



State of Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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**BLUE MOUNTAINS ELK HERD PLAN  
ADDENDUM 19-020 TO FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
STATEMENT (SEIS) 14-075 DATED: DECEMBER 3, 2014**

**Name of SEIS:** 14-075 2015-2021 GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Description of SEIS:**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has prepared this Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) titled, 2015-2021 Game Management Plan. Changes to the 2003-2009 Game Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were proposed to update the plan for 2015-21. Strategies that have been accomplished or are no longer a priority have been deleted. New issues, objectives, and strategies are proposed based on public and staff comments gathered over the past several months.

Significant issues include: wildlife conflict management; recruitment and retention of hunters; hunter access to private lands; disease in big game; re-introduction of pronghorn; and wolf management. These issues, along with corresponding objectives and strategies, have been added to the original 2003-09 issues. Many of the original issues have been updated or modified based on new information and research, changing priorities, or emphasis.

Previously, the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) updated the 2003-09 EIS for species management during that period.

**Description of Addendum 19-020: BLUE MOUNTAINS ELK HERD PLAN**

The Blue Mountains elk (*Cervus elaphus*) herd is located in the extreme southeast corner of Washington and managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Despite the herd's relatively small size, it is an important resource providing recreational, aesthetic, and economic benefit to Washington citizens. This includes Native American people of the area who value elk as a cultural, subsistence, and ceremonial resource.

The primary purpose of this plan is to provide direction for future management of the Blue Mountains elk herd. The plan will also serve as a valuable reference document and guideline for WDFW, agency cooperators, private landowners, two treaty tribes, and the public. As management priorities change, it is WDFW's intent to update this plan as needed. The primary goals of the Blue Mountains Elk Herd Plan are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage elk and their habitat to ensure sustainable populations
2. Manage elk for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes including hunting, wildlife viewing, photography, scientific study, and cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans
3. Manage elk populations for a sustainable annual harvest
4. Manage elk and elk habitat to help minimize human conflicts and agricultural damage

The plan identifies specific objectives and strategies that address specific challenges in managing the Blue Mountains elk herd. WDFW has identified the following objectives:

1. Maintain the Blue Mountains elk herd post-hunt estimate at 5,500 (+/- 10%) while maximizing opportunity for recreational harvest within the constraints of other objectives. Increase the number of elk in GMU 169 to achieve additional recreational opportunity. Maintain all other core area elk subpopulations at 2015 estimated GMU levels. Limit elk numbers in GMUs 145, 149, 163, 178, and 181 to mitigate damage.
2. Maintain or improve the level of precision of Blue Mountains elk population estimates.
3. Use recreational harvest to maintain bull elk populations with a diverse age structure and post-hunting season bull:cow ratios near 25 bulls:100 cows, (range of 22 – 28). Maintain a target of 10% prime age (> 5 yrs. of age) bulls within the post-hunt bull subpopulation.
4. Use adaptive management to keep the number of elk-caused damage claims filed to fewer than 5 per year.
5. Maintain full staffing of enforcement in the Blue Mountains area and publicize the use of emphasis patrols to prevent poaching.
6. Once each biennium invite the Nez Perce Tribe and the CTUIR to meet and discuss implementation of the Blue Mountains Elk Herd Plan.
7. Cooperate and collaborate with Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Walla Walla Counties to implement the Blue Mountains Elk Herd Plan. Discuss elk in meetings between Department Staff and County Commissioners as necessary.

**Proponent/Applicant:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
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**Location of Proposal or Action:** The 2015-2021 Game Management Plan is statewide. Addended Blue Mountains Elk Herd Plan will cover Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Walla Walla Counties in southeast Washington.

**Lead Agency:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

This addendum is being distributed pursuant to WACs 197-11-600 and 197-11-625. The updated information provided above does not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts in the existing environmental checklist. Based on the original determination and the updated information provided in this addendum, we have determined that a new threshold determination is not warranted.

We will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date of issue below. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **5:00 pm on March 29, 2019**.

**Location of Documents:** The 2015-2021 Game Management Plan and Blue Mountains Elk Herd Plan are available to be read during business hours at the WDFW headquarters office in Olympia (Wildlife Management Program, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE). Alternatively, they can be obtained by calling WDFW Wildlife Program at (360) 902-2515 or viewed or downloaded from the WDFW SEPA website at the following address:  
[http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa\\_comment\\_docs.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html)

**Method of Comment:**

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to [SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov)
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at:  
[http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa\\_comment\\_docs.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html)
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

**Responsible Official:** Lisa Wood

**Position/Title:** SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division

**Address:** P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal.

If you have questions about this action, contact Lisa Wood at the address above, [SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov), phone (360) 902-2260, or fax (360) 902-2946.

**DATE OF ISSUE:** March 15, 2019

**SIGNATURE:**

