



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: August 20, 2021

Agenda Item: 2021 Deer and Elk Muzzleloader Season

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Minutes

Background: During the 2021 Legislative Session, House Bill 242 was adopted and signed into law. It established a nine-day muzzleloader season for deer and elk that begins on the second Saturday following the end of the regular season. To address this new statute, the commission must consider options to establish a muzzleloader season for the upcoming fall season (2021). The department has prepared a recommended approach providing that any unused license/permit be valid during the general season for hunting deer and elk in a specific hunting district. It would be valid during the muzzleloader season in accordance with all authorizations and restrictions associated with that license/permit. This approach would limit confusion and administrative burden.

Public Involvement Process and Results: The department received just over 150 comments on the muzzleloader proposal. About 80 supported the proposed seasons, another 40 disliked the addition, and about 30 had suggestions for modification (some of which could not be implemented due to statutory limitations).

Alternatives and Analysis: This muzzleloader season is required by statute. After reviewing public comments and degree of support, the department has not altered the original recommendation. Statute requires the use of hunter orange during any firearm season, and hunters must wear hunter orange during this muzzleloader season, along with complying with all other applicable existing regulations.

Agency Rationale and Recommendation: The department recommends the commission adopt the proposed muzzleloader seasons.

Proposed Motion:

I move that the commission vote to adopt deer and elk muzzleloader seasons for 2021 as presented by the department.