

## ***FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** February 13, 2014

**Agenda Item:** Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis 2014 Work Plan—Local Modification

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Proposed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 30 minutes

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### **Background**

In January 2013, the Commission endorsed elk management recommendations from a citizen working group for application in areas with brucellosis (Designated Surveillance Area as described by the Montana Department of Livestock). The Commission endorsed a 2013 work plan in February and reviewed annual implementation efforts in August. The 2013 work plan included hazing, fencing and dispersal hunts as management actions available for implementation. Examples of all three were applied in 2013. While recommendations from the citizen working group identified local working groups, such participation has been most present in the Paradise Valley.

A proposed 2014 work plan was presented on Aug. 8, 2013. That plan was assembled by FWP with input from the statewide working group that met in Bozeman July 11. The 2014 plan proposed in August offered several modifications based upon 2013 experiences and expanded upon the 2013 plan with renewed emphasis on local working groups and education/outreach. A final 2014 annual work plan was adopted in October after an extended public comment period. That 2014 plan was presented in such a way that any work plan refinements developed using local working group inputs could be proposed to the Commission at a future time.

The wildlife sub-committee of the Upper Yellowstone Watershed group has been hosting local deliberations on proposed modifications to the 2014 annual work plan. FWP has been assisting these discussions with MSU Extension providing facilitation and other meeting logistics. The meetings have been open to any interested party. If approved by the Commission, modifications generated by these Paradise Valley discussions would be available for use in 2014. The modifications include private land fencing efforts to delineate reduced-risk travel corridors and later dates for lethal removals on private land.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

Any adoption would be presented for public review and comment through 5 p.m., March 21. Any final proposal and adoption would take place at the April 10 Commission meeting.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

Given the concept of elk management actions in response to brucellosis risk management is both new and debated, FWP presents the proposed modifications with a recommendation to initially adopt to solicit broader public input.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

Proposals may be adopted as proposed or with adjustment per staff justifications, public comment and/or Commission discussion.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move to adopt the proposed 2014 annual work plan modifications for brucellosis-related elk management tools in the Paradise Valley as presented by FWP.