



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** December 14, 2021

**Agenda Item:** 2022–2023 Black Bear Hound Hunting Regulations and Season Structures

**Action Needed:** Proposed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 Minutes

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**Background:** New for 2022 and 2023 is the legislative change authorizing the use of hounds to hunt black bears in the spring. The department is proposing allowing hounds to be used to pursue bears during regular black bear seasons statewide, except in occupied grizzly bear habitat in BMUs 100, 101, 103, 104, 110, 120, 121, 122, 123, 130, 140, 141, 150, 170, that portion of 200 that includes the Ninemile watershed north of I-90, 216 east of the Granite/Ravalli county line, 280, 290, 300 west of I-15, 301 west of I-15 from Chester to Hwy 69 near Fort Benton, 309, 317, 341, 400 north and west of I-15/Hwy 87 between Helena and Fort Benton, west of Hwy 223 between Fort Benton and Hwy 2 at Chester, south of Hwy 2 between Chester and I-15 at Shelby, and west of I-15 between Shelby and the Canadian border, 510 West of Hwy 310, and 520. This delineated area mirrors the area with restrictions on wolf trapping due to concerns associated with the federally listed grizzly bear.

In addition, Montana statute allows nonresidents to pursue black bears with hounds during hunting seasons or hound training seasons if they obtain a Class D-4 nonresident hound license. Statute allows up to 80 D-4 licenses – the department recommends these be split between mountain lion and black bear seasons, and that the commission allocate the Nonresident Class D-4 Black Bear Hound licenses according to the attached description within the black bear master list.

**Public Involvement Process and Results:** The department initiated a public scoping process in August 2021, substantially earlier than in prior years, to increase the amount of public dialogue about a substantial number of considerations that the public had shared with the department previously regarding both seasons and hunting district boundaries. The department used the input received at virtual open houses, meetings, and in written material to tailor the proposals before the commission. Additional public comment will be accepted on the proposals adopted for comment by the commission. Public comment will be accepted through Jan. 14, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The commission may provide the department with additional amendments on any aspect of season structure, quota, or hunting district, and the department will seek additional public comment on all proposals. A final recommendation will be presented to the commission at their February meeting.

**Agency Recommendation and Rationale:** The department recommends the commission approve for public comment the proposed 2022 and 2023 black bear hound hunting regulations as described in the Black Bear Master List.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission vote to adopt for public comment: Changes identified in the Black Bear Master List regarding hound hunting seasons, hound training seasons, and nonresident hound licenses as presented by the department as part of the overall black bear regulations.