

Cougar Hunting Seasons and Regulations WAC 220-415-100

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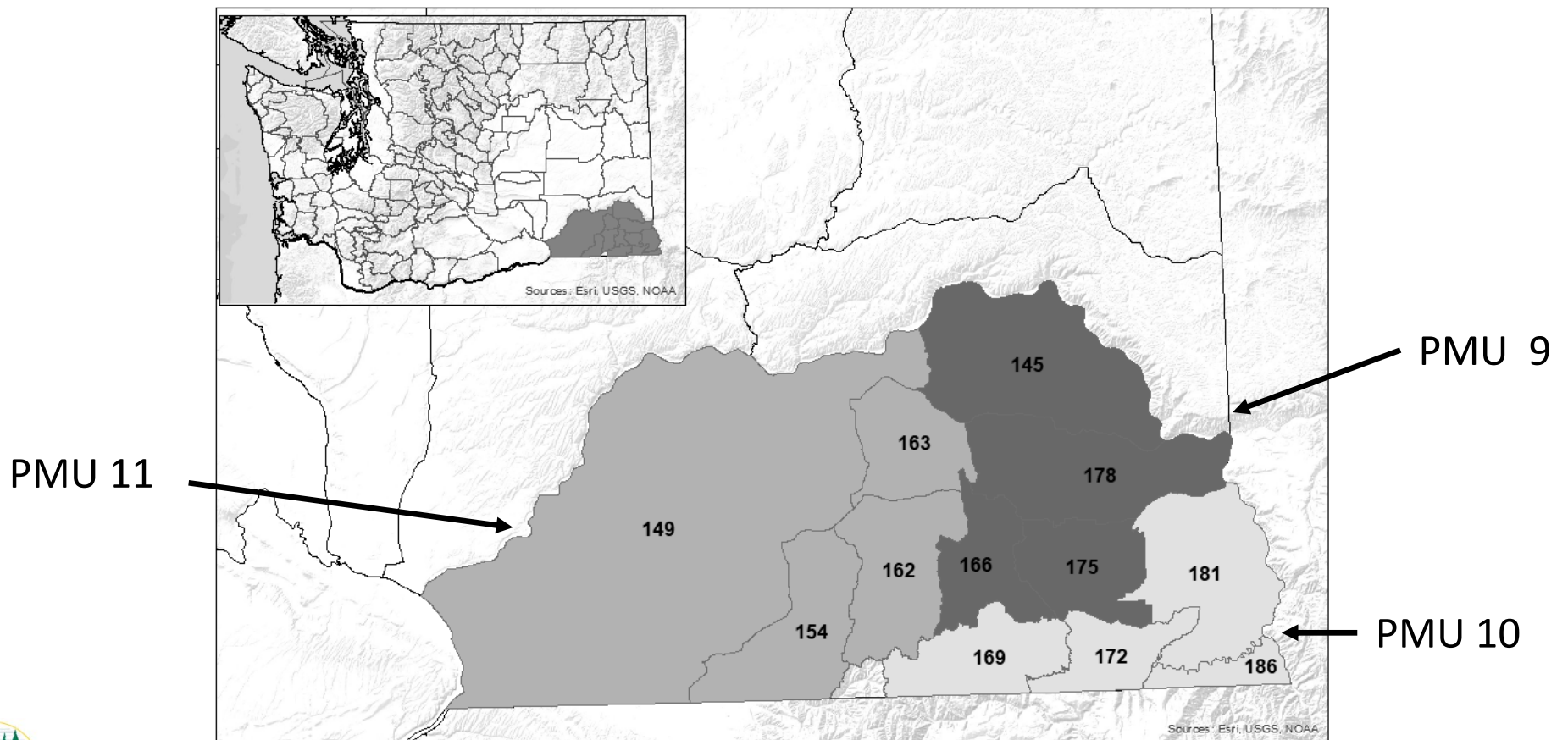
Background

- ❑ The changes we are proposing only relate to cougars hunting in the Blue Mountains Game Management Units (GMU)
- ❑ The proposal is intended to reduce cougar density to increase elk calf survival



Background

- Three Population Management Units (PMUs) within the Blue Mountains area; comprised of 13 GMUs.



At-risk assessment

Calf mortality

- 3 core GMUs continue to decline due to poor calf survival
- Calf survival is too low to reverse the decline
- Main cause of poor calf survival is predation
- Main predator is cougar



Background

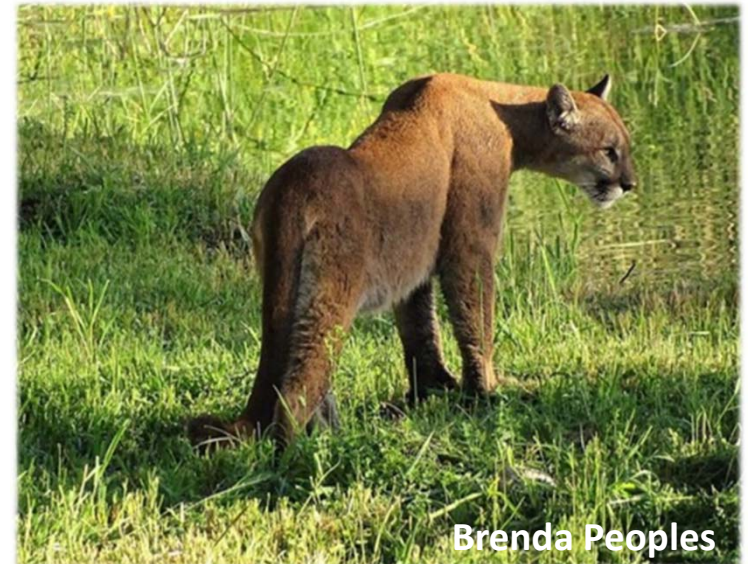
Summary

- ❑ To improve elk calf survival, we must address predation
- ❑ Among the options to address predation is to reduce the resident cougar population within the affected PMUs



Proposed changes

- ❑ Editorial change under section (2)
 - » Add the PMU number to each hunt area in the WAC
- ❑ Allow an individual to harvest a second cougar per license year in PMUs 9, 10, and 11 (Blue Mountains). (Section (4)(b))



Proposed changes

- ❑ A second tag will be required to harvest a second cougar
- ❑ The second tag will be valid only for PMUs 9, 10, and 11 (Blue Mountains)



Anticipated effects

- Reduced cougar density in the short term
- Increased calf survival
- Continued monitoring of cougar harvest
- Continue monitoring of calf survival
- Assess the efficacy of this proposed action if adopted

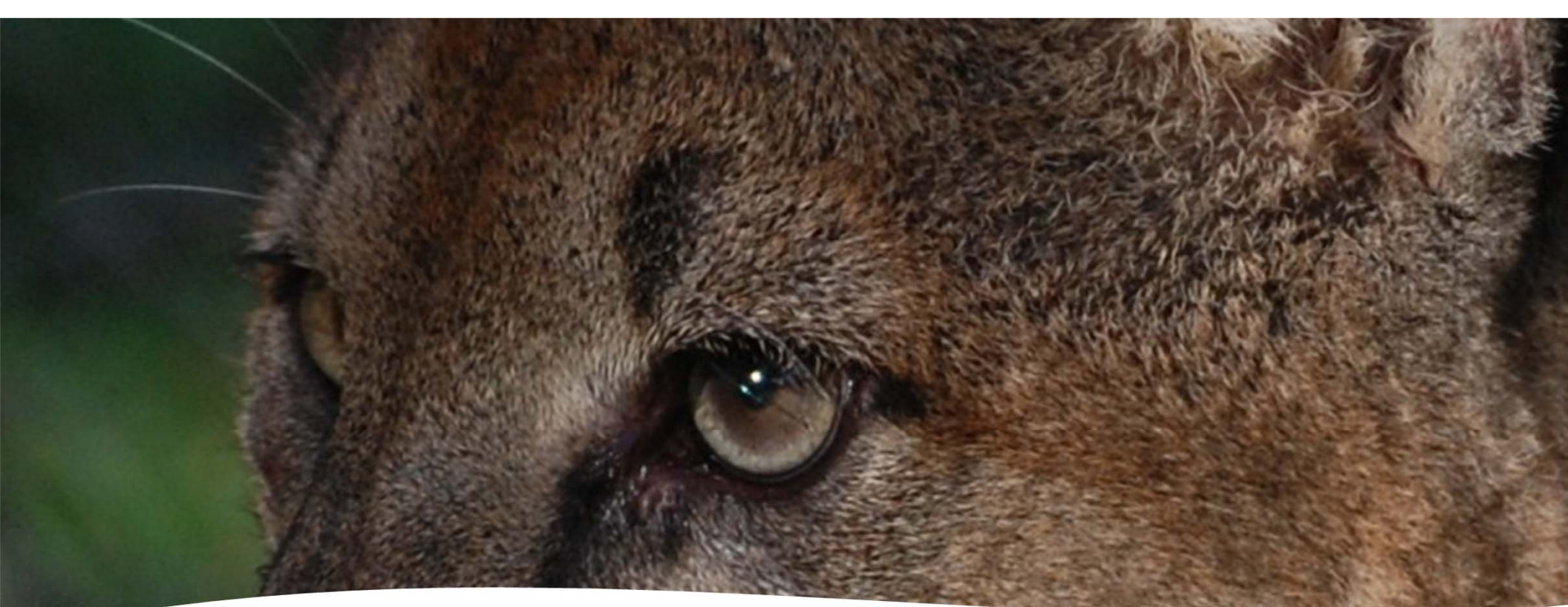


Summary

The proposed change to cougar hunting season and regulations

- Supports the mandate of the department, the commission, and the director
- Allows the department to use recreational hunters as a management tool
- Supports conservation of wildlife





Public Comment

Over 550 comments through:

- Online survey
- Letters (electronic, several form letters)
- Emails
- FWC briefing



Public Comment

- ❑ Comments received from individuals, organizations, and groups of organizations
- ❑ In addition to public comment, the department received comments from our Tribal co-managers



Public Comment

Common Themes –

- Support the proposal as stated
- Suggest a longer season / increased guidelines
- Desire for use of hounds / raffle hunts / other tools: bait, electronic calls etc.
- Suggest WDFW staff & contractors implement removals
- Desire for increased bear & cougar hunt opportunities / more areas



Public Comment

Common Themes -

- Oppose hunting, increasing cougar harvest or cougar hunting
- Oppose focus on predators
- Desire for review of elk herd objective, supplemental feeding of elk, and other factors effecting the elk population
- Desire for further evaluation of habitat and effects of climate change
- Suggest cougar harvest is already in excess of 12-16%



Public Comment

Additional Comments:

- WDFW needs to advise – they are the experts
- Desire more information to clearly explain the situation
- Concern the 2nd tag is not enough to assist the elk herd



Recommendation: WAC 220-415-100

-Request to consider a motion

Motion Language:

I move to adopt the recommended rule changes as presented by Department staff.

Is there a “second”?

