



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

**Meeting Date:** February 13, 2020

**Agenda Item:** 2020 - 2021 Elk Shoulder Seasons

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 60 Minutes

**Background:** Most season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted every other year between December and February. FWP proposes adopting the existing 2019 structure except for specific proposed changes. **This agenda item speaks only to elk shoulder seasons. Other elk season changes are proposed under a separate agenda item.**

Shoulder seasons are a management tool designed to address over-objective populations and problematic elk distributions that have been unable to be addressed by other means. Application and continuation of these seasons depends on satisfying both harvest objectives and other fundamental objectives specified in the *Elk Season Guidelines* adopted by the commission in 2015. FWP presented evaluations of harvest and fundamental objectives in August and October, respectively. Differing from other season structures that can continue indefinitely unless proposed to be changed, the *Guidelines* specify shoulder seasons be re-proposed following evaluations.

There are currently shoulder seasons in 58 hunting districts. FWP is proposing changes in many of these, including proposed changes from the December commission adoptions. The details of these proposed changes are enumerated in the elk shoulder season master list. While these proposals may be adopted for the 2020 and 2021 hunting seasons, the commission has previously stated an interest in reviewing these seasons annually.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** Public comment was taken from Dec. 5 to Jan. 27 and forwarded to commissioners and FWP staff for their consideration.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions, or no change from 2019 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

**Proposed Motion:** I move that the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt as final the 2020 elk shoulder seasons as presented by FWP. Except for calendar rotation and those season elements specifically identified for change, all other aspects of these seasons are to remain unchanged.