

Meeting Date: May 14, 2020

Agenda Item No. 11

Agenda Item: Briefing on Special Bighorn Sheep
Lottery and Auction tags

Bureau Chief Approval: TB

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Background:

Idaho Code 36-408(5) states that one special bighorn sheep tag shall be auctioned off by an incorporated nonprofit wildlife conservation organization selected by the Commission each year. This Code section also authorizes the Commission to issue one special bighorn sheep tag by lottery, as marketed by the Department or a nonprofit wildlife conservation organization selected by the Commission. At Commission direction, the Bureau of Wildlife staff developed guidelines for competitive selection of organizations to offer wildlife auction and lottery tags. When multiple organizations apply, Wildlife Bureau staff review and score all applications for the selection process. In recent years only one organization (Wild Sheep Foundation) has applied to offer the bighorn sheep auction tag, and only one organization (Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation) has applied to market the bighorn sheep lottery tag.

Historically the auction and lottery tags generate more revenue in years in which the respective tag may be used in Hunt Area 11 in Hells Canyon: odd-numbered years for auction tags and even-numbered years for lottery tags.

Auction tag.— The auction tag sold for high values of \$180,000 in 2005 and \$175,000 in 2019. The winning bid for the tag was \$105,000 in 2018 and \$165,000 in 2020 when the tag could not be used in Hunt Area 11. Since 1988, the auction tag has generated \$2,471,975 for bighorn sheep research and management.

Lottery tag.-- The lottery tag has generated as much as \$114,531 in 2018 and \$86,246 in 2006. Lottery proceeds were \$65,825 in 2017 and \$109,593 in 2019. The lottery drawing is held on the last Wednesday in July each year and is scheduled for July 29, 2020. Since 1992, the lottery tag drawing has generated \$1,455,913.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code 36-408(5) authorizes the Commission to release 2 special bighorn sheep tags: one issued through auction, one through lottery, and authorizes the use of nonprofit wildlife organizations for conduct of the auction and marketing of the lottery tag.

Idaho Code 36-408(5) requires net proceeds from auction tag sale to be used for bighorn sheep research and management purposes; these funds may generally not be used for transplanting bighorn sheep, litigation, environmental impact statements, or acquisition of private property or federally-managed grazing permits.

Idaho Code 36-408(5) requires net proceeds from the lottery tag drawing to be used to solve problems between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep (or between wildlife and domestic animals in general), or to improve relationships between sportsmen and private landowners.

The Department uses a competitive process for timely, transparent selection of a conservation organization for each tag.

The bighorn sheep auction tag is valid in Hunt Area 11 during odd-numbered years (IDAPA 13.01.04.700.02) and the bighorn sheep lottery tag is valid in Hunt Area 11 during even-numbered years (IDAPA 13.01.04.800.02).

Public Involvement Process:

Instructions for applying to auction or conduct a lottery for these special tags are posted on the Department website year-round. The application period for organizations interested in the opportunity to market the special auction and lottery tags closes 45 days before the July Commission meeting each year (Monday, June 8 in 2020).

Justification:

Commission action is required to release special bighorn sheep tags to conservation groups. The competitive bid process assures special tags are issued objectively and that maximum value is received for the tags to implement critical management programs.

Staff Recommendation:

This agenda item is for commission information only. Staff will make a recommendation for selection of organizations for tag marketing/issuance at the July meeting.