

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 10, 2017

Agenda Item: Use of Lighted Nocks on Archery Equipment

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 Min

◆-----◆

Background:

At the Dec. 8 Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting the Montana Bowhunters Association asked the Commission to consider allowing lighted nocks on archery equipment arrows. As per Commission direction, FWP developed a proposal to allow the use of lighted nocks using the newly-adopted Fish and Wildlife Commission Policy on Archery Season Intent and Equipment Evaluation Criteria and put it out for public comment on Dec. 9.

Currently, Montana regulations do not allow “A bow sight or arrow which uses artificial light, luminous chemicals such as tritium, or electronics” during any Archery-equipment-only hunting season, commonly known as archery season or bow season, although such equipment may be used during the general rifle or other seasons. The current proposal would make the use of lighted nocks legal during archery-equipment-only seasons.

Montana has adopted a unique set of equipment regulations based upon the priorities of effective, ethical harvest, fair chase ideals, and minimal impact to the resource. These methods and means assure that Montana maintains the original focus of bowhunting as a challenging, close-range sport. Montana’s current equipment regulations specify that no luminous, electronic, or battery-powered devices be attached to the bow or arrow. These restrictions were based on Pope and Young Club's Rules of Fair Chase. In 2015 the Pope & Young Club changed their bylaws and created an exemption within their "no electronics" stance to allow lighted nocks.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

Public comment was taken from Dec. 9 to Jan. 13. We received 1,515 comments with 1,400 in favor of the proposal, 114 against and one comment not on topic. Those in favor, including the Montana Bowhunters Association, cited that lighted nocks do not aid in the hunt but only in arrow and game retrieval and that it is allowed in many other states. Those opposed, including the Traditional Bowhunters of Montana, spoke to the creep of technology in a supposedly primitive sport and that lighted nocks would prompt hunters to take unethical shots in low-light situations. One comment spoke to the need for more weapons restriction areas near towns in flat areas.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The alternative is to continue disallowing lighted nocks on archery equipment arrows.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

FWP recommends that the Commission adopt the use of lighted nocks on archery equipment arrows as outlined in the proposal.

Proposed Motion:

I move the Commission allow the use of lighted nocks on archery equipment arrows as proposed by FWP.