



Sportsman's News Roundup

Aug. 3, 2010

Game Department presents options for antelope license allocation

New Mexico hunters are starting to weigh in on proposed changes to the controversial A-PLUS program, which gives control of the vast majority of antelope licenses to a relative few landowners in antelope territory. Public comment is being taken on three options posted last week, including one that would allocate most licenses to the Big Game Draw, known as Option 3. In contrast, Option 1 would maintain the transferable license program, but according to a preliminary analysis by NMWF would continue to give A-PLUS landowners about 65 percent of licenses to sell, give away or not use. The remaining Option 2 is status quo, which in recent years has taken about 70 percent of antelope hunting opportunity out of the Big Game Draw and given it to A-PLUS landowners.

The department has offered no analysis of how any of the options would affect hunter opportunity in New Mexico, but **NMWF believes Option 3 is the best solution for resident hunters**. It would put all or most licenses (the department could give one tag to landowners who allow hunting on their ranches) into the Big Game Draw, ensuring that 78 percent of licenses went to New Mexico residents. Landowners who allow hunters on their land could charge trespass fees or participate in access programs.

Speak up now and make your voice heard

Sportsmen are urged to ask the department to analyze Option 3 and determine its effect on department revenues and on hunter distribution on public and private land (similar programs in other western states such as Montana, Wyoming and Arizona could provide examples). The Game Commission should not vote on any revisions to A-PLUS until such an analysis is complete, even if it means postponing a decision. The commission and sportsmen must know how each option would affect antelope hunting opportunity in New Mexico in order to make an informed decision.

[Click here](#) to send a message to the department and the commission asking for a thorough analysis of how Option 3 could be made to work in New Mexico. **If sportsmen like you don't speak up** and demand transparency and full information from the department that you and your fellow hunters and anglers fund, there will be no change – and that is not an option.

Attend a meeting and bring a friend

Sportsmen should also plan to attend one of the department's public meetings and comment on the proposed options – and bring a friend! [Click here](#) for the meeting dates, times and locations, but many are this week:

- Raton, Ruidoso and Tierra Amarilla on Tuesday, Aug. 3;
 - Farmington and Estancia on Wednesday, Aug. 4; and
 - Albuquerque, Roswell and Clayton on Thursday, Aug. 5.
- Meetings are set for later in August for Roy, Taos, Tucumcari, Las Vegas, Las Cruces, Silver City and Socorro.

Better late than never

It was disappointing to see the department offer two – not three – options when the proposals were posted on Wednesday, July 28. Only options 1 and 2, which are essentially versions of the status quo, were put out for public comment. **Missing was the option the department had promised for nearly a year** (including as late as March), which would put all or most antelope licenses in the Big Game Draw. That option did finally appear around 10 a.m. the following day. Department Deputy Director Bob Jenks called the omission “an oversight.”

U.S. House passes historic conservation measure

Will help open landlocked public lands

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was created when Stewart Udall was Secretary of Interior, and the logic behind it was simple: A portion of offshore oil and gas royalties from drilling in federal waters would be put back into our lands and waters to conserve some of the best places left in the United States. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has **helped to protect some of our best outdoor treasures, like the Valles Caldera**. A portion of the funds are also used for city parks and recreation and have benefited every county in New Mexico over time. However the money intended for the LWCF was frequently diverted to other uses over the years.

On Friday, New Mexico Congressmen Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan were among the ranks in the U.S. House that **passed historic legislation ensuring that monies intended for the Land and Water Conservation Fund will be dedicated**, meaning they cannot be diverted to other programs. Rep. Harry Teague voted against the measure.

Another major plus in HR 3534 was a successful amendment co-sponsored by Heinrich that **requires 1.5 percent of the fund be used to provide access to landlocked public lands**. (New Mexico Wildlife Federation tracks access problems. If you have one, [clicking here](#).) H.R. 3534 ([click here to read the full text](#)) also includes several key provisions that will benefit hunters and anglers in New Mexico, such as requiring oil and gas drilling operations to control stormwater runoff. That provision should help places like the San Juan River, where sedimentation is an issue. The bill included another key provision for hunters, requiring the BLM and Forest Service to consult state game and fish agencies on the impacts to big game and other wildlife before increasing well densities.

Survey results: How was the Big Game Draw for you?

Many hunters who responded to our July Sportsman Survey said they were **not very happy with the Big Game Draw this year**. Of the 231 respondents, 60 percent said they were disappointed in the results, and 32 percent said neither they nor their immediate family drew a single hunt. At the other end of the spectrum, 10 percent said they drew a license for every application they submitted. Asked whether they applied for fewer hunts this year because of the full up-front payment requirement, 80 percent said “no.” **For the full poll results, [click here](#).**

Second chance for deer, javelina, elk

If you missed out on drawing a big game hunt this year, the Department of Game and Fish is offering a second chance – particularly to young hunters. The department will make available more than 5,000 deer, elk and javelina licenses on its website in two separate sales. But be warned – it's first come, first served, so you'll have to be quick on the mouse. On Wednesday, Aug. 4, some 1,900 elk licenses will be offered to hunters younger than age 18 who applied for but did not receive any license in the Big Game Draw earlier this year. On Wednesday, Aug. 11, about 2,760 deer licenses and 430 javelina tags will be available for adults and youths. Both sales begin at 10 a.m. For more information, go to www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

And finally

If you appreciate receiving these monthly news updates, please share them with a friend and ask them to get involved by joining our Sportsman's Alert network. New Mexico sportsmen need to stay involved to ensure our hunting and fishing traditions continue. **And please make a donation to NMWF**. With sportsmen like you, we can continue to make a difference. [Click here to donate now](#).

About the New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Founded in 1914 by sportsman and conservation pioneer Aldo Leopold, the New Mexico Wildlife Federation is New Mexico's first and most effective conservation advocate. We are dedicated to protecting New Mexico's wildlife, habitat and outdoor way of life. We spearheaded permanent protection of our hunting and fishing rights in the Valle Vidal, and stopped cold the previous sell-off of your public lands. We believe that the best way to get things done is to build consensus with common goals.

Our key priorities are: Opportunity Habitat Youth

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