

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FISH AND GAME COMMISSION
INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR REGULATORY ACTION
(Pre-Publication of Notice Statement)

Amend Section 364
Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR)
Re: Elk

I. Date of Initial Statement of Reasons: January 2, 2007

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings:

- (a) Notice Hearing: Date: February 2, 2007
Location: Monterey, California
- (b) Discussion: Date: March 2, 2007
Location: Arcata, California
- (c) Discussion: Date: April 13, 2007
Location: Bodega Bay, California
- (d) Adoption Hearing: Date: April 25, 2007
Location: Teleconference

III. Description of Regulatory Action:

- (a) Statement of Specific Purpose of Regulation Change and Factual Basis for Determining that Regulation Change is Reasonably Necessary:

1. Number of Tags

Existing regulations specify elk license tag quotas for each hunt. In order to maintain hunting quality in accordance with management goals and objectives, it is periodically necessary to adjust quotas in response to dynamic environmental and biological conditions. This proposed amendment modifies elk tag numbers to ranges of tags to adjust for fluctuations in population numbers.

2007 Proposed Elk Tag Allocation										
Hunt Name	Antler-less	Either-Sex	Bull	Spike	Muzzle-loader Bull	Muzzle-loader Antler-less	Muzzle-loader either-sex	Archery Either-Sex	Archery Antler-less	Archery Bull
Roosevelt Elk										
Siskiyou	0-30	0-30								
Del Norte	0-20		0-10							
Marble Mountains		0-80								
Marble Mtns Junior		0-4								

Klamath	0-20		0-20						
Big Lagoon		0-10							
Northwestern California (new)		0-25							
Rocky Mountain Elk									
Rocky Mtn Elk									
Northeastern		0-20					0-10		
Northeastern Junior		0-4							
Tule Elk									
Cache Creek	0-4		0-4						
Cache Creek Junior (New)			0-2						
La Panza									
Period 1	0-12		0-10						
Period 1 (Junior)			0-2						
Period 2	0-12		0-12						
Owens Valley									
Bishop									
Period 1 (new) Muzzleloader					0-10	0-30	0-10		
Period 2 (new) Junior	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 3 (new dates)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 4 (old per 1)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 5 (old per 3)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Independence									
Period 1 (new) Archery							0-10	0-30	0-10
Period 2 (new)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 3 (new dates)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 4 (old per 1)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 5 (old per 3)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Lone Pine									
Period 1 (new) Muzzleloader					0-10	0-30	0-10		
Period 2 (new)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 3 (new dates)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 4 (old per 1)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Period 5 (old per 3)	0-30	0-10	0-10						
Tinemaha & W. Tinemaha									

Period 1 (new) Archery								0-10	0-30	0-10
Period 2 (new)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 3 (new dates)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 4 (old per 1)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 5 (old per 3)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Grizzly Island										
Period 1	0-12					0-6				
Period 1 Junior	0-2					0-2				
Period 2	0-12		0-2			0-6				
Period 2 Junior						0-2				
Period 3	0-12		0-2			0-4				
Period 4	0-10									
Period 5	0-10									
Fort Hunter Liggett										
Archery Only								0-6	0-10	
Period 1	0-14									
Period 1 Junior	0-4									
Period 2	0-14									
Period 3			0-14							
Period 3 Junior Elk			0-2							
East Park Reservoir										
Period 1			0-2							
Period 2			0-2							
Period 3	0-10									
San Luis Reservoir (new)	0-5	0-10	0-10							

2. Modify Boundaries: Big Lagoon Roosevelt, La Panza Tule Elk, and Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunt (Independence, Lone Pine, and West Tinemha zones)

A portion of Green Diamond Resources Company property currently not open to the public for elk hunting is to be included within the Big Lagoon Roosevelt Elk Hunt Boundary. The proposal modifies the existing boundary to include the new portion.

The proposed change modifies portions of the Independence, Lone Pine, and West Tinemaha Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunt boundaries. These boundary changes are in conjunction with tag quota changes and additional new hunt periods in an effort to issue more tags in zones that currently exceed herd management levels such as Bishop and Tinemaha.

Existing regulations specify boundaries for the La Panza Tule Elk Hunt, which initially was established in 1993 and modified in 2004. During the years that have elapsed since this hunt was established, elk population numbers have increased and their range has

expanded beyond existing hunt boundaries. The proposal to expand boundaries for the La Panza Tule Elk Hunt is necessary to improve hunter opportunity and is consistent with management objectives for tule elk in the area.

3. Additional hunt periods: Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunt.

In an effort to issue more tags in zones that are currently exceeding herd management levels such as Bishop and Tinemaha, two new hunt periods will be established. Tule elk within each zone typically concentrate in a small part of each zone which in turn concentrates hunters. By keeping the number of hunters to a small level in each period, hunters are more likely to have a safe, quality hunt within each zone. Current hunt periods start in November and end in early December. Two (new) hunt periods will begin in mid September and early October.

4. Eliminate Owens Valley Archery Only Tule Elk Hunt

Eliminating the Owens Valley region-wide archery only hunt is part of the overall changes in this hunt area. Two additional periods are being added and the overall tag numbers are being increased from 32 to 83 tule elk tags. A portion of the archery only hunts are being incorporated into one of the (new) hunt periods.

5. Add Muzzleloader hunts: Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunts

As part of the overall changes within the Owens Valley tule elk hunts establish a Muzzleloader only hunt for the Bishop and Lone Pine tule elk hunts during the first period.

6. Eliminate mandatory orientation: Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunts

Eliminate the mandatory orientation for the Owens Valley tule elk hunts. The information that is given to the hunters during orientation is the same information that is part of the package that is mailed to them with their tag. The other information is included in the hunting regulation booklet and the DFG webpage. Hunters seeking additional regulatory information during the orientation are already referred to Fish and Game law enforcement personnel. Orientations require substantial time from Fish and Game employees and the same information can be passed onto the tag holder in a written format.

7. Establish new Junior Hunt: Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunt (Bishop) and Cache Creek Tule Elk Hunt

Establish a junior elk hunt as part of the overall changes in the Owens Valley tule elk hunts. The junior hunt is proposed to be in the Bishop zone during the (new) period 2 in October.

Establish a junior elk hunt for the Cache Creek tule elk hunt. The junior hunt is proposed for a bull tag during the general bull hunt for the Cache Creek tule elk hunt period.

8. Establish new hunts: San Luis Reservoir and Northwestern California

Public opportunities to hunt elk are not available in western Merced County and adjacent areas in Santa Clara, San Benito, and Fresno Counties. Tule elk were established in western Merced County in 1990. Sufficient numbers of elk now occur in this area to provide additional opportunity for the public to hunt elk. Add a (new) hunt for elk in portions of Merced, Santa Clara, San Benito, and Fresno counties. Either-sex tags (range

0 to 10) would be available to the public during a season beginning on the first Saturday in October and extending for 23 consecutive days.

Public opportunities to hunt elk in Humboldt and Del Norte counties are limited to three hunts that occur on private lands owned by Green Diamond Resource Company and the Marble Mountains Elk Hunt that occurs in a small portion of Humboldt County. Sufficient numbers of elk occur outside of existing hunt boundaries in those counties to provide additional opportunity for the public to hunt elk. Add a (new) hunt for elk in Humboldt and Del Norte counties, excluding lands contained within existing elk hunts (Del Norte Roosevelt Elk Hunt, Klamath Roosevelt Elk Hunt, Big Lagoon Roosevelt Elk Hunt, and Marble Mountains Roosevelt Elk Hunt). Either-sex tags (range 0 to 25) would be available to the public during a season beginning on the first Wednesday in September and extending for 12 consecutive days.

9. Modify Season Dates: East Park Reservoir and Fort Hunter Liggett Tule Elk Hunts

Increase the season length for antlerless tule elk during the East Park Reservoir hunt. The number of animals within this hunt has increased over time. Increase the season length from 4 days to 27 days to increase public opportunity and encourage harvest of antlerless elk on private property that are currently receiving depredation problems.

Modify season dates for the Fort Hunter Liggett hunts. Due to military use constraints, hunt dates are subject to change from year to year. Fort Hunter Liggett is adjusting hunt dates due to military use constraints and in an effort to increase hunter success.

(b) Authority and Reference:

Authority: Fish and Game Code sections 200, 202, 203, 332, 1050, and 1572.

Reference: Fish and Game Code sections 203, 203.1, 332, 713, 1570-1572, and 3951.

(c) Specific Technology or Equipment Required by Regulatory Change:

None.

(d) Identification of Reports or Documents Supporting Regulation Change:

Final 2004 Environmental Document Regarding Elk Hunting.

2006 Data Supplement Regarding Elk Hunting.

(e) Public Discussions of Proposed Regulations Prior to Notice Publication:

The Department conducted a public scoping session in Sacramento on October 11, 2006. Public input, discussions and recommendations regarding the environmental document and mammal hunting and trapping regulations were taken at this time.

IV. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action:

(a) Alternatives to Regulation Change:

1. Number of Tags

No alternatives were identified. Elk license tag quotas must be changed periodically in response to a variety of environmental and biological conditions.

2. Modify Boundaries: Big Lagoon Roosevelt Elk, La Panza Tule Elk, and Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunt (Independence, Lone Pine, and West Tinemaha zones)

Establishing a (new) hunt (in lieu of adjusting boundaries) was considered as an alternative and rejected for the La Panza hunt zone. The additional area occupied by the elk is almost entirely private property. It is unknown if trespass permission would be granted to a general tag holder. From aerial surveys it is believed that most of the elk within the new boundary cross back and forth to the previous boundary. Establishing a (new) hunt is not needed at this time.

The Big Lagoon boundary change was made to encompass additional property which Green Diamond Resources Company is adding to the hunt area. Establishing a (new) hunt was considered as an alternative and rejected. The establishment of a new hunt boundary for this additional area is not needed at this time.

Owens Valley hunt boundary changes (Independence, Lone Pine, and West Tinemaha) are necessary to optimize hunter opportunity and maintain flexibility to implement additional tags in a safe effective manner. Combining hunt boundaries was considered as an alternative and rejected as it would not accomplish the management objectives for the various herds and could potentially concentrate harvest on herds that are below population objectives. It would also not optimize the harvest on herds that are above population management objectives.

3. Additional hunt periods: Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunt

Increasing the number of tags for respective zones with the current hunt periods one, two and three was considered and rejected at this time because this would concentrate too many hunters within each zone. Tule elk within these zones tend to concentrate which would in turn concentrate hunters. Concentrating hunters could potentially create safety hazards in addition to causing the elk to vacate the hunt areas.

4. Eliminate Owens Valley Archery Only Tule Elk Hunt

No alternatives were identified. This hunt is not zone specific or sex specific and therefore does not give the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) the ability to manage sex and location of harvested elk.

5. Add Muzzleloader hunts: Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunts (Bishop and Lone Pine)

Establishing these tags as archery only tags was considered as an alternative and rejected. Currently there are muzzle loader special deer hunts (M8, M9, etc) and archery only elk hunts (Northeastern California and Owens Valley) but there are no muzzle loader only elk hunts. Designating the first period of the Bishop and Lone Pine Zones of the Owens Valley tule elk hunt will provide additional opportunity while also increasing the harvest and reducing the population to appropriate levels.

6. Eliminate mandatory orientation: Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunts

Phone orientations were considered as an alternative and rejected. It would be very difficult to effectively contact all the hunters by phone and conduct the orientation.

Schedules of both DFG employees and tag holders would be difficult to coordinate and be very time consuming.

7. Establish (new) Junior Hunt: Owens Valley (Bishop) and Cache Creek Tule Elk Hunts

Although junior hunters can currently apply for and receive Owens Valley and Cache Creek elk tags through the big game drawing process, they must compete with adult hunters to do so. In order to increase interest and participation in this unique hunting opportunity by junior hunters, a regulation change is necessary to add junior-only elk tags for the Owens Valley and Cache Creek tule elk hunts.

8. Establish (new) hunts: San Luis Reservoir and Northwestern California

Demand for public elk hunting is high in California. More than 25,000 applications were submitted in 2006 for less than 300 elk tags.

No alternatives identified for the San Luis Reservoir tule elk hunt. Existing regulations do not provide for public tule elk hunting in Merced, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Fresno Counties near San Luis Reservoir, the area currently supports over 100 elk. Establishing a (new) tule elk hunt near San Luis Reservoir is desired to improve hunter opportunity and is consistent with the statewide management objectives for tule elk.

Expanding the current Del Norte, Big Lagoon, Klamath, and Marble Mountain Roosevelt elk hunting boundaries was considered as an alternative and rejected. Del Norte, Big Lagoon, and Klamath hunt zones exist entirely on Green Diamond Resources Company property, expanding the hunt boundaries would result in a separate drawing to access the Green Diamond Resources property. In order to avoid hunter confusion and separate drawings the new hunt boundary was established for lands outside of the existing hunt zones. Telemetry data suggests that the elk within the Marble Mountain hunt boundary are separate subgroups and expanding the boundary would not be consistent with the herd management goals for the Marble Mountain elk herd. Establishing a new zone is the best alternative to increase hunter opportunity and meet herd objectives.

9. Modify Season Dates: East Park Reservoir and Fort Hunter Liggett Tule Elk Hunts

Increasing the antlerless hunt from 4 days to less than the recommended 28 days was considered as an alternative and rejected. The 28 day hunt period allows enough time for hunters to harvest an elk on property outside of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) property where a majority of elk in this zone are harvested. Due to restrictions with the BOR their property is not available for hunting until after Labor Day weekend, and then two bull elk hunt periods are conducted prior to the antlerless hunt. This increase in season length is in conjunction with an increase in tag numbers for this antlerless hunt. Increasing the number of hunt days can potentially increase hunter days in the field and lessen potential depredation problems.

No alternatives were identified for the Fort Hunter Liggett Tule Elk Hunt season date modification. Access is entirely controlled by Fort Hunter Liggett and the new dates are the only option.

(b) No Change Alternative:

1. Number of Tags

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected because it would not attain project objectives of providing for hunting opportunities while maintaining elk populations and biological/environmental conditions at desired levels. Retaining current tag quotas for each zone may not be responsive to biologically-based changes in the status of various herds. Management plans specify desired sex and age ratios which are attained and maintained in part by modifying tag quotas on an annual basis. The no-change alternative would not allow adjustment of tag quotas in response to changing environmental/biological conditions.

2. Modify Boundaries: Big Lagoon Roosevelt Elk, La Panza Tule Elk, and Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunt (Independence, Lone Pine, and West Tinemaha zones)

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected because it does not facilitate opening additional areas to hunt in the Big Lagoon and La Panza hunt zones. No change in the Owens Valley has the potential to increase the elk herd above management objectives as mandated by Fish and Game Code, Section 3951.

3. Additional Hunt Periods: Owens Valley

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected because it would not meet the management objectives for this herd. The herd is near the maximum number of elk allowed in the Owens Valley Fish and Game Code, Section 3951. The no-change alternative would not reduce the number of elk to levels specified in the Fish and Game Code.

4. Eliminate Owens Valley Archery Only Tule Elk Hunt.

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected because the hunt is not zone specific or sex specific and does not give DFG the ability to manage sex and location (hunt zone) of elk being harvested.

5. Add Muzzleloader Hunts: Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunts (Bishop and Lone Pine)

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected because it does not meet the demand by the hunting public for muzzleloader only hunts nor does it allow DFG to meet and maintain population objectives for this area.

6. Eliminate Mandatory Orientation : Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunts

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected because it is viewed as unnecessary and a time and resource consuming activity that can be accomplished in a written or electronic format.

7. Establish New Junior Hunt: Owens Valley (Bishop) and Cache Creek Tule Elk Hunts

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected. Although juniors can apply for and receive a tag under current regulation, they must compete with adults to do so, resulting in significantly greater odds they will not draw a tag. The no change alternative will not promote additional participation by junior hunters for this unique hunting opportunity.

8. Establish New Hunts: San Luis Reservoir and Northwestern California

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected. The no-change alternative would not allow DFG to offer additional hunting opportunities, which currently are in high demand. By not implementing hunting in the vicinity of San Luis Reservoir and Northwest California, the no-change alternative would compromise DFG's ability to alleviate land use conflicts and manage elk population numbers.

9. Modify Season Dates: East Park Reservoir and Fort Hunter Liggett Tule Elk Hunt

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected for the East Park Reservoir tule elk hunt because it does not help alleviate depredation issues within the hunt boundary and increase hunter opportunity.

The no-change alternative was considered and rejected for the Fort Hunter Liggett tule elk hunt because not adjusting the dates is not acceptable to the military base. Military use has priority over the hunting program and the new dates meet the needs of the base.

(c) Consideration of Alternatives:

In view of information currently possessed, no reasonable alternative considered would be more effective in carrying out the purposes for which the regulation is proposed, or would be as effective as and less burdensome to the affected private persons than the proposed regulation.

V. Mitigation Measures Required by Regulatory Action:

The proposed regulatory action will have no negative impact on the environment; therefore, no mitigation measures are needed.

VI. Impact of Regulatory Action.

This proposed action adjusts tag quotas, modifies boundaries, adds new hunt periods, eliminates an archery only hunt, adds muzzleloader only hunts, eliminates a mandatory orientation, establishes a new junior hunt, establishes two new hunts, and modifies several hunt dates. Given the number of tags available, and the area over which they are distributed, this proposal is economically neutral to business.

(a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businessmen to Compete with Businesses in Other States.

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. Considering the small number of tags issued over the entire state, this proposal is economically neutral to business.

(b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California.

None.

(c) Cost Impacts on Private Persons.

The agency is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with this proposed action.

- (d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State.
None.
- (e) Other Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies.
None.
- (f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts.
None.
- (g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4.
None.
- (h) Effect on Housing Costs.
None.

**INFORMATIVE DIGEST
(Policy Statement Overview)**

Existing regulations specify elk license tag quotas for each hunt. In order to maintain hunting quality in accordance with management goals and objectives, it is periodically necessary to adjust quotas in response to dynamic environmental and biological conditions. This proposed amendment modifies elk tag numbers to ranges of tags to adjust for fluctuations in population numbers.

Periodic quota changes are necessary to maintain hunting quality in accordance with management goals and objectives.

2007 Proposed Elk Tag Allocation										
Hunt Name	Antler-less	Either-Sex	Bull	Spike	Muzzle-loader Bull	Muzzle-loader Antler-less	Muzzle-loader either-sex	Archery Either-Sex	Archery Antler-less	Archery Bull
Roosevelt Elk										
Siskiyou	0-30	0-30								
Del Norte	0-20		0-10							
Marble Mountains		0-80								
Marble Mtns Junior		0-4								
Klamath	0-20		0-20							
Big Lagoon		0-10								
NW California (new)		0-25								
Rocky Mountain Elk										
Rocky Mtn Elk										
Northeastern		0-20						0-10		
Northeastern Junior		0-4								
Tule Elk										
Cache Creek	0-4		0-4							
Cache Creek Junior-New			0-2							
La Panza										
Period 1	0-12		0-10							
Period 1 (Junior)			0-2							
Period 2	0-12		0-12							
Owens Valley										
Bishop										
Period 1 (new) Muzzleloader					0-10	0-30	0-10			
Period 2 (new) Junior	0-30	0-10	0-10							

2007 Proposed Elk Tag Allocation										
Hunt Name	Antler-less	Either-Sex	Bull	Spike	Muzzle-loader Bull	Muzzle-loader Antler-less	Muzzle-loader either-sex	Archery Either-Sex	Archery Antler-less	Archery Bull
Period 3 (new dates)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 4 (old per 1)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 5 (old per 3)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Independence										
Period 1 (new) Archery								0-10	0-30	0-10
Period 2 (new)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 3 (new dates)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 4 (old per 1)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 5 (old per 3)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Lone Pine										
Period 1 (new) Muzzleloader					0-10	0-30	0-10			
Period 2 (new)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 3 (new dates)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 4 (old per 1)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 5 (old per 3)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Tinemaha & W. Tinemaha										
Period 1 (new) Archery								0-10	0-30	0-10
Period 2 (new)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 3 (new dates)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 4 (old per 1)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Period 5 (old per 3)	0-30	0-10	0-10							
Grizzly Island										
Period 1	0-12			0-6						
Period 1 Junior	0-2			0-2						
Period 2	0-12		0-2	0-6						
Period 2 Junior				0-2						
Period 3	0-12		0-2	0-4						
Period 4	0-10									
Period 5	0-10									
Fort Hunter Liggett										
Archery Only								0-6	0-10	
Period 1	0-14									
Period 1 Junior	0-4									
Period 2	0-14									
Period 3			0-14							
Period 3 Junior Elk			0-2							
East Park Reservoir										

2007 Proposed Elk Tag Allocation										
Hunt Name	Antler-less	Either-Sex	Bull	Spike	Muzzle-loader Bull	Muzzle-loader Antler-less	Muzzle-loader either-sex	Archery Either-Sex	Archery Antler-less	Archery Bull
Period 1			0-2							
Period 2			0-2							
Period 3	0-10									
San Luis Reservoir (<i>new</i>)	0-5	0-10	0-10							

Existing regulations specify boundaries for the Big Lagoon Roosevelt Elk Hunt and La Panza Tule Elk Hunt. The proposed change expands the Big Lagoon zone southeast to encompass additional Green Diamond Inc. property. The proposal expands the La Panza boundaries, consistent with the natural range expansion of tule elk which has occurred since this hunt was established in 1993. The proposal is necessary to improve hunter opportunity and is consistent with management objectives for tule elk in the area.

Existing regulations specify boundaries for the Owens Valley Tule Elk Hunt (Independence, Lone Pine, and West Tinemaha zones). The proposed changes adjust the boundaries for the Independence, Lone Pine, and West Tinemaha zones. The proposal is necessary to improve hunter opportunity and is consistent with management objectives for tule elk in the area.

Existing regulations specify hunt periods for the Owens Valley tule elk hunts. The proposed changes add two additional hunt periods prior to the existing hunt periods. The proposal is necessary to improve hunter opportunity and is consistent with management objectives for tule elk in the area.

Existing regulations authorize an Owens Valley archery only tule elk hunt. The proposed action eliminates this hunt. These tags are not area or sex specific and therefore do not allow DFG to manage sex and location of elk being harvested.

Existing regulations do not authorize any muzzleloader only elk hunts. The proposed regulation would authorize muzzleloader only hunts for the Bishop and Lone Pine tule elk hunts during the new second period.

Existing regulations require a mandatory orientation for the Owens Valley tule elk hunts. The proposed regulation would eliminate this orientation. All information would be supplied to the hunter in a written format. Orientations require substantial time from employees and the same information can be supplied in a written format.

Existing regulations do not authorize a junior elk hunt in the Owens Valley and Cache Creek. The proposed regulatory action is made to enhance junior big-game hunting opportunity. Junior hunters can apply for and receive an elk tag through the big-game drawing process, but they must compete with adult hunters to do so. The proposal authorizes junior elk tags in the Bishop zone during the new period 2 and at Cache Creek during the general bull hunt. The proposal is necessary to improve junior elk hunter opportunity and is consistent with management objectives for tule elk in the area.

Existing regulations do not provide for public tule elk hunting in western Merced County and adjacent areas in Santa Clara, San Benito, and Fresno Counties near San Luis Reservoir. The proposal will establish a new tule elk hunt in the vicinity of San Luis Reservoir with either-sex elk

tags (range 0-10) during a season beginning on the first Saturday in October and extending for 23 consecutive days. The proposal will provide additional elk hunting opportunities, consistent with the statewide management objectives for tule elk.

Public opportunities to hunt elk in Humboldt and Del Norte counties are limited to three hunts that occur on private lands owned by Green Diamond Resource Company and the Marble Mountains Elk Hunt that occurs in a small portion of Humboldt County. Sufficient numbers of elk occur outside of existing hunt boundaries in those counties to provide additional opportunity for the public to hunt elk. Add a new hunt for elk in Humboldt and Del Norte counties, excluding lands open to elk hunting contained within existing elk hunts (Del Norte Roosevelt Elk Hunt, Klamath Roosevelt Elk Hunt, Big Lagoon Roosevelt Elk Hunt, and Marble Mountains Roosevelt Elk Hunt). Either-sex tags (range 0 to 25) would be available to the public during a season beginning on the first Wednesday in September and extending for 12 consecutive days

Existing regulations establish season dates for the East Park Reservoir antlerless tule elk hunt and Fort Hunter Liggett tule elk hunts. The proposed regulation increases the length of the antlerless hunt for East Park Reservoir from 4 days to 27 days. The proposed regulations for Fort Hunter Liggett decreases the number of days for archery from 11 to 5 days and changes the antlerless archery hunt to run concurrently with the Period 1 antlerless rifle hunt. These regulations modify the season dates for period 1 antlerless hunt (including the junior hunt) from late November to early October. In addition the regulations also modify the period 2 antlerless hunt from mid-December to late November.