



PETITION FOR ADOPTION, AMENDMENT, OR REPEAL OF A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE RULE

Print Form

In accordance with RCW 34.05.330, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) created this form for individuals or groups who wish to petition a state agency or institution of higher education to adopt, amend, or repeal an administrative rule. You may use this form to submit your request. You also may contact agencies using other formats, such as a letter or email.

The agency or institution will give full consideration to your petition and will respond to you within 60 days of receiving your petition. For more information on the rule petition process, see Chapter 82-05 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=82-05>.

CONTACT INFORMATION *(please type or print)*

Petitioner's Name Brad Thomsen
Name of Organization _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____ State WA Zip Code _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

COMPLETING AND SENDING PETITION FORM

- Check all of the boxes that apply.
- Provide relevant examples.
- Include suggested language for a rule, if possible.
- Attach additional pages, if needed.
- Send your petition to the agency with authority to adopt or administer the rule. Here is a list of agencies and their rules coordinators: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/CodeReviser/Documents/RClist.htm>.

INFORMATION ON RULE PETITION

Agency responsible for adopting or administering the rule: WDFW

☐ 1. NEW RULE - I am requesting the agency to adopt a new rule.

- ☒ The subject (or purpose) of this rule is: Please See Attached
- ☒ The rule is needed because: Please See Attached
- ☒ The new rule would affect the following people or groups: Please See Attached

☐ **2. AMEND RULE - I am requesting the agency to change an existing rule.**

List rule number (WAC), if known: _____

☐ I am requesting the following change: _____

☐ This change is needed because: _____

☐ The effect of this rule change will be: _____

☐ The rule is not clearly or simply stated: _____

☐ **3. REPEAL RULE - I am requesting the agency to eliminate an existing rule.**

List rule number (WAC), if known: _____

(Check one or more boxes)

☐ It does not do what it was intended to do.

☐ It is no longer needed because: _____

☐ It imposes unreasonable costs: _____

☐ The agency has no authority to make this rule: _____

☐ It is applied differently to public and private parties: _____

☐ It conflicts with another federal, state, or local law or rule. List conflicting law or rule, if known: _____

☐ It duplicates another federal, state or local law or rule. List duplicate law or rule, if known: _____

☐ Other (please explain): _____

Hello,

Please find attached my "Petition to Adopt, Amend / or Repeal an Administrative Rule" form.

I have checked box, "2. Amend Rule – I am requesting the agency to change an existing rule."

As per the questions associate with the form"

"The subject (or purpose) of this rule is: "immediately begin Rule Making for the Year Round Cougar Hunting Season in Washington State"

Washington State has problems surrounding habitat loss and human's failure to assume responsibility to provide a balanced, at least as balanced as humans can make it, to provide a balanced ecosystem out of the remaining wildlife habitat that is left for all species.

This Commission has heard again and again, fawn and calf mortality is a grave concern.

It's the Cycle of Life, and Death, in the Wild.

Most wildlife give birth to their young in the spring / late spring.

It's because nature is just beginning to provide increased food sources for wildlife through the late spring, summer and early fall.

By late fall it becomes clear when there is a surplus of animals that will not make it through the winter and decreased food sources during the cold, dark, wet months.

While all that foliage and vegetation is greening up for the ungulates in the spring and summer, so too Cougars begin feasting on calves and fawns.

At an alarming rate.

Around the State of Washington Cougar populations are putting an out of balance pressure on our ungulate populations.

This Petition acknowledges it is the role of the Commission and the WDFW Staff to continue to set "Hunt Area Harvest Guidelines" just as they do now. The current year Hunt Area Harvest Guidelines can be seen on page 69 in the 2023 Washington Big Game Hunting Regulations Pamphlet.

Cougars Harvest is closely monitored by the Department.

The early season currently runs Sept 1, 2023 – Dec 31, 2023, with the Late Hunt Season running January 1, 2024 – April 30, 2024.

In the Early Hunt Season All successful hunters in the EARLY SEASON must (1) present the unfrozen hide and skull for mandatory sealing and sample collection by WDFW within 5 days of the kill.

Beginning with the Late Hunting Season All hunters must call the Cougar Hotline prior to hunting to check if Cougar Hunt Areas are open or closed.

All successful hunters in the LATE SEASON must: (1) Report their harvest within 72 hours to the cougar hotline.

All hunters purchasing a cougar tag must report their hunt activity (successful or unsuccessful) via the WILD system by January 31, 2024

Bag Limit: The statewide bag limit is one cougar per license year. A transport tag is included with a big game hunting license that has cougar as a species option. **A second cougar tag may be harvested only from the following GMUs: 145, 149, 154, 162, 163, 166, 169, 172, 175, 178, 181, and 186.** A second cougar transport tag must be purchased to take a second cougar in the GMU's listed above (only after the first tag is filled).

There was the increase to a second tag in the above mentioned GMU's, but there has been conversation whether the Hunt Area Harvest Guidelines number should have also increased to help ungulate survival in the second tag GMUs.

Currently the way the process works is hunters may hunt Cougars until the Harvest Guidelines are met.

That is a proper example of Wildlife Conservation / The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Hunters do not want wildlife hunted to extinction.

Only some of the Hunt Areas ever reach their Hunt Area Harvest Guidelines.

Some years in some GMU's they hit the Harvest Guidelines shortly after January 1st. (maybe it's an indication there are too many Cougars on the landscape in those GMU's, but I'm not out doing wildlife population studies here...)

There are plenty of GMU's that do not reach their Hunt Area Harvest Guidelines even by the end of both the early and late seasons.

There is the rub.

The Commission and The Staff have agreed on the Harvest Guidelines as being appropriate for a healthy and balance ecosystem.

Bull dozers just keep destroying habitat at a very fast pace here in Washington State.

It's throwing the ecosystem out of balance.

Humans have to take some responsibility in ensuring a balanced ecosystem.

There are too many Cougars on the landscape for the Ungulates to survive in healthy herd numbers.

If the Harvest Guidelines for Cougars are not being met, leave the season open year round.

Everyone acknowledges Cougar mortality upon ungulates is on the rise and is putting various herds at risk, yet the one time of year when humans could actually help with fawn and calf survival, we take all human hunting pressure off Cougars and close the Cougar Hunting Season.

People in the suburban communities do not want Cougars roaming in their neighborhoods.

People do not want Cougars attacking domesticated pets, cattle, or sitting in a tree in a suburban park.

Cougars are encroaching into suburban and urban areas where they do not belong.

Hunting pressure pushes wildlife back out toward the wild places where they do belong.

Cattle, livestock, and pets are at risk.

Wildlife herds are suffering from Cougar Predation.

A year round cougar hunting season will allow continued Cougar Hunting until the Cougar Harvest Guidelines are met in each Hunt Area.

Consider adjusting the Harvest Guidelines in the GMUs that need it.

Continue to close GMU's when the Harvest Guidelines are met as has been the rule for years.

Where the populations are out of balance, year round cougar hunting until the Harvest Guidelines are met is the right thing to do.

The Commission and Department have no problem leaving fishing seasons open and closing them once quotas are met.

It's time to apply a similar concept to the management of Cougars for the sake of a more balanced ecosystem.

Thank-you

Cougar General Seasons



Photo credit: Laura Rogers

GENERAL SEASONS:

- **Early hunting season:** Sept. 1-Dec. 31
- **Late hunting season:** Jan. 1-Apr. 30 or when the harvest guideline is reached, whichever occurs first. **A current, valid 2024-2025 cougar license/tag is required to hunt cougar in April 2024.** (WAC 220-415-100)

HUNTER REQUIREMENTS, MANDATORY REPORTING AND HIDE SEALING

MANDATORY FOR ALL HUNTERS

All hunters, successful or not, must report their hunt activity via the WILD system (see due dates below by season)

1. All successful hunters must have their harvested cougar (unfrozen hide and skull) sealed by WDFW within 5 days of the kill (please leave proof of sex attached). The skull and hide (both nonfrozen) must be presented so teeth and biological samples can be taken.
2. No one may possess an open WDFW cougar seal unless it has been cut by a licensed taxidermist or fur dealer who has received and invoiced the pelt for processing (WAC 220-415-050).
3. It is unlawful to kill adult cougars accompanied by spotted kittens or to kill or possess spotted cougar kittens.

Early Hunt Season

(Sept 1, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)

1. All successful hunters in the EARLY SEASON must: (1) present the unfrozen hide and skull for mandatory sealing and sample collection by WDFW within 5 days of the kill (please leave proof of sex attached).
2. All hunters purchasing a cougar tag must report their hunt activity (successful or unsuccessful) via the WILD system by January 31, 2024.

Late Hunt Season

(January 1, 2024 - April 30, 2024)

1. All hunters must call the Cougar Hotline at 1-866-364-4868 (press 2 after greeting) or visit WDFW's website at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/big-game/cougar> prior to hunting to check if Cougar Hunt Areas are open or closed.
2. All successful hunters in the LATE SEASON must: (1) Report their harvest within 72 hours to the cougar hotline at 1-866-364-4868 (press 3 after greeting) and state name, WILD ID, date of kill, sex of kill, and GMU of kill; (2) present the unfrozen hide and skull for mandatory sealing and sample collection by WDFW within 5 days of the kill (please leave proof of sex attached).
3. All hunters purchasing a cougar tag must report their hunt activity (successful or unsuccessful) via the WILD system by March 31, 2024. Note -Agency inspection/sealing must be within 5 days of making the kill, the hotline reporting is not associated with sealing.

LICENSE/TAG REQUIRED:

A valid big game license, which includes cougar as a species option.

ATTENTION - A valid 2024-2025 cougar license/tag is required to hunt cougar in April 2024.

BAG LIMIT:

The statewide bag limit is one cougar per license year. A transport tag is included with a big game hunting license that has cougar as a species option.

A second cougar tag may be harvested only from the following GMUs: 145, 149, 154, 162, 163, 166, 169, 172, 175, 178, 181, and 186. A second cougar transport tag must be purchased to take a second cougar in the GMU's listed above (only after the first tag is filled).

Hunters that harvest in April should be aware that since this is a new license year, cougars killed in April 2024 count towards the bag limit through March 31, 2025.

HUNTING METHODS:

Hunters can use any legal weapon for hunting cougar. The use of dogs for recreational hunting of cougar is prohibited statewide.

| HUNT AREA | HARVEST GUIDELINE |
|--|-------------------|
| GMU 101 | 7-11 |
| GMU 105 | 4 |
| GMUs 108, 111 | 9-11 |
| GMU 113 | 4-5 |
| GMU 117 | 11-13 |
| GMU 121 | 9-11 |
| GMUs 124, 127, 130 | 7-9 |
| GMUs 133, 136, 139, 142, 248, 254, 260, 262, 266, 269, 272, 278, 284, 290, 330, 334, 371, 372, 373, 379, 381 | N/A ^b |
| GMUs 145, 166, 175, 178 | 6-7 |
| GMUs 149, 154, 162, 163 | 7-9 |
| GMUs 169, 172, 181, 186 | 5-6 |
| GMU 203 | 4-5 |
| GMU 204 | 6-8 |
| GMUs 209, 215 | 3-4 |
| GMUs 218, 231 | 4-5 |
| GMU 224 | 2 |
| GMUs 233, 239 | 4-5 |
| GMUs 242, 243 | 5-6 |
| GMUs 244, 246, 247 | 4-6 |
| GMUs 245, 250 | 4-6 |
| GMUs 249, 251 | 4-6 |
| GMUs 328, 329, 335 | 8-10 |
| GMUs 336, 340, 342, 346 | 9-11 |
| GMUs 352, 356, 360, 364, 368 | 7-9 |
| GMUs 382, 388 | 3 |
| GMU 407 | N/A ^b |
| GMUs 418, 426, 437 | 10-13 |
| GMUs 448, 450 | 8-11 |
| GMU 454 | N/A ^b |
| GMU 460 | 4-6 |
| GMUs 466, 485 ¹ , 490 | 2-3 |
| GMUs 501, 504, 506, 530 | 6-9 |
| GMUs 503, 505, 520, 550 | 5-7 |
| GMUs 510, 513 | 3 |
| GMU 516 | 3-4 |
| GMUs 524, 554, 556 | 3 |
| GMU 560 | 4-5 |
| GMU 564 | 1 |
| GMU 568 | 3 |
| GMU 572 | 2-3 |
| GMUs 574, 578 | 5-6 |
| GMUs 601, 602, 603, 612 | 4-6 |
| GMUs 607, 615 | 3-4 |
| GMUs 618, 636, 638 | 3-5 |
| GMUs 621, 624, 627, 633 | N/A ^b |
| GMUs 642, 648, 651 | 6-8 |
| GMUs 652, 666 | N/A ^b |
| GMUs 653, 654 | 4-5 |
| GMUs 658, 660, 663, 672, 673, 681, 684, 699 | 8-11 |
| GMU 667 | 6-7 |

Cougar Hunt Notes

- ^a A current special deer or elk permit is required to hunt cougar in GMU 485.
- ^b These units have no harvest guideline.

IT IS UNLAWFUL TO KILL OR POSSESS SPOTTED COUGAR KITTENS (USUALLY <80 LBS.) OR ADULT COUGARS ACCOMPANIED BY SPOTTED KITTENS.

Since cougars are solitary, observing multiple tracks likely means a female with offspring. Kitten tracks may appear similar in size to an adult, so please be sure to abide by the law (WAC 220-415-100.).