



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

ALTERNATIVES TO THE CURRENT DEER LICENSE ALLOCATION PROCESS

EVALUATE POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES TO THE CURRENT LICENSE ALLOCATION PROCESS THAT WOULD INCREASE THE NUMBER OF HUNTERS WHO DRAW THEIR PREFERRED DEER LICENSE.

BACKGROUND: During the development of the statewide deer management plan several social management considerations were identified through stakeholder group meetings and public comments to the deer plan. One area which received considerable attention from the public was deer license allocation. The Commission has asked the Department to identify alternatives which would increase the number of hunters who draw their preferred deer license.

To date, Department staff has developed alternatives to the current license allocation process, and the process of gathering public feedback began with discussion of alternatives with the deer management stakeholder group. Additional feedback will be collected using focus groups made up of deer applicants. These focus groups will be held starting in March and conclude in early May. In the next few days an email will be sent to resident deer applicants who provided an email address (18 and older) asking for focus group participants. There will be nine focus groups in total and each group will be capped at 30 participants. Applicants will be asked to select the locations where they are interested in participating. A random draw will be used to select participants for each location. Participants may only participate in one focus group. The draws to select participants will be done in order of meeting date: Pierre, Philip, Yankton, Sioux Falls, Watertown, Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Rapid City, and Mitchell. The main objective of these focus groups will be to 1) discuss the potential alternatives; 2) receive feedback on level of support or opposition for the alternatives; and 3) determine how participants would apply for deer licenses under each alternative.

ALTERNATIVE #1

Drawings for East River, West River and Black Hills deer seasons would be at the same time.

- Opportunity to apply for a 1st and 2nd choice across the combination of the 3 seasons in 1st draw (*non-residents would only have opportunity to apply for seasons with available non-resident licenses*).
- Four draw periods.

ALTERNATIVE #2

Drawings for East, River, West River, Black Hills, National Wildlife Refuge, Custer State Park, and Muzzleloader deer seasons would be at the same time.

- Opportunity to apply for a 1st and 2nd choice across the combination of the 6 seasons in 1st draw (*non-residents would only have opportunity to apply for seasons with available non-resident licenses*).
- Four draw periods.

ALTERNATIVE #3

No Change

OTHER DETAILS:

- Preference point system would remain in place and you would not lose current points.
- Landowner preference would remain unchanged.
- No changes would be made to Archery or Youth Deer.
- Individuals who received a Special Buck license are not eligible to apply until the third draw period.