



State of Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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June 19, 2019

Dear Master Hunters and prospective Master Hunter Permit Program applicants,

This letter is notification that the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) now has enough clarity on the 2019-2021 biennial budget to reopen the Master Hunter Permit Program (MHPP) to new applicants. Applications can be submitted from July 1 through August 15, 2019 (the normal 45-day application period). Applicants will have until May 15, 2020 to complete MHPP requirements. Due to challenges with the timing of this application period, the Crime Observation and Reporting Training (CORT) requirement will be optional. Applicants who take a CORT class and submit their certificate of completion will still receive credit for three volunteer hours. Please see the MHPP webpage (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/requirements/master-hunter>) for application information.

While MHPP renewals were accepted during the open enrollment postponement, some Master Hunters may have delayed their renewal pending a decision on the program. For permits that expired January 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019, WDFW will accept renewal applications as if they were submitted before the expiration date, until September 1, 2019. If approved, those permits will extend five years from the original expiration date.

As you may know, going into the 2019 legislative session WDFW faced significant budget challenges for the 2019-2021 biennium. WDFW had a \$31 million deficit that needed to be addressed in order to maintain all existing services and core functions. The MHPP was one of the programs that was at risk of being reduced or eliminated. See the [November 26, 2018 MHPP letter](#) on the [MHPP webpage](#) for information on WDFW's budget situation and the budget development process. Additional budget information can be found on [WDFW's website](#). In addition to the state budget issue, WDFW's Pittman-Robertson funds are down \$2.4 million from last year.

While WDFW's 2019 request legislation did not pass, the agency received a great deal of support from legislators as well as interested and involved partners and stakeholders. This support resulted in the department receiving a one-time appropriation of \$24 million from the state general fund, most of which is dedicated to the first year of the 2019-2021 biennium. In addition, legislative budget writers have signaled they expect WDFW to submit a sizable supplemental budget request during the 2020 legislative session to address the known funding issues in the second year of the biennium. And as with all legislation that isn't passed in odd years, WDFW's agency-request legislation ([HB 1708/SB 2692](#)) may be brought back during the 2020 legislative session.

Please be aware there is a great deal of budget uncertainty for year two of the biennium (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) that creates ambiguity relative to the future of the MHPP beyond June 30, 2020.

Consequently, the MHPP application period may be postponed next year until the budget picture is clear.

I will provide future program and budget updates on the MHPP webpage when they are available, and as always I'll brief the Master Hunter Advisory Group (MHAG). Feel free to contact your [MHAG representative](#), Kris Thorson ([Kristopher.Thorson@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Kristopher.Thorson@dfw.wa.gov)), or myself ([David.Whipple@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:David.Whipple@dfw.wa.gov)) with any questions.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in the MHPP. Your ambassadorship and service to WDFW and wildlife management is tremendous and is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Whipple". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Whipple  
Hunter Education Division Manager