

To: Members of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission
From: Danielle Isenhardt, Regulations Manager
Date: August 24, 2018

Re: 2020-2024 Big Game Season Structure, Finalization of Discussion Topics and Public Outreach Approach

This memo provides an update to the Commission on the 2020-2024 BGSS planning process and summarizes the final list of recommended discussion topics for CPW's public outreach efforts.

Public Outreach and Involvement

Over the years, the Commission and staff have used a variety of methods to inform interested publics about BGSS and to gather input on key issues. These activities have included media outreach, public meetings, targeted stakeholder briefings, quantitative surveys, telephone town halls and focus groups. The breadth of outreach efforts has generally been driven by the scope of each planning process.

With the high level of hunter satisfaction heard during the past two season structure processes, CPW proposes a moderate level of public involvement for 2020-2024 BGSS with a narrowly focused list of discussion topics. Under this approach, harvest survey data could be consulted without including a Big Game Attitudes survey. The number of in-person meetings could also be reduced by utilizing existing meetings with stakeholder organizations, supplemented by telephone town halls and a public online event. Focus groups may also be a useful tool to discuss topics with a mixture of constituents with different backgrounds and affiliations.

So far, the 2020-2024 BGSS has been discussed with the Sportsman's Roundtable at their Bi-Annual August meeting, which included attendance by other invited stakeholders. A flyer and archery comment form were also circulated at three of the regional sportsman's caucus meetings in late July and early August. In addition to these meetings, CPW staff also plans to discuss BGSS at other regularly scheduled hunting organization meetings across the state from now into early spring. There will also be two telephone town halls, one for residents and one for non-residents sometime in January or February of 2019 as well as a webinar or online live event.

Topics

As far as potential topics to discuss during these public meetings, the topics that have arose since the last season structure, amongst staff, members of the public and the Commission include the following:

The Archery and Muzzleloader Seasons

- Addressing the overlap and timing of the archery and muzzleloader elk and deer seasons based on safety concerns. (citizen petition)
- Moving the start of the 28-day archery season to begin in September.
- Exploring options to address the growing number of archery hunters in the field. This could include consideration of limiting some (such as either-sex) or all over-the-counter(OTC) archery licenses or setting caps on the OTC licenses for elk.
- Creating OTC options for hunting elk and pronghorn for muzzleloader hunters. (citizen petition)

Pronghorn

- Adjusting the timing for the late antelope seasons.
- Increasing hunting opportunity for pronghorn by extending the rifle season to include two-full weekends or creating a second optional rifle pronghorn season.

Moose

- Establishing an optional second rifle moose season to increase harvest in targeted areas of the state.
- Allowing moose license holders to hunt any available moose season for their unit(s) with an unfilled license and using the applicable method of take. (citizen petition)

Bear

- Exploring ways to increase bear harvest without affecting crowding, such as creating multiple September rifle seasons or creating bear combination licenses.

Deer

- Adjust timing for the plains early rifle deer season to avoid hunting during the whitetail rut.

Youth

- Increasing youth opportunity and participation through options such as combo licenses, youth bear licenses or increasing existing youth preference for select hunts.

General Season Timing

- Starting seasons mid-week instead of always on a Saturday.

Based on the proposed moderate level of public involvement, topics such as license allocation, preference points, and lion hunting would be avoided or addressed through a separate planning process.

CPW staff seeks approval from the Commission on this list of topics, which will ultimately be included for public discussion and final consideration. A summary of these outreach efforts and public feedback will be shared with the Commission at the March 2019 meeting.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thanks for your time reviewing this list.

5-Year Big Game Season Structure



Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) needs your help in developing the next 5-Year Big Game Season Structure for deer, elk, pronghorn, moose, and bear for the 2020-2024 seasons.

What is the 5-Year Big Game Season Structure?

Every five years, the Parks and Wildlife Commission (Commission) adopts a Big Game Season Structure to provide an overall framework for hunting regulations. The 5-Year Big Game Season Structure primarily addresses issues like the length and timing of seasons for different species, allowable hunting methods, the general proportion of licenses that will be limited or unlimited, and provides guidelines to balance different kinds of hunting opportunities. The current Big Game Season Structure ends in 2019, with the next cycle covering the time period of 2020-2024. Input and comments from the public are critical to informing this process.



Why does Colorado Parks and Wildlife have a 5-Year Big Game Season Structure?

The 5-Year Big Game Season Structure helps guide CPW's big game management in concert with herd management planning and annual license setting. In addition, it helps CPW provide a broad range of hunting opportunities to fit the varied preferences of different hunters.

The Commission adopts the Big Game Season Structure for a five-year time period for several reasons. First,

this timeframe provides consistency for CPW to assess the effectiveness of management actions and hunting seasons over time. Second, it is for YOUR convenience! It allows hunters the opportunity to request vacation time, plan hunts, and arrange schedules. It allows landowners to plan for seasons and hunting opportunities on their property. It allows guides and outfitters, restaurant and motel owners, and other service providers to make business plans with some certainty about hunting seasons for the next five years.

<http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/SeasonStructure.aspx>

5-Year Big Game Season Structure

2020- 2024 Big Game Season Structure SCOPING - Summer 2018

Topic Areas

CPW is currently considering the following list of topics for regulatory or programmatic changes during the upcoming 5-year Big Game Season Structure:

Timing and length of seasons

Pronghorn: Increasing hunting opportunity through mechanisms such as extending the rifle pronghorn season to include two full weekends, or creating an optional second pronghorn rifle season. Also exploring options to extend dates for late season hunts in order to address game damage concerns.

Moose: Allowing licensed moose hunters to hunt any available moose seasons for their unit(s) with an unfilled license and appropriate method of take; providing maximum opportunity for a successful harvest. Additionally, broadening herd management tools, such as establishing an optional second rifle season for moose to increase harvest success in targeted areas of the state.

Whitetail Deer: Implementing a set date for the eastern rifle whitetail deer season(s) in order to avoid potential hunting during the rut.

Bears: Exploring ways to increase hunter harvest opportunity without affecting crowding, such as creating multiple September seasons or bear combination licenses.

Youth Outreach & Participation

Increasing youth opportunity and participation. Potential options could include creating new combo licenses and/or increasing existing youth preference for select hunts.

Archery Season

Exploring options to address increasing participation during the archery season. This could include consideration of limiting some or all archery licenses or setting caps on over-the-counter licenses.

Considering season changes to address the overlap and timing of the archery and muzzleloader deer and elk seasons.

Consider starting the archery season in September.

How you can participate

Your opinions will help the Commission decide on a 5-Year Big Game Season Structure that best addresses current hunter preferences and desires.

Public Forums – CPW will use a mix of existing meetings and special forums throughout the process to give you the chance to discuss different ways to structure the hunting seasons. Public meetings will take place around the state during January and February 2019. Check the CPW website for schedules and locations.

July - September 2018 – CPW will identify and finalize topic areas to consider during this process.

January and February 2019 - CPW will hold public forums to gather input on potential changes.

By September 2019 – The Commission will adopt changes for the 2020-2024 Big Game Season Structure.

Stay Updated - Postings to the Big Game Season Structure webpage will provide the most current news and information throughout this year-long process. Refer to this site for public forums and other opportunities to offer input. Visit cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/SeasonStructure.aspx for more information. You can also receive email notices by signing up for CPW eNews from the CPW homepage: cpw.state.co.us.