



## MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** February 8, 2021

**Agenda Item:** Extension of the 2020 Elk Shoulder Season in HD 580

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 30 minutes

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**Background:** The 2020 and 2021 elk hunting seasons were finalized by the Fish and Wildlife commission in February 2020. This included elk shoulder seasons. The 2020 elk shoulder season adopted for HD 580 was to conclude January 15, 2021. Since that closure date, FWP has heard requests from some landowners to extend the 2020 elk shoulder season to February 15, 2021 due to mild weather and the corresponding limited elk harvest.

The proposal is to extend the 2020 elk shoulder season in HD 580 to February 15, 2021 with the regulations in place when the shoulder season closed January 15, 2021. The regulations in place on January 15 were the 595-00 B license and the general elk license for those hunters holding the 595-00 B license. On January 15, 2021 these licenses were valid for antlerless elk off National Forest Lands.

The elk management objective for HD 580 is 780-1170 observed elk. During the 2020 winter, 4649 elk were observed in HD 580.

**Public Involvement Process and Results:** At this time, no public comment has been formally solicited. Accordingly, opportunity for public comment will be made available at the February 8 commission meeting.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** Potential alternatives to this proposal include no shoulder season extension (status quo), adjustments to the licenses valid for this extension, or a different ending date. Given the previous adoption of the HD 580 2020 shoulder season and the relatively short notice of this proposed change, this proposal is narrowed to the extension to February 15, 2021 of the regulations from January 15, 2021 when the previously adopted season ended.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move the commission vote to adopt as final the extension of the 2020 elk shoulder season in HD 580 using the regulations in place on January 15, 2021, as presented by the department. All other aspects of the 2020 elk season would remain unchanged.