

## Summary

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**Meeting dates:** March 18-19, 2016

**Agenda item:** Deer Areas, Elk Areas, Special Closures and Firearm Restriction Areas, and Hunting by Persons with a Disability – Rule Briefing and Public Hearing

**Presenter:** Jerry Nelson, Ph.D., Deer and Elk Section Manager, Wildlife Program

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### **Background summary:**

Staff will brief the Commission on proposed amendments to WAC 232-28-624 Deer Area Descriptions, WAC 232-28-337 Elk Area Descriptions, WAC 232-28-248 Special Closures and Firearm Restriction Areas, and WAC 232-28-828 Hunting of game birds and animals by persons with a disability.

Two new deer areas are proposed for Region 3 in Yakima and Kittitas Counties. The proposed additions are intended to reduce agricultural damage.

One new elk area is being proposed for Asotin County. The proposed addition is intended to reduce agricultural damage. The proposed change to Elk Area 6054 in Pierce County will make the boundary more discernable and make the elk area more effective. The proposed change to Elk Area 6064 removes some public land that was unnecessarily included. The elk area was established due to safety concerns, but the original boundary included some U.S. Forest Service lands where this concern does not exist. The removal of Elk Area 6063 is also proposed as it is no longer needed.

The proposed change to the Special Closures and Firearm Restriction Areas clarifies a restriction in Grays Harbor County that should only apply during modern firearm deer and elk seasons.

A rule reinstating the conditions under which hunters with disabilities may shoot from their vehicles is being proposed. This is necessary because the conditions were removed in anticipation of a change to RCW 77.32.238 and that change never happened. Until changes to the RCW are made, the conditions need to remain in rule.

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### **Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:**

- Maximizing recreational hunting opportunity while controlling wildlife populations, consistent with management objectives.
  - Managing wildlife conflict issues utilizing hunters.
  - Managing wildlife conflict issues by influencing the distribution of deer and elk.
  - Implementing firearm restriction areas when safety dictates.
  - Reestablishing conditions under which hunters with disabilities may shoot from their vehicles.
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### **Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

The Department notified approximately 28,000 individuals and organizations informing them of the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed regulations. Additionally, these individuals and organizations were informed of the opportunity to provide verbal testimony at the March 18-19, 2016 Commission Meeting in Moses Lake.

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**Action requested:**

Take public comment. Adoption is planned for the April 8-9, 2016 Commission Meeting.

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**Draft motion language:**

NA – Briefing and public hearing only.

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**Justification for Commission action:**

NA – Briefing and public hearing only.

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**Communications Plan:**

WDFW Website  
News Releases  
Hunting Pamphlet

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*Form revised 12/5/12*