

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: November 17, 2017

Agenda item: Timing for Sale of Special Hunt Permit Applications

Presenter(s): Mick Cope, Deputy Assistant Director, Wildlife Program and Evan Yett, WILD System Manager, Licensing Division

Background summary:

Department staff are evaluating the logistics of selling special hunt applications in December, versus mid-April, and will present an update and seek Commission input. Hunt choices and special hunt application submittal process would continue with same time-period of mid-April through mid-May, after Commission approval of hunting season structure and permit levels. The expanded purchase window could go into effect as early as December 2017.

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

- **Option 1-** Allow for Special Hunt application purchases from December 1 through the Special Hunt deadline, beginning December 2017.
 - Submittals would continue to be open from mid-April to mid-May
- **Option 2-** Make no changes to how Special Hunt applications are sold.
 - Sales and submittals are allowed during a one-month window from mid-April to mid-May.

Impacts to choosing Option 1:

- Pros-
 - A customer could get everything they need in a single transaction.
 - Allows for the agency to promote special hunt application sales for five months. This could allow us to increase participation and revenue.
 - The WILD system is configurable to start selling the applications on any desired date.
 - Cons-
 - The current process is that the customer must have a license and tag to purchase a special hunt application. Special Hunt Areas and permit numbers are not released until mid-April (after the April Commission meeting) which may cause the hunter to not know in advance what weapon they want to declare.
 - If a hunter wants to change their weapon choice, the Tag Exchange Process is in place to allow a customer to change their tag prior to the submittal.
 - On rare occasion, the customer may be given the opportunity to buy an application for a category that could be eliminated because no hunts are available (Example- Conflict Goat). This could happen because the hunts are not finalized until the April Commission meeting. However, this would likely be rare and the Department would likely be able to anticipate whether permits are available in categories with few hunt
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choices.

- This may cause additional staffing costs to issue these customers refunds?
 - The Wildlife Program would be responsible to make a decision on Hunt Categories prior to sales starting on December 1.
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- Issue for Multi Season tag winners- A customer can currently purchase a Multi Season Application for Deer and/or Elk without purchasing their license and tag. Once they find out they win, they can go to a dealer to purchase the Multi Season Tag. While customers typically wait until after seeing the drawing results to declare their weapon choice, they would be required to purchase their license and tag to purchase special hunt applications starting December 1. Declaring the weapon for a general tag and then winning a chance to buy a Multi-Season tag causes additional steps in the purchase process that impacts the customer and dealer.
 - The process to buy a Multi Season Tag is cumbersome if the general season tag has already been selected. The customer/license dealer must contact WDFW Licensing prior to purchasing the multi-season tag. Licensing is going to work with the vendor to improve this process whether this change occurs or not.
 - WAC 220-412-080 currently states: “1. Deer, elk, cougar, or black bear special hunting season permit applications: A. **To apply** for special hunting season permits for all categories of deer, elk, cougar, or black bear, applicants must have a valid Washington big game hunting license and a valid transport tag for the appropriate species. To apply for a particular hunt, each applicant for deer or elk must have the proper transport tag as identified in the special deer or elk permit regulations.”

This WAC would need to be changed, first via an e-rule, and then a permanent rule would need to be adopted as part of the March/April 2018 public rule-making process on the three-year hunting package. Section A needs to state: **To purchase** a Special Hunt Permit Application....

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

The WILD System is configured to make this change with minimal impact on staffing.

This change may cause an increase to workload based on some of the potential issues identified above.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Game Division asked the Game Management Advisory Council if they had any concerns from selling Special Hunt Applications in December. but the results of that outreach was not known at the time this Summary Sheet was submitted.

Action requested:

Briefing only. Staff are requesting input or potential guidance from the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Draft motion language: N/A

Justification for Commission action:

Post decision communications plan:

A news release, social media posts, and direct email will be used to let hunters know about the opportunity to buy special hunt applications when the LY2018-19 products are available, should the decision be made to go this direction.
