

Deer and Elk Baiting

232-12-078, 232-12-079, and 232-12-088

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | <u>Page</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Summary Sheet | 1 |
| WAC 232-12-078..... | 3 |
| WAC 232-12-079..... | 5 |
| WAC 232-12-088..... | 7 |
| CR102 | 9 |

Summary Sheet

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Meeting dates: | March 20-21, 2015 |
| Agenda item: | Deer and Elk Baiting – Rule Briefing and Public Hearing |
| Presenter(s): | Jerry Nelson, Ph.D., Deer and Elk Section Manager, Wildlife Program |

Background:

The Commission requested that the use of bait for the purposes of hunting deer and elk be part of the discussion for the 2015-2017 hunting season setting process. The topic of using bait for deer and elk hunting was incorporated into all of the scoping and survey materials and was also one of the many topics included in the open house public meetings held throughout the state.

In the non-random input received through the Department's website:

- Favored no change to the rule- 63%
- Favored a ban on baiting for deer and elk but not including agricultural operations- 15%
- Favored a ban on baiting for deer and elk imposed on guides/outfitters and include a limit on the amount of bait allowed- 14%
- Favored a ban on baiting for deer and elk- 8%

In the random telephone survey of deer and elk hunters:

- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of deer hunters opposed or strongly opposed baiting.
- Twenty-one percent (21%) of deer hunters supported or strongly supported baiting, and
- Twenty-one percent (21%) of deer hunters were neutral or had no opinion

- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of elk hunters opposed or strongly opposed baiting
- Fourteen percent (14%) of elk hunters supported or strongly supported baiting, and
- Nineteen percent (19%) of elk hunters were neutral or had no opinion

The comments received during the comment period in response to the filing of the CR102 were:

- Eighty-seven percent (86.7%) of the people commenting were against one or all of the proposed new restrictions and preferred status quo.
- Six percent (5.7%) of those commenting were somewhat in favor of one or more of the proposed new restrictions if they could be modified or more limited in a variety of fashions.
- Seven and a half percent (7.5%) of those commenting were in favor of one or more of the proposed new restrictions.

In the public meeting setting and the written public comment received, those not in favor of using bait to hunt deer and elk cited reasons of fair chase, unfair advantages over hunters that don't use bait, concentrating animals in places where neighbors don't want them, and luring animals away from land that was formerly perceived as better hunting.

Those in favor of using bait to hunt deer and elk cited reasons of being more selective in their harvest, being better able to lure animals out of security cover that is impossible to move through, being able to hunt smaller acreages successfully, improving the probability of a clean kill and reducing their risk of wounding or losing animals, enhancing the hunting experience of a youth hunter or first-time hunter, and facilitating a hunting experience for a senior hunter or hunter with disability that would otherwise be unable to hunt.

Using the input received from the public, the Department will provide four(4) options for the Commission to consider:

- 1) No change, status quo
- 2) A limit on the amount of bait that can be used to hunt deer and elk; new WAC 232-12-079
- 3) A restriction on baiting with exceptions for youth, senior, disabled, and urban interface lands with landowner permission with an additional limit on amount of bait allowed; new WAC 232-12-088
- 4) A complete ban on baiting for hunting deer and elk not including agricultural operations; new WAC 232-12-078

Policy Issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

The Department is bringing a wide variety of policy issues to the Commission for their consideration regarding the use of bait to hunt deer and elk:

- Possibly disallowing the use of bait to hunt deer and elk
- Possibly limiting the amount of bait that can be used to hunt deer and elk
- Possibly disallowing the use of bait to hunt deer and elk but with exceptions for specific user groups like youth, senior, and hunters with disabilities
- Possibly disallowing the use of bait to hunt deer and elk with exceptions made for agricultural operations
- Retaining the existing rules with no change related to the use of bait to hunt deer or elk

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The Department conducted an extensive public involvement process to develop the 2015-2017 hunting season recommendations. In early August, an email was sent to over 50,000 hunters announcing that the Department was beginning the development of the 2015-2017 hunting season package. The email also informed them of the opportunity to provide their comments via an online issue scoping survey and invited them to attend one of the public meetings being held statewide. Four public meetings were held with approximately 150 people in attendance and nearly 4,000 responses were received on the scoping survey. In February, a postcard was mailed to approximately 600 organizations and individuals informing them of the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed regulations. These organizations and individuals were also informed of the opportunity to provide public testimony at the March Commission Meeting in Moses Lake.

Action requested (identify the specific Commission decisions you are seeking):

N/A

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A – Briefing only

Communications plan:

WDFW Website
News Releases
Hunting Pamphlet

NEW SECTION

WAC 232-12-078 Baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk.

(1) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Bait" is any salt, grain, fruit, hay or other food-based attractant that could serve as a lure or attraction for deer or elk.

(b) Commercial scent attractants and scent covers are not considered bait.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this section, it is unlawful to hunt deer or elk using any type of bait placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, scattered, or otherwise used for the purpose of attracting deer or elk to an area where one or more persons intend to hunt them.

(3) Exceptions: Hunting on or over the following is not considered an unlawful use of bait while hunting deer or elk:

(a) Farms or ranches where active agricultural operations including salt or mineral distribution for livestock, crop fields, orchards, vineyards, hay fields, haystacks, or pastures exist;

(b) Abandoned orchards or vineyards;

(c) Naturally occurring mineral deposits; or

(d) Food plots planted for wildlife and left undisturbed.

(4) A violation of this section is punishable as an infraction under RCW 77.15.160 (5)(b) if no animal has been shot or killed or RCW 77.15.410, Unlawful hunting of big game—Penalty, if an animal has been shot or killed.

[]

NEW SECTION

WAC 232-12-079 Bait volume limits for the purpose of hunting deer or elk. (1) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Bait" is any salt, grain, fruit, hay or other food-based attractant that could serve as a lure or attraction for deer or elk.

(b) Commercial scent attractants and scent covers are not considered bait.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this section, it is unlawful to hunt for deer and elk using any type of bait placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, scattered, or otherwise used for the purpose of attracting deer or elk to an area where one or more persons intend to hunt them, if the volume of bait exceeds 10 gallons (1.34 cubic feet).

(3) Exceptions: Hunting on or over the following is not considered an unlawful use of bait while hunting deer or elk:

(a) Farms or ranches where active agricultural operations including salt or mineral distribution for livestock, crop fields, orchards, vineyards, hay fields, haystacks, or pastures exist;

(b) Abandoned orchards or vineyards;

(c) Naturally occurring mineral deposits; or

(d) Food plots planted for wildlife and left undisturbed.

(4) A violation of this section is punishable as an infraction under RCW 77.15.160 (5)(b) if no animal has been shot or killed and RCW 77.15.410, Unlawful hunting of big game—Penalty, if an animal has been shot or killed.

[]

NEW SECTION

WAC 232-12-088 Baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk with exceptions. (1) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Bait" is any salt, grain, fruit, hay or other food-based attractant that could serve as a lure or attraction for deer or elk.

(b) Commercial scent attractants and scent covers are not considered bait.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this section, it is unlawful to hunt deer or elk using any type of bait placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, scattered, or otherwise used for the purpose of attracting deer or elk to an area where one or more persons intend to hunt them.

(3) Exceptions:

(a) Hunting on or over the following is not considered an unlawful use of bait while hunting deer or elk:

(i) Farms or ranches where active agricultural operations including salt or mineral distribution for livestock, crop fields, orchards, vineyards, hay fields, haystacks, or pastures exist;

(ii) Abandoned orchards or vineyards;

(iii) Naturally occurring mineral deposits; or

(iv) Food plots planted for wildlife and left undisturbed.

(b) Hunters that meet the requirements of a hunter with a disability and possessing a valid disabled hunter permit as provided in RCW 77.32.237 and 77.32.238; or is sixty-five years old or older; or qualifies as a youth hunter and possesses a youth license; can use bait for the purposes of hunting deer or elk if the volume of bait present is 10 gallons (1.34 cubic feet) or less.

(c) Hunters may use bait while hunting deer or elk on private lands with the express permission of the landowner if those lands are designated as within an urban growth area or a firearm restriction area by a county or municipal government and the volume of bait present is 10 gallons (1.34 cubic feet) or less.

(4) A violation of this section is punishable as an infraction under RCW 77.15.160 (5)(b) if no animal has been shot or killed or RCW 77.15.410, Unlawful hunting of big game—Penalty, if an animal has been shot or killed.

[]



PROPOSED RULE MAKING

CR-102 (June 2012)

(Implements RCW 34.05.320)

Do NOT use for expedited rule making

Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

- Preproposal Statement of Inquiry was filed as WSR 14-24-118 filed 12/3/14; or
- Expedited Rule Making--Proposed notice was filed as WSR _____; or
- Proposal is exempt under RCW 34.05.310(4) or 34.05.330(1).

- Original Notice
- Supplemental Notice to WSR _____
- Continuance of WSR _____

Title of rule and other identifying information:

See attachment A.

Hearing location(s):

Civic Center
411 South Balsam Street
Moses Lake, WA 98837

Date: March 20-21, 2015 Time: 8:00 AM

Submit written comments to:

Name: Wildlife Program Commission Meeting Public Comments
Address: 600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501
e-mail wildthing@dfw.wa.gov
fax (360) 902-2162 by (date) 2/24/15

Assistance for persons with disabilities: Contact

Tami Lininger by March 1, 2015

TTY (800) 833-6388 or (360) 902-2267

Date of intended adoption: On or after April 9, 2015

(Note: This is NOT the effective date)

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

See attachment A

Reasons supporting proposal:

See attachment A

Statutory authority for adoption: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.055, 77.12.047, 77.12.150 and 77.12.240.

Statute being implemented: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.055, 77.12.047, 77.12.150 and 77.12.240.

Is rule necessary because of a:

- Federal Law? Yes No
 - Federal Court Decision? Yes No
 - State Court Decision? Yes No
- If yes, CITATION:

CODE REVISER USE ONLY

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER
STATE OF WASHINGTON
FILED

DATE: February 02, 2015

TIME: 5:25 PM

WSR 15-04-098

DATE

February 2, 2015

NAME (type or print)

Joanna Eide

SIGNATURE

TITLE

Rules Coordinator

(COMPLETE REVERSE SIDE)

Agency comments or recommendations, if any, as to statutory language, implementation, enforcement, and fiscal matters:

When filing the permanent rule-making order (CR-103P), the WAC sections containing rule amendments will be consolidated into two or three Order Typing Service (OTS) documents.

Name of proponent: (person or organization) Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

- Private
- Public
- Governmental

Name of agency personnel responsible for:

| Name | Office Location | Phone |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Drafting..... Nate Pamplin | Natural Resource Building | (360) 902-2515 |
| Implementation....Nate Pamplin | Natural Resource Building | (360) 902-2515 |
| Enforcement..... Steven Crown | Natural Resource Building | (360) 902-2373 |

Has a small business economic impact statement been prepared under chapter 19.85 RCW or has a school district fiscal impact statement been prepared under section 1, chapter 210, Laws of 2012?

Yes. Attach copy of small business economic impact statement or school district fiscal impact statement.

A copy of the statement may be obtained by contacting:

Name:
Address:

phone () _____
fax () _____
e-mail _____

No. Explain why no statement was prepared.

These rules apply to recreational hunting and do not affect small business.

Is a cost-benefit analysis required under RCW 34.05.328?

Yes A preliminary cost-benefit analysis may be obtained by contacting:

Name:
Address:

phone () _____
fax () _____
e-mail _____

No: Please explain: This proposal does not involve hydraulics.

ATTACHMENT A

Title of rule and other identifying information:

232-12-078 Baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk.
232-12-079 Bait volume limits for the purposes of hunting deer or elk.
232-12-088 Baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk with exceptions.
232-28-248 Special closures and firearm restriction areas
232-28-337 Elk area descriptions
232-28-357 2015-2017 Deer general seasons and definitions
232-28-358 2015-2017 Elk general seasons and definitions
232-28-359 2015 Deer special permits
232-28-360 2015 Elk special permits
232-28-624 Deer area descriptions

WAC 232-12-078 Baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of this proposal is to further the public discussion regarding hunting deer and elk using bait. If adopted the rule would make it unlawful to use bait to hunt deer or elk for all hunters.

Reasons supporting proposal:

In the last two years the Department has been approached by hunters and landowners that do not approve of the practice of baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk. Additional input was received as part of the 3-year hunting season package, public process.

The non-random input the Department received via the website indicated that 23% of hunters wanted a ban on baiting with an exception for food plots and agricultural operations. Fourteen percent (14%) of hunters wanted to disallow the use of bait by hunting guides and restrict the manner and volume of baiting by hunters not using guides. A 63% majority of the hunters commenting wanted no change to the rules pertaining to baiting deer and elk.

In a random telephone survey of deer hunters, 59% either opposed or strongly opposed baiting for deer. Deer hunters that strongly supported or supported baiting for deer made up 21% of the respondents. Eleven percent (11%) of those surveyed were neutral and 9% didn't know.

In the same random telephone survey, 68% of elk hunters either opposed or strongly opposed baiting for elk. Elk hunters that supported or strongly supported using bait to hunt elk were 14%. Eleven percent (11%) of those surveyed were neutral and 8% didn't know.

Although some potential exists, the Department has no data at this time to suggest that the practice of baiting for deer and elk hunting has a negative population or natural resource effect. Therefore it is a social issue that the Fish and Wildlife Commission will address.

232-12-079 Bait volume limits for the purposes of hunting deer or elk

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of this proposal is to further the public discussion regarding hunting deer and elk using bait. If adopted the rule would make it unlawful to use bait to hunt deer or elk if the bait volume exceeded 10 gallons (1.34 cubic feet).

Reasons supporting proposal:

In the last two years the Department has been approached by hunters and landowners that do not approve of the practice of baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk. Additional input was received as part of the 3-year hunting season package, public process.

The non-random input the Department received via the website indicated that 23% of hunters wanted a ban on baiting with an exception for food plots and agricultural operations. Fourteen percent (14%) of hunters wanted to disallow the use of bait by hunting guides and restrict the manner and volume of baiting by hunters not using guides. A 63% majority of the hunters commenting wanted no change to the rules pertaining to baiting deer and elk.

In a random telephone survey of deer hunters, 59% either opposed or strongly opposed baiting for deer. Deer hunters that strongly supported or supported baiting for deer made up 21% of the respondents. Eleven percent (11%) of those surveyed were neutral and 9% didn't know.

In the same random telephone survey, 68% of elk hunters either opposed or strongly opposed baiting for elk. Elk hunters that supported or strongly supported using bait to hunt elk were 14%. Eleven percent (11%) of those surveyed were neutral and 8% didn't know.

Although some potential exists, the Department has no data at this time to suggest that the practice of baiting for deer and elk hunting is having a negative population or natural resource effect in Washington. Therefore it is a social issue that the Fish and Wildlife Commission will address.

232-12-088 Baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk with exceptions.

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of this proposal is to further the public discussion regarding hunting deer and elk using bait. If adopted the rule would make it unlawful to use bait to hunt deer or elk with some exceptions for youth hunters, elderly hunters, and hunters with disabilities while still imposing a volume restriction.

Reasons supporting proposal:

In the last two years the Department has been approached by hunters and landowners that do not approve of the practice of baiting for the purposes of hunting deer or elk. Additional input was received as part of the 3-year hunting season package, public process.

The non-random input the Department received via the website indicated that 23% of hunters wanted a ban on baiting with an exception for food plots and agricultural operations. Fourteen percent (14%) of hunters wanted to disallow the use of bait by hunting guides and restrict the manner and volume of baiting by hunters not using guides. A 63% majority of the hunters commenting wanted no change to the rules pertaining to baiting deer and elk.

In a random telephone survey of deer hunters, 59% either opposed or strongly opposed baiting for deer. Deer hunters that strongly supported or supported baiting for deer made up 21% of the respondents. Eleven percent (11%) of those surveyed were neutral and 9% didn't know.

In the same random telephone survey, 68% of elk hunters either opposed or strongly opposed baiting for elk. Elk hunters that supported or strongly supported using bait to hunt elk were 14%. Eleven percent (11%) of those surveyed were neutral and 8% didn't know.

Although some potential exists, the Department has no data at this time to suggest that the practice of baiting for deer and elk hunting is having a negative population or natural resource effect in Washington. Therefore it is a social issue that the Fish and Wildlife Commission will address.

232-28-248 Special closures and firearm restriction areas

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of the proposal is to change the Special Closures and Firearm Restriction Areas; adjust the boundaries and dates of Firearm Restriction Areas to better address safety issues while still accommodating hunting as a management tool. The proposal also recommends adding semi-auto handguns of .40 caliber or larger for the modern firearm season.

The proposed changes to the Deer Area Descriptions will accommodate additional land acquired and added to the 4-O Wildlife Area since last year. The effect will be to better discern hunting boundaries.

The proposed changes to the Elk Area Descriptions will accommodate additional land acquired and added to the 4-O Wildlife Area since last year. The proposal also recommends an adjustment to Elk Area 3911 which will remove a portion of public land. This change will allow better distribution of elk away from private agricultural lands. A boundary change is proposed for an Elk Area in Klickitat County to better address wildlife conflict and a new Elk Area is proposed in GMU 522 to create a new Quality elk opportunity. In addition, boundary changes to an existing Elk Area and the creation of a new Elk Area are proposed to better address agricultural damage caused by elk in Pierce County.

Reasons supporting proposal:

Special closures and firearm restriction areas allow the Fish and Wildlife Commission to restrict or close hunting activity in certain areas to optimize safety, discourage trespass on restricted lands, and protect sensitive species.

Deer Areas and Elk Areas allow the Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt hunting seasons that can be conducted at a smaller scale than the Game Management Unit. Setting seasons at this scale allows for more strategic wildlife management using hunting as a tool to control populations and mitigate wildlife conflict.

232-28-337 Elk area descriptions

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of the proposal is to change the Special Closures and Firearm Restriction Areas; adjust the boundaries and dates of Firearm Restriction Areas to better address safety issues while still accommodating hunting as a management tool. The proposal also recommends adding semi-auto handguns of .40 caliber or larger for the modern firearm season.

The proposed changes to the Deer Area Descriptions will accommodate additional land acquired and added to the 4-O Wildlife Area since last year. The effect will be to better discern hunting boundaries.

The proposed changes to the Elk Area Descriptions will accommodate additional land acquired and added to the 4-O Wildlife Area since last year. The proposal also recommends an adjustment to Elk Area 3911 which will remove a portion of public land. This change will allow better distribution of elk away from private agricultural lands. A boundary change is proposed for an Elk Area in Klickitat County to better address wildlife conflict and a new Elk Area is proposed in GMU 522 to create a new Quality elk opportunity. In addition, boundary changes to an existing Elk Area and the creation of a new Elk Area are proposed to better address agricultural damage caused by elk in Pierce County.

Reasons supporting proposal:

Special closures and firearm restriction areas allow the Fish and Wildlife Commission to restrict or close hunting activity in certain areas to optimize safety, discourage trespass on restricted lands, and protect sensitive species.

Deer Areas and Elk Areas allow the Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt hunting seasons that can be conducted at a smaller scale than the Game Management Unit. Setting seasons at this scale allows for more strategic wildlife management using hunting as a tool to control populations and mitigate wildlife conflict.

232-28-357 2015-2017 Deer general seasons and definitions

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of this proposal is to retain general season deer hunting opportunity for the years 2015-2017. The purpose of this proposal is also to retain special permit deer hunting opportunity for 2015. In addition, the purpose of the proposal is to balance the hunting opportunity between user groups. The proposal also increases the opportunity when deer populations allow, and reduces the opportunity when declining deer numbers warrant a change.

Reasons supporting proposal: These proposals provide for recreational deer hunting opportunity and protects deer from overharvest. The proposal would maintain sustainable general deer hunting season opportunities for 2015-2017. The proposal would also maintain sustainable deer special permit hunting season opportunities for 2015. The proposal helps address deer agricultural damage problems and provides for deer population control when needed.

232-28-358 2015-2017 Elk general seasons and definitions

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of this proposal is to retain general season elk hunting opportunity for 2015-2017 and retain elk special permit hunting opportunity for 2015. The purpose is also to balance the elk hunting opportunity between user groups. The proposal also increases elk hunting opportunity when elk populations allow, and reduces elk hunting opportunity when declining elk numbers warrant a change.

Reasons supporting proposal: This proposal provides for recreational elk hunting opportunity and protects elk from overharvest. The proposal would maintain sustainable general elk hunting season opportunities for 2015-2017 and sustainable elk special permit hunting opportunity for 2015. The proposal helps address elk agricultural damage problems and provides for elk population control when needed.

232-28-359 2015 Deer special permits

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of this proposal is to retain general season deer hunting opportunity for the years 2015-2017. The purpose of this proposal is also to retain special permit deer hunting opportunity for 2015. In addition, the purpose of the proposal is to balance the hunting opportunity between user groups. The proposal also increases the opportunity when deer populations allow, and reduces the opportunity when declining deer numbers warrant a change.

Reasons supporting proposal: These proposals provide for recreational deer hunting opportunity and protects deer from overharvest. The proposal would maintain sustainable general deer hunting season opportunities for 2015-2017. The proposal would also maintain sustainable deer special permit hunting

season opportunities for 2015. The proposal helps address deer agricultural damage problems and provides for deer population control when needed.

232-28-360 2015 Elk special permits.

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of this proposal is to retain general season elk hunting opportunity for 2015-2017 and retain elk special permit hunting opportunity for 2015. The purpose is also to balance the elk hunting opportunity between user groups. The proposal also increases elk hunting opportunity when elk populations allow, and reduces elk hunting opportunity when declining elk numbers warrant a change.

Reasons supporting proposal: This proposal provides for recreational elk hunting opportunity and protects elk from overharvest. The proposal would maintain sustainable general elk hunting season opportunities for 2015-2017 and sustainable elk special permit hunting opportunity for 2015. The proposal helps address elk agricultural damage problems and provides for elk population control when needed.

232-28-624 Deer area descriptions

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules:

The purpose of the proposal is to change the Special Closures and Firearm Restriction Areas; adjust the boundaries and dates of Firearm Restriction Areas to better address safety issues while still accommodating hunting as a management tool. The proposal also recommends adding semi-auto handguns of .40 caliber or larger for the modern firearm season.

The proposed changes to the Deer Area Descriptions will accommodate additional land acquired and added to the 4-O Wildlife Area since last year. The effect will be to better discern hunting boundaries.

The proposed changes to the Elk Area Descriptions will accommodate additional land acquired and added to the 4-O Wildlife Area since last year. The proposal also recommends an adjustment to Elk Area 3911 which will remove a portion of public land. This change will allow better distribution of elk away from private agricultural lands. A boundary change is proposed for an Elk Area in Klickitat County to better address wildlife conflict and a new Elk Area is proposed in GMU 522 to create a new Quality elk opportunity. In addition, boundary changes to an existing Elk Area and the creation of a new Elk Area are proposed to better address agricultural damage caused by elk in Pierce County.

Reasons supporting proposal:

Special closures and firearm restriction areas allow the Fish and Wildlife Commission to restrict or close hunting activity in certain areas to optimize safety, discourage trespass on restricted lands, and protect sensitive species.

Deer Areas and Elk Areas allow the Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt hunting seasons that can be conducted at a smaller scale than the Game Management Unit. Setting seasons at this scale allows for more strategic wildlife management using hunting as a tool to control populations and mitigate wildlife conflict.