



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: February 4, 2021

Agenda Item: Commission Rule Regulating Carcass disposal of Cervids Harvested in Montana

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Minutes

Background: The current Montana Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Plan details the 2014 Decision Notice by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks regarding the department's surveillance and response to CWD detections in the state. In June 2020, the commission adopted the most recent revision of the plan. This adoption included a commission rule (CR) that directed hunters that had harvested deer, elk or moose anywhere in Montana to dispose of the head and spinal column at site of kill, except that those portions could be moved to a camp, private residence, taxidermist, processor, or CWD sampling site and then disposed of at an appropriate landfill in Montana. When implemented, this practice would limit the unintentional spread of undetected prions and CWD within Montana.

Because this CR was adopted in June and did not appear in the printed regulations, the department chose to take this opportunity to bring the CR before the commission again prior to including it in the printed regulations for 2021. The department believed this opportunity could solicit additional public input and better inform the public of the regulation. This was the most significant change in the CWD management plan and replaced the area-specific carcass transportation restriction zones with a statewide carcass disposal requirement that would apply to all deer, elk, and moose carcasses regardless of where in the state they are harvested by hunters or vehicle-killed salvage.

Public Involvement Process and Results: The department presented this to the commission as part of the CWD Management Plan in April and June 2020 and solicited public comment at that time. The public will have an opportunity to provide additional comment at the February commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis: The department received three public comments regarding the original CWD Management Plan that included this proposed CR; none of the comments expressed opposition. A decision to discard this regulation would limit the department's ability to possibly reduce spread of CWD. If changes are discarded, disposal regulations will revert to those that apply to management zones that are no longer supported through the recently adopted CWD Management Plan. The department believes the CR will limit CWD spread in Montana.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale: The department recommends that the commission approve the CR because these proposed changes directly address the intent of Montana's CWD Management Plan.

Proposed Motion: I move that the commission adopt as final the proposed carcass disposal rule as presented by the department.