

Agenda Item 12

Baiting Deer and Elk

WAC 232-12-239, 232-12-245, 232-12-246



Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

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Background

- 2015-17 3-year package issue –
 - Public meetings;
 - Website comments;
 - Random survey of deer and elk hunters;
 - Public hearing at Commission meeting.
- Over 1,600 comments received.

2015 Decision

- Over 80% of comments from the public requested no change – allow baiting.
- Random survey of deer and elk hunters showed a majority supported limits on baiting.



Bins of Fruit Sometimes Used as Bait

2015 Decision

- GMAC and public testimony supported no change.
- Commission decided to make no change.
- Directed staff to look into the issue further for 2016.
- Volume of bait and timing.



Photo: Wisconsin DNR

Bait Pile of Corn and Apples

Focus Group

- Focus group of hunters
 - Pro-baiting, against baiting, middle ground.
- Charge: Evaluate issue considering science, social, and political perspectives and identify potential rule changes.
- Group met 3 times over a 9-month period.



Elk with Hay in the Background

Focus Group Findings

- Very polarizing issue.
- Increased understanding of the issue.
- Consensus that artificial scents and normal agricultural practices should not be considered "bait".
- Identified volume as the major issue.
- Majority of the group saw a need for compromise.
- Some remained committed to their position.

Additional 2016 Input

- GMAC is also polarized – majority see a value to middle-ground.
- Public input received online – over 75% supported no change.

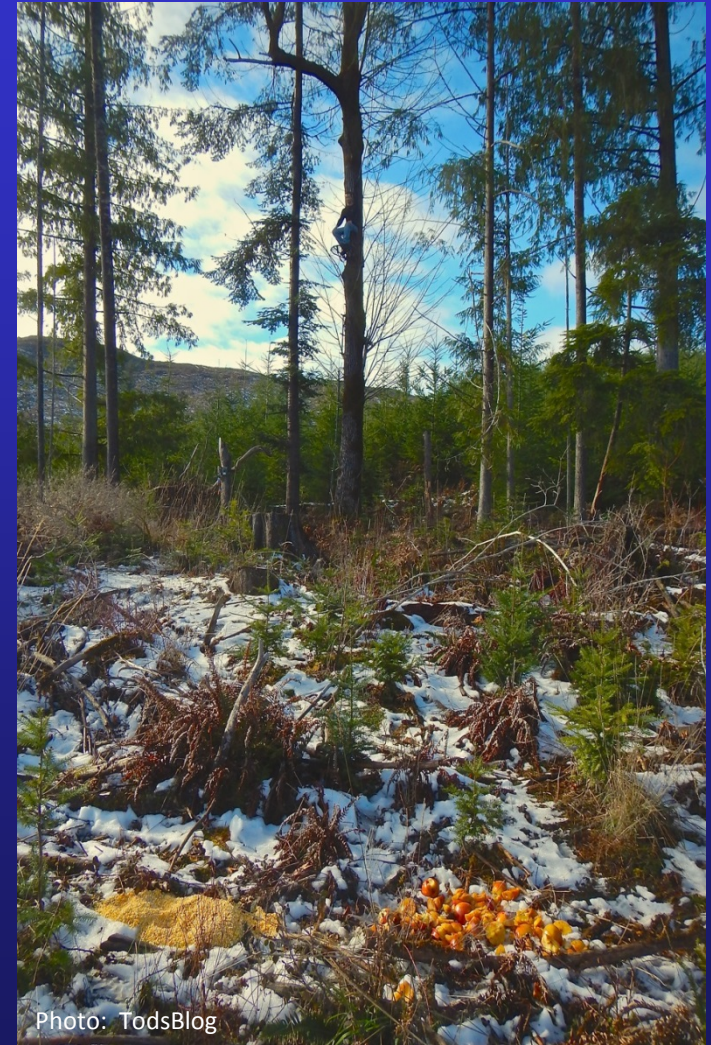


Photo: TodsBlog

Tree Stand With Bait

Perspectives In Favor of Baiting

Input from focus group, public meetings, GMAC,
and written public comment:

- The ability to lure animals out of thick cover; ability to be more selective
- Improves hunt on smaller acreages
- Improves the probability of a clean kill
- Enhances the hunting experience for a youth hunter or first-time hunter
- Facilitates a hunting experience for a senior hunter or hunter with disability
- Some businesses rely on baiting
- Unnecessarily restricts hunting without proof of biological problem



Photo: Realtree Outdoors

Deer Using Corn Bait

Perspectives Against Baiting

Input from focus group, public meetings, GMAC,
and written public comment:

- Nutritional impacts
- Fair chase and ethical hunting
- Concentrating animals – concern about nuisance and disease
- Luring animals away from other hunters
- Negative habitat impacts



Deer Using an Apple Bait Pile

Potential Rules

No Change

Allows use of bait for deer and elk hunting.

Pro –

- Does not directly affect hunters

Con –

- Issue of baiting volume is not addressed

Potential Rules

232-12-246

- Allows baiting, but limits to 10 gallons.
- Exempts scents and agriculture/food plots

Floor Change: 4 (e) exempt bait if authorized by a department permit.

Rationale: Allows for the department to allow baiting based on a management objective

Potential Rules

232-12-246

- Allows baiting, but limits to 10 gallons.
- Exempts scents and agriculture/food plots

Pro –

- Addresses concerns raised regarding large volumes of bait

Con –

- Will significantly affect some hunters who use large quantities of bait
- Complicates rules

Potential Rules

232-12-245

- Allows baiting, but limits to 10 gallons and 200 yards apart.
- Exempts scents and agriculture/food plots

Floor Change: 4 (e) exempt bait if authorized by a department permit.

Rationale: Allows for the department to allow baiting based on a management objective

Potential Rules

232-12-245

- Allows baiting, but limits to 10 gallons and 200 yards apart.
- Exempts scents and agriculture/food plots

Pro –

- Addresses concerns raised regarding large volumes of bait being used.

Potential Rules

232-12-245

- Allows baiting, but limits to 10 gallons and 200 yards apart.
- Exempts scents and agriculture/food plots

Con –

- Will significantly affect some hunters who use large quantities of bait.
- Complicates rules
- Unintentional violations
 - Unknown baiting stations
 - Small parcels

Potential Rules

232-12-239

Eliminates the use of bait for deer and elk hunting.

Floor Change: 3 (e) exempt bait if authorized by a department permit.

Rationale: Allows for the department to allow baiting based on a management objective

Potential Rules

232-12-239

Eliminates the use of bait for deer and elk hunting.

Pro –

- Addresses concerns raised regarding large volumes of bait being used.

Con –

- Could significantly affect hunting statewide

Questions

