



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: February 4, 2022

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

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 Minutes

Background: The 2021 legislature expanded the ability for the commission to authorize hound hunting, and nonresidents now are allowed to pursue black bears with hounds during hunting seasons or hound-training seasons if they obtain a Class D-4 Nonresident Hound License. The department proposes to allow 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.

Statute allows up to 80 D-4 licenses be issued in total, to include all hound hunting for both black bears and mountain lions – the department recommends these be split evenly between mountain lion and black bear seasons, and that the commission allocate the Class D-4 Nonresident Black Bear Hound Licenses according to the attached description within the black bear master list.

Public Involvement Process and Results: Public comment on the proposal adopted by the commission at their Dec. 14 meeting was accepted through Jan. 21, 2022, at 5 p.m. This proposal represents comments received through Jan. 14. Adjustments based on final public comment may be considered at the Feb. 4 commission meeting. Generally, comments opposed use of hounds to hunt black bears, or advocated more open areas than that which have been proposed.

Alternatives and Analysis: The department recommends adoption of the proposal as presented. The department did not recommend alternative areas for hound hunting to remain consistent with already-adopted wolf trapping restrictions in occupied grizzly bear habitat.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale: The department recommends the commission approve 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 changes identified in the black bear master list regarding hound hunting seasons and open areas, hound training seasons, and nonresident hound licenses as presented by the department as part of the overall black bear regulations.