

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: October 17, 2018

Agenda Item: Brucellosis 2019 Annual Work Plan

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 minutes

Background

In January 2013, the commission endorsed elk management recommendations from a citizen working group for use in areas with brucellosis (the Designated Surveillance Area as described by the Montana Department of Livestock). Annual work plans describe specific management actions based upon these recommendations. The proposed 2019 annual work plan largely restates the 2018 plan to include hazing, limited fencing, limited lethal removal of elk, habitat modifications, and other efforts to adjust elk distribution away from cattle at small scales to mitigate the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle. The proposed 2019 plan also expands the landownership and dates describing where and when elk may be lethally removed to influence elk distribution away from cattle. The number of elk that may be taken is not proposed to be changed.

In response to public comment, the language describing where these actions are available for implementation is proposed to be modified to address potential circumstances where brucellosis in elk is confirmed outside a DSA.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The public comment opportunity for the proposed annual work plan ran from the August 9 commission meeting through 5 p.m. Monday, September 17. Two public comments were received and will be forwarded to the commission.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends adoption of the proposed 2019 annual work plan that largely restates earlier plans and includes expanded landownership and dates describing where and when elk may be lethally removed to influence elk distribution away from cattle. The number of elk that may be taken is not proposed to be changed.

In response to public comment, the language describing where these actions are available for implementation is proposed to be modified to address potential circumstances where brucellosis in elk is confirmed outside a DSA.

Alternatives and Analysis

The proposal may be adopted as presented or with adjustment per FWP justifications, public comment, and commission discussion.

Proposed Motion

I move to approve as final the 2019 annual work plan for elk management in areas with brucellosis as proposed by FWP.