

Spring Bear Policy Development Approach Framework

June 24, 2022 Draft

Policy Components

Purpose

The purpose is to establish a Commission policy on spring bear hunting seasons that would supersede policy language in the Game Management Plan.

Policy Elements (*areas of “deep dives”*)

- Explore possible objective(s) of a spring bear hunt (*e.g., tree damage; recreational opportunity; predatory control; multiple objectives*).
- Elevating the scientific standards for allowing a hunting season, in comparison to recent scientific assessments of hunt sustainability (*e.g., population estimates; trend; statistical confidence standards; geographic sub-area evaluations; estimated takes and population impacts; etc.*).
- Impacts to sows-with-cubs component of the bear population.
- Relationship to the fall hunting season.
- Socio-economic benefits to the hunting community.
- Assessments of sentiment of both hunting and non-hunting public (*i.e., how to properly identify “public values”*).
- Commission interpretation of the legislative mandate on “maximizing” hunting opportunity consistent with not “impairing” the future productivity of the bear population.
- Conclusionary policy language that represents possible alternative(s) to status quo.

Process Steps

- Commission assigns Wildlife Committee to work with staff to consider the policy elements and develop policy language alternative(s) to status quo.
- Commission approves public review draft.
- Public Hearing and Commission approval of a SEPA review draft.
- Final Commission decision.