

#1

COMPLETE

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Q1

Contact information:

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Q2

Please comment on Corrections and Amendments to Regulations

I would like for the council to please take seriously the complaints of not only the residents but non residents too on how the mule deer and whitetail in regions 6 and 7 are being managed. There is way too many people hunting too few deer. It is obvious the FWP is prioritizing profit from tag sales over quality of the deer themselves, the herd, and the hunt. Populations are down due to over hunting, drought, and predators. This is obvious to anyone who has been here over the years and has a good understanding of what it used to be like. if one takes a drive around on gravel roads or highways during season you will find countless out of state license plates either driving around or parked at every approach going into state, BLM, and block management. I've talked with residents and non residents for the past 3 years and all are in agreement that the amount of people hunting the east side of the state is climbing drastically each year while the number of deer is shrinking. More hunters hunting fewer deer. It's a recipe for frustration for hunters and population disaster for the deer herds. The fact that the out of state plates are not just from Eastern states such as North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, etc. But are also from states to the west of montana like Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho show that this area is an obvious magnet for outdoorsman and they're willing to travel across the entire state to get here. I propose that the general deer season on this side of the state is cut to just 2 weeks, have a traditional muzzleloader/archery season only to finish out what would be the rest of general season and to limit the amount of non resident hunters allowed to hunt regions 6 and 7 either by regional or unit specific tags. Atleast until the quality and quantity of both mule deer and whitetail gets back to a respectable level. I would be more than happy to take anyone from the commission out to hunt the area and talk with locals and non locals who are both hunters and are not that are all I'm agreement on this.

#2

COMPLETE

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Q1

Contact information:

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Q2

Please comment on Corrections and Amendments to Regulations

R1 Change Spring Bear Quota- I am very appreciative of the Department recommending elimination of the 37% female harvest limit for BMU's 141, 150. These areas are remote, difficult to access early and see low bear harvest as a result. The bear harvest in these areas is not low due to low bear densities. This is a good change and should be supported.

Regarding other Region 1 BMUs, the justification for inclusion of a spring bear female harvest limit should be tied to HD specific deer and elk harvest and recruitment objectives. If deer and elk HD's within Region 1 are not meeting their objectives for harvest or recruitment the female harvest limit should be removed from the corresponding BMU. There have been recent concerted efforts to increase pressure on mountain lions and wolves in deer and elk hunting districts in Montana where ungulate populations are depressed and not meeting objectives. It makes no sense to me why black bears are managed to maintain stable populations in areas where deer and elk populations are suppressed and not meeting objectives. Those like myself who have advocated for the June 15th season extension view expansion of hunting opportunity as a secondary benefit and the primary reason for the season extension is be to reduce black bear populations to improve suppressed deer and elk populations.

Please refer to the Elk and Mule Deer reports for Region 1 with the links provided below which clearly show many areas that are not meeting their objectives:

https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwpp/aboutfwpp/regions/r1/other/elk_r1_2023_annual_report_final.pdf

https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwpp/aboutfwpp/regions/r1/other/final_2023_md-report_v2.pdf

At a minimum the mountainous districts that make up the 3 forks of the Flathead River and the Swan Valley that are chronically under their deer and elk objectives should remove the female harvest limit.

I propose to the Commission that an amendment is made to revise the proposal as follows:

Proposal: Eliminate 37% female harvest limit during spring season for BMUs 110, 140, 141, 150 and 170. (A female quota should not be established in BMU 130)

Recommendations for the next black bear season setting:

The arbitrary female sub quota % should be removed and numerical female quotas should be established for each BMU. However, BMU's should only have a female quota when the corresponding deer and elk HDs are meeting their harvest and recruitment objectives.

In BMU's within Region 1 that are not meeting their harvest and recruitment goals (Specifically BMU's 110, 140, 141 & 150) the Department should provide hunters with the opportunity to purchase a second black bear tag that is only valid in specific BMU's. Allocation of a second black bear tag has been successfully demonstrated in Northern Idaho which is very similar to Northwest Montana

#3

COMPLETE

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Q1

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Q2

Please comment on Corrections and Amendments to Regulations

Removing the bear quotas in the proposed management units should be considered and numbers tracked, lots of areas in the units can be hard to hunt due to snow hanging on in the mountains late into the spring/ early summer meaning numbers harvested could be influenced by weather more then just bear numbers. All of these units seem to have very high black bear density's from my experience hunting them in the spring. Specifically 110. Also 2 bears being harvested in unit 150 is not related to a "struggling" population but the degree of difficulty for access and hunting spring bears.

#4

COMPLETE

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Q1

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Q2

Please comment on Corrections and Amendments to Regulations

I appreciate the recommendation to eliminate the 37% female harvest limit for BMUs 141 and 150, citing that these areas are remote and difficult to access, leading to low bear harvests not due to low bear densities. It suggests that the female harvest limit for other Region 1 BMUs should be based on deer and elk harvest and recruitment objectives. If these objectives are not met, the female harvest limit should be removed. The message proposes eliminating the 37% female harvest limit for BMUs 110, 140, 141, 150, and 170 and suggests numerical female quotas for each BMU, only if deer and elk objectives are met. Additionally, it recommends allowing hunters to purchase a second black bear tag in specific BMUs where deer and elk objectives are not met.

#5

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Q1

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Q2

Please comment on Corrections and Amendments to Regulations

Please eliminate 37% female harvest limit during spring season for for BMUs 141, 150 and 170 and instate a 37% female harvest limit during the spring season for BMU 130.

#6

COMPLETE

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Q1

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Q2

Please comment on Corrections and Amendments to Regulations

With deer and elk numbers below objective, FWP should eliminate the 37% female harvest quota for Region1. Specifically in units that are seeing the lowest deer and elk numbers (BMUs 110, 140, 141, 150 and 170). Also, an allocation of a second black bear tag for these specific units would help reduce the number of black bears in an area that is not easily hunted because of heavily forested terrain.
