

FWP proposal to be amended: Elk Regulations

Commissioner: Brian Cebull

Date Received by Commission:

Proposed Amendment: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the following amendments to the proposed 2024 and 2025 Elk Regulations:

1. Modify LPT 502-20 and make it valid only in HD 502. Set quota at 5 either-sex tags. (Page 108 of draft regulations)
2. Create LPT 555-20 which is valid only in HD 555. Set quota at 25 either-sex tags. (Page 111 of draft regulations)

Requested by FWP: No

Rationale and Background: HD 555, the East Beartooth Face and the west Pryors, was combined with HD 502 in the 2022-23 season setting process under LPT 502-20 due to the interchange of bull elk between the 2 HD's with 30 either-sex permits available. Prior to 2022-23, these HD's were separate with 25 either-sex tags in HD 555 (was part of HD 525) and 5 in HD 502. According to the updated elk management plan draft, only 11% of the land in HD 502 is public, with nearly all of the elk occurring on private land in the southern half of the HD. The addition of HD 555, which is 69% public land, to LPT 502-20 has created additional pressure on landowners in HD 502 plus added harvest pressure on a HD that is currently at the low end of population objectives. Given that HD 555 appears to be well over population objectives due to the Robertson Draw fire, it does not make sense to have these 2 HD's combined in the LPT. These amendments effectively return the 2 HD's to the separate either sex quotas they were at prior to the 2022-23 process.

Department response:

The department does not anticipate any adverse biological effects as a result of this amendment.