



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: October 20, 2022

Agenda Item: Bad Rock Canyon Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Hunting Regulations

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background: In December 2021, the department acquired the 772-acre Bad Rock Canyon WMA along the Flathead River. During the acquisition process, the department committed to develop a proposal for how it would administer hunting opportunity on the WMA using the public review process. Under the previous ownership, the property was enrolled in the Block Management Program and provided limited opportunity for apprentice and youth hunters to harvest white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, black bear, upland game birds, and turkey during the upland game, archery, and general big game seasons. The property was open Thursday–Sunday with permission required through reservation, first come, first served, during the archery season, and by lottery during the general hunting season. Access was for a single party, for a single day. As public property, WMAs are open to all commission-established hunting seasons unless specifically closed or restricted as noted in hunting regulations.

Public Involvement Process and Results: The department used public scoping and environmental assessment processes to develop a recommendation for future management. The department received strong public support for continuing to manage hunting on the property as a youth opportunity. Additional public comment will be solicited for a four-week period starting Aug. 26, 2022. Public comments will be posted online and provided to commissioners no later than two weeks prior to the October commission meeting.

Analysis and Alternatives: In the environmental assessment, the department evaluated three alternatives that correspond with the alternatives presented below:

Alternative A: The commission may approve a limited opportunity hunting season structure with an emphasis on youth hunting on Bad Rock Canyon WMA as proposed by the department.

Alternative B: The commission may choose to allow hunting on the Bad Rock Canyon WMA to default to regulations as defined for the hunting district.

Alternative C: The commission may choose another hunting season structure, although this option may necessitate further environmental analyses prior to implementation.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale: Based on the results of the environmental assessment and record of decision, the department recommends the commission approve regulations for the Bad Rock Canyon WMA that include hunting by limited access permit only. Archery season is open Thursday through Sunday (or Monday if it is a holiday) to archery equipment for all legal species, limited to two individuals/week awarded by lottery. General hunting and spring turkey seasons are open to youth ages 10–15 and hunters with a PTHFV for all legal species, limited to one party/day awarded by lottery. It is closed to spring black bear hunting. Area rules, maps, and the access permit application process are available at FWP’s Region 1 headquarters, 406-752-5501.

Proposed Motion: I move that the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the Bad Rock Canyon WMA hunting regulations (Alternative A) as presented by the department.