

Agenda Item 15

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SUMMARY OF WRITTEN PUBLIC INPUT

WAC 232-28-355 2010 Deer special permits.

COMMENTS	AGENCY RESPONSE
<p>This program of providing 2nd deer tags looks great and may entice more members to stay in state.</p>	<p>Thank you for your support, the second deer tags have been very popular, and as you can see, we have recommended more antlerless tags being shifted to second tags. Because second tag permit holders tend to be more successful than antlerless tag holders, some reduction in the number of total permits available was required.</p>
<p>Second tag antlerless hunts only recently required the loss of points; I would like to see those points reinstated because of the current proposals and my recent loss of points because of being awarded a second tag.</p>	<p>There are many reasons for hunters to have their current level of points. All are related to choices they made. It is not prudent to reinstate points because hunters were awarded permits in the recent past for any reason.</p> <p>The second tag and points issue was related to hunters with many points applying for buck permits that were difficult to draw and putting a second tag permit as a last choice. They would often draw the second tag based on the number of points accumulated, but not lose their points. This made them more competitive year after year for the second tags, which was considered unfair.</p>
<p>There are far too few hunt choices in the "buck" category. More hunt choices are needed to keep the hunts in the category within reasonable drawing success rates. You need more hunt choices to increase the drawing odds (which is one of your goals per the website). One suggestion I have is to move all the "general late season" hunts out of the general season and into the "bucks" category. I would suggest you do this per GMU and you could offer a very liberal quantity of permits. This could be applied to modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader.</p>	<p>Most hunters support the retention of general seasons rather than switching to permit only. If we don't get adequate sales of permits in the buck category, we can look at shifting permit hunt categories in the future.</p>

There are also way to few hunts available in the "doe" category. Again, I think this will push drawing odds down (and not meet your improved odds goal). I would suggest you move many of the 2nd deer tags to "doe" category.

There are way to many 2nd deer hunt choices available. I understand the need and management model for maintaining whitetail deer density in washington state, and also understand the need for managing whitetail expansion - so the 2nd deer whitetail tags make sense. However, there are several 2nd deer permits listed in GMUs in the eastern cascades that have struggling/declining mule deer herds.

2nd deer tags for GMUs - Mission, St Andrews, Foster Creek, Eask Klictitat, Grayback, and West Klickitat) seems very out of place. These hunts should be in the "doe hunt" category. Further, I would suggest you increase the doe tags for youth, in these GMUs, and reduce the number of doe permits for adults, disability, and seniors.

There are 3 specific youth permits that you have chosen to move to the "bucks" category. Hunts in Grayback, East Klickitat, and West Klickitat. These hunts should be moved into the youth hunt category. Placing them into the "bucks" category will significantly decrease the drawing odds of these hunts. Placing them back into the "youth" category will increase the drawing odds of these hunts, and all the other hunts within the youth category. You left 4 other "any deer" hunts in the youth category, so it seems very out of place to move these 3 hunts to the "bucks" category. Pull all the youth hunts into the youth category so as to increase the drawing odds across the board. As a hunting community, we need to increase the drawing odds and hunting opportunities for youth - they are the future of land conservation, the hunting tradition, and WDFW revenue.

The use of 2nd tag permit hunts is very popular with hunters. How we divide up antlerless harvest between the categories will be important in the future. You may be right about dividing up opportunity better between the users, but only time will tell.

We agree with you about the youth hunts all being in the same category and have made that change in our recommendation.