

# GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Black Hills Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:56

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Public Hearing Finalization</b>	<b>April 4, 2012 April 4-5, 2012</b>	<b>Brookings Brookings</b>
----------------------------------	------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------

### COMMISSION PROPOSAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Season Dates:** September 1 – December 31, 2012

**Open Area:**

Unit 1: Pennington County west of Highway 79, except Mount Rushmore National Memorial

Unit 2: Custer County west of Highway 79, except Custer State Park, Wind Cave National Park, and Jewel Cave National Park

**Licenses:**

Unit 1: 1 “any bighorn sheep” license

Unit 2: 1 “any bighorn sheep” license



**Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. All licensees are required to attend an orientation meeting on the day preceding the opening day of the season at the regional office in Rapid City.
2. Application for a license may be made by any resident hunter who has not been previously issued a bighorn sheep license in South Dakota.
3. Hunters who are eligible for bighorn sheep license may apply for both a Black Hills Bighorn Sheep License and a Custer State Park Bighorn Sheep License.
4. Hunters can only apply for one of the two Black Hills Bighorn Sheep units.
5. Land operator preference is not applicable to these licenses.
6. All successful hunters must submit their bighorn sheep to a conservation officer or Department representative for inspection and permanent marking within 24 hours after the kill.

**Recommended change from last year:**

1. Adjust the number of licenses available from 2 "any bighorn sheep" to 1 "any bighorn sheep" in Unit 1.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Bighorn sheep sub herds in Unit 1 primarily have been experiencing poor lamb recruitment for the last several years. Preliminary data from ongoing research through SDSU suggests that the majority of lamb recruitment is being lost primarily due to pneumonia (44% of total mortality) and predation (24% of total mortality). This in turn has significantly reduced the recruitment of rams into the population, resulting in fewer Class I and II rams. Furthermore, the number of mature rams in the population has declined and overall there are fewer rams available for harvest. A reduction of licenses is needed to ensure a sufficient number of mature rams are available for hunting opportunities and to ensure adequate reproduction for the next few years. Continued loss of lamb recruitment in future years could result in further license reductions.

Year	Licensed hunters	Rams harvested	Ewes harvested
2007	4	4	0
2008	5	5	0
2009	5	5	0
2010	5	5	0
2011	3	3	0