

## ***FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** December 10, 2018

**Agenda Item:** Mule deer season changes in HDs 502, 510, 520 & 575 for 2019

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Proposed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 20 Minutes

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**Background:** FWP proposes to change the 2019 mule deer hunting regulations in HDs 502, 510, 520, and 575 to address CWD, which was found in these HDs in late 2017 and early 2018. FWP is proposing this change outside of the regular biennial cycle because of CWD. Long-term CWD management, as described in the *Montana CWD Management Plan*, is aimed at maintaining low densities of deer and low buck:doe ratios in hunting districts with CWD and adjacent hunting districts to keep disease prevalence low and prevent disease spread. We are proposing to manage for lower buck:doe ratios because bucks are two to three times more likely to be infected with CWD and more likely to spread it through the population.

Specific changes proposed are:

- HD 502 change the general mule deer season from buck-only to either-sex.
- HD 510 eliminate the unlimited 510-50 buck mule deer permit and establish an either-sex mule deer season.
- HD 520 change the general mule deer season from buck only to either-sex in that portion of HD 520 lying east of Highway 212.
- HD 575 increase 575-00 antlerless mule deer B license from 250 to 500 and increase the biennial range from 5-200 to 5-750. This proposal is outside the current biennial range and requires commission action.

These proposed changes and justifications are in the commission packet for the December meeting.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** In addition to public comment on proposed deer season changes taken during the Dec. 10 commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 18, 2019, and any final adoptions will take place at the Feb. 2019 commission meeting.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions, or no change from 2018 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** Rationale for individual proposals is included in the commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 10 commission meeting.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the commission adopt for public comment the 2019 deer hunting regulations for hunting districts 502, 510, 520, and 575 as presented by FWP, and that all other aspects of the deer season remain unchanged unless addressed in other proposals.