

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** February 10, 2011

**Agenda Item:** Close Bighorn Sheep HD 213

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Approval of Final Rule

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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### **Background**

Bighorn sheep in hunting district 213 near Anaconda have recently suffered significant mortality related to a disease and die-off event that included some agency culling. Out of concern for population recovery, and in the interest of offering reasonably hunting opportunity for any successful applicant, FWP proposes to close HD 213. The closure would be in effect until the population recovers sufficiently to maintain biological health and reasonable hunter opportunity. The scale of this event, and the elimination of reasonable hunting opportunity, prompts this request for an exception to the biennial season setting process.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

In addition to public comment at the FWP Commission meeting in December, public comment ran from Dec. 10 Jan. 14, 2011. Twenty-one comments were received and forwarded to the commission. A common theme was recognition of reduced numbers of bighorn sheep in this district.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2010 (status quo) as per staff justifications, public comment and FWP Commission discussion.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

Given the observed mortality, there is significant reason to pursue this closure to enhance recovery potential as much as possible.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the commission adopt the final bighorn sheep hunting district 213 closure as presented by FWP.