

Agenda Item 14

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WAC 232-28-352 2009-2011 Elk 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 WAC language.

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Change the beginning season date for the Eastern Washington Late Archery General Elk Season from Nov. 24 to Nov. 25. This change avoids an overlap with the late modern firearm deer permit season.

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SUMMARY OF WRITTEN PUBLIC INPUT

WAC 232-28-352 2009-2011 Elk general seasons and definitions.

COMMENTS	AGENCY RESPONSE
I believe this unit (346) should be kept as a quality hunt. Archery hunts could be done in September before the limited rifle tag.	Disturbance caused by allowing an early archery season in this unit may impact the modern firearm bull permit holders. However, we are recommending eliminating the early archery antlerless hunt in GMUs 352 & 356. To offset the loss, we recommended a spike and antlerless opportunity for early archery in GMU 346.
The early archery season in GMU 352 should not change to spike only. The problem with low calf recruitment will not be resolved with reducing archery harvest of cows during the early archery season.	There may be many factors associated with low calf recruitment and the proportion of calves surviving on an annual basis. However, increased cow survival will likely impact the absolute number of calves surviving each year, and it is the easiest factor for the Department to affect through hunting season changes. It is hard to argue that hunting is not the greatest mortality factor for elk and the easiest factor for the Department to affect.
GMU 490 should remain closed to elk hunting because the watershed is closed to public access to protect the quality of the drinking water for the City of Seattle; access exceptions made to members of the Muckleshoot tribe are because of their treaty rights and the settlement associated with their lawsuit regarding the development of a habitat conservation plan; there are many special considerations and values for wildlife associated with current management of the watershed; and there are questions regarding whether the elk population can sustain harvest under the proposed regulations.	The Department respects and supports the need to protect the drinking water for the City of Seattle. However, the mission for the Department is to protect and manage wildlife and provide associated recreation. The regulations proposed for harvest of three point or better bulls is a conservative season that has been effective for most of western Washington. It is not likely that this regulation would harm the elk population in GMU 490.
I support opening GMU 490 to elk hunting.	Thank you for your support.
The general archery hunting season in Elk Area 4941 needs to be changed to a permit only hunt.	This issue was obviously a very controversial one this past year. We have had a successful general season hunt in this area for many years without the level of harvest and problems experienced in 2008 and 2009. The current proposal is to provide Master Hunter permits with private landowner access based on active elk damage problems.
I do not support opening GMU 346 to antlerless elk hunting during the archery season. This was a good unit to hunt for those archers drawing a bull permit because of the low density of other archery hunters.	We provided this antlerless opportunity to compensate for lost opportunity in other Yakima elk units for archers. This proposal may affect hunter densities, but the tradeoff was lost antlerless opportunity for archers.

<p>We do not support the reduction in archery antlerless hunting opportunity in the early season in GMUs 352 & 356. We do not understand the need to restrict antlerless harvest.</p>	<p>Antlerless harvest opportunities for all users have been gradually restricted in these units due to lower recruitment and excessive harvest of cows. The only remaining way to directly improve survival of cows, was to restrict archery harvest.</p>
<p>How about opening up other Yakima area units to antlerless elk harvest rather than GMU 346. This unit is a very high quality archery hunt, which may be impacted by opening it to antlerless hunting.</p>	<p>The mix of antlerless hunting opportunity varies by availability of animals as well as allocation between the users (modern, muzzleloaders, and archers). At this point, we are not looking to add antlerless harvest in other units.</p>
<p>Wolves have ruined hunting in Idaho; the state of Washington will be next. Hunters don't want wolves; they will result in lost revenue and jobs.</p>	<p>Actually the majority of hunters support wolf re-colonization; however, they do want their numbers managed.</p>
<p>We should reduce the hunting pressure on our elk herds by requiring elk hunters to only hunt or apply for permits on alternate years. In addition, the price of a tag should be \$35 and the price of a permit application should be \$10.</p>	<p>We have discussed the tradeoffs of reducing hunter numbers in the field and the enjoyment of the hunting opportunity. Hunters have consistently said they want to be able to hunt every year and do not support permit only hunting at the expense of general seasons. Tag and permit application prices are set by the Legislature and are generally designed to provide broad participation.</p>
<p>As a landowner in the West Klickitat Unit I am very interest in regulations that can affect my property. I like the idea of eliminating the <u>any elk</u> for the modern and late muzzleloader season in 578. I support going to a draw only for antlerless elk in West Klickitat.</p>	<p>Thank you for your support for this proposal.</p>
<p>I have some concerns for the proposed changes for unit 578 in the 2010 elk seasons. We are elk hunters and also own and operate a cattle ranch in the Glenwood Valley, where there is an over abundance of elk. Our pastures have been trampled full of holes in the early spring when the ground is soft, fences stressed and broken down by continual crossing with grain hay and fall pasture all but ruined.</p> <p>Elk hunting is allowed on our ranch by permission only and we have never charged a hunting fee.</p> <p>It is fine to have 3 point or better on bulls but do not have a draw on antlerless. Make the hunt 3 point or antlerless only.</p> <p>My son and I buy our hunting license and tags every year and do not feel it is fair that we have to take a chance on getting drawn for a cow tag to be able to harvest elk on our own ranch.</p>	<p>As described previously, this recommendation to go to antlerless harvest by permit is designed to address the relatively dramatic fluctuations in antlerless harvest from years with high snow fall. The harvest of resident elk such as your situation is desirable, and there are many ways to address the property damage problems. We encourage you to contact your local enforcement officer to determine what options would best fit your situation.</p>
<p>The Makah Tribe would like to see the late muzzleloader hunt in GMU 601 alternated to other units to improve bull survival in the unit.</p>	<p>We would encourage further cooperative research efforts to determine the need for improving bull survival and negotiations with all parties to effect appropriate harvest management.</p>

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WAC 232-28-356 2010 Elk special permits.

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDED ADJUSTMENTS

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

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Under the bull category for modern elk permits, the number of permits for the Green River hunt should be increased from 3 to 4. The permits in GMU 485 are negotiated between the landowners, the Muckleshoot tribe, and the department. This change reflects the current agreement.

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The Sherman, Kelly Hill, and Douglas antlerless elk permits are deleted because these units have an any elk general season for modern firearm hunters.

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Under the antlerless elk category for modern elk permits, add a hunt as follows:

Green River	WF	Any	Oct. 30 – Nov. 5	Antlerless	GMU 485	6
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The permits in GMU 485 are negotiated between the landowners, the Muckleshoot tribe, and the department. This change reflects the current agreement.

Page 17

The Sherman, Kelly Hill, and Douglas antlerless elk permits are deleted because these units have an any elk general season for muzzleloader hunters.

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Under the Antlerless elk permit category, the Wildwood elk hunt for muzzleloader hunters should close on January 15 to correct an error.

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SUMMARY OF WRITTEN PUBLIC INPUT

WAC 232-28-356 2010 Elk special permits.

COMMENTS	AGENCY RESPONSE
<p>I do not support the proposal to change GMU 578 to permit only for antlerless elk hunting for muzzleloaders. Elk numbers continue to be problematic in the Glenwood area and need to be controlled to prevent property damage.</p>	<p>The proposal is designed to continue pressure on elk numbers in this unit, but eliminate excessive harvest during those years of high snow fall in the adjacent units. Typically, every few years, a snow event occurs and harvest increases dramatically. In our assessment, this is due to migratory elk coming into the lowlands (private property areas) and the harvest being excessive. We feel the timing and permit levels developed will allow us to reduce resident elk numbers while preventing excessive harvest during high snowfall years.</p>
<p>The master hunter permits in the Boistfort and Tenino areas have been eliminated. Why were they eliminated?</p>	<p>Landowners in these areas have expressed concerns that master hunters are no different than general hunters, and in the case of the Boistfort area, they asked to eliminate this hunt.</p>
<p>How can a hunt coordinator set the rules for participating in a hunt?</p>	<p>This issue is best addressed between the agency and the master hunter representatives. Obviously the intent is to have someone who has the confidence of the landowners coordinate harvest opportunities with landowner needs and concerns.</p>
<p>How do we deal with multiple users and weapon tags hunting in the same area?</p>	<p>Overlaps in weapon types always require that participants wear hunter orange for the safety of all.</p>
<p>There are too many restrictions and rules for master hunters. The seasons should be more generalized and open without using a hunt coordinator and without restrictions on weapon used.</p>	<p>The reason the Department needs a program like the Master Hunter Program is to have greater confidence that we can employ hunters with greater understanding and empathy to address sensitive issues. The seasons created may be harvest related, harassment related, or very sensitive in terms of landowner needs. A hunt coordinator helps address all of these issues.</p>
<p>The time frame for master hunter hunts designed to address damage should include July and August. That is when the crop damage is typically happening.</p>	<p>When the Department staff identifies timing as an issue, we set the permit season to address the timing issue.</p>
<p>HC hunts are no guarantee that a permit holder will even get to hunt. Yet the hunter loses their points.</p>	<p>With the new proposals, these permit holders will only accumulate and lose points in the Master Hunter category.</p>
<p>Wonder where the rifle rut hunts went for elk in the blues?</p>	<p>Some of the permits during the September timeframe were eliminated because of negotiations with the Umatilla tribes. Their issue was mainly the timeframe. However, the permit levels for all users in these units have been increasing regularly over the past few years.</p>

<p>There is no guarantee a master hunter permit holder will be called to hunt. Some hunts have not called any permit holders in a season. Because of that, these hunts do not affect accumulated points. Under the proposed system, accumulated points will be lost, even if a permit holder is not allowed to hunt. That is not the intent of these types of hunts.</p>	<p>We have had problems in the past with getting sufficient applicants to fill the Hunt Coordinator permit quotas. This is especially true in areas where few hunters are contacted. However, with nearly 2000 master hunters and 500 permits available, we should be able to develop a system that works.</p> <p>The Department is more than willing to work with master hunters to make the program more effective. If this proposal doesn't work as intended, we will recommend modifications.</p>
<p>The last proposal I have comments on is the new Turnbull hunt. In addition to modern firearm and muzzle loader bull elk hunts for the Turnbull unit, I would like to see archery bull opportunities as well.</p>	<p>These permits were the result of negotiations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local constituents. We will take your request into consideration for future discussions with them.</p>