

# Deer and Elk – HD 204



**Draft Changes for 2022-2023 Hunting Regulations** (boundary types, LPT changes, species, etc.):

Boundary Change: Create a larger Hunting District 204 by combining former 204 and the north half of former 261.

White-tailed Deer: General license opportunity for antlered buck white-tailed deer across new HD 204 for the whole season. Remove the first week of the season either-sex opportunity with the general license. New season-long either-sex opportunity with general license on private land only. Eliminate 299-00 Deer B Licenses. Retain either-sex opportunity for white-tailed deer for youth season-long.

Mule Deer: Replace unlimited mule deer buck permit in former HD 204 with general license three-week season across the new district.

Elk: Add brow-tined bull or antlerless elk opportunity on the general license (not valid for antlerless on Threemile Wildlife Management Area). Eliminate antlerless elk permit. Add unlimited Elk B License valid on private lands only during the general season and in a late shoulder season (through Jan. 1).

## **Biological Implications:**

Boundary Change: There is similar habitat across these districts and deer and elk regularly cross existing boundaries. This proposed boundary also matches an elk survey unit.

White-tailed Deer: The population can support season-long buck harvest. With the proposal to add either-sex opportunity with the general license on private land only, 299-00 is no longer necessary to get adequate harvest where needed. White-tailed deer population can support youth hunter extra opportunity.

Mule Deer: This limits mule deer buck harvest during the rut to improve survival of breeding-age bucks. Allowing antlered buck harvest on the general license will give hunters an opportunity to hunt MD bucks in districts other than 204, which should reduce the focused hunting pressure that the current 204-50 permit creates.

Elk: The elk population in this HD is over objective. A shoulder season is needed because of chronically over-objective elk herds, and a shorter season (Jan. 1 vs Feb. 1 closure) is needed to prevent overharvest in the southern part of the district where populations are closer to objective.

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## **Social Implications:**

There may be some opportunity loss by restricting antlerless white-tailed deer harvest to private lands, but it is a boost to hunters with landowner permission.

The consolidation of the north half of former HD 261 will result in the loss of a former mule deer special management area, however hunters will gain opportunity to hunt mule deer with a general license in that part of the former district.

Some hunters are concerned about the potential for overharvest of antlerless elk but this is mitigated in some cases by the general license not being valid for antlerless elk on Threemile Wildlife Management Area.

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