

Guideline based on variable density

Description

We currently set our cougar guideline based on a median density that was calculated using research conducted in Washington over the past two decades. The department realizes that cougar density is variable on the landscape. Research only tells us the density in a specific time and place and may not apply everywhere but is informative when attempting to determine a statewide median density. Nothing precludes the Department or the commission from considering a range of density options that are possible on the landscape when setting guidelines.

Pros	Cons
Gives us the option of varying from a median density, when other factors could indicate a lower or higher cougar density.	Since local density may not be known it would be difficult know what density to use for the guideline.
May allow for a connection to the public safety objective in the GMP (see implementation language below).	

Implementation

The Department or the commission could use a density that differs from the median if they have information indicating that density may be different in a specific Population Management Unit (PMU). The information used to could include depredation numbers, hunter reports and other useful information that would indicate the density is different enough to warrant a change in the guideline.