

March 2025 Commission Meeting

Agenda Item: Season Setting – Big Game and LAP (Action)

Prepared by: Rick Ward

Position/Title: State Wildlife Manager

Background:

Regional staff scoped proposals for big game season changes, controlled hunt tag limits, and hunt boundary changes at open houses, public meetings, and through the Department's website during Feb 8-22. Following assessment of public input and final regional recommendations, regional staff will submit recommendations to the Wildlife Bureau and a final package of recommendations will be developed for the 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons for presentation to the Commission. Staff will also present recommendations for adjustments to Landowner Appreciation Program tags proportional to recommended changes to corresponding big game tag numbers.

Agenda Item No.: 5A

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

Recommendations have not been finalized as of this writing, but a summary of preliminary proposals scoped with the public is attached. Following review of public input and consideration of any new population survey information, proposals may be modified or rescinded. Final recommendations will be presented to the Commission at the meeting.

Statutory Authority and/or 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. This agenda item is to establish statewide big game hunting seasons for the 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons.

Public Involvement Process:

Recommendations have resulted from year-round public involvement and population and harvest monitoring. Proposals have been scoped internally and with the public through open houses and public meetings around the state, email outreach, and through the Department's website. Proposals were posted on the Department website and input was solicited from February 8-22. Public input will be evaluated and a summary will be provided during the presentation.

Justification:

Commission action is required to adopt 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons for mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, pronghorn, black bears, mountain lions, and gray wolves.

Commission action is also required to adopt the 2025 and 2026 Landowner Appreciation Program seasons.



Staff Recommendation:

After evaluation of public input, staff will develop final recommendations for the 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons. Those final recommendations will be presented to the Commission at the meeting. Staff recommends Landowner Appreciation Program hunts and tag levels be adjusted consistent with, and proportionate to, Commission adopted changes in regular controlled hunt timing, boundaries, and tag levels.

Suggested Motion:

Motion #1 - I move the Commission adopt staff recommendations for big game hunting seasons, tag numbers, and hunt boundaries for the 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons.

Motion #2 - I move the Commission adopt staff recommendations for the Landowner Appreciation Program seasons and tag numbers for 2025 and 2026 that are reflective of the 2025 and 2026 regular controlled hunt timing, boundaries, and tag levels.

Preliminary Proposals Scoped with the Public

DEER

Panhandle:

- Controlled Hunt Area 1-1X: Establish two new any-weapon, extra-antlered controlled hunts, white-tailed deer only, 50 tags each.
- Controlled Hunt Area 1-1X: Establish three new any-weapon, extra-antlerless controlled hunts, white-tailed deer only, 800 tags total.
- Controlled Hunt Area 1-2X: Hunt No 1119, extra-antlerless, white-tailed deer only - modify hunt area and reduce to 50 tags (-750).
- Controlled Hunt Area 2-1X: Hunt No 1120, extra antlerless reduce to 150 tags (-150).
- Controlled Hunt Area 3-1X: Hunt No 1121, extra antlerless, white-tailed deer only
 reduce to 75 tags (-75).
- Controlled Hunt Area 5-1X: Hunt No 1122, extra antlerless, white-tailed deer only
 reduce to 50 tags (-50).

Clearwater:

- Add late opportunity to the general-season white-tailed deer tag.
- Allow antlered harvest during the general muzzleloader-only season on whitetailed deer tag, Dec 2 – Dec 14.
- Establish an either-sex, muzzleloader-only season for general white-tailed deer tag, Nov 21 - Dec 5.
- Establish an either-sex, muzzleloader-only seasons for general white-tailed deer tag, Nov 21 - Dec 5.
- Eliminate mule deer-only restriction and allow harvest of antlered white-tailed deer in antlered controlled hunts.
- Controlled Hunt Area 18: Hunt No 1009, increase to 100 tags (+45) and Hunt No 1010 increase to 25 tags (+10).
- Controlled Hunt Area 8A: Hunt No 1065, eliminate either sex hunt, white-tailed deer only (50 tags).
- Controlled Hunt Area 18X: Establish an any weapon, extra antlered controlled hunt, Oct 10 – Nov 20, white-tailed deer only, 50 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 18X: Establish an any weapon, extra antlerless controlled hunt, Oct 10 – Nov 20, white-tailed deer only, 100 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 18X: Establish an any weapon, extra antlerless controlled hunt, mule deer only, Oct 17 – Nov 30, 50 tags.

Southwest – McCall:

Units 22 and 32: Extend youth either-sex season.

Southwest – Nampa:

 Controlled Hunt Area 39-1: Hunt No 1067, any weapon, either sex, Oct 10 – Oct 31 - reduce to 1,500 tags (-500).

- Controlled Hunt Area 39-1X: Hunt No 1114, any weapon, youth only, extra antlerless, Dec 1 – Dec 22 - increase tags to 100 (+30).
- Controlled Hunt Area 39-2X: Create new any-weapon, extra-antlerless, Oct 10 –
 Oct 31, 1,000 tags in a portion of Unit 39.
- Controlled Hunt Area 41: Hunt No 1032, any weapon, antlered, Nov 1 Nov 24 reduce to 75 tags (-25).
- Controlled Hunt Area 42: Hunt No 1033, any weapon, antlered, Nov 1 Nov 24 reduce to 50 tags (-25).

Magic Valley:

 Controlled Hunt Area 39-1: Hunt No 1067, any weapon, either sex, Oct 10 – Oct 31 - reduce to 1,500 tags (-500).

Southeast:

- o SE Mule Deer Working Group Unit 73A General Hunt Seasons.
- o SE Mule Deer Working Group Unit 76 General Hunt Seasons.
- o SE Mule Deer Working Group Unit 70 Controlled Hunt Seasons.
- SE Mule Deer Working Group Unit 70 Archery Hunt Seasons.
- o SE Mule Deer Working Group Unit 78 Controlled Hunt Seasons.
- Controlled Hunt Area 66A-1X: New any weapon, extra antlerless hunt, Aug 30 –
 Dec 31, 200 tags.

Upper Snake:

- Controlled Hunt Area 60-1: Hunt No. 1049, antlered hunt, Oct 10 Nov 30 modify hunt area and increase to 60 tags (+20).
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-1: Create new any weapon, antlerless hunt in modified Hunt Area 60-1, Oct 25 – Nov 15, 300 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-2: Hunt No. 1068, either sex, Oct 5 Nov 8 increase to 300 tags (+175).
- Controlled Hunt Area 62: Create new any weapon, either sex, Oct 5 Nov 8, 100 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 63A: Hunt No 1069, either sex, Oct 5 Nov 15, 50 tags remove mule deer only restriction.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-1: Hunt No. 1111, Youth only, either sex hunt, Oct. 10 –
 Oct. 24 modify hunt area and increase to 250 tags (+50).
- Controlled Hunt Area 62: Create new Youth only, any weapon, either-sex hunt,
 Oct 10 Oct 24, 50 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 63A-1X: Create new deer landowner permission hunt, extra antlerless deer, 50 tags.

Salmon:

- Controlled Hunt Area 21-1X: Hunt No 1128, any weapon, extra antlerless change season dates to Aug 30 – Oct 31 and increase tags to 200 (+100).
- Controlled Hunt Area 36A-1X: Hunt No 1130, any weapon, extra antlerless change season dates to Aug 30 – Oct 31 and increase tags to 200 (+100).

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ELK

Panhandle:

- Panhandle Zone: Remove general season antlerless elk seasons on A and B
 Tags.
- o Controlled Hunt Area 1: Establish an antlerless hunt in Unit 1 with 75 tags.
- o Controlled Hunt Area 2: Establish an antlerless hunt in Unit 2 with 25 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 2-1: Hunt No 2046, antlerless hunt, Aug 1 Dec 31, eliminate hunt (25 tags).
- o Controlled Hunt Area 3: Establish an antlerless hunt in Unit 3, 75 tags.
- o Controlled Hunt Area 5: Establish an antlerless hunt in Unit 5, 100 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 5-1: Hunt No 2049, antlerless, Oct 10 Dec 31 increase to 200 tags (+100).
- o Controlled Hunt Area 6: Establish an antlerless hunt in Unit 6, 100 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 5-2X: Create two new elk landowner permission hunts, extra antlerless elk, 120 tags total.

Clearwater:

- Dworshak Elk Working Group Proposal.
- Palouse Zone: Change current A Tag muzzleloader opportunity to Unit 8A only.
 Restructure Units 8 and 11A A-tag muzzleloader to be antlerless only, Dec 2 –
 Dec 14.
- o Elk City Zone: A Tag add Unit 16 archery opportunity Aug 30 Sept 30.
- Controlled Hunt Area 18: Hunt No 2002, change any weapon, antlered hunt season dates to Oct 1 – Oct 24 and reduce to 80 tags (-30).
- Controlled Hunt Area 18: Hunt No 2055, change any weapon, antlerless hunt season dates to Oct 20 – Nov 10.
- Controlled Hunt Area 16: Establish an any weapon, antlerless controlled hunt,
 Dec 10 Dec 31, 40 tags in portion of Unit 16.
- Controlled Hunt Area 14-1: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt, reduce to 80 tags (-40)

Southwest McCall:

- Weiser River Zone: Shift "Private Land Only" dates back 2 weeks on Weiser Zone
 B Tag and remove quota from Weiser B Tag.
- o Brownlee Zone: Add Brownlee B Tag antlerless opportunity.
- Controlled Hunt Area 31: Hunt No 2008 modify dates; add new antlered controlled hunt, 75 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 31: Hunt No 2071 and Hunt No 2072 increase tags to 300 total (+75).
- Controlled Hunt Area 31: Create new youth-only antlerless-only hunt, Oct 15 Nov 14, 100 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 31: Hunt No 2155, Youth only, Oct 1 Oct 14 increase to 50 tags (+20).

- Controlled Hunt Area 22-1: Create new antlerless controlled hunt (200 tags) and reduce tags in Hunt No 2060 to 100 (-100).
- Controlled Hunt Area 22-1: Shift closing date on Hunt No 2146 and create new youth-only antlerless controlled hunt, Oct 25 – Nov 10, 200 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 22-2X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt increase to 400 tags (+100).
- Controlled Hunt Area 31-2X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt increase to 200 tags (+50).

Southwest – Nampa:

- Boise River Zone: Add Unit 38 opportunity any weapon, any elk, August 1 to
 September 30, antlerless & spike only, October 1 December 31.
- Controlled Hunt Area 39-1X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt reduce tags to 150 (-150) and create new hunt, Jan 1- Jan 31, 50 tags.

Magic Valley:

- o Smoky-Bennett Zone: Reduce B Tag quota to 600 tags (-100).
- South Hills Zone: New any-weapon B Tag hunt in Unit 56 only.
- Big Desert Zone: Increase B Tag quota to 350 tags (+100).
- Controlled Hunt Area 46-1: Hunt No. 2023, any weapon, antlered hunt, Oct 15 Nov 30 - reduce to 10 tags (-5).
- Controlled Hunt Area 46-1: Hunt No. 2120, archery only, Aug. 30 Sep. 30 reduce to 5 tags (-5).
- Controlled Hunt Area 46-1: Hunt No 2130, muzzleloader only, Oct 1 Oct 14 reduce to 5 tags (-5).
- Controlled Hunt Area 44: Hunt No 2084, eliminate antlerless controlled hunt,
 Oct. 15 Nov. 10, 150 tags.
- Hunt Area 44: Hunt No. 2150, change any weapon youth-only antlerless-only season dates to Oct. 15 – Oct. 31.
- Controlled Hunt Area 48-1: Hunt No 2086, any weapon, antlerless hunt, Oct 15 Nov 14 - reduce to 175 tags (-75).
- Controlled Hunt Area 48-2: Hunt No 2087, any weapon, antlerless hunt Oct 15 Nov 14 - reduce to 150 tags (-50).
- Controlled Hunt Area 54: Hunt No. 2090, any weapon, antlerless hunt, Oct. 15 –
 Nov. 10 reduce to 125 tags (-75).
- Controlled Hunt Area 56: Hunt No 2092, eliminate any weapon, antlerless controlled hunt and shift to general hunt.

Southeast:

- Big Desert Zone: Increase B Tag quota to 350 tags (+100).
- o Diamond Creek Zone: Add B Tag hunting opportunity with a quota of 300 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 66A: Hunt No. 2101, any weapon, antlerless hunt, Oct 25 Nov 5 - increase to 60 tags (+10).
- Controlled Hunt Area 76: Hunt No. 2104, any weapon, antlerless hunt, Oct 25 Nov 15 - reduce to 600 tags (-100).

- Controlled Hunt Area 68-1, New any-weapon, either-sex hunt, Aug 1 Aug 29, 150 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 70-1: Hunt No. 2139, muzzleloader only hunt, 125 tags add late season antlerless-only hunt Dec 1 – Dec 31.
- Controlled Hunt Area 69-2X: New any weapon, extra antlerless hunt, Dec 1 Dec 31 with 75 tags, private land only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 74X: Hunt No. 2162, any weapon, extra antlerless hunt,
 Dec 1 Dec 15 increase to 100 tags (+25).
- Controlled Hunt Area 74X: Hunt No. 2163, any weapon, extra antlerless hunt,
 Dec 16 Dec 31 increase to 100 tags (+25).
- Hunt Area 76-1X: Hunt No. 2164 and 2165, any weapon, extra antlerless hunt extend season in Hunt No. 2164 to Dec 31 and eliminate Hunt No 2165 (-50 tags).
- Controlled Hunt Area 69-2X: New any weapon, extra antlerless hunt, Jan 1 Feb
 15, on private land only, 75 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 76-1X: Hunt No. 2285, extra antlerless hunt, Jan 1 Jan 15, 50 tags - convert to private land only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 76-1X: Hunt No. 2286, extra antlerless hunt, Jan 16 Jan 31, 50 tags convert to private land only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 66A-1X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt increase to 75 tags (+25).
- Controlled Hunt Area 72-1X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt increase to 50 tags (+25).
- Controlled Hunt Area 69-1X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt increase to 150 tags (+50).

Upper Snake:

- o Island Park Zone: Add Unit 60A to the Island Park A Tag.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-1: Hunt No. 2037, antlered hunt, Oct 1 Oct 14 increase 100 tags (+60)
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-2: Eliminate Hunt No. 2038, antlered hunt, Nov 1 Nov 30, 120 tags, and replace with two either-sex hunts with 100 tags each.
- Controlled Hunt Area 66-1: New any-weapon, antlered-only hunt, Nov 15 Nov 30, 50 tags
- Controlled Hunt Area 51: Hunt No. 2098, any weapon, antlerless hunt 150 tags shift season dates to Oct 16 – Nov 5.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-1: New any weapon, antlerless hunt, Oct 1 Oct 24, 400 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-1: Hunt No. 2095, antlerless hunt change dates to Oct 25 – Nov 14 and increase to 1,000 tags (+600).
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-2: Hunt No. 2096, antlerless hunt change season dates to Nov 15 to Nov 30 and modify hunt area.

- Controlled Hunt Area 62-1: Hunt No. 2097, antlerless hunt, Oct 15 Nov 14 increase tags to 150 (+50).
- Controlled Hunt Area 64-1: Create new any weapon, antlerless hunt, Oct. 15 Nov 14, 50 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 51-1: Create new any weapon, either sex hunt, Aug 1 Aug 29, 25 tags in those portions of Unit 51 that are outside the National Forest System boundary on or within one mile of private irrigated agricultural lands.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60A: Hunt No. 2111 eliminate any-weapon, either-sex hunt, Aug 1 – Sep 30, 125 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 63: Hunt No. 2114, either-sex hunt, Aug 31 Nov 30 reduce tags to 100 (-100).
- Controlled Hunt Area 36A: Hunt No. 2126 and 2127, muzzleloader only, either sex hunt, Nov 1 – Nov 30 - increase tags to 250 (+225), expand hunt area to all of Unit 36A, and eliminate Hunt No 2127 (125 tags).
- Controlled Hunt Area 66-1: Hunt No. 2138, muzzleloader only elk, either sex hunt
 increase to 75 tags (+25) and change season dates to Oct 1 Oct 14.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60-1: Hunt No. 2153, youth only, antlerless only increase to 200 tags (+100) and change dates to Oct 25 – Nov 14.
- Controlled Hunt Area 62-1X: Create new any weapon, extra antlerless hunt, Oct
 15 Nov 14, private land only, 100 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 63X: Hunt No. 2160, any weapon, extra antlerless hunt, Aug 1 – Oct 31 - increase to 100 tags (+50).
- Controlled Hunt Area 63X: Hunt No. 2161, any weapon, extra antlerless hunt, Nov 1 – Dec 31 - increase to 100 tags (+50).
- Controlled Hunt Area 69-2X: Create new any weapon, extra antlerless hunt, Dec
 1 Dec 31 on private land only, 75 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 69-2X: Create new any weapon, extra antlerless hunt, Jan 1
 Feb 15 on private land only, 75 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60A-1X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt increase to 150 tags (+50).
- o Controlled Hunt Area 62-2X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt modify hunt area.
- Controlled Hunt Area 63-1X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt new hunt, antlerless only, Aug – Dec 31, 50 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60A-2X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt new hunt, antlerless only, Jan 1 – Feb 15, 100 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 69-1X: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt increase to 150 tags (+50).

Salmon:

- Salmon Zone A Tag: Add greenfield hunt on private irrigated agricultural lands only in Unit 21A.
- Salmon Zone B Tag: Remove Unit 36B from any weapon season and reduce B Tag Quota to 2,000 tags (-507).

- Lemhi Zone: Remove 1-mile buffer from private irrigated agricultural lands, any weapon, antlerless portion of A Tag.
- Controlled Hunt Area 36B: Establish an any-weapon, antlered-only hunt, Oct. 15
 Nov. 8, 120 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 30A-1: Establish an any weapon, either-sex hunt, Aug. 1 Aug. 29, 10 tags
- Controlled Hunt Area 36A: Combine Hunt Numbers 2126 (hunt area 36A-1) and 2127 (hunt area 36A-2), muzzleloader-only, either-sex hunt, Nov 1 – Nov 30, modify hunt area to all of Unit 36A - increase total tags to 250 (+100).
- Controlled Hunt Area 36AX: Hunt No. 2159, any weapon, extra antlerless hunt,
 Dec. 1 Dec. 31 increase tags to 300 (+100).
- Controlled Hunt Area 36A-1X: Hunt No. 2280, any weapon, extra antlerless hunt,
 Jan. 1 Jan. 31 expand hunt area and increase to 100 tags (+50)

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Magic Valley:

- Controlled Hunt Area 44-1: Hunt No. 4010, any weapon hunt, Sep. 25 Oct. 24 increase tags to 100 (+25).
- Controlled Hunt Area 44-1: Create new any weapon, doe or fawn hunt, Oct. 5 –
 Oct. 24, 100 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 49-1: Hunt No 4037, archery only hunt, Aug 15 Sep 15, unlimited 1st choice only - convert to buck only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 43-1X: New pronghorn landowner permission hunt, private land only, extra doe or fawn, Aug 15 – Oct 24, 25 tags.
- Controlled Hunt Area 46-1X: Pronghorn landowner permission hunt modify hunt area.
- Controlled Hunt Area 54-1X: New pronghorn landowner permission hunt, private land only, extra doe or fawn, Aug 15 – Oct 24, 25 tags.

Southeast:

- Controlled Hunt Area 76-1: New any-weapon, either-sex hunt, Aug 15 Sep 15, 5 tags
- Controlled Hunt Area 68: Hunt No 4044, archery only hunt, Aug 15 Aug 30, 20 tags convert to buck only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 68: Hunt No 4045, archery only hunt, Sep 10 Sep 24, 75 tags convert to buck only.

Upper Snake:

- Controlled Hunt Area 50: Hunt No 4014, either sex, Sep 25 Oct 24 reduce to 50 tags (-25).
- Controlled Hunt Area 51: Hunt No 4015, either sex, Sep 25 Oct 24, 75 tags change hunt area to all of Unit 51.
- Controlled Hunt Area 49-1: Hunt No 4037, archery only, Aug 15 Sep 15, unlimited controlled - convert to buck only.

- Controlled Hunt Area 51-2: Hunt No 4038, archery only, Aug 15 Sep 15, unlimited controlled - convert to buck only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 59A-1: Hunt No 4042, archery only, Aug 15 Sep 15, unlimited controlled - convert to buck only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 60A-1: Create new muzzleloader only hunt, Sep 25 Oct 24, 30 tags.

Salmon:

- Controlled Hunt Area 30-1: Hunt No. 4002, any weapon, either sex, Sep 25 Oct
 24, 30 tags modify hunt area.
- Controlled Hunt Area 36B-1: Hunt No. 4004, any weapon, either sex, Sep. 25 –
 Oct. 24, 10 tags modify hunt area.
- Controlled Hunt Area 28-1: Hunt No. 4029, archery only, Aug 15- Sep 15, unlimited controlled - convert to buck only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 30A-1: Hunt No. 4030, archery only, Aug 15- Sep 15, unlimited controlled - convert to buck only.
- Controlled Hunt Area 36-1: Hunt No. 4031, archery only, Aug 15- Sep 15, unlimited controlled - convert to buck only.

BLACK BEAR

- Southwest McCall:
 - Unit 32A: Reduce harvest by eliminating spring and fall baiting and spring hound hunting in Unit 32A and shift general hunt in Unit 32A from "on or within one mile of private land" to "outside the National Forest System Boundary".
 - Unit 32: Allow use of dogs during Oct 1 Oct 9 in Units 22, 31 and 32 and shift Unit 32 controlled hunts (Hunt No 8504 and Hunt No 8003) to a general bear hunt.
 - Units 22 and 31: Allow use of dogs during Oct 1 Oct 9, shift general hunts in Units 22 and 31 from "on or within one mile of private land" to "outside the National Forest System Boundary", and allow use of dogs during Oct 1 - Oct 9 in Hunt Area 22-1 (Hunt No 8502 and Hunt No 8505).
- Magic Valley:
 - Units 52A and Unit 53: New bear hunting opportunity.
- Southeast:
 - Units 66A and 76: Extend take season to June 30.
 - o Units 68, 68A, 70, 73 and 73A: Extend general spring and fall seasons.
 - Units 71, 72, 74, 75, 77 and 78: Extend take season to June 30.

MOUNTAIN LION

- Statewide:
 - Year-round, statewide mountain lion season (no change to hound hunting season dates).



- Clearwater:
 - o Units 8 and 11A: add dogs prohibited Aug 30 Sept 14.
 - o Unit 10A: allow use of second lion tag.
 - o Modification to the nonresident hound permits in the Selway Elk Zone. Combine the Selway Zone (Units 16A, 17, 19, and 20) and Unit 17-1.
- Magic Valley:
 - o Unit 45: allow use of second mountain lion tag.
- Southeast:
 - o Units 70, 73 and 73A: Allow use of hounds beginning Nov 1.