

**GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION
PROPOSAL**

Special Custer State Park Antlerless Elk Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:47

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	February 28 - March 1, 2019	Pierre
	Public Hearing	April 4, 2019	Rapid City
	Finalization	April 4-5, 2019	Rapid City

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Duration of Recommendation: 2019 hunting season.

Season Dates: Closed

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Harvested elk must be inspected within 24 hours.
2. Each successful elk hunter shall submit samples for chronic wasting disease testing for all elk harvested from any Custer State park elk hunting unit.

Recommended changes from last year:

1. Close the antlerless elk hunting season (see map below for unit).

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The CSP antlerless elk season was opened again in 2017 based on new information on chronic wasting disease (CWD) prevalence rates from both Custer State Park (CSP) and Wind Cave National Park (2016/2017 culling program). At this time, the season was justified to learn more about the CWD infection rate of CSP elk, begin managing at a lower population density in the identified area due to concerns of over-utilization of forage, and to evaluate and respond accordingly for future management actions.

Through the development of the “draft” CWD action plan, the goal of surveillance strategies in South Dakota is to determine the likely spread of CWD to new units where the disease has not been detected in wild, free-ranging cervids. Without pre-determined research design and management objectives, prevalence rates will not be quantified. If research objectives require prevalence rates or a management strategy will be implemented based on prevalence rate thresholds (i.e., implement management strategy X if prevalence exceeds Y%), prevalence will be estimated by collecting a representative sample with desired levels of precision.

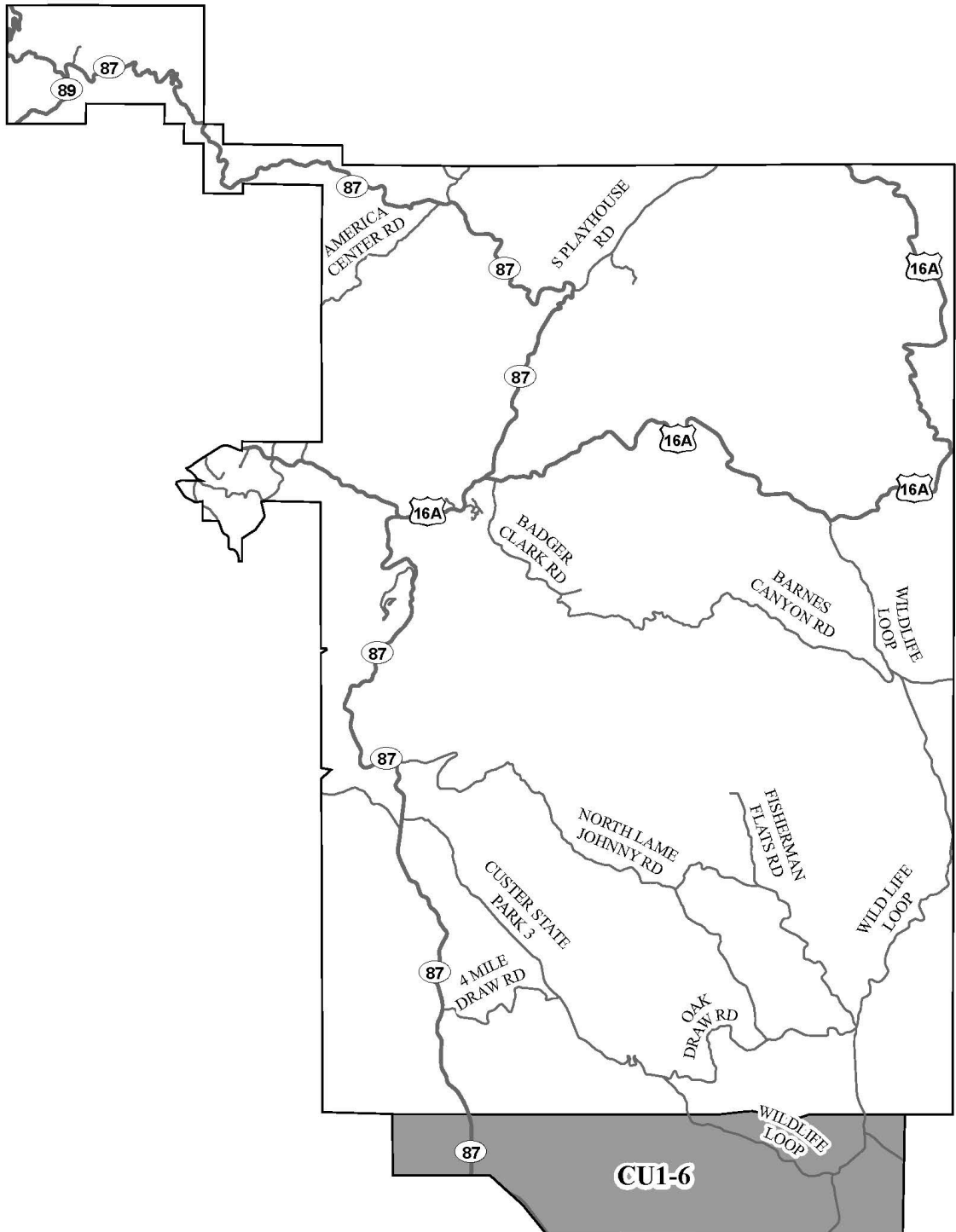
The current population objective for CSP is 800 wintering elk and will general range from 700-900 depending on habitat conditions; the current CSP elk population estimate is 552 (95% CI=483-620). With the current dispersal of elk from this antlerless unit and no identified management response actions if CWD prevalence reaches a certain threshold, there is no current need for this antlerless elk season. Mandatory submission of samples for CWD will still be required from all deer and elk hunters for any future management considerations.

Year	Licensed Hunters	Hunter Success	Harvest
2014	CLOSED		
2015	CLOSED		
2016	20	90%	18
2017 ¹	29	84%	24
2018 ²	23	19%	4

¹Last three seasons canceled due to Legion Lake Fire.

²Due to low elk densities in the unit, 37 licenses were voluntarily returned.

APPROVE _____	MODIFY _____	REJECT _____	NO ACTION _____
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APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____