BIG GAME SEASON STRUCTURE 2010-2014
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE
PREFERED DRAFT ALTERNATIVES:

27 August 2009

The draft Big Game Season Structure (BGSS) alternatives were developed by Division staff based on analysis of the current BGSS and input received to date on BGSS issues, including the BGSS strawman alternatives. Input has come from external publics, Division employees and the Wildlife Commission via meetings, letters and email. No alternatives are provided for some issues because little or no input has been received, no feasible alternative was proposed, or changes can be handled outside the BGSS process. The Division's preferred alternatives are shaded dark gray.

Note: Bolding in the alternatives and options denotes key differences from status quo.

Alternatives vs. Options: Alternatives would replace the status quo whereas Options could be implemented with the status quo or a selected alternative.

Abbreviations: DAU = data analysis unit, ES = either-sex, GMU = game management unit, OTC = over-the-counter, PLO = private land only, RFW = Ranching for Wildlife.

DEER AND ELK

Early Deer and Elk Seasons

Archery & Muzzleloader Deer and Elk Seasons: west of I-25 and unit 140	
Status Quo:	**Archery:** There will be a 30-day season (weekend opening), opening on Saturday of the last weekend in August. • Deer: Limited ES or limited antlered by GMU/DAU • Elk: Unlimited ES and unlimited antlerless, valid in most units OR limited ES licenses, issued by GMU/DAU (totally limited units) **Muzzleloader:** There will be a 9-day season (weekend opening), opening on the 2nd Saturday in September. • Deer: Limited antlered and limited antlerless in some units, all licenses issued by GMU/DAU • Elk: Limited antlered and limited antlerless, all licenses issued "statewide" in OTC units and by GMU/DAU in totally limited units
Alternative 1: **Preferred**	**Archery:** status quo **Muzzleloader:** There will be a 9-day season (weekend opening), opening on the 2nd Saturday in September. • Deer: Limited **ES** or limited antlered and limited antlerless in some units, all licenses issued by GMU/DAU • Elk: Limited **ES** or limited antlered and limited antlerless in some units, **all licenses issued by GMU/DAU**
Option 1:	OTC List B archery elk antlerless licenses would only be valid in **GMUs that also have List B rifle elk antlerless licenses**.

High Country Deer:	
Status Quo:	There will be a limited 9-day antlered deer season (weekend opening), in high country or wilderness portions of selected deer GMUs, opening on the last Saturday in August, the 1st Saturday of September, or the 2nd Saturday of September depending on GMU.

Rifle Seasons

Regular Rifle Deer and Elk Seasons: west of I-25 and unit 140 for deer and statewide for elk	
Status Quo:	There will be four regular rifle seasons with the first season opening on the 1st Saturday after October 9, in this order and species: separate limited elk, combined deer and elk, combined deer and elk, and combined deer and elk; as described below. All deer hunting will be limited with licenses issued by drawing. **1st Rifle** - Separate Limited Elk (5 days), Saturday opening, followed by 2-day break. ▪ Elk - all licenses limited, issued by GMU/DAU; ES, antlered or antlerless licenses as needed to achieve population objectives. **2nd Rifle** - Combined Deer and Elk (9 days), Saturday opening, followed by 5-day break. ▪ Deer - all licenses limited; antlered and antlerless licenses or antlered licenses only, issued by GMU/DAU. ▪ Elk - unlimited antlered licenses (some licenses limited, issued by GMU/DAU), limited ES, antlered or antlerless licenses by GMU/DAU. **3rd Rifle** - Combined Deer and Elk (7 days), Saturday opening, followed by 4-day break. ▪ Deer - all licenses limited; antlered and antlerless licenses or antlered licenses only, issued by GMU/DAU. ▪ Elk - unlimited antlered licenses (some licenses limited, issued by GMU/DAU), limited ES, antlered or antlerless licenses by GMU/DAU. **4th Rifle** - Combined Deer and Elk (5 days), Wednesday opening. ▪ Deer - all licenses limited, issued by GMU/DAU, antlered only, units must be AT sex ratio objective AND with preceding three year average sex ratio of at least 25 bucks:100 does. ▪ Elk - all licenses limited, issued by GMU/DAU; ES, antlered or antlerless licenses as needed to achieve population objectives.
Alternative 1: **Preferred**	**Difference from Status Quo:** Lengthening 3rd season and shortening break between 3rd & 4th seasons. Four regular rifle seasons with the first season opening on the 1st Saturday after October 9 **1st Rifle** - Separate Limited Elk (5 days), Saturday opening, followed by 2-day break. **2nd Rifle** - Combined Deer and Elk (9 days), Saturday opening, followed by 5-day break. **3rd Rifle** - Combined Deer and Elk (**9 days)**, Saturday opening, followed by **2-day break**. **4th Rifle** - Combined Deer and Elk (5 days), Wednesday opening.
Option 1:	1st Rifle- Separate Limited Elk, all licenses limited, issued by GMU/DAU; **antlered or ES licenses. Antlerless licenses may be offered in DAUs over population objective.**

Late Rifle Elk Seasons:	
Status Quo:	There will be the option for limited antlerless seasons, with licenses issued by GMU/DAU, as needed to achieve population objectives. Season lengths variable within the time frame by GMU/DAU and set annually.

Private Land Only (PLO) Deer and Elk Seasons:	
Status Quo:	There will be the option for limited antlerless or ES deer and limited antlerless or ES elk by GMU/DAU as needed to achieve population objectives (Sept 1 – Jan 31).
Alternative 1: **Preferred**	There will be the option for limited antlerless or ES deer and limited antlerless or ES elk by GMU/DAU as needed to achieve population objectives, antlerless seasons opening **no earlier than August 15th**.
AND	
Status Quo:	There will be the option for PLO buck licenses and PLO ES elk licenses, where necessary to distribute antlered hunting opportunity between private and public lands, with PLO licenses issued by GMU/DAU, during the regular rifle seasons, including plains regular rifle seasons.

Plains Deer Seasons

Plains Muzzleloading Deer Season: east of I-25 except unit 140	
Status Quo:	There will be a 9-day season (weekend opening), opening the 2nd weekend in October. All licenses limited. Antlered and antlerless deer or antlered deer only by GMU/DAU.

Plains Rifle Deer Season: east of I-25 except unit 140	
Status Quo:	**Regular Rifle:** There will be an 11-day season (weekend opening), opening on 4th Saturday in October. All licenses limited. Antlered and antlerless deer or antlered deer only, issued by GMU/DAU. **Late Rifle:** There may be a single 14-day season, fixed dates annually. All licenses limited. Antlered and antlerless deer or antlered deer only by GMU/DAU.
Alternative 1: **Preferred**	**Regular Rifle:** There **may** be an 11-day season (weekend opening), opening on 4th Saturday in October. All licenses limited. Antlered and antlerless deer or antlered deer only, issued by GMU/DAU. **Late Rifle:** There may be a single 14-day season, fixed dates annually. All licenses limited. Antlered and antlerless deer or antlered deer only by GMU/DAU.

Plains Archery Deer Season: east of I-25 except unit 140	
Status Quo:	There will be 2 or 3 splits within the season (3 in units with late plains rifle deer season – no archery from December 1 through 14 to avoid archery/rifle season overlap). All licenses limited, ES deer or antlered deer only by GMU/DAU.

MOOSE

Archery & Muzzleloader Moose Season:	
Status Quo:	**Archery:** There will be a limited archery moose season, opening on the 1st Saturday after Labor Day in September continuing through the close of the archery deer and elk season. **Muzzleloader:** There will be a limited 9-day muzzleloading moose season, concurrent with muzzleloading deer and elk season.

Regular Rifle Moose Season:	
Status Quo:	There will be one 9-day rifle moose season, the first 9 days of October.
Alternative 1: **Preferred**	There will be one **14-day** rifle moose season, the first 14 days of October.

BLACK BEAR

Archery & Muzzleloading Bear Seasons:	
Status Quo:	**Archery:** OTC w/cap by DAU/GMU season opening on September 2 and closing on last day of archery deer and elk season, **no** season participation restrictions, unfilled licenses may not be used during the regular deer/elk rifle seasons. **Muzzleloader:** OTC w/cap by DAU/GMU season concurrent with muzzleloading deer and elk season, **no** season participation restrictions, unfilled licenses may not be used during the regular deer/elk rifle seasons.

Limited Rifle Bear Seasons:	
Status Quo:	**Regular Rifle:** Limited 28-day season, fixed dates (9/2-30), licenses issued by DAU/GMU, **no** season participation restrictions, unfilled licenses may not be used during the regular deer/elk rifle seasons. **Private Land Only Rifle:** May have two separate seasons: • Limited 28-day season, fixed dates (9/2-30), licenses issued by DAU/GMU, **no** season participation restrictions, unfilled licenses may not be used during the regular deer/elk rifle seasons • Limited season, fixed start date (10/1) through end of 4th regular rifle season, licenses issued by DAU/GMU, **no** season participation restrictions (not required to hold deer/elk license during the PLO bear season), unfilled licenses may not be used during the regular deer/elk rifle seasons

Concurrent Regular Rifle Bear Seasons:	
Status Quo:	OTC w/cap by DAU/GMU season concurrent with the regular rifle deer and elk season, season participation restrictions, unfilled licenses may not be used during the regular deer/elk rifle seasons.

Black Bear Season Participation:	
Status Quo:	A person may not hunt bear with an over the counter license during any regular rifle deer or elk season west of I-25 or in units 133, 134, 136, 140, 141, 142, 143, 147, unless they also possess a deer or elk license (filled or unfilled) valid in the same unit and for the same time period (season) and manner of take. Provided further that a hunter may only hunt in one bear season when an extended deer or elk season overlaps more than one bear season. If the deer or elk license is a PLO license, use of the bear license is restricted to private land as well.

PRONGHORN

Regular Pronghorn Season:	
Status Quo:	**Archery:** There will be a 37-day season, OTC licenses (some units limited, licenses issued by GMU/DAU), with fixed dates annually beginning August 15th (8/15-9/20). Only bucks will be hunted in August; buck, doe, and ES hunting in September. **Muzzleloader:** There will be a 9-day season, limited buck and limited doe issued by GMU/DAU (some units closed), with fixed dates annually in October (10/21-29). **Rifle:** There will be a 7-day season, opening the 1st Saturday in October, limited buck and limited doe issued by GMU/DAU (some units closed).

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Season Choice Licenses:	
Concept :	An alternative to PLO licenses specific to method of take (e.g. rifle, archery or muzzleloading) could involve a "season choice" PLO antlerless license. This license would be valid during all seasons and hunters would only be restricted by the legal methods of take for each season. Such a "season choice license" would provide more time and equal opportunity for all deer hunters to harvest an antlerless deer and would allow landowners more flexibility in managing hunting on their property. In addition, administration efficiency would be improved because "season choice license" would require one hunt code rather than three hunt codes necessary to provide PLO antlerless opportunity for each method of take.
Status Quo:	Extended PLO rifle hunts and method specific PLO hunts will be used to provide opportunity and facilitate achieving antlerless harvest objectives
Alternative 1: **Preferred**	"**Season choice**" PLO antlerless plains deer licenses as needed to achieve management objectives.

CUSTOMER SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

Preference Points & Drawings:	
Status Quo:	• Deer, Elk, Pronghorn & Bear: regular preference points used for first-choice drawing licenses; preference points purged after 3 years of inactivity in the draw; $25 fee (pay-to-play) for preference point if did not have annual or big game license in the previous year or current drawing. • Moose: regular preference points capped at 3; weighted preference points; preference points purged after 5 years of inactivity in the draw; $25 fee (pay-to-play) for preference point if did not have annual or big game license in the previous year or current drawing. A variety of nonresident limitations exist depending on species, season and resident demand.
Preference Points: proposed changes in how preference points are accrued and used	
Preference Point Purging Alternatives:	
Alternative 1:	Do not purge preference points if purchase OTC or leftover big game license for current year.
Alternative 2: **Preferred**	Purge preference points after **10** years of inactivity in the draw.
Preference Point Banking Options:	
Option 1:	Reinstate **preference point banking** for deer, elk pronghorn & bear similar to 2006 implementation but with no expiration.
Pay-to-Play Alternatives:	
Alternative 1:	**Remove $25 fee (pay-to-play)** for preference point if did not have annual or big game license in the previous year or current drawing.
Alternative 2:	**Remove resident $25 fee (pay-to-play)** for preference point if did not have annual or big game license in the previous year or current drawing.
Drawings: proposed changes in the draw system.	
Alternative 1:	**Hybrid draw system** for deer, elk, pronghorn, and bear licenses that take over a minimum number of preference points to draw. Part of the draw would be based on straight preference points and part would be based on a random, weighted or "names-in-hat" draw that will increase access. Basic components of a hybrid draw system include a minimum preference point level for hunters to qualify, a minimum number of points to draw for licenses to qualify, and the ratio of licenses going into each draw type.

Definition of List A, B & C Licenses:	
Status Quo:	List A, B & C licenses primarily defined by species, sex and GMU; in some cases definition is season specific.

Resident/Nonresident Allocation:	
Status Quo:	A variety of nonresident limitations exist depending on species, season and resident demand. • Deer: nonresident drawing limitations exist (65/35 & 80/20 for 1st choice hunts in primary draw) except for PLO and RFW hunts; public RFW hunts only available to residents. • Elk: nonresident drawing limitations exist (65/35 & 80/20 for 1st choice hunts in primary draw) except for PLO and RFW hunts; public RFW hunts only available to residents. • 65/35 & 80/20 split: the number of preference points required to draw shall be determined by a three year average ending with the 2005 limited license draw. • Pronghorn: no nonresident drawing limitations; public RFW hunts only available to residents. • Bear: no nonresident drawing limitations; public RFW hunts only available to residents. • Moose: no more than 10% of the quota is available to nonresidents; public RFW hunts only available to residents.
Alternative 1: **Preferred**	Refresh 80/20 list every five years (new BGSS) based on previous three year average.

OTHER TOPICS CONSIDERED

Youth Late Antlerless Elk:	
Status Quo:	Youths holding an unfilled antlerless or ES elk license may continue hunting antlerless elk in any open or continuing late, PLO, or any other regularly scheduled starting the day after the last regular rifle seasons through January 31st.

White-tailed Deer Only Licenses:	
Status Quo:	There will be white-tailed deer only licenses/seasons concurrent with plains deer seasons in select units to provide additional hunting opportunity and/or to achieve management objectives; all licenses limited; matching ES and antlerless hunts by method of take may be available in select units.
Option 1:	There may be experimental "**Season Choice**" antlerless white-tailed deer only licenses in select GMUs/DAUs.
Option 2:	There may be experimental **OTC ES** white-tailed deer only licenses in select GMUs/DAUs.

Antler Point Restrictions:	
Status Quo:	• Deer: no antler point restrictions. • Elk: four-point or brow tine antler restriction will be used for antlered elk in over-the-counter units to help achieve sex ratio objectives.

Reissuing Returned Licenses:	
Status Quo:	Licenses for all hunts are made available if the hunt is available as a leftover and has not sold out. In some hunts (see below) licenses are reissued to the next available hunter even if the hunt has sold out. • Deer, Elk, Pronghorn: public RFW male and ES hunts. • Moose: all moose licenses.

Refund & Exchange Policies:	
Status Quo:	**Refunds:** Requests for refunds after the opening of the season will be accompanied by sufficient evidence demonstrating that the license has not been used and circumstances precluded the licensee from being able to use the license. In addition, to be eligible for a refund the failure to apply for a refund before the opening day of the season for which the license was issued cannot be due to a lack of diligence on the part of the licensee. The Division of Wildlife's License Administration Manager will render a decision on the refund request on behalf of the Division and the Wildlife Commission and such decision shall constitute final agency action. Circumstances for which reimbursement will be considered shall be limited to: a. Extreme medical circumstances involving the license holder. b. Death of the license holder or death of a license holder's immediate family member. However, in no event shall a refund be made where the request for refund is submitted more than thirty (30) days after the opening of the season for which the license was issued or more than thirty (30) days after the date of purchase of the license. In case of conflict the least restrictive time limit shall apply. Proved further that the 30-day time limit will be extended for members of the United States armed forces whose military service requirements precluded their application for a refund within said period or for refunds as described below. **Exchanges:** No fee to exchange license and no limit on number of exchanges.

Youth Preference and Youth Outreach:	
Status Quo:	A variety of youth (ages 12-17) preference exists depending on species and season. • Deer: 15% of first and second choice ES and antlerless hunts in primary draw and up to 100% of ES, antlered and antlerless deer licenses are available in leftover draw. • Elk: 15% of first and second choice antlerless hunts in primary draw and up to 100% of ES, antlered and antlerless elk licenses are available in leftover draw; youths holding an unfilled antlerless or ES license may continue hunting antlerless elk in any open or continuing late, PLO, or any other regularly scheduled starting the day after the last regular rifle seasons through January 31st. • Pronghorn: 15% of first and second choice in primary draw available for doe hunts. • Bear: no youth preference. • Moose: no youth preference. • Youth Outreach: deer, elk, and pronghorn licenses available to qualified organizations sponsoring youth hunting activities.