

Meeting Date: May 11, 2023

Agenda Item No. 5.H

Agenda Item: 2nd Controlled Hunt Drawing and Early Hunts **Bureau Chief Approval:** AW

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Background:

IDAPA Rule prescribes the Big Game (deer, elk, pronghorn, and black bear) Controlled Hunt draw application period dates, deadline for draw results, and the procedure for issuing unclaimed tags that haven't been purchased by the August 1 deadline. Prior to 2004, all Big Game Controlled Hunt tags that were not claimed by the required August 1 deadline remained unsold through the remainder of the year. With public input, the process was revised to conduct a second controlled hunt draw in August to provide hunters with another opportunity to apply for unclaimed tags. Tags still remaining after the second draw would be made available on a first-come, first-serve basis on August 25th.

Prior to 2016, unclaimed early season tags were offered via a first-come, first-serve sale, with no second application period. The licensing system in place at that time could not consistently accommodate the volume of customers for this sale event; so, to ensure all tags could be offered fairly, all tags were put in the second draw thereafter.

The second application period has been consistently offered for all unclaimed tags since 2016, and provides a second opportunity for hunters to apply for a controlled hunt for the season. Some early season hunters have shared feedback with the department that the timeline for the second application period negatively impacts their opportunity to hunt on an early season tag.

Rule authorizes the Director to make unclaimed tags available to sell first-come, first-served outside of the second application period, when tag hunt dates are early enough in the season that the second draw period timeline significantly limits the total number of days available to hunt on the tag. However, due to licensing system considerations, the Director has not used this authority recently.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

IDAPA Rule 13.01.08.258-259 outlines the dates and process for the Big Game Controlled Hunt draw and second draw for unclaimed tags. IDAPA Rule 13.01.08.258.08 gives the Director authority to designate certain leftover controlled hunt tags to become immediately available on a first-come, first-serve over-the-counter basis due to the dates of the hunt.

Public Involvement Process:

In early 2023, the Department received hunter requests for reconsideration of the second controlled hunt draw process particularly around those early season hunts that start in August, prior to the second application period draw being completed. In response, the Department agreed to review the history of unclaimed tags, the quantity of impacted early season hunts, and current licensing resources to evaluate issuing early hunt tags first-come, first-served in early August.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff will summarize early season Big Game Controlled Hunt hunts with start dates and season lengths that may warrant selling unclaimed tags on a first-come, first-served basis, and provide the Commission the opportunity to take formal action on the matter.

Sample Motion: I move the Commission support the proposed use of the authority delegated by rule, to the Director, for designating unclaimed early season Controlled Hunt tags on a first-come, first-served basis.

Justification: Offering a first-come, first-served sale event during the first week of August for unclaimed controlled hunt tags for early hunts would allow hunters more opportunity to plan and participate in these hunts.