

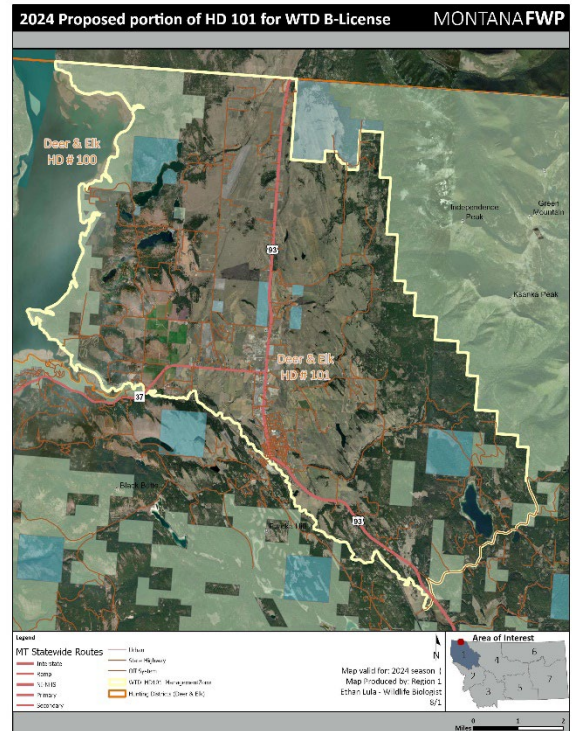
**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**  
**HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species: White-tailed Deer**  
**Region: 1**  
**Hunting District: 101**  
**Year: 2024-2025**

**1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

- Designate the North Tobacco portion of HD 101 for the purpose of white-tailed deer management.
- Create an unlimited B-license, valid only on **private lands** in the North Tobacco portion of HD 101
  - Limit 2 per person
  - General season start **Aug 15** to align with game damage timing.
- Modify existing antlerless LPT 101-00 to maintain some antlerless WTD opportunity in the rest of HD 101.
  - Remove private land only restriction.
  - Reduce quota to **100**

Current antlerless WTD harvest opportunity in HD 101 using the general license is limited to the archery season, the first week of the general season and for youth and hunters with a PTHFV. Additional opportunity is provided by an antlerless B license 101-00 which is valid for only for private lands. The quota for this LPT was increased from 200 to 450 for the 2023 hunting season.



*Figure 1. Proposed North Tobacco portion of HD 101 (yellow).*

**2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

The objective of this proposed change is to reduce WTD game damage occurring on private agricultural lands, in the northern portion of HD 101, by reducing local deer densities. The establishment of the North Tobacco portion of HD 101 is intended to direct harvest towards WTD populations associated with agricultural lands surrounding Eureka while minimizing the risk of reducing WTD populations in the remainder of the HD. The season structure is intended to reduce local densities of white-tailed deer, provide agricultural producers with added flexibility for responding to game damage, and provide hunters with antlerless white-tailed deer harvest opportunities. Reducing local densities may also lower the risk of disease and help mitigate urban deer conflicts within the town of Eureka.

**3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints.**

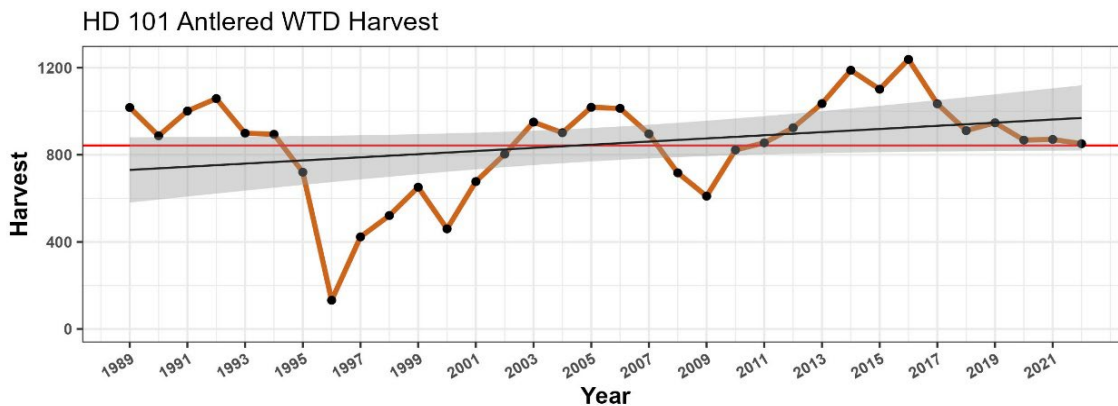
Success will be measured by the number and scope of game damage complaints received, as well as the number of deer observed during annual spring recruitment surveys. LPT success will be estimated through the annual hunter harvest telephone survey, and hunter satisfaction will be assessed from contacts made at R1 game check stations. Enforcement staff will be queried post-season to assess compliance with the special

restrictions associated with the opportunity. Landowners and sportsmen will be queried post-season to evaluate overall opportunity popularity and participation.

4. **What is the current population’s status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

White-tailed deer populations in HD 101 are monitored through the annual harvest survey and spring recruitment surveys. At the HD scale, population trend, as measured by annual antlered harvest (Figure 2), indicates that the WTD population has been stable relative to the past 5 years.

Figure 2. Annual antlered white-tailed deer harvest for HD 101. Red Line = LTA.



Recruitment is measured by the number of fawns (yearlings) per 100 adults observed during late March to early May. Surveys are conducted from a pickup along established routes where deer are expected to be observed feeding on early emergent vegetation. Between 2 - 6 routes are surveyed annually in HD 101. In 2021 survey routes were established within the Northern Tobacco portion of HD 101. At the HD scale, WTD populations experienced a modest population increase between 2019-2021 with recruitment approaching the long-term average (LTA = 46:100). Recruitment was lower in 2022, though appears to have maintained an overall stable population. 2023 recruitment (28:100) is the lowest observed for this HD and is expected to result in a population decline within the HD. However, high recruitment variability among survey routes was observed in 2023, with an average of 42:100 within the North Tobacco portion as opposed to 25:100 for routes outside of the North Tobacco (Table 1.) Although survey data isn’t available for the North Tobacco prior to 2021, average annual recruitment for routes in the area have consistently been higher than that observed throughout the rest of the HD. This suggests that while WTD deer populations through much of the HD may have experienced a decline over the winter of 2023, those within the North Tobacco portion are likely stable or increasing. This is supported by anecdotal reports from hunters and landowners in HD 101.

Figure 3. Annual recruitment estimates for HD 101 as measured by fawns:100adults.

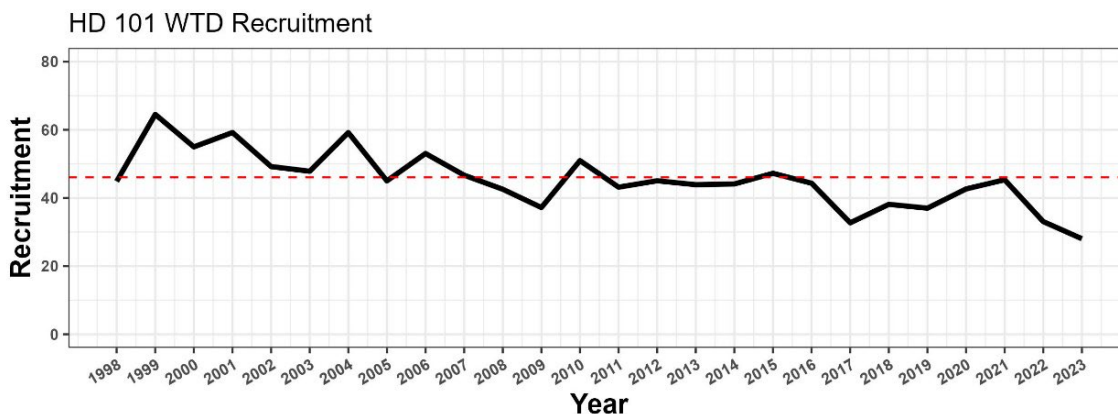


Table 1: Comparison of recruitment estimates for survey routes within and outside the proposed North Tobacco portion of HD 101.

Survey Year	# Survey Routes	Ave. Recruitment (fawns:100adults)	Inside N. Tobacco Portion
2021	4	43	N
	2	49	Y
2022	2	31	N
	2	39	Y
2023	3	25	N
	2	42	Y

**5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

Weather

Winter severity (i.e., cold temperatures and snow depth) is the primary factor influencing WTD populations in HD 101. Relative to the rest of the HD, the Tobacco Valley portion experiences lower amounts of precipitation, reduced snowpack, and milder temperatures. Early snowfall, extended periods of cold temperatures, and persistent snowpack outside of the North Tobacco portion during the winter of 2022/2023 is suspected as the primary contributing factor for the low and variable recruitment observed during 2023 spring surveys.

Summer and early fall drought conditions often cause WTD to concentrate on irrigated agricultural land in the North Tobacco Valley, as forage in the surrounding foothills and forest senesces. Game damage associated with these concentrations depends on drought timing and severity along with agricultural production timelines.

Hunter Access

Most of the land within the proposed portion of HD 101 is privately owned. While agriculture is still a significant land use in the Tobacco Valley, residential development over the past 20 years has resulted in high degree of subdivision. Hunter access can therefore be constrained due to ownership size and proximity to orientation with surrounding residences. While many landowners within area still provide hunter access, valid safety concerns often require hunters to be familiar with the landscape or have special restrictions imposed according to the landowner's requirements.

Game Damage

The number and severity of game damage complaints associated with WTD in HD 101 has increased over the last 5 years. The primary complaint is damage to standing agricultural crop during the late summer and early fall months. Hazing, kill permits, supplemental and game damage hunts have all been implemented on qualifying landownerships. These actions have had mixed results in mitigating damage and, by design, are not intended to reduce deer numbers in an area. Due to the fragmented landownership within the Tobacco Valley, single game damage actions are often only effective at temporarily dispersing animals onto adjoining properties or changing animal behavior so that only active on the property at night.

**6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

The fundamentals of this proposal were made available to the public during the 2023 biennial season setting process via the FWP website and during four public meetings hosted throughout Region One. During this process, two options for achieving the proposed objective were presented for discussion: issuing an antlerless B license as outlined above or allowing either-sex harvest using a general license on private land within the same defined boundary.

Online comment was limited to a single response by the Montana Wildlife Federation (MWF) which supported the private land B-license option. While not specific to the proposal, another commenter was concerned about the spread of CWD into the Eureka area and indicated that Region One should prioritize actions that mitigated the risk of spread to the area.

In-person meetings were held in Eureka, Libby, Kalispell, and Thompson Falls.

Eureka (4 attending) – The meeting was primarily attended by landowners concerned about WTD numbers and experiencing game damage. All attending supported adding an additional antlerless B-license, with interest in allowing hunters to purchase multiple licenses. There was general acknowledgement of increasing safety concerns due to residential development and the challenges associated with managing access and hunter opportunity in this area.

Libby (3 attending) – No comments specific to proposal

Kalispell (12 attending) – Ten people were in support of an additional B-license and two people supported going to either-sex during the general season. One of the people supporting the latter option expressed concern of overharvesting bucks and suggested that allowing people to harvest a doe using a general license would take pressure off bucks.

Thompson Falls (6 attending) – No comments specific to proposal

Outside of the season setting process, most of the agricultural producers within the Tobacco Valley have expressed a desire for a reduced WTD population and have experienced demonstrable game damage during the last 4 years. Local sportsmen generally support some additional opportunity for antlerless WTD in the area, but have expressed concern over access to private lands, safety, and potential abuse of the license outside of the Tobacco Valley.

Submitted by: Ethan Lula – Wildlife Biologist

Date: 08/02/2023

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS  
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species: MD**  
**Region: 1**  
**Hunting District: 103-50**  
**Year: 2024**

**1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

Require mandatory reporting and check in of mule deer harvested in the HD 103-50 permit area. CWD was recently found in white-tailed deer within the permit area. This permit area is supported by many local hunters and currently consists of 13 permits, yet we get almost no information on CWD prevalence in this mule deer herd. Given the high prevalence documented in Colorado and other states in mule deer herds with limited buck harvest, we need to determine CWD risk in the population by increasing the sample size of deer for CWD.

**2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

Increase the number of MD sampled for CWD from within the special MD permit area.

**3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints.**

We wish to sample/test every MD harvested from the special MD permit area, HD 103-50, in perpetuity. For example, as FWP currently offers N = 13 permits for HD 103-50, this proposal would be successful if we sampled/tested all 13 MD from this HD.

**4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

Currently, the greatest number of MD sampled from within HD 103-50 has been no more than N = 2. However, we need to determine the risk of CWD to this MD population, one of few MD trend areas in R1.

**5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

While this permit area is supported by many local hunters, we receive few to no CWD samples from this area. Obtaining a greater number of CWD samples will help FWP adhere to our statewide MD AHM Plan, by improving our knowledge of CWD risk in this herd.

**6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

We haven't had a lot of opportunity to discuss this with a lot of people, but we did discuss this at the pre-scoping meetings in R1; we received little comment thus far.

Submitted by:

Date:

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_   
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by:

\_\_\_\_\_   
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS  
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species: MD**

**Region: 1**

**Hunting District: CWD Management Zone (MZ), incl HDs 100, 103, and 104**

**Year: 2024**

**1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

We wish to require mandatory reporting and testing of animals harvested utilizing this license (199-20), and limit the number a hunter can acquire to 1. The number of people submitting samples from within the MZ for CWD testing has declined, making it more difficult to evaluate CWD prevalence in the Libby CWD MZ. The decline in samples testing has also reduced local support for the license. This is a CWD management action and mandatory testing would increase our CWD sample sizes which would improve our CWD prevalence estimate and well as improve our ability to assess harvest within the MZ.

This license is limited to the Libby CWD Management Zone (MZ) and was implemented with the goal of reducing white-tailed deer densities to help control the prevalence and spread of CWD. For the 2022 season, the license was changed from an unlimited number of licenses with the ability to purchase only one license to a limit of 2000 licenses available through a drawing. In 2022, much to our surprise the licenses went under-subscribed placing them in surplus status. Since there was no limit placed on the number an individual could hold, a person could purchase up to 7 licenses. Many people bought multiple licenses. This now made it the only place in MT where you could harvest up to 7 whitetail bucks and was met with wide criticism and loss of support by locals.

**2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

Increase the number of WT sampled for CWD from within the CWD MZ, and limit the number of licenses available to hunters to increase fairness and public support of this opportunity.

**3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints.**

We wish to sample/test as many WTD from the CWD MZ as possible, to increase the total number sampled. The total number of WTD sampled from the MZ has nearly halved since 2019; the proposal will be considered successful if we increase the total number of WTD sampled over  $N = 375$ . In addition, a successful proposal would be reflected in an improved confidence in our CWD prevalence estimate for the area within the CWD MZ. Finally, if each hunter were limited to no more than 2 licenses for this opportunity, we anticipate the support for this license will improve.

**4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

In the 2019-20 harvest season, FWP collected 616 samples from WTD within the MZ; in 2020-21, 440 WT were tested; and in 2021-22, we collected 364 samples from WTD inside the Libby MZ. This equates to a nearly 40% drop in samples across the first 3 years of testing. However, FWP needs to continue to accurately assess the risk of CWD to this WT population – 1 of only 2 WT populations with CWD inside a city limits. In addition, since there was no limit placed on the number of licenses an individual could hold, a person could purchase up to 7 licenses. Many people bought multiple licenses. This now made it the only place in MT where you could harvest up to 7 whitetail bucks and was met with wide criticism and loss of support by locals.

**5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

While this permit area is supported by many local and non-resident hunters, the number of CWD samples from Libby's CWD MZ continues to decline annually. At the same time, FWP needs to continue estimating CWD prevalence in the Libby CWD MZ.

In addition, given the fact that many hunters purchased multiple licenses, making this the only place in MT where a hunter could harvest up to 7 WT bucks, it was met with criticism, especially by local hunters.

**6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

We haven't had a lot of opportunity to discuss this with a lot of people, but we did discuss this at the pre-scoping meetings in R1. While we received little comment thus far, the majority were in favor of increasing sampling and reducing the number of licenses available for purchase from the CWD MZ.

Submitted by:

Date:

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_   
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by:

\_\_\_\_\_   
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS  
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species: Elk**  
**Region: Region 1**  
**Hunting District: HD 120 and HD 130**  
**Year: 2024**

- 1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

*Proposal: HD 120 & HD 130- Remove Either-Sex harvest opportunity on a general license for people holding a PTHFV.*

Prior to regulation simplification of 2022, HD 120 and HD 130 offered a limited number of permits for antlerless elk, including 5 permits in HD 120 (120-01) reserved for hunters with PTHFV. With the elimination of antlerless permits in 2022, the PTHFV opportunity was extended to allowing antlerless harvest on a general license for these districts. This change also eliminated any mechanism to limit total harvest. According to the hunter harvest survey, 6-7 cow elk were harvested during the 2022 rifle season, ostensibly by hunters holding a PTHFV in HD130.

- 2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

The objective of this proposal is to eliminate antlerless harvest opportunity during the general season for the purposes of increasing elk numbers. Currently, these districts do not offer antlerless opportunity during the general season other than for holder of a PTHFV. Eliminating PTHFV antlerless opportunity is consistent with the season structure and growth objectives for these HDs and other districts in the Region where antlerless harvest opportunity has been removed.

- 3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints.**

Population status is monitored via long-term trends in total bull harvest. Proposal success will be achieved by eliminating antlerless harvest during the general season. Future antlerless opportunity will be contingent on increasing elk numbers in these districts.

- 4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

The population goal for both HD 120 and HD 130 is to increase elk numbers. Elimination of antlerless opportunity during the general season is consistent with that goal.

- 5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

Road density in both HD 120 and HD 130 provide ample access. Without limiting the number of license opportunities, antlerless take by PTHFV hunters could limit growth of elk herds in these districts. Hunter check stations documented several antlerless harvests by PTHFV hunters during the 2022 season, and hunter harvest survey estimated 6.5 antlerless elk taken by hunters in HD 130 during the general rifle season. Without a means to limit take, growth of PTHFV harvest in HD 120 and HD 130 could impede achievement of growth objectives in these districts.

- 6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**



This proposal was discussed during R1 public scoping meetings held in late June. The proposal received unanimous support.

Submitted by: Franz Ingelfinger

Date: 5/29/2022

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS  
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species: Deer**  
**Region: Region 1**  
**Hunting District: HD 130**  
**Year: 2024**

**1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

Proposal: Eliminate Either-Sex harvest opportunity during the first week of the general season and change to a 5-week buck only regulation.

Antlerless white-tail harvest opportunity during the general rifle season has varied over time in HD 130 (Table 1). Antlerless opportunity during the first week of the general season was reintroduced in 2022 as part of the regulations simplification process to make antlerless opportunity in HD 130 consistent with the rest of Region 1. This change was met with unease by local hunters, who have expressed growing concern about perceived declines in white-tail numbers in HD 130, despite mild winters and strong spring recruitment in recent years (2020-2022). Last fall's buck harvest in HD 130 was the lowest in over two decades.

Table 1: General Season white-tail Harvest Opportunity in HD 130 (2015-2022)

Year	5-Week General Season Harvest Opportunity
2015	Buck Only
2016	Antlerless 1st and Last Wk.
2017	Antlerless 1st and Last Wk.
2018	Antlerless 1st and Last Wk.
2019	Buck Only
2020	Buck Only
2021	Buck Only
2022	Antlerless 1st wk.

**2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

The objective of proposal is to facilitate white-tail population growth in the Swan Valley (HD 130) by eliminating antlerless opportunity during the general season.

**3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints.**

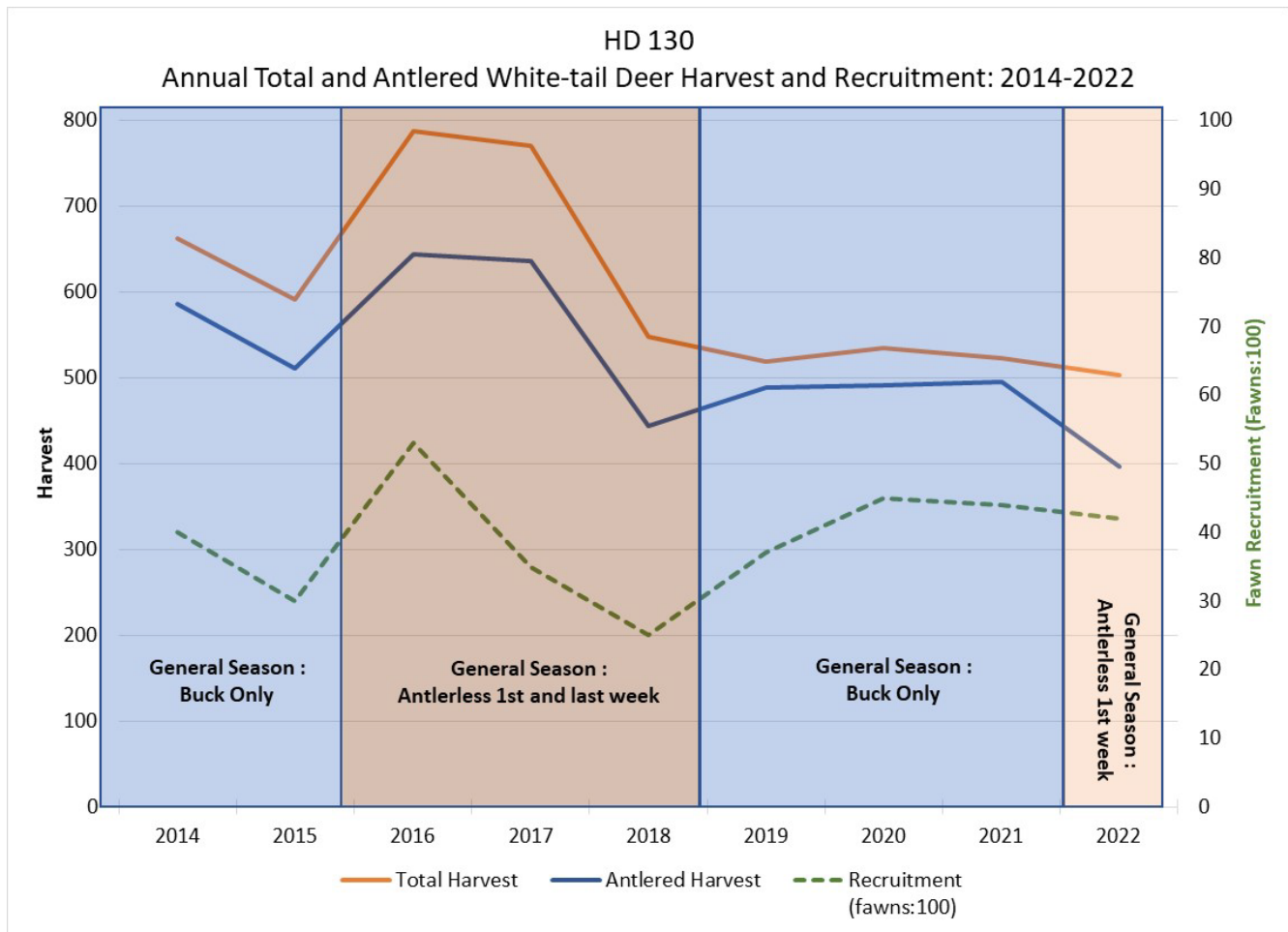
Reduction in antlerless harvest is expected to aid population recovery and will be evaluated using:

- Total buck harvest
- Trend counts from spring green up surveys

**4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

Buck harvest has remained stable or declining, even after three mild winters and strong recruitment (2020-2022). During the 2022 hunting season, numerous hunters expressed concern about the lack of white-tail deer. Buck harvest in 2022, as estimated by the hunter phone survey, was the lowest in two decades (Figure 1). Whereas we issued over 650 Antlerless B-Licenses (Permit 130-00) in 2008, we have issued 50 or fewer each year since.

Despite strong recruitment, white-tail numbers have not rebounded, suggesting that doe survival may have declined since the early 2000s (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** HD 130 annual total and antlered white-tail deer harvest (left vertical axis) and recruitment (right vertical axis): 2014-2022.

**5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

Slow population recovery after declines following the winter of 2016-2017 has raised concern among local hunters that adult survival may be declining from historic norms – due in-part to increased vehicle strikes, habitat loss, reed canarygrass encroachment of ephemeral wetlands used during spring green up, and an increasing diversity and abundance of predators. Recent harvest trends are not responding to strong recruitment as would be anticipated. Antlerless harvest, which is generally additive, may be further suppressing white-tail recovery.

**6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

In January we met with former commissioner Gary Wolfe, former and current executive directors of Swan Valley Connections to discuss their concern about changes in doe survival that may be impacting white-tail populations in Swan Valley, and their desire to see a reduction in general season harvest of white-tail does.

This proposal was discussed during R1 public scoping meetings held in late June and was supported unanimously.

Submitted by: Franz Ingelfinger

Date: 05/29/2023

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS  
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species: Deer and Elk**  
**Region: Region 1**  
**Hunting District: HD 170 and HD 140**  
**Year: 2024**

- 1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

We are proposing to change the legal description of the boundary of HD 170 to correct the omission of the Bad Rock Canyon WMA from any hunting district, and to clarify the northern boundary between HD 170 and HD 140 at the Flathead River.

- 2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

**HD 170 - Reason for Change/Description of the Change:** Change will correct omission of Bad Rock Canyon WMA from HD 170. Existing legal descriptions create a donut hole in which Bad Rock Canyon WMA lies outside any hunting district.

**HD 140 - Reason for Change/Description of the Change:** Change will clarify the junction between HD 170 and 140 at the Flathead River.

- 3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints.**

Change will correct omission and clarify boundaries and reduce confusion over boundary lines

- 4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

**HD 170** (changes highlighted in blue text and in Figure 1):

**HD 170: See pg. 20 of Legal Descriptions**

170 Flathead River: That portion of Flathead County lying within the following-described boundary: Beginning where State Route 35 bridge crosses the Swan River, *near Bigfork*, then southerly along the lakeshore of Flathead Lake to the confluence of Hunger Creek and then northeasterly along said creek to USFS ~~boundary~~*Boundary*, then northerly along said boundary to T26N, R19W, Section 8, then west ~~along long~~ USFS Boundary and then southeasterly along said boundary to the lakeshore of Swan Lake. Cross the lake shore to the east to opposite shoreline, then follow shoreline southerly to USFS ~~boundary~~*Boundary* south of the confluence of How Creek, then follow USFS Boundary northerly to *its northernmost intersection with Berne Road, then north along Berne Road to its junction with US Highway 2, then due north to the Flathead River, then westerly along said river to US Highway 2*, then westerly along said highway to 12th Avenue West, Columbia Falls, then northerly to Tamarack Lane, then westerly to East Edgewood Drive and continue westerly to East 2nd Street, Whitefish, then south and westerly to US Highway 93, then west and northerly along said highway to Farm-to-Market Road, then southerly along said road to West Spring Creek Road across US Highway 2 on to Dern Road then east on Whalebone Drive to Foys Lake Road, then southerly onto Foys Canyon Road to Rocky Cliff Road, then easterly to US Highway 93, then southerly along said highway to the Somers Fishing Access Site and the north shore of Flathead Lake, then easterly along said shore to the Swan River, then easterly along the north shore of said river to State Route 35 Bridge, the point of beginning.

**HD 140: See pg. 21 of Legal Descriptions**

140 Lower South Fork: That portion of Flathead County lying within the following-described boundary: Beginning at Inspiration Point on the Swan Divide and the Middle Fork Creek/ Inspiration Creek Divide, then northeasterly along said creek divide to USFS Trail 218, then southerly along said trail to USFS Trail 226 (Picture Peak Trail), then

easterly along said trail to USFS Trail 107 near Picture Peak, then northerly along said trail to the south side of Sarah Peak, then easterly along the main creek starting southeast of Sarah Peak to the South Fork Flathead River and the mouth of Mid Creek/USFS Trail 103, then northeasterly along said trail to USFS Trail 89 at Mid Mtn., then easterly and northerly along said trail to USFS Trail 83 (near Silvertip Cabin), then northwesterly along said trail to USFS Trail 43, then northwesterly along said trail to USFS Trail 327 east of Whitcomb Peak, then northwesterly along said trail to USFS 81 and the South Fork Flathead River/Middle Fork Flathead River Divide, then northwesterly along said divide (Twin Mtn., Prospector Mtn., Great Northern Mtn.) to USFS Trail 331, then northwesterly along said trail to US Highway 2, then westerly on said highway to Ousel Creek, then northerly along said creek to the Middle Fork Flathead River, then westerly along said river to the Flathead River at the confluence of the North Fork Flathead River, then southerly along said river to the South Fork Flathead River, then westerly along the Flathead River to Badrock Canyon Fishing Access Site, the point due-north of the intersection of Berne Road and US Highway 2, then due south to the junction of US Highway 2 and Berne Road, then south along Berne Road to the Forest Service Boundary's northernmost intersection with Berne Road, then southerly to Highway 2 and the USFS Boundary in T30, R20, Section 11, then follow the USFS ~~boundary~~ Boundary southerly to the confluence of Groom Creek and Swan Lake, then follow Groom Creek northeasterly along said creek to USFS Trail 61, then northerly along said trail to the Swan Divide, then southerly along said divide to Inspiration Point, the point of the beginning

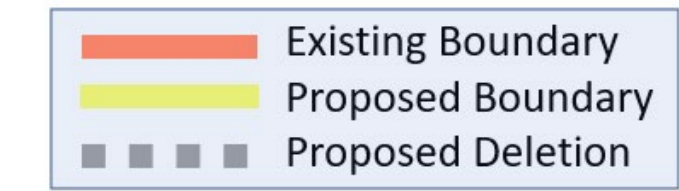
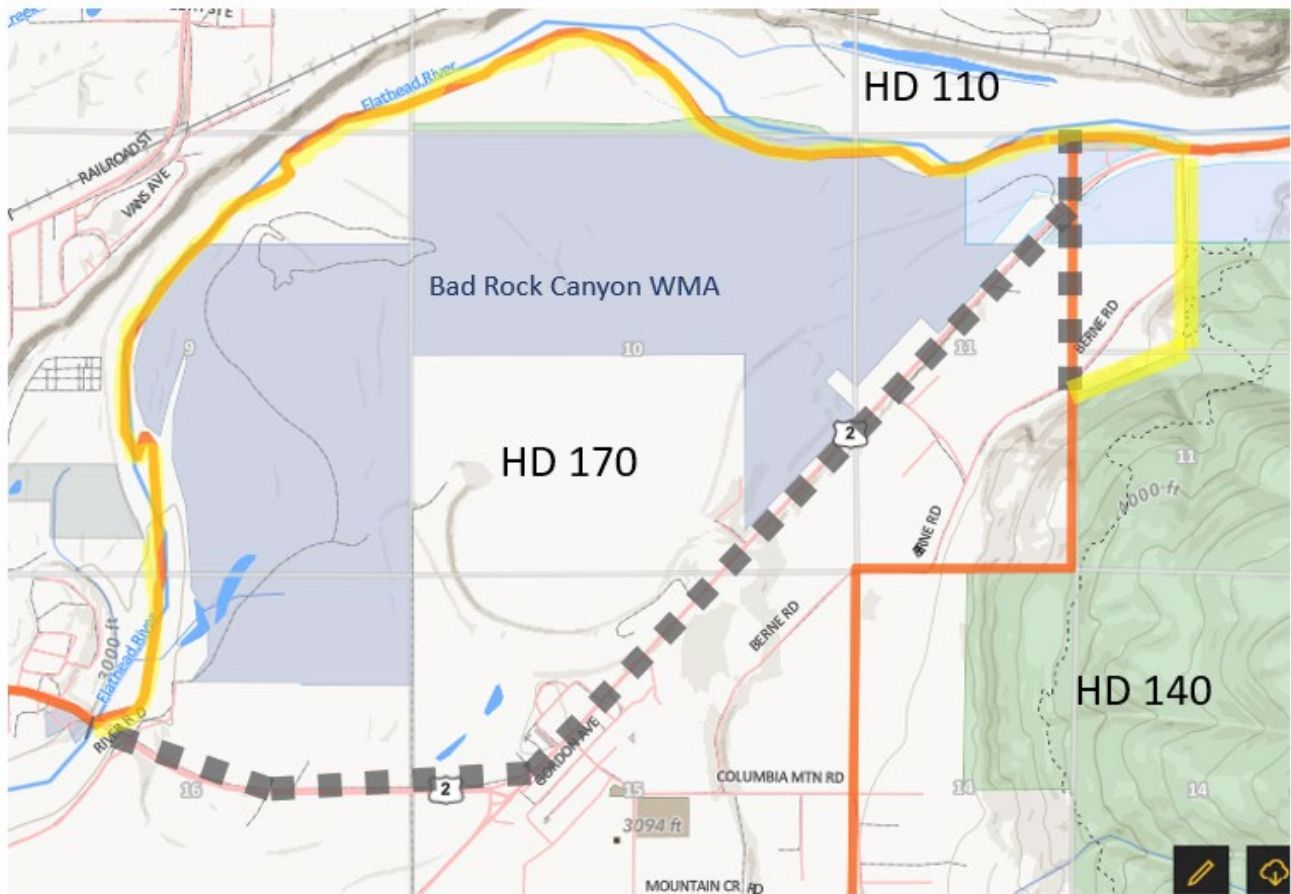


Figure 1: Proposed boundary changes / clarifications in HD 170 and HD 140.

**5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

Not Applicable – HD 140 references a Badrock Canyon Fishing Access Site (FAS). No such FAS exists. The river access point at this location is administered by the US Forest Service and is unnamed.

**6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

This proposal was discussed at R1 public scoping meetings held in late June and received unanimous support.

Submitted by: Franz Ingelfinger

Date: 5/29/2022

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**  
**HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species: Elk**  
**Region: Region 1**  
**Hunting District: HD 170**  
**Year: 2024**

**1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

Proposal: HD 170 – Establish an Elk B License 170-00 (quota range 5-100) – Limit one per hunter; only valid on private land north of Lake Blaine Road and west of Hwy 35. Secure access before applying. Recommendation is to start at 25 licenses. Valid Archery through Late Season (February 15<sup>th</sup>).

For many years, general season elk opportunity in HD 170 has extended to both brow-tined bull and antlerless elk. When HD 132 was combined with HD 170 in 2021, a geographic qualifier was added restricting the antlerless opportunity to areas north of Lake Blaine Road and west of Highway 35.

HD 170 is primarily private land, especially within the area north of Lake Blaine Road and west of Highway 35. Valley elk in this zone continue to increase, while harvest opportunity declines as the Flathead Valley develops.

**2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

The objective of this proposal is to increase antlerless elk harvest within the Flathead Valley to help curtail growth of the valley elk herd and reduce game damage complaints.

**3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints.**

To evaluate whether 170-00 licenses are being utilized we will examine annual harvest surveys to assess harvest and % management success. Minimum counts of valley elk, based on ground surveys, will be utilized to evaluate growth or decline of local elk herds.

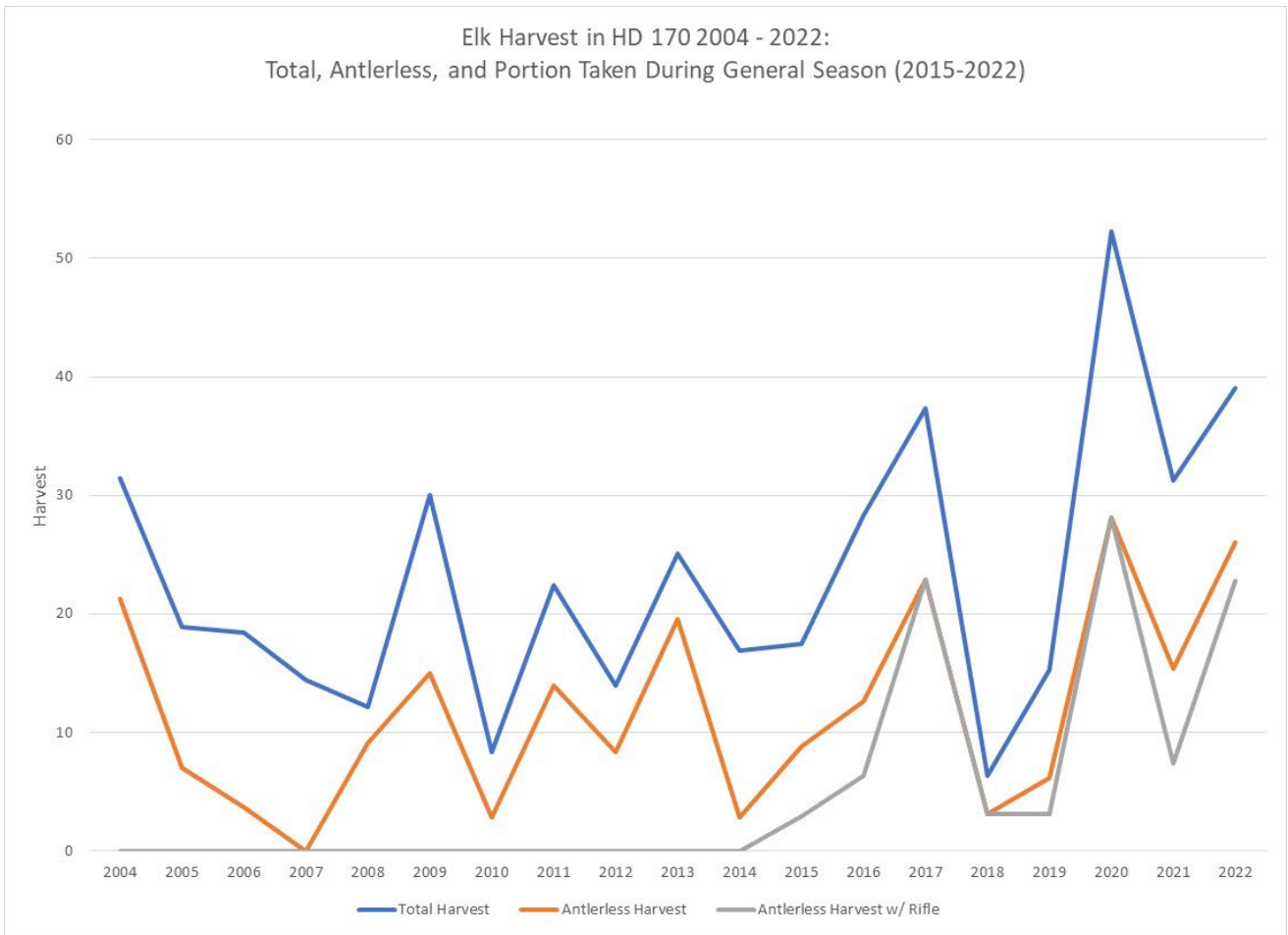
**4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

Elk numbers within the Flathead Valley continue to grow, with minimum counts exceeding 150 animals along Middle Road (Silver Bullet Herd); 35 animals around Bad Rock Canyon WMA, and over 50 animals in the West Valley Herd. Surveys are opportunistic and lack statistical rigor, but the sense from counts, the public, and frequency of game damage complaints, is that the valley elk herd continues to grow.

**5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

The opportunity to harvest Elk in HD 170 is largely restricted to private property, especially within the zone north of Lake Blaine Road and west of Highway 35. During the last 19 years (2004 - 2022), annual elk harvest in HD 170 has averaged 23 elk (range: 6-53); with antlerless harvest comprising approximately half the harvest (annual average: 12; range: 0 -28 ) (Figure 1). Despite consistent harvest, the valley elk herd continues to grow. Creating additional antlerless harvest opportunity, through issuing antlerless elk B licenses, is our best option for applying additional pressure on valley elk – permitting individuals with access to elk on private land, the ability to harvest antlerless elk on a B license.





**Figure 1:** Elk harvest in HD 170 from 2004-2022.

**6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

This proposal was discussed during R1 scoping meetings held in late June and received unanimous support.

Submitted by: Franz Ingelfinger

Date: 5/29/2022

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: