

**Supplemental Information**  
**for**  
**Agenda Item 21**

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## **“GREEN SHEET”**

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**Meeting:** March 6-7, 2009

**Agenda Item 21:** Deer General Seasons and Special Permit Regulations – **Rule Briefing and Public Hearing**

**Prepared By:** Jerry Nelson

**Presented By:** Jerry Nelson, Deer and Elk Section Manager, Wildlife Program

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### **Background:**

Department staff will brief the Commission on proposed rule amendments to the following WACs: 232-28-351 2009-2011 Deer general seasons and definitions; and 232-28-353 2009 Deer special permits.

The issues brought before the public this summer and fall included changes to deer seasons in Regions 1, 2, 3, and 5. The public encouraged the Department to make several changes that the Department could accommodate while sustaining the wildlife resource:

- Opening more GMUs to muzzleloader general season opportunity for deer, as well as a longer early general season time period and less overlap with muzzleloader elk season.
- Shifting antlerless white-tailed deer special permits to “2<sup>nd</sup> deer” opportunities in Region 1.
- Offering more late season deer special permits in Region 2 GMUs.
- Shifting early muzzleloader and late archery opportunity to a late muzzleloader season structure in GMU 381.
- Changing the season structure for GMUs 388, 574, and 578 to improve low buck survival and/or low total deer numbers to ultimately provide a better hunting experience.

As a result of either Agency management objectives or the public support (sometimes strong support), the following are recommended hunting season proposals for 2009-2011 general deer seasons and special permits for the fall of 2009:

- Increase the number of GMUs open for general season muzzleloader opportunity. Increase the general muzzleloader season from 7 to 9 days, and shift the timing to decrease some of the overlap with muzzleloader elk season.
- Shift the antlerless permits in GMUs 101-142 to “2<sup>nd</sup> deer” permits.
- Increase the number of GMUs open to late season special permit opportunities in Region 2.
- Shift GMU 250 from late general season archery to late special permit archery to reduce overall high pressure and hunter crowding while deer are on winter range.
- Shift early muzzleloader and late archery opportunity to a late muzzleloader season structure in GMU 381.
- Move GMU 574 to “any buck”, move GMU 578 to “3 pt. min.”, and reduce the late season pressure in GMU 388 from general season to special permit.
- Reduce the early archery general season to accommodate the increased muzzleloader general season.

In addition, the Allocation Sub-Committee and the full Game Management Advisory Council (GMAC) recommended that the Department develop some new special permit hunts for modern firearm hunters during the peak of the rut for deer. These proposed hunts should provide some additional opportunity for modern firearm hunters at times when mature bucks are available. To accommodate this change we are also proposing a reduction of days in the late archery general season to accommodate the increased premium special permits offered to all three user groups.

Additional recommendations in response to overall population concerns:

- Adjust the number of late season special permits for modern firearm hunters.
  - Reduce the antlerless white-tailed deer opportunity in Region 1 in general and permit seasons.
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**Policy Issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:**

- Provide balanced hunting opportunities for modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader deer hunters.
  - Maintain general deer hunting season opportunities, while meeting population objectives.
  - Adjust deer special permits in response to population changes and damage complaints.
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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

The Department conducted an extensive public involvement process to develop these three-year hunting season cycle recommendations. In June 2008, the Department received nearly 4,000 responses to a scoping survey that was developed to determine the major issues that were important to the public. After the initial scoping phase, the issues were refined and preferred alternatives to address those issues were developed. The alternatives were discussed at more than ten public meetings held throughout the state in August and September. Nearly 5,000 people commented on the Alternatives, which were presented at the public meetings and available online for approximately seven weeks. In early January, an email was sent to over 50,000 hunters announcing that the proposed recommendations were online and would be available for comment until February 20. A postcard was mailed to approximately 800 organizations and individuals informing them of the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed regulations. Advisory groups were utilized throughout the process. The Game Management Advisory Council is split on some of the proposed changes. The archery representatives are against the shift of some late general season opportunity to a special permit opportunity. Muzzleloader representatives are in favor of the increased number of GMUs open, adding two days to the early general season, and eliminating some of some overlap with elk season.

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**Action requested (identify the specific Commission decisions you are seeking):**

Take public comment. Adoption is planned for the April 2-3-4, 2009 Commission meeting in Olympia.

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**Draft motion language:**

N/A

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**Justification for Commission action:**

N/A

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**Communications plan:**

- News Release
  - Hunting Pamphlets
  - Direct email to approximately 55,000 hunters
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# Agenda Item 21

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## WAC 232-28-351 2009-2011 Deer general seasons and definitions

### Supplemental Recommended Adjustments

The following adjustments are proposed since the Code Reviser (CR 102) filing and are NOT included in your notebook language.

#### Page 5

Under **Early Archery General Deer Seasons, Eastern Washington Mule Deer**, reinstate GMU 178 in the 3 pt. min. or antlerless category. This change restores status quo for the general seasons in this GMU based on public response and concerns.

Under **Early Archery General Deer Seasons, Eastern Washington White-tailed Deer**, reinstate GMU 178 in the 3 pt. min. or antlerless category. This change restores status quo for the general seasons in this GMU based on public response and concerns.

#### Page 6

Under **Late Archery General Deer Seasons, Eastern Washington Mule Deer**, add the following line to the table:

Nov. 21-30	Nov. 21-30	Nov. 21-30	209, 215, 233, 243	3 pt. min.
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This change restores the late archery season in four GMUs that were originally proposed to be closed or changed to special permit only. The reinstated units have a shorter time frame, which will lessen the impact to the deer population when it is vulnerable.

#### Page 7

Under **Early Muzzleloader General Deer Seasons, Eastern Washington Mule Deer**, delete GMU 178. This change restores status quo for the general seasons in this GMU based on public response and concerns.

Under **Early Muzzleloader General Deer Seasons, Eastern Washington White-tailed Deer**, delete GMU 178. This change restores status quo for the general seasons in this GMU based on public response and concerns.

# Agenda Item 21

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## WAC 232-28-351 2009-2011 Deer general seasons and definitions

### SUMMARY OF SUPPLEMENTAL WRITTEN PUBLIC INPUT

Supplemental public comments were not captured in the original summary of written comments. Each comment may be representative of multiple like comments.

COMMENTS	AGENCY RESPONSE
I would like to have a unit that is only open for traditional archery equipment. You could charge more and only allow real bows.	We think there are enough different seasons and timeframes now. Adding more user groups would only create more complexity and animosity among hunters.

## Agenda Item 21

*Please insert this document after page 51*

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### WAC 232-28-353 2009 Deer special permits

#### Supplemental Recommended Adjustments

The following adjustments are proposed since the Code Reviser (CR 102) filing and are NOT included in your notebook language.

#### Page 33

##### Under **Modern Firearm Deer Permit Hunts:**

Change the ending date from Nov. 24 to Nov. 20 for the following hunts:

- East Okanogan A
- West Okanogan A
- Sinlahekin A
- Chewuch A
- Pearrygin A
- Gardner A

This change still gives modern firearm hunters more days than last year, keeps the timing consistent with adjacent 200 series units, and accommodates the late archery season.

Delete Wannacut A. This change accommodates reinstating the late archery general season in this GMU.

Change the number of permits for Sinlahekin C from 30 to 5 and change the ending date from Nov. 24 to Nov. 20. This change still gives modern firearm hunters more days than last year, keeps the timing consistent with adjacent 200 series units, and accommodates the late archery season.

Change the number of permits for Pogue A from 30 to 15 and change the ending date from Nov. 24 to Nov. 20. This change still gives modern firearm hunters more days than last year, keeps the timing consistent with adjacent 200 series units, and accommodates the late archery season.

Delete Chiliwist A. This change accommodates late season permits for archery and muzzleloader in this GMU.

Change the number of permits for Alta A from 39 to 20 and change the ending date from Nov. 24 to Nov. 20. This change still gives modern firearm hunters more days than last year, keeps the timing consistent with adjacent GMUs, and accommodates the late muzzleloader season.

Change the ending date from Nov. 24 to Nov. 20 for the following hunts:

- Manson A
- Chiwawa A
- Slide Ridge A
- Entiat A
- Big Bend A

This change still gives modern firearm hunters more days than last year, keeps the timing consistent with adjacent GMUs, and accommodates the late muzzleloader season.

### **Page 34**

Under **Modern Firearm Deer Permit Hunts:**

Change the ending date from Nov. 24 to Nov. 20 for the following hunts:

- Swakane A
- Mission A

This change still gives modern firearm hunters more days than last year, keeps the timing consistent with adjacent GMUs, and accommodates the late muzzleloader season.

### **Page 36**

Under **Muzzleloader Only Deer Permit Hunts:**

Delete the following permit hunts:

- Wannacut B
- Sinlahekin D
- Pogue B
- Manson B

This change helps allocate opportunity among the users. The permit hunt for muzzleloaders was shifted to the Alta unit.

Change “Chiliwirs B” to “Chiliwist A”. This change corrects a clerical error and resets the alphabetical sequence of hunts in this GMU.

Change the number of permits for Alta B from 5 to 20. This change helps allocate opportunity among the users. The permit hunt for muzzleloaders was shifted to the Alta unit.

### **Page 38**

Under **Archery Deer Only Deer Permit Hunts:**

Delete the following permit hunts:

- Wannacut C
- Sinlahekin E
- Pogue B
- Manson C

This change accommodates reinstating a late general archery season in this GMU.

Delete Alta C. This change accommodates a late, special permit muzzleloader season in this GMU.

Change the date for Desert E to Nov. 30-Dec. 13. This change corrects a clerical error.

**Page 44**

**Under Special Deer Permits – Second Deer Tag:**

Change the boundary description for Colville River from Deer Area 1030 to Deer Area 1035. This change corrects a clerical error.

# Agenda Item 21

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## WAC 232-28-353 2009 Deer special permits

### SUMMARY OF SUPPLEMENTAL WRITTEN PUBLIC INPUT

Supplemental public comments were not captured in the original summary of written comments. Each comment may be representative of multiple like comments.

COMMENTS	AGENCY RESPONSE
Why does modern firearm get 24 days for their late permits and the archers get nine. The additional GMUs open for archery permits in the north central part of the state in no way makes up for all of the general season closures.	The original intent was to provide some modern firearm opportunity closer to the peak of the rut. However, we are recommending some changes that back off some of the time frame and have the modern firearm permit hunts ending November 20, 2009 in the north central part of the state. Archers would start the 21 <sup>st</sup> of November through the 30 <sup>th</sup> . We have also changed our recommendation regarding some of the GMUs that were open for late archery general seasons. Our long term intent is still to manage these late seasons using permits to better control harvest. But we agree that we were making many changes and they were coming a little too quickly. We now plan to phase into the permit season and permit levels for archers over the next few years.
There are too many permits in the Pogue unit for late modern firearm. It would be nice to have more trophy aged bucks in the populations.	We are comfortable with current permit levels for the late seasons. We plan to start collecting additional age data from harvested bucks if funding allows.
We need additional doe permits in Adams county; there are too many deer.	We will continue to monitor the deer population level and increase antlerless harvest when it is warranted.