

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
PUBLIC COMMENTS ON
2021 DEER & ELK MUZZLELOADER SEASON

1. I am strongly in favor of the Montana muzzleloading season as proposed in the legislation. Only traditional and traditionally styled muzzleloaders with iron sights, shooting loose powder and a lead projectile should be allowed.

Stephen Straley Saint Ignatius, MT

2. In favor of Muzzleloader season

Randy Fey Red Lodge, MT

3. I am excited to have a late season muzzleloader season in Montana. I have purchased hunting licenses in Idaho to use specifically for late season muzzleloader hunting and have hoped MT would adopt a season. I would encourage you to clarify the statement from your requirements that "May not use a muzzleloading rifle that requires insertion of a cap or primer into the open breech of the barrel". Most of the newer muzzleloaders break open like a shotgun and a percussion cap is inserted in the breech. The quoted line above could be interpreted to eliminate them. I encourage you not to eliminate them. I would also encourage you to allow non lead and sabot projectiles. With the ammunition shortage going on it is difficult to find any bullets. Sabot bullets would increase accuracy and (yes a little more range). But if optics are not allowed; 150 yds would most likely be your effective range. Requiring loose powder would keep your reloading rate slow so sabots increased power and accuracy would make the first shot more effective. Lastly I would encourage you to extend the season to the whole month of December.

Chris Clarke Florence, MT

4. The addition of a dedicated traditional muzzleloader season has the potential to reignite the interest and passion in the history of our state. Montana was settled and founded using traditional muzzleloaders like those allowed in the hunt.

Kane Wells Great Falls, MT

5. I am for this

Mike Price Whotehall, MT

6. This is a great idea.

WILLIAM BALLOWE Great Falls, MT

7. Great idea. Please keep the proposed restrictions on the firearms/ammo as they are. There is no need for in-line or hi-power component involvement. Thanks for the opportunity.

Charles Pentecost Billings, MT

8. In order to reduce confusion on both sportsman and wardens sides and to reduce the need and expense of multiple firearms please consider keeping the weapon rules the same as other

northwestern states such as Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Many manufactures already produce western state compliant guns. Thank you

Dennis Deaton Helena, MT

9. As a life-long muzzleloader and antique arms collector, I fully support FWP's introductory plan to provide for a 9-day muzzleloader season. I look forward to opportunities to hunt elk and deer with my muzzleloader. Thank you!

Steven Kloetzel Ovando, MT

10. I applaud the efforts of the FWP, and strongly support their efforts & service. I moved to MT in 2015 from CO where I was a muzzleloader hunter since 1989. (I'm a very conscientious & ethical hunter. never once used a truck or ATV in 45 years of big game hunting, and am proud of my success of 50+). I was quite disappointed to find out, when I moved here, that MT didn't have a muzzle-loader season. and if this current legislation is getting your feet wet in the subject I whole heartedly support that. and hope for refinement in the near future. However: allowing any high-power rifle hunting to overlap with Muzzleloader season is a very poor choice. I strongly can not agree, nor support, that. placing muzzleloader season at the end of the year, in the winter, is also not of value to the hunter. most hunters are not going to opt for a winter hunt. all agencies of your type always have a financial factor to the matrix of season & license determinations. putting muzzleloader season in the winter will not provide your department a big surge in income nor serve the average hunter well. the proper placement of Muzzleloader Season for Deer & Elk is in between archery & rifle season. (use Colorado as a template). with limited distance of the shooting its a good way to provide the dedicated MZ hunter with good odds and favorable weather, as well as an enjoyable time of year. This will increase your revenue and improve both the quality of hunt & access to BMA land. the MT archery season is very long, almost excessive, at over 5 weeks. probably too long. I strongly believe that for the quality of the hunt, revenue generated, success percentages, herd control, and availability of hunters to actually have time available and also avoid arctic weather conditions, this is the only viable hunting period to plug in your new muzzleloader season. adjust archery by limiting it to a 30 day season and put Muzzleloader season between archery & rifle. do not overlap either into MZ season and have MZ season be limited to that weapon only. further: specifying that MZ projectiles ONLY be lead is scientifically and medically negligent. after 50 years of curtailing lead shot for waterfowl, and the more recent science of lead particulates in big game meat, it is naïve and completely neglectful to 'only allow lead' bullets in muzzleloaders. I totally agree with not allowing Scopes & Sabots, but a full diameter copper projectile with a plastic gasket is not a huge game changer. its a common sense and responsible thing to do for the health of any consumption by the humans and long tern health of the hunter & any unfortunate wounded game. thank you for taking the time to solicit public input and hearing me out. Greg Sievers, Bozeman, MT

Gregory Sievers Bozeman, MT

11. I am for the proposed muzzloader season in Montana. I hope to see this pass

Tristin Glovan Anaconda, MT

12. We would love to have a muzzleloader season , could make it between archery and regular rifle season maybe, 7 to 9 days would be great

Steven Robinson Cascade, MT

13. I support the proposed plan for a muzzle loader season.

Duane Ziegler Miles City, MT

14. I emphatically approve the proposed regulations. I am from Montana but hunted with a muzzleloader in Washington State for a few seasons. I hunt with a traditional muzzle-loading flintlock. I strongly feel that in any muzzleloading season, the technology needs to be primitive. I would strongly opposed any muzzle loading season that allowed modern in-line or breach-loaded muzzle loaders. The weapon should be required to load from the muzzle and should have a cap lock, flintlock, wheel lock, or matchlock mechanism. Personally, I would also favor a restriction to blackpowder only, but the regulations as written are tolerable. I also strongly favor require lead projectiles that directly contact the rifling--so no sabots as written. Allowing modern "muzzle loading" firearms is not sporting and would destroy the purpose of a muzzle loading season. The main purpose of the season is to preserve the tradition of primitive hunting with "mountain man" weapons--a tradition maintained in Montana for over 200 years now. I also would never want a muzzle loader season to adversely affect game populations.

Benjamin Simpson Lewistown, MT

15. I strongly support the 2021 Muzzleloader season. It is long overdue. I urge that the weapons used be of traditional muzzle loading firearms with traditional percussion rifle and musket caps. In addition, projectiles should be of all lead alloy with no sabot devices.

John Shaffer BELGRADE, MT

16. Overall I like the proposed Muzzleloading season. Only issue I have is the inability to use a sabot. Means we have to shoot a lead bullet. There has been a lot of pressure to go to non lead projectiles. Seems inconsistent.

Kirk Fessler Salisbury , NC

17. I strongly support this muzzle loading season! Many other states use this a great management tool and we should too. Traditional muzzleloaders are rather range limited and will likely not result in large harvest rates thus present little risk of overharvest or exploitation of out game resources. Thank you.

Nate Lewistown, MT

18. As long as we can hunt in both the firearm and muzzleloader seasons with the same tags I am all for it. This meaning if we fill our tags in the firearms season we don't hunt in the muzzleloader season, but if we don't fill them then we can hunt in the muzzleloader season. If it is like this yes I am all for it. But if it restricts us to only one season or the other I'm against it. I hope this goes through as an addition to our hunting tags and seasons, buy our deer an elk tags and go hunt in both saesons if needed, this will give residents a better opportunity to fill our tags especially

those of us that do not get much time off from work and have to mostly hunt on the weekends or what ever days we normally have off from our work scheduled.

George Bogan Shepherd, MT

19. I think it is a great idea, and by keeping it Traditional only it will be a challenge give fair chance to the game. But still affords the opportunity to fill a tag for the freezer!

Gary McCleerey Lolo, MT

20. I think this is a great idea. As an opportunity State this should have come about along time ago. I think this could be expanded on in the future. By adding a muzzleloader only license taking pressure off the non resident general tag drawing. As more and more people move to Montana and want to come to Montana the department needs to think about not only harvest but pressure that is out on the resource.

Tony piscopo Corvallis, MT

21. I think this is a great opportunity for muzzle loader shooters. a long with myself there are several others that are for this season. thank you, John

John Hogan Libby, MT

22. I fully support a late season muzzle loader season for unfilled permits. Many states offer this and it is a different sort of hunt to general rifle season. Less hunters, you have to get closer, etc. It seems like a win/win for F&G revenue and opportunity for the subset hunters who own a black powder rifle. I fully support allowing all black powder rifles, including in-line models which are most prevalent today and the use of scopes. My eyesight precludes using open sights due to my age.

Stephen Merriam Nye, MT

23. I think it's a great idea. Would give more opportunities to harvest deer and elk that would be competing for food in the winter

Ted Rosevear Lolo, MT

24. I think the 2021 Deer & Elk Muzzleloader Season - Draft is A great idea and I'm all for it. Thank you.

Terry Boucher Havre, MT

25. I support a 2021 muzzleloader season and thereafter. It should run for two weeks instead of nine days. My work schedule is such that I am unable to hunt for two weeks at a time. A longer hunt term would allow a much better chance to actually hunt.

William Higg Livingston, MT

26. I feel that the proposed Deer and Elk regulations are excellent and have my full support.

Sal Scrano Forsyth, MT

27. Since the legislature has seen fit to pass HB242 and Governor Gianforte has signed it into law , and many Montanans desire to hunt by this traditional method, in 2021, It would be well if FWP could make it happen in a timely manner, knowing that adjustments could be made later should the need arise.

Rodney F Beattie Forsyth, MT

28. Now that HB 242 has been signed into law it would be hoped by all of those who have wanted a traditional muzzleloader season in Montana that rules be implemented Post haste for management of the season , so there is no delay at the appointed season opening date.

Rodney F Beattie Forsyth, MT

29. I think a ML season is a great Idea, I only have one thing to add, in your restrictions you say nothing that comes between the lead and the bore, while i agree with that, you should provide a exception for a cloth patched Round ball. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hunting this late season with my smoke pole.

Schnell G Hartrampf Troy, MT

30. I grew up in a state that had a special muzzle loader season. Maybe in certain areas that have a population problem it would be a great idea (instead of all bow season) but I dont believe it really increased harvest rates as opposed to regular rifle season! I filly support fwp's recommendation and opinion! Rob Wigton

Robert Wigton Clancy, MT

31. I fully support the proposed muzzleloader season.

Skyler Mitchell EDGAR, MT

32. I fully support implementation of the proposed (draft) version of the 2021 Deer and Elk Muzzleloader Season. I feel it is vitally important to make no modification to the draft regulations that would allow use of modern muzzleloaders or optical sights. I feel it is an exciting opportunity to hunt in a dedicated heritage big game season with 18th and 19th century firearms routinely used by Lewis and Clark, early Montana fur trappers and explorers, and the indigenous people that inhabit our great state. Thankyou for this opportunity to comment.

Bill Hammer Clancy, MT

33. This is a great idea! Super excited

Clay Sweet Bozeman , MT

34. I'd like to see this happen. Muzzle loading is not easy and it should be part of the hunting season.

David Krischel Great Falls, MT

35. Great. Idea

Todd Wise River , MT

36. I think a designated ML season is a great idea. It gives a chance for hunters who want to use a primitive weapon without being over crowded with rifle hunters. I do think it should be in between archery and rifle. Not after rifle.

David chambers Bozeman , MT

37. Thank you so much for finally incorporating a muzzleloader specific season for hunting deer and elk in Montana. I have hunted "Muzzleloader Only" units in New Mexico for many years and see the benefits it brings to a traditional rifle season. My main question/ concern is if we would ever be looking at expanding the parameters of what muzzleloaders can be used during this season. I am not looking to need to make the jump immediately to using "anything and everything as long as it uses smokeless power" as New Mexico regulates, using Gunwerks, Bad Bull, and Ashland Arms custom manufactured muzzleloaders (even though I would personally prefer that). But even just considering the use of muzzleloading rifle that requires the insertion of a cap or primer can expand the requirements enough that most hunters have access to that type of muzzleloader at least so more individuals can take advantage of the new season. Also I would love to see the inclusion of magnification devices (scopes) within this proposal. Montana is home to very large country and restricting muzzleloaders to open sights (especially in December) is going to severely limit and chance at a successful harvest (besides maybe if you own private land where most of them will be residing at that time), taking away from the traditional public land hunter. I hope this makes it to the correct personnel and that my feedback is beneficial in possibly adding to this proposal. Thank you again for adopting this bill, I am looking forward to see what becomes of it.

Cheyenne Wallace Bozeman, MT

38. Please allow the muzzleloader season. Let us see the results. It's not this time of the year the animals need less stress.

Francis Reishus Helena , MT

39. Very good idea!!!

Jennings Bass Sutton Missoula, MT

40. Finally Montana Established a Muzzleloader Season, its about time! Long over due, I believe it should have been done before now. Really I believe bow hunting season is too long and a week or two should be taken from bow hunting & muzzleloading season should be held at that time proceeding the regular big game season.

Joseph Tenzer Darby, MT

41. I support as long as it doesn't cut into our 5 week general season.

Kristopher George Great Falls , MT

42. I am in favor of the muzzleloader season, provided that black powder/pyrodex is used in weapons that are exclusively front loading. Any breach loading weapon is nothing more than a standard rifle with a vintage propellant.

Paul Tackes Lodge Grass, MT

43. I would be interested in a Traditional Muzzleloader season. The in-lines are more like a high power. I have seen them shoot 400 yards. That is not what muzzleloaders are all about.

Daniel Henry Kalispell, MT

44. I like the idea of a muzzleloader hunt. But I think we should limit some general hunt dates or areas and consider special draw areas. Our big game ungulate population up in northwest MT is very poor. So we should really consider the impact on low density game areas. Predator population is at an all time high we should consider taking more of those out. Thanks!

Lon Rhoades Kalispell, MT

45. I think a muzzleloader season is a great idea BUT you cannot just keep adding seasons without taking something for the animal populations sake. A couple options are making the general season shorter or making the muzzleloader season something you can draw.

Christopher Kalispell, MT

46. I understand the Deer Elk Muzzleloader season was passed by the legislature. I think it's a terrible idea that forces FWP to manage a decision made by non biologists and special interests. We need to reduce hunting pressure during the deer rut, not increase it. Mule deer are declining severely in many areas and increasing pressure in December will only make that worse. Please adopt whatever rules and regs you can to make this less impactful on our declining deer herds.

Phil Matteson Cascade, MT

47. I have been advocating for years for this to happen. I think it would be a good thing. It should be for traditional muzzle loader with no gun mounted optics.

Roger Knoell Butte, MT

48. So excited as a Montana resident to have the additional time to muzzleloader hunt. The state legislatures and Governor did a great job when they passed this.

David Bradley Glasgow, MT

49. I support the establishment of a deer and elk muzzleloader season, so long as it does not reduce the established rifle season. I also hunt during the archery season, but I can see the day coming when I will no longer be able to safely use a bow due to US Army service connected injuries to my shoulder and spine. Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Sincerely, Chuck Wright

Chuck Wright Butte, MT

50. Good idea. Most states have a separate season for muzzleloader. Good to see the proposal.

Scott Kamrath Ashby, MN

51. I think it is a great idea to have a deer and elk muzzleloader season. i look forward to having another hunting opportunity.

James Dunmire Three Forks, MT

52. We should have this for sure

Rod McAllister Livingston, MT

53. Great idea.

GARY HICKS LIBBY, MT

54. Totally excited about this bill. Been wanting a late traditional muzzleloading season for years. 100% in favor of this bill.

Ronald D Barnett Kila, MT

55. I'm in favor of the Deer & Elk traditional muzzleloader season.

Ross Mitchell Whitehall, MT

56. I think it is a good idea, but what will the provisions for a muzzleloader rifle be. I think that to be a good hunt you should allow scopes and in-line rifles to be used. Non-breech loading. Dates for the hunts should be either a early bugle or a late predation hunt. Non-residents and residents all equal to bring in money to the efforts of conservation. It would also bring ranchers money for problem animals in stead of having to pay them with money that could go for other conservation efforts. A late season would also put hunters in the field for wolves.

ROBERT CURTIS JACOBSON Faribault, MN

57. As an avid muzzleloader hunter I am excited to have a special season. Thanks to all for this opportunity.

David Metzler Marion, MT

58. I am strongly in support of the proposed muzzle loader season, added to the end of the regular deer and elk firearms season. I also support the proposed limitations on in-line muzzle loaders. Thank you very much.

David Snyder Kalispell, MT

59. I'm all for it. Do it.

Richard Doughty Missoula, MT

60. Season should be regulated to traditional muzzleloaders only.

Remi warren Reno, NV

61. This would be a great opportunity to teach younger hunters the old ways

James George Trego, MT

62. The wording in the "may not use" section should include the term "inline" to help clarify that the cap can not be loaded from an open breach. It may be a good idea to copy Idaho in their description of allowable equipment. Traditional is the way to go. A muzzleloader season is long overdue.

David Powers Rexford, MT

63. This is a great idea! I would suggest that Montana adopt something similar to Pennsylvania in limiting it to traditional sidelock weapons, round balls, and iron sights. In my opinion, modern inline "muzzleloaders" violate the whole principle of having a muzzleloading season with their scopes and 300 yard range.

Michael McNulty Roundup, MT

64. As a hunter I think the muzzleloader season should be allowed because it would be a great tool to help reduce damage hunts.

Heather Great Falls, MT

65. Git 'er dun!!

Greg Sielinsky Roundup, MT

66. Finally! I agree with having a separate muzzleloader season. Without a scope after the regular season seems it will be really tough to get up on something. You also seem really restrictive on types of muzzleloaders. The Thompson Encore would not be allowed under this regulation. Great to have a season though.

Shad Barrows Billings, MT

67. The FWP proposal on this season sounds reasonable as long as enforcement is in the field to ensure compliance with the rules.

Matt PIETCH Bay Village, OH

68. I agree there should be a muzzleloader deer and elk season.

Guy L Schoenborn Columbus, MT

69. Long overdue support it 100%

Richard Eppard Bonner, MT

70. I think it is about time FWP gets the muzzleloader season of some kind. Many other State use this technique effectively for management. As well it is time to start spreading hunters out. There are way to many people running around in the woods.

Paul Hooper Philipsburg, MT

71. I am for a 9 day muzzleloader season. However, I would like to see the ability to use a copper Sabot over lead bullets for health reasons and for other wildlife safety

Jordan Watkins Missoula, MT

72. Longtime resident, and now I still return "home" every fall to hunt as a non-resident. Great idea to add a Muzzleloader season after the general season, and you have come up with a good way to not require a different license. I'd like to participate but the ridiculous equipment limitations in the last two paragraphs of the draft reg rule me out. You are adopting some of the

most restrictive rules compared to other western states. For example, Scopes are standard equipment on most muzzleloaders and help prevent wounded game with poor shots, especially at the ranges required to hunt in open country. What input or data is driving these rules?

Jonathan Neumann Belmont, NC

73. looks good to me.

DAVID BRENDEN ELLENSBURG, WA

74. I have hunted the coming home to hunt for the last 5 years and would love to hunt a muzzleloader season with my son who lives and works in Billings. The only issue I see is Muzzleloader seasons are generally between archery and modern. Hunting after modern could be a major issue.

William Kelly Medical Lake, WA

75. The restrictions and legal weapon descriptions in place on/of muzzleloader are great. I think the few days should be a little longer. MT has great season lengths and muzzleloader should be no different. (Greater than 9 days)

Nycole E Wildermuth Corvallis, MT

76. I love it! Thank you for bringing back traditional muzzle loading season. I would propose longer than 9-days.

Richard M Wildermuth Corvallis, MT

77. I love the idea. A lot States have a "primitive hunt" at the end of the season. Why not include a late season bow hunt as well in areas with high damage?

William Norberg HELENA, MT

78. Greetings- I strongly support the traditional muzzleloader season as proposed. I think its long overdue in Montana. While I'm not enthusiastic about the legislature overstepping what I see as their authority and mandating this season, I still think its a good idea that the commission should adopt. Many thanks!

Mike Scott BILLINGS, MT

79. I am very excited for this season being passed. I like that we will be able to use our tags from general season that were not filled. I do highly suggest that additional deer B and elk B tags could be sold OTC and via drawing specifically for the muzzleloader season. I am mainly wanting to see the deer B tags though. When mid-December hits, most whitetail bucks will be getting ready to drop their antlers, I have found fresh whitetail sheds as early as New Year's Day. With that in mind, I believe that deer B tags would remediate the problem that I know has occurred where a hunter harvests a late season deer and goes to pick up the buck by its horns only to have them fall off. Since traditional muzzleloader hunters must be skilled enough to still close the distance to 100 yards or less, I don't believe that there would be a problem of harvesting to many does. Of all the districts that I hunt, 285 is one of my favorites. The seeley-swan valley is absolutely loaded with whitetails. With the thick timber and rolling hills that make up the valley,

I believe a drawing or even OTC deer B tags strictly for the muzzleloader season would be very appealing for region 2 in general. I hope that you take my comment into consideration for this new season. Thank you!

Matthew Cowan Dillon, MT

80. I do not support the establishment of a deer and elk muzzleloader season. Hunting with a muzzleloader should be limited to the general rifle season.

Daniel Hoffman Missoula, MT

81. Montana already has a liberally-long hunting season. I do not support making the season even longer by adding a muzzleloader season. This adds additional stress to wildlife going into winter. Hunters in Montana already have the opportunity to hunt with a muzzleloader during the rifle season and in weapons restricted units. If a muzzleloader-only season is going to be implemented, it should only occur in Hunting Districts where deer or elk populations are over objective. In addition, this hunt should not be for any unused general tags, as this will just support additional hunting pressure after an already months-long hunting season. The muzzleloader tag should be received through an application and drawing. I would support the opportunity of it being an additional (second) tag that someone could draw, to increase opportunity in HD's over objective.

jessica french Challis, ID

82. I do not support a muzzle loader season. Muzzle loaders can hunt during rifle season without disadvantage. Their own designated season is completely unnecessary.

Kaine Zetterberg Valier, MT

83. NO MORE SEASONS, how many elk do we need to kill to make this commission happy. Let the elk winter and live.

Barry Robinson manhattan, MT

84. I live in WA and we have archery, muzzleloader and rifle season I don't feel it is a benefit to add this season. I grew up in MT and love the way the seasons are set one change takes place you end up like WA and have to choose bow only muzzleloader only or rifle only. Keep MT free of this please it's a slippery slope.

Brandon Jolliff Snohomish, WA

85. I oppose the introduction of a muzzleloader season outside of current season dates. However, I would be willing to support a muzzleloader season in place 9 days in a current rifle season.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, Hunter Stier

Hunter Stier Belgrade, MT

86. This muzzleloader season is not needed. There is just as much opportunity to hunt with a muzzleloader in this state as there is to hunt with a rifle and archery equipment. Our big game populations deserve a break after going through a generous 6 week archery, and a 5 week general season. Please do not go forward with this.

AJ Kanthack Bozeman , MT

87. Absolutely No!! Deer and Elk do Not need to feel pressure for that long. No extra muzzleloader season please!

Teresa Lea Sturm CLANCY, MT

88. I am against the separate season because the muzzle loaders will have a advantage over any bow or general season hunter.

Douglas Libby, MT

89. I do not support the muzzleloader season established in HB 242. It is an attempt to remove FWP's ability to set seasons depending on game populations, and is the legislature strong arming the commission to open up "opportunity" while several of the representatives and senators that voted for this "opportunity" also supported HD 103-50, a trophy area that FWP did not support, that removed opportunity from many hunters especially youth.

Scott Hanson Libby, MT

90. Muzzleloader season is a bad idea. It should be canceled or included in the general rifle. Modern muzzleloaders are no different than most rifles or certainly shotguns with slug barrels. You could open up muzzleloader usage in archery/shotgun areas. Breaking up and complicating existing seasons, while adding an additional muzzleloader only season only interferes with the existing seasons.

William Anderson Butte, MT

91. I am not in favor of a dedicated muzzelloader season. The use of muzzleloaders is already allowed in the generous general rifle season.

David L French Belgrade, MT

92. Good way to continue destroying Montana's deer population. Season is already too long and during vulnerable rut period. Too many tags are issued. I could see it being a good opportunity to sell some limited quota late season muzzleloader tags, but this will be destructive if used for any general tag. If you want to hunt late season with a muzzleloader. Go to Pennsylvania.

Justin Korl Gardiner , MT

93. I am against adding any weapon specific season to our already generous archery and rifle (firearm) season. More prolonged seasons are hard on animals and make them less and less accessible on public land.

Jim Crichton Helena, MT

94. I disagree with adding a muzzleloader season. Adding an additional 9 days of stress to deer and elk is too much , especially during that time when they are trying to recover from the rut and onset of winter . Muzzleloaders are legal during the regular rifle season . Let's not add any more stress to an already over hunted population of deer and elk (in most areas)

Kevin Burns Kalispell , MT

95. I oppose extending firearm (including muzzleloader) hunting seasons for big game species in Montana. The five week general season already drives the majority of big game off of publicly accessible lands well before the end of season, and conditions those animals to avoid publicly accessible lands in the future due to sustained pressure. This has the additional consequence of concentrating big game animals on private lands, where they can be a burden or even nuisance to the landowner. Adding an additional muzzleloader season would only exacerbate this problem, and would not meaningfully improve hunter experience or success but rather further deteriorate both in the long term. I would, however, support changing the final 7-12 days of season from general firearms to muzzleloader only. This would provide opportunity for those wishing to use traditional methods without further pressuring big game herds off of accessible lands, without reducing general firearms quality or opportunity. Regards, Robert Kayser

Robert J Kayser Billings, MT

96. This muzzleloader season is the most ridiculous thing I have ever read! I could care less about hunting elk in this manner, but not our deer. We already crush our deer (especially the mule deer), through the entire rut with rifles. Now you want yet another season while they are extremely vulnerable. This is CRAZY! How about we take two weeks out of the end of the deer rifle season instead. thanks, John Ruebusch

JOHN R RUEBUSCH Livingston, MT

97. We simply can not continue to have addition without subtraction. If you would like to add a muzzleloader you have got to shorten your general rifle season. With the evolution of muzzleloader's you are just adding another rifle season onto an already long rifle season. 6 weeks!!!! If you want to add something you should plan on taking that time off of the general rifle season. Perhaps putting the muzzleloader season in place of the first 2 weeks of the general rifle season.

Kellen MacDonald Libby, MT

98. We already have the longest hunting season in the country. Give our elk and deer herds a break. We do not need another season in mt

Randy Setter Anaconda , MT

99. I really feel the animals are hunted for too long of period already. When will we act with a conservation mind set and not just everyone trying to expand their opportunities to kill every big game animal they can. I am against additional season days. Take days from other hunts and give them to muzzleloaders. Some from end of archery and some from beginning of rifle.

Garth Foster Helena, MT

100. I stand against an independent muzzleloader season. They can use them during the general season like I do. All I can imagine is the idiots of the world will be launching lead to God knows what distance. Give the animals a break and have the muzzleloader "rifle" toters use them during....."rifle" season.

Charles Smith HELENA, MT

101. Not in favor of the muzzleloader season as proposed. Recommend making the muzzleloader law an opportunity to have sportsmen choose a weapon and thus related season in the general districts. Similar to Idaho's system. Choice of weapon and time of hunt will aid in the over use and increased hunting pressure we are facing.

Josh Regan Dillon, MT

102. I strongly oppose a blanket extension of the general season for the legislatively mandated muzzleloader season. FWP biologists need to have the ability to manage each area individually. While most WMAs close when general rifle season ends, a few such as the Fish Creek WMA in Mineral county do not. This WMA was purchased by FWP for big game winter range, and it would not be ethical to allow a firearm season to happen on this WMA in late December. Our biologists need to have the ability to manage areas like this.

randy Hodges Stevensville, MT

103. This special season is a complete scam. To think these modern muzzleloaders are limited in any way is ridiculous. They shouldn't be allowed scopes. And it should only be allowed on pvt land in the valley floors in region 1. The complete and total lack of game on public land in region 1 can't take 9 more days of pressure from any weapon. The muzzleloader idiots can use their special weapons during the general season, they didn't need this. I have an idea, maybe the snowmobile dealers can issue a free modern muzzleloader with every purchase. Maybe we can finish off the last of our elk in region 1 in an effort to starve out the predators!!!

David Rankosky Kalispell, MT

104. I honestly don't see why we have to have a muzzle loader season after rifle season. They can hunt with a muzzle loader in rifle season. I just don't get hunters know a days and the small groups that get priority with their bills over others. They used the excuse that disabled archery hunters can not have the option to use a cross bow during archery because you can use a cross bow in rifle season and they allowed none disabled people to choose the equipment used for those that have the adaptive archery equipment permit. I also don't understand the ill pushed HD 103-50 with the use of fear mongering to get the signatures to save the mule deer population when there was nothing wrong with it just to gain a muzzle loader season, I am sure the ones that wanted this to happen are mule deer hunters that wanted more time to hunt mule deer I doubt it is white tail hunters that pushed this threw, which goes against the supposably need to save the mule deer. I know your hands are tide because they went threw legislation and I don't believe that it was the way to go. I hope in region 1 there is no muzzle loader season due to HD -103-50 or HD 103-50 gets removed due to the chronic wasting deaseas and all the problems that the area has created up here in our local mule deer hunter population. If this muzzle loader season is open in region 1 I believe it is only fair to remove HD103-50.

Dorian Boling Libby, MT

105. I am not for a "special" deer and elk muzzleloader season. I would have no problem with muzzleloader hunters hunting during the rifle season or shoulder seasons where rifle hunters can also hunt.

Dale Anderson Great Falls, MT

106. I don't think it's needed. I am against a muzzleloader season.

Bill Carelli Butte, MT

107. we don't need another season extending our general rifle season which a special muzzleloaders season does. People that like to hunt with Muzzleloader and pistols also, hunt during the regular season right now, maybe clarify what is legal for Muzzleloaders in the regulations but not another extended season continuing to disturb the big game, especially deer that breed so late with our long seasons, I find their fawns baled up in the hay I have bought the last several years. A lot of us enjoy the outdoors, walking, hiking, and camping after the seasons closes and we also have dogs with us. Please no more extra extended seasons thank you

John T. Kloote Bonner, MT

108. I am STRONGLY opposed to this additional season for Deer & Elk. Any additional firearms hunting season for Deer & Elk in the state will only further drive big game animals off of accessible lands, reducing hunter success and satisfaction in the future, while also increasing conflicts with private landowners who may complain about "too much wildlife eating them out of house & home". This is a terrible idea for hunters and game management, and I seriously doubt the intentions of anyone that supports this hunt. I would, however, support changing some of the current Rifle Season to a muzzleloader-only hunt, on a no-net-gain swap. But I refuse to support any additional hunting days, as it is a direct contributor to the decline of the quality of the herds and the hunts for them.

Robert Kayser Billings, MT

109. The state does not need any more hunting seasons.

Paul Donohoe Nye, MT

110. I am in absolute opposition to this muzzleloader season. It lengthens an already ridiculously long hunting season and will place devastating stress on our elk and deer herds when they are at their most vulnerable. This new season for all unused tags is reckless and negligent. If this season has to take place, have it only in districts that are at over population for elk and deer numbers.

Jason Van Hyning Florence, MT

111. I am against a separate muzzleloader season. I have hunted with a muzzleloader for 20 years and don't believe they are any more limiting than a regular firearm. This just puts more pressure on game, esp buck deer which are very vulnerable in the time frame mentioned. I have shot elk up to 100 yards with my muzzleloader so don't believe a crutch is needed for muzzleloader users. If you do choose to implement this season I would suggest an earlier season to protect rutting bucks and also limit the projectile to round ball only.

Darwin h reynolds Buffalo, MT

112. There does not need to be a separate season for muzzleloaders. Muzzleloaders can be used during the regular rifle seasons. This will drastically affect the archery hunter's experience and success rate. NO MUZZLELOADER SEASON!!!

Andrew Lam Helena, MT

113. I am 100% against any muzzleloader season in December in Montana. I am shocked that our lawmakers passed this turd of a Bill with little to no public support, as I followed this and other bills through the legislature this year. My only hope is that the department can limit the areas of this hunt to give the resource and landowners space after the general season.

Jake Conner Billings, MT

114. I'm adamantly opposed to implementation of a muzzleloader season. There are 5 weeks of rifle season where muzzleloaders can be used should you choose to do so. We already offer the most liberal season lengths the west has to offer. Let's not let this small faction of hunters dictate their new season with the stroke of a pen.

Tyler Wells Kalispell, MT

115. I am not opposed to this muzzleloader season for whitetail deer or on private. I am opposed to a muzzleloader season for elk and mule deer especially on public land. My reason for this is that elk and mule deer already have tons of pressure on public land with the current archery and general rifle seasons. If you must add a muzzleloader season give them a few days during the end of archery-don't put additional hunting days on public land elk. I'd be opposed if it took place before general rifle because muzzleloaders would be too effective at killing rutting bulls and I'd be opposed to a muzzleloader season after rifle season because I believe many elk would be mortally wounded and not recovered when hunters try to take long shots on cagey late season elk with an inadequate firearm.

Drew Stuart Three Forks, MT

116. There is no need for a muzzle loading season unless we are going to cut back the rifle season.

Michael Schaub Bozeman, MT

117. Anyone can hunt elk and deer for 5 weeks with a muzzleloader and now you need another week. No for muzzleloader season

joe hundley Darby, MT

118. Do we not like elk in MT anymore? The increase of seasons and hunting times seems a little excessive. If someone wants the challenge of black powder why can't they use that weapon during the general rifle season? Why must we create another season and pressure the elk longer into the winter. No in favor of this proposal.

Kyle Reedy Great Falls, MT

119. Dear FWP: Please tell me why we need a muzzleloader season when we have a five-week bow season and then a five-week rifle season, plus late-season hunts for cow elk and an extended Gallatin Valley doe and cow season and no doubt other weapons-restricted zones/seasons around the state? Here's why: to force hunters into buying a muzzleloader just to get another week of big game hunting in. It's a big present to the muzzleloader firearms industry and nothing else. If someone wants to hunt with a muzzleloader, let them use a standard, scoped muzzleloader (that the proposed season bans) during the regular rifle season. That's their choice. And if they have no luck, then they can probably fill out a shoulder season tag later on. Just don't add a muzzleloader season, putting more pressure on our big game going into winter and making the muzzleloading industry happy at our cost. Trust me, the only reason my friends from other states own a muzzleloader is because their state game departments gave into the muzzleloader lobby; if given their choice they'd rather hunt those extra 7-14 days with a conventional weapon. Thanks for listening.

Bill Buckley Bozeman, MT

120. I oppose implimenting a special deer and elk muzzleloader season. Montana currently has a great hunting season and there is no need for an additional deer and elk season specifically for muzzleloader hunters. Please vote NO to a special deer & elk muzzleloader swason.

Arnold Sowa Helena, MT

121. During the regular season we can already hunt with a muzzleloader.

Scott Dittmer Alberton, MT

122. In order to create consistency with overlapping shoulder and damage hunts that specifically target non-antlered wildlife, a condition within the recently adopted muzzleloader (ML) season should be that only cow elk or doe deer can be harvested during the muzzleloader season, per that condition is in place during the general big game season. Allowing the harvest of antlered elk and deer with a muzzleloader concurrently with both damage and shoulder hunts creates an unmanageable and unenforceable environment with too much potential for the illegal take of bulls or bucks with a rifle. In addition, hunters choosing to participate in the muzzleloader season should be prohibited from hunting in the either the general big game rifle or archery season. A choose your weapon approach to muzzleloader hunting in Montana will help to limit the number of hunters in the field during the muzzleloader season, while still providing the small minority of ML specific hunters who supported the creation of this season the opportunity to have their own stand-alone season.

Kyle Paulson Belt, MT

123. Muzzleloader hunt seems a bit ridiculous for mule deer as we already have the most liberal season ever. Please keep it as primitive as possible and closer to the closing of the season so we don't kill too many bulls on FS especially older age class bulls

Terry Antonich Seeley Lake, MT

124. There is already a 6 week riffle season in which they are free to participate. If approved it should be only flintlock and no optics.

Neil Jacobson Lakeside, MT

125. The only thing I see as an issue is the HB242, in sect 2 87-1-301. The "landowner tolerance ". I do not feel landowners have the right to have a say about people hunting public land. Period. They have the right to stop people from trespassing and normal private landowner rights like I do as a landowner. But that should NOT include a say in public land . Thankyou for the opportunity to Comment.

Bonnie Potter Roundup, MT

126. Is there going to be a season

Terry tanner Darby , MT

127. While I would like to take part in a primitive muzzleloader hunt with my flintlock, I think adding even more pressure to the elk herds after the general season is a bit drastic. We already have the longest seasons of any states in the west. If the consideration was to decrease the general season by one week to add this I would be in favor.

Jared Weaver EAST HELENA, MT

128. The season should coincide with the last week of archery and coincide with the first week of the general season.

Greg Hinkle Thompswon Falls, MT

129. It's ridiculous to me that after an 11 week elk/deer season, we need to add another muzzleloader season when the animals are on winter range trying to recover. I understand the commission's required by law to create this season, so I ask that you please make it the most primitive, toughest to harvest regulations possible.

Dan Gagner Helena, MT

130. I have a CVC muzzle loader, that use a shot gun primer placed in the breech, I'm assuming that's not legal?

George Rose Hoodsport, WA

131. Why aren't 209 primers acceptable ignition source. Even Washington has finally approved that change. A lot less misfires.

William Kelly Medical Lake, WA

132. I agree and disagree with the proposed muzzle loader season. I agree that there should be a specific season for muzzleloader hunters, however I disagree about it being after the 5 week general season (I believe it'd be better before) and I disagree with having to use a specific type of muzzle loading rifle. Keep it similar to Colorado where it's an open sight only restriction but limiting to the use of only lead ball or solid lead projectiles I see as worrisome as they are no where as accurate as today's modern muzzle loading projectiles.

Keegan Gallagher Conrad, MT

133. I would endorse this season completely so long as it is #1 Limited to only residents and # 2 Traditional equipment only . Thank you for your time
Jared Green Helena, MT
134. Regulations and how to apply
Todd Wise River , MT
135. Muzzleloader season should fall between archery and rifle season and result in a shorter rifle season. Elk on public land don't need to be shot at for an additional 2 weeks.
David Helena, MT
136. In-line muzzleloaders that have been modified to have a cap exposed to the elements should be legal in Montana just like Idaho and all the other Pacific north west states.
Kyle Beto Helena, MT
137. Muzzleloader should be its own draw or general season . Make people choose between rifle and muzzy . This will also cut back over crowding
Joshua Hatfield Rigby idaho, ID
138. Minimum caliber for Elk should be .50 not .45.
Cody Smith Great Falls, MT
139. i think we need to limit this new muzzleloader season to units with populations above objective. If we roll this season out across the state i think our mature mule deer buck population will suffer the most. i would like to see this season in the future be used to add some additional limited permits in some trophy units and general units. Similar to how idaho, colorado, utah and a number of other western states utilize muzzleloader seasons to increase permits and the diversity of hunt options.
Mathew Deaton Helena , MT
140. No inlines until we see a few seasons outcome.50 cal. Min.
Stanley Towarnicki Lolo, MT
141. My comment regards the definition of a muzzleloader. Historically, a muzzleloader season was a season that challenged the skills of the hunter, much-like archery, but with a bit better odds due to increased bullet ranges over arrows. A true muzzleloader season should reflect Pennsylvania's flintlock only season. In- line "muzzleloaders" should not be permitted as the range of those weapons is equivalent to modern weapons and do nothing to represent the spirit and intent of a muzzleloading season. In-line " muzzleloaders" are shortcuts to a kill and should not be confused with the sportsmanship of flintlock hunting.
Robert Griffin Roy, MT
142. Why is it that archery hunters can use the most modern archery equipment available: compound bows, carbon arrows, high tech broadheads, plastic vanes, etc. Have prime elk and

deer seasons, without competition from rifle hunters, but muzzleloader hunters are restricted to a season after all other user groups have had their seasons, AND they might have to compete with rifle hunters during elk shoulder and damage control seasons, AND their season is so late they are restricted from many areas other user groups are not? Why not also have some high quality controlled permit ML hunts? Also, using a conical lead bullet or ball is the worst projectile a muzzleloader hunter can use and results in more crippling loss. Why is it that we don't worry about crippling loss with archers? Having used conical bullets where required, I can attest to research that has been done on ML projectiles that conicals/balls are the worst projectiles. I harvested an antelope in Idaho last year (requires conicals) at 40 yards, broadside. The 385 gr. conical bullet entered behind the right shoulder, hit a rib and deflected, coming out the left flank. That is the problem (deflection) so prominent with soft lead projectiles!. How bad would the conical have deflected on the rib of an elk? The people making these decisions should know something about muzzleloader ballistics and hunting, before making bad recommendations! Use the best projectile that minimizes crippling loss! Pat Fowler (wildlife biologist ret.)

Pat Fowler Walla Walla, WA

143. A:) I take issue with the following situation: "Therefore, there can be overlap between the existing approved season and muzzleloader season (e.g., cow elk only in a shoulder season hunting district using rifles, but bull elk could be taken with traditional muzzleloader in that same hunting district with valid license and permit)." --This is a chance to abuse the M/L season and allow poaching bulls using a M/L as cover. Anyone can throw two rifles and produce the "right" one for the warden when checked. I recommend letting the M/L season run first, then let the hi-powered rifles have the rest of the season. We're only talking about a few days, so why create confusion? First M/Lers, then let the others have at it. B:) "Department staff may initiate game damage and management hunts following established policies and using modern firearms, during the traditional muzzleloader season". My question is why not let the M/Lers have the first go at this and THEN let the hi-powered guns in? Is it so vital that the few days of the M/L season can't be allowed to run their course first? The M/L season in 2021 will likely be a slow one as people get used to the idea; but more people are going to see this as another good opportunity to engage with this style of hunting. By allowing the season to proceed without interference with hi-powered rifles will: secure the season from abuse (there will always be abuse, obviously) and help the wardens enforce the laws. Do yourselves a favor and keep things separate for simplicity's sake. This season is going to catch on and get more popular, and hence more complicated. Let's just keep it to nine days for M/Lers only. The hi-power crowd has had the field for almost two months prior-- I think nine days isn't too much to ask. Thanks for the opportunity.

Mark Jacobsen Miles City, MT

144. Is the hunter orange law in effect if you are Muzzle loader hunting. I think it would be a nice change of pace to require a primitive attire as well.

William Andrew Rantala Miles City, MT

145. Hunters should be able to use all black powdered rifles the requirements for this is not fair to those of us who use black powder rifles. Montana should change this to include any black powdered rifle in the states desired bullet weight. The only difference between the two rifles is one must be measured and the other comes measured.

Zachery Chinook, MT

146. I fully support a muzzleloader season, as long as it does not extend or prolong the current hunting season. Montana's hunting season is already 11 weeks long any extension will have negative impacts on the quality and quantity of hunting opportunities and the elk/deer population. If a muzzleloader season is desired, it should be in lieu of the first week of the general elk and deer season.

Ryan Burkert Helena, MT

147. Though the MT Legislature created this new proposed season, I ask that you minimize the affects of this season on deer and elk as much as possible. As the quality of our Mule Deer age class has diminished over time, I am concerned about folks shooting mule deer bucks post rut, when they are incredibly vulnerable. Though it would create administrative overhead, I ask that you limit the muzzleloader season in places where it makes sense - HD 335 for example. Do not make them widespread across all HDs for folks with unused licenses/tags.

Bret L Lian Jefferson City, MT

148. There needs to be mandatory harvest reporting for muzzleloader season. We need reliable data to understand how this season will effect wildlife.

Nuridia Missoula, MT

149. I support a muzzleloader season only if the original intent of flint lock and percussion cap with iron sights are allowed in the hunt. The unfortunate thing about going down this road is that it will be unpopular. People will want to be able to use modern in-line muzzleloaders with magnified scopes, they will pressure their local politicians, and a bill will be passed to make said weapons legal.

Justin Dalby Livingston, MT

150. I would like to see use of this season for deer restricted and made limited entry statewide. Our deer are already hammered with a 5 week rifle season that in some areas goes during the rut. This will only allow more mature bucks to be killed if any general tag can hunt this season. The permit would be drawn just like any other mule deer permit but would not restrict the hunter to only the unit that the permit is valid in. This would allow the hunter to hunt the general season and if their tag is unfilled during that season they could then use the permit to hunt the muzzleloader season. As far as elk I don't see this making a huge impact but should be restricted in some areas of the state that are prone to migrations that would enhance hunting over what was available during the general season. I am in full support of a muzzleloader season as long as it doesn't excessively impact game populations on top of the already very, very generous archery and rifle general seasons.

Zack Boughton Bozeman, MT

151. It should only be open to traditional muzzleloaders with open sights.

STEVEN FELTER East Helena, MT

152. From: eric archer <earcher1001@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, July 8, 2021 2:49 PM

To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Muzzleloader season

I am writing to express my support for the 2021 muzzleloader season. Montana provides extremely liberal opportunities to pursue big game animals and an additional week of hunting using primitive weapons is unlikely to have a negative effect on overall populations of big game. Being a primitive weapon hunter I enjoy pursuing game with archery and muzzleloader. I know many will argue "well you can use a muzzleloader during regular season" that is a silly argument given the limited range of traditional muzzleloaders.

I fully support limiting the hunt to traditional weapons and no sabots. However, I would suggest that the commission consider allowing copper jacketed bullets (not sabots), just copper, From my experience hunting in Colorado which allows copper bullets and Idaho which does not, they are much more effective at killing game that are hit, but do not extend effective range like sabots. In my opinion this will reduce the loss of hit animals and result in quicker cleaner harvest.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I look forward to the opportunity to hunt with a muzzleloader in my home state of Montana.

153. From: randy hodes <randy182@msn.com>

Date: July 6, 2021 at 8:22:07 AM MDT

To: fwpdistrict3@gmail.com

Subject: Muzzleloader season extension

Mr. Walsh-

With concern of the Muzzleloader season extension for 2021, I do not think that a blanket extension in all districts is prudent. In Mineral county there is a very large WMA that FWP purchased in the early 2000s called Fish Creek WMA. This WMA was initially purchased to protect big game winter range. The biologist at the time chose to not implement a winter

closure like other WMAs, because they felt it was important to allow predator hunters in there throughout the winter (very healthy population of both lions and wolves).

With the blanket extensions, this WMA would be open for muzzleloader hunting in mid-December. I do not feel like this is appropriate for the area, and I think the local biologists need to have some say in how this muzzleloader season is managed. I realize that it is legislatively mandated, but I think this is probably just one example of many where there needs to be some micro-management of how the season is implemented.

Thank you

Randy Hodges,

Stevensville, MT

154. From: Nick Gevock

To: FWP Commission

Subject: [EXTERNAL] MWF comments on muzzleloader hunting season

Date: Tuesday, July 13, 2021 11:16:14 AM

Attachments: [MWF comments on muzzleloader season.pdf](#)

Dear Fish and Wildlife commissioners,

Please accept these comments from the Montana Wildlife Federation on the upcoming muzzleloader hunting season. Comments are attached.

Sincerely,

--

Nick Gevock

Conservation Director

Montana Wildlife Federation

PO Box 1175

Helena, MT 59602

Phone: 406.458.0227 ext. 108

Cell: 406.533.9432

ngevock@mtwf.org

<http://www.montanawildlife.org> [montanawildlife.org]



Protecting Montana's wildlife,
land, waters and hunting & fishing
heritage for future generations.

July 13, 2021

Lesley Robinson, Chair
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
1420 E. Sixth Ave.
Helena, MT 59624

RE: Muzzleloader hunting season comments

Dear Chair Robinson and Commissioners,

The Montana Wildlife Federation opposed HB 242, a bill that micro-manages Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, wrote a special-interest hunting season into state law and takes authority away from the Fish and Wildlife Commission. However, now that the bill is law, we make the following suggestions to consider lessening its impact on our public wildlife resources.

FWP needs to do the accountability work to determine the effect of this hunt on bucks and bulls. Data collection on the number of participants, and their success rates, should be at the very least incorporated into the game harvest surveys. We would suggest that this is another reason to move toward mandatory harvest reporting, now that FWP has modernized its licensing system and revamped its website.

The agency should also produce a report on the first every muzzleloader hunt on how many animals were taken, its effect on buck-doe and bull-cow ratios, and overall impacts to big game herds. We opposed adding nine days of hunting after the general season, when white-tailed deer bucks are just coming out of the rut, and we should get data on how this hunt is affecting their numbers and age structure. The potential is there for many more bucks and bulls to be killed, and it's important to have that information.

Sincerely,

Tom Puchlerz
Board President

155. From: Jim Homison <jfhomison@yahoo.com>

Sent: Saturday, June 26, 2021 11:40 PM

**To: FWPDistrict1@gmail.com; FWPDistrict2@gmail.com; FWPDistrict3@gmail.com;
FWPDistrict4@gmail.com; FWPDistrict5@gmail.com**

Cc: Gangstad, Kaedy <kgangstad@mt.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] My comment regarding the heritage muzzleloader season

All,

I was caller #174 who tried to connect to the Commissioner's meeting this past Thursday, so I could comment regarding the heritage muzzleloader season. I spoke my comment, however technical glitches prevented me from being heard as demonstrated by viewing the video of the meeting. (I see I did come across loud and clear when I commented on caliber restrictions during the Issues Not on this Agenda portion of the meeting.)

For the record, I happen to be a member of FWP Region 4s CAC, however my comments are in no way CAC related. I am independent sportsman and not affiliated with any advocacy organizations that commonly engage with FWP, so my comment is purely my personal opinion.

I also saw Commissioner Cebull echoed some points similar to mine regarding equipment restrictions and hunter orange requirements.

I wasn't exactly sure where I should send this and that's what why I adopted the scattergun approach.

Attachment 1 is my comment for the record.

The next two attachments are purely informational and not meant for the public record

Attachment 2 is my analysis of the legislation that drove my comment.

Attachment 3 is what I envision the first question of a simple on-line quiz might look like.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Jim Homison

Stanford, Montana

406-868-3566

COMMENT REGARDING HERITAGE MUZZLELOADER SEASON

This memo will help illustrate my concerns regarding equipment restrictions during the heritage muzzleloader season. In attachment # 2, I've picked apart the appropriate parts of the legislation and added some of my concerns. I think providing a new season that increases hunting opportunity after the end of general big game might draw participants whom have never even fired a muzzleloader, let alone hunted with one. That said, I think some simple measures should be adopted by FWP and the Commission.

For this year, my suggestion is to require hunters to acquire a free* Heritage Muzzleloader License similar to the Montana Bow and Arrow License. I'm suggesting free for this year since I believe a new license with fee would require legislative approval.

To acquire this Heritage Muzzleloader License a hunter must take and pass a simple on-line 12 to 15 question test (Similar to procedures for the bear identification test.) that would demonstrate the hunter understands the equipment terminology in the regulations. Acquiring this license would be consenting to the use of lawful equipment. This should facilitate enforcement efforts.

Requiring a Heritage Muzzleloader License would also give FWP a pretty accurate head count of the number of hunters participating in this season (as would FWP annual harvest survey calls.)

*After the first year, I suggest a five dollar license fee if legislature would approve. Revenue from this license fee, after administrative costs, would be earmarked for the Block Management program. My reasoning for targeting the Block Management program is, during most years a significant portion of public land normally open to hunting will likely be snowed out. This earmark would justifiably help support the Block Management program which is likely to see an increased use during this heritage muzzleloader season. It might not be a lot of money, but every little bit helps. A license fee would also be fair given that special archery seasons require a fee license.

Lastly, consider waiving the hunter orange requirement in hunting districts and areas where there are no other concurrent big game firearm seasons. Districts with elk shoulder seasons are examples that comes to mind where hunter orange should still be required. Waiving the orange requirement where appropriate would give hunters an opportunity to wear buckskin jackets and coonskin caps or other heritage-type garments if they're into that kind of thing.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Jim Homison
Stanford, Montana

MUZZLELOADER HERITAGE HUNT-Black text is copied, (wording unaltered) from the signed legislation. Red text expresses my interpretation, thoughts or concerns that may not be clear to the general hunting public (and maybe myself), especially those whom are new to muzzleloaders and black powder.

(legal equipment section)

(8) There is established a special muzzleloader heritage hunting season that begins on the second Saturday after the end of the regular season and lasts 9 days. During this season, subject to the provisions of 87-6-401(1)(i) and rules adopted by the commission, a person may take a deer or elk with a valid license or permit using plain lead projectiles (Plain lead projectiles means unjacketed, sabotless, non-armored-tip conical or round ball projectiles. Bees wax and synthetic bullet lubricants are only on the bullet. Bullet lubricants are not part of the bullet and are not prohibited.) and a muzzleloading rifle (Muzzleloading rifle means just that. No muzzleloading handguns, shotguns nor smoothbore muskets*) that is charged with loose black powder, loose pyrodex, or an equivalent loose black powder substitute, (I think this phrase is self-explanatory: No preformed pellet charges offered by some powder manufacturers.) and ignited by a flintlock, wheel lock, matchlock, or percussion mechanism using a percussion or musket cap (Some hunters may not know what wheel lock and matchlock mechanisms are. Using a percussion or musket cap means that 209 style shotgun primers are not legal. I'm not sure if regular center fire primers are used anywhere in the muzzleloader world, but they would be also be prohibited). The muzzleloading rifle must be a minimum of .45 caliber (This requirement may create a rare issue. Some blackpowder handguns in the mid-19th century that were billed as .44 caliber were actually .454 caliber**. I do not know if this is true for any muzzleloading rifles.) and may not have more than two barrels. (No explanation needed)."

*Smooth bore muskets because they lack rifling are not rifles even though they are long guns. This eliminates the Brown Bess, the smooth bore musket used by both sides during the American Revolution. Also, this prohibits using a muzzleloader handgun for a coup de grace on a downed deer or elk.

**Colt Walkers (used by Clint Eastwood in the movie "The Outlaw Josey Wales") are an example of this according to Wikipedia. Same for the Colt Dragoon (used by Crazy Cora in the movie "Quigley Down Under)". I'm guessing the vast majority of hunters participating in this hunt will be using modern replicas of historical muzzleloader rifles that are appropriately labeled for caliber. Law enforcement issues should be quite rare if ever.

.....
(prohibited equipment section)

(i) during the special muzzleloader heritage hunting season established in 87-1-304, use a muzzle loading rifle that requires insertion of a cap or primer into the open breech of the barrel, is capable of being loaded from the breech (I hope every hunter knows the difference between the breech and the muzzle. I think these clauses are intended to prohibit modern-style muzzleloader rifles that have bolt or break actions that when

opened, a 209 style shotgun primer is inserted for ignition), or is mounted with an optical magnification device (The first thing that comes to my mind when I read “optical magnification device” is telescopic sight. After a little further thought, red dot sight devices came to mind. A quick internet search tells me that red dot sight devices that do not magnify are available. Just an FYI.) Use of preprepared paper or metallic cartridges (probably no further explanation needed regarding paper or metallic cartridges), sabots, gas checks (Sabots, I think, are probably fairly understood by the average hunter; gas checks are another matter. Gas checks are a fairly esoteric item in the shooting world. Gas checks are small gilding metal cups that fit over the base of unjacketed plain lead projectiles to reduce projectile deformation and rifle bore leading. I’ve polled a half a dozen hunter and shooter acquaintances; only 1 could tell me what a gas check is^{***}.), or other similar power and range-enhancing manufactured loads that enclose the projectile from the rifling or bore of the firearm is also prohibited. (Probably OK...I can’t think of any examples.)

^{***}This has some significance since gas checks are on the prohibited list during this heritage muzzleloader season but legal in Weapons Restriction Areas where muzzleloaders are permitted.

157.

2183 Swan Hwy.,
Bigfork, Mt. 59911

July 19, 2021

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
Wildlife Division Office,
P.O. Box 200701,
Helena, Mt. 59620-0701

Dear Commissioners,

I write to you in response to the upcoming Heritage Muzzleloader Season this December.

I have successfully hunted with blackpowder flintlocks since 1985 in Montana, Wyoming and Alaska.

I am very pleased by the statute enacted, submitted by Representative Caleb Hinkle and signed into law by the Governor.

My key comment or concern is that the original wording and traditional intent not be lost or manipulated. Legislative Representatives I spoke with expressed pleasure and acceptance of the historical significance of the traditional, heritage theme of the initial bill. I concur.

I have followed various state muzzleloader seasons/regulations which sometimes become bastardized over time as special interest concerns become woven into their seasons until the primitive, traditional challenge is smothered in gadgets and modern equipment insuring new equipment sales or "just another tag".

A glowing example is the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: once known for a flintlock- only deer season which now only requires flintlock ignition and no telescopic sight. What ever happened to their pre 1840 intent with acceptable plastic stocks, stainless steel maintenance free barrels, copper jacketed pistol bullets encased in plastic as sabots, pelletized substitutes for loose black powder, and clip-on fiber-optic front sights??

Montana's culture includes national recognition as a "hunting" state. Some say Montana is the last state to enact a specific muzzleloader season but I see that as an opportunity to "raise the bar" and set a finer example for the entire nation by implementing and maintaining a true, primitive, traditonal hunt that instills a sense of respect and admiration for the colonists; our forefathers and pioneers who came before us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully and " in the spirit of fair chase",



Michael Jorgenson



BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
MONTANA

July 22, 2021

FWP Commission
Wildlife Division
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
SENT VIA EMAIL: fwcomm@mt.gov; hank.worsech@mt.gov

RE: MT-BHA Muzzleloader Season Public Comment

Dear Commissioners,

The Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers represents some 3,000 dues-paying Montana members who care deeply about public fish and wildlife habitat, public access and fair chase hunting and fishing practices.

We are concerned about the implementation of the upcoming muzzleloader season without any basis in an evidence and science-based management approach. The legislature mandated a nine-day season with only primitive muzzleloaders, and we disagreed with the legislature taking that season-setting prerogative out of this commission's hands. We maintained that the commission is a more informed body that would make decisions regarding seasons based upon all available information and input, particularly principles of sound management for the benefit of all Montanans.

But as this season is now mandated, we ask that you take into consideration the best available science for the implementation of the muzzleloader season and use the same carefully measured approach as any other season setting. Specifically, we ask you take a targeted approach when assigning these new opportunities. By adding muzzleloader hunts only in units that are above deer and elk objectives - and ideally in areas that are currently archery-only



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and/or areas where private landowners may be uncomfortable with high-powered rifles - we could both add muzzleloader opportunity and work to address elk and deer management issues at the same time.

Our fear is that an extended state-wide season justified from a 'simplicity of implementation' standpoint ignores the management goals of the department and will lead to increased harvests in areas that may not be needed or desirable, thereby reducing our existing archery and rifle season lengths and/or decreasing general season opportunities in the near future. We're also concerned that, if not carefully targeted, these added opportunities could further concentrate deer and elk on private lands.

Sincerely,

Jake Schwaller, Eastern Montana Board Member
Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Billings, MT



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