

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

The Department has been using the same process and timelines for setting big game seasons and tag numbers for decades. Key points in the current process are:

- Field Biologists collect biological data November to March
- Field Biologists submit initial tag and season recommendations to Wildlife Division by March 20th
- Department proposals finalized early-April
- Public meetings held around the state early-May
- Commission approval of current year tag numbers in June
- Commission approval of following year hunts and season dates in October
- Big game regulations book printed in December
- Controlled hunt application deadline May 15th
- Controlled hunt draw results available mid-June

A team of Department field, headquarters and Director's Office staff recently reviewed the process to identify process efficiencies and improvements that could be implemented.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The team's recommendations have been communicated to leadership of Oregon's sport groups via the Sport Group Leaders meeting held in Salem and other presentations.

ISSUE 1

PROPOSED CHANGE TO PROCESS AND TIMELINES FOR SETTING BIG GAME SEASONS AND TAG NUMBERS

ANALYSIS

After a lengthy review of the current process and timelines, the team identified many concerns, including:

- Tag and hunt proposals being developed before all biological data was collected and final harvest survey results are available
- Short window between public meetings and Commission approval does not give hunters and sport groups adequate time to review and comment on proposals
- Setting tag numbers and hunts at separate Commission meetings is inconvenient and confusing for hunters commenting on proposals and an inefficient use of staff and Commissioner's time
- Big game regulations book being printed with previous year tag numbers instead of the actual number of tags for the hunt

The Department is proposing the following changes to develop efficiencies in the process, provide more time for hunters to review and comment on proposals, and be able to provide actual tag numbers in the regulations book:

- Begin setting big game tag numbers one year in advance based on population trends while still maintaining the ability to make emergency changes in the spring due to major population changes.
- Only go to the Commission once a year in September to set following year tag numbers and seasons.

OPTIONS

**STAFF
RECOMMENDATION**

N/A – Informational only

DRAFT MOTION	N/A
EFFECTIVE DATE	