

**Meeting Date:** March 24, 2009

**Agenda Item No. 8**

**Agenda Item:** Season Setting: Big Game Species  
(Action)

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** Brad Compton

**Background:**

Staff will present deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear, mountain lion, and gray wolf season recommendations for 2009/2010. A summary of recommended changes include:

**DEER**

- Reduce antlerless harvest in north Idaho to help rebuild white-tailed deer populations.
- Standardize general season closing date to October 24 in south-central and eastern Idaho.
- Provide additional youth opportunity.
- Adjust controlled hunt permit levels in response to population changes, and to address chronic depredation concerns.

**ELK**

- Reduce antlerless harvest in north Idaho to help rebuild populations.
- Implement caps on Sawtooth 'A' & 'B' tags, Diamond Creek 'A' tags, Smoky Mountain 'A' tags, Pioneer 'A' tags
- Adjust controlled hunt permit levels in response to population changes, and to address chronic depredation concerns.

**PRONGHORN**

- Implement restrictions on general archery pronghorn hunts to reduce hunter congestion concerns, achieve management objectives, and provide an equitable distribution of participation and harvest among user groups.

**BLACK BEAR**

- Increase hunting opportunity in Clearwater Region.

**MOUNTAIN LION**

- No changes proposed.

**GRAY WOLF**

- Establish hunting season dates. Notes: 1) harvest quotas would not be established until summer, and 2) regulated hunting would be contingent on wolves being removed from Endangered Species Act restrictions.

**Policy issues:**

Idaho Statute 36-104 authorizes the Commission to establish rules for the taking of wildlife consistent with state policy. Species management plans provide Commission direction for population and harvest management.

**Public Involvement Process:**

The recommendations have resulted from year-round public involvement, population and harvest monitoring, and have been scoped internally and with the public through regional meetings and the website.

**Staff Recommendations:**

Preliminary recommendations are attached. Final Department recommendations, after considering public input, will be provided during the presentation. Staff recommends Landowner Appreciation Program hunts and permit levels be consistent with, and proportionate to, Commission adopted changes in regular controlled hunts and permit levels.

**Justification:**

Commission action required to adopt 2009/2010 hunting seasons for mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear, mountain lion, and gray wolf.