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MEMORANDUM

Date: April 5, 2011
To: Utah Wildlife Board / Regional Advisory Council Members
From: Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator
SUBJECT: Overview of 2011 Big Game Permits Recommendations

The attached tables summarize the Division of Wildlife's recommended general season, limited entry, and antlerless permit allocations for the 2011 big game hunts. These recommendations are based upon evaluation of information from the 2010 harvests and post-hunting season herd composition classifications. The number of permits proposed for 2011 should help achieve or maintain desired objectives for population size, trophy quality, and hunting opportunity under Utah's big game management plans.

Highlights:

- 1) We recommend a 5,000 permit cut to general season deer permits. These cuts are designed to ease us in the 2012 season when we will likely have to make more substantial cuts in order to reach the new objective of 18-25 bucks/100 does. The cuts are 2000 in the Northeastern Region, 1000 in the Southeastern Region, and 2000 in the Southern Region.
- 2) We recommend no substantial increase in permits on limited entry and premium limited entry deer hunts.
- 3) We recommend increasing spike elk permits from 13,750 to 15,000. This recommendation is based on the statewide plan objective.
- 4) We recommend no substantial increase to limited entry elk permits. Some units in the higher age classes will see a substantial cut in permits, whereas units in the lower age classes will require an increase in permits. The net change in total permits is 13.
- 5) We recommend a substantial reduction in permits for pronghorn in response to excessive mortality in the winter 2009-2010 on the Plateau Unit.
- 6) We recommend no substantial change in once in a lifetime species permit numbers. Minor changes this year include: 1) a slight reduction in moose permits to reflect changes in objectives in the statewide plan and 2) a slight decrease in bison permits as we grow the population on the Henry Mountains towards objective.
- 7) Deer populations have declined slightly in some management units during 2010, largely due to the severe winter in southern Utah during 2009-2010. The current statewide post-hunt population is estimated at approximately 293,700 deer.
- 8) We recommend reduction in antlerless deer permits in 2011. Almost all of our antlerless deer permits are designed to deal with depredation. The only exception is the Panguitch Lake unit where we recommend 150 antlerless permits to deal with habitat damage on rangeland.
- 9) Elk populations increased in 2010, and we now have about 72,530 (+ 5,500) elk statewide. The population is about 3,700 elk above the population objective of 68,825.
- 10) Elk populations are above management objectives on several units, and antlerless harvest is needed to reduce elk numbers on those units. Antlerless harvest is also needed to slow the growth of elk numbers on units that are approaching management objectives. We are recommending 12,174 antlerless elk permits in 2011 (2,371 more than in 2010).
- 11) There are 3 elk units in Utah where our objective is 0 elk including the Henry Mountains, North San Rafael, and San Juan (east of US 191). There are also 3 units



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where we are unable to harvest enough due to private land issues (Nine Mile Range Creek, Chalk Creek, and East Canyon). On these Units we are recommending that hunters who have any antlered big game permit can also purchase an antlerless elk control permit for these units at a reduced price (resident \$25, non-resident \$88).

- 12) We recommend a slight increase in doe pronghorn permits mainly on the Cache North Rich Unit where pronghorn are above the population objective.
- 13) We recommend no public antlerless moose permits in 2011. Many of the moose populations in Utah are stable or slightly declining, and there is no need to harvest antlerless moose.