



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: June 24, 2021

Agenda Item: 2021 Wolf Seasons and Quota (Fall 2021–Winter 2022)

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 60 minutes

Background: Montana's wolf population is well established and within the era of modern management, and the department believes that the wolf population can support increased harvest without adverse biological effects. Consistent with direction from legislation adopted in the most recent session and the wolf management plan, the department has assembled several season options variously including the following tools:

- Increase bag limit and allow a person to take more than one wolf per license.
- Liberalize seasons in quota areas.
- Allow snaring on private lands during the trapping season and extend season dates. The following is also proposed in relation to the use of snares for wolves:
 - Must be equipped with a loop stop that will close to a loop no smaller than 2.5 inches in diameter (stop placed at no less than 8 inches from end of loop).
 - Must have a breakaway device rated at 1,000 lbs. or less installed on the loop end.
 - Must be placed such that the bottom of the snare loop is at least 18 inches above the surface.
 - Power-assisted (e.g., spring-loaded) snare locks are prohibited on wolf snares on public lands.
 - A relaxing snare lock is required on snares in lynx protection zones.

In addition, FWP proposes re-visits to the commission at certain harvest amounts and non-target captures, that all non-targets from traps and snares be reported, and that the wolf season be re-visited each year using the most recent wolf population data available.

Public Involvement Process and Results: Montana's 2004 wolf plan identifies the need to balance wolf management with other socially important factors such as livestock losses and ungulate populations. During its 2021 session, the Montana State Legislature passed several wolf-oriented bills. A range of comments are anticipated in response to proposed wolf regulations. This meeting initiates the public comment period, and comment will be taken until 5 p.m. on July 26, 2021.

Alternatives and Analysis: Some adjustments to existing regulation are required by statute. The public may comment on the proposed regulations as the commission considers the range of this proposal or other options best to meet legislative intent while maintaining a viable wolf population.

Agency Rationale and Recommendation: The department supports adoption of one or more wolf regulation options for public comment.

Proposed Motion: I move that the commission vote to adopt for public comment the fall 2021–winter 2022 wolf seasons and quotas as presented by the department with all other aspects regarding prior seasons included, except for those influenced by routine calendar rotations or by other proposals pending before the commission.