



State of Idaho
DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES
"Caring for America's Heroes"



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
Governor

DAVID E. BRASUELL
Division Administrator

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July 7, 2017

Virgil Moore, Director
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
600 S. Walnut
P.O. Box 26
Boise, ID 83707

RE: Notice of Intent to Promulgate Rules Governing the Disabled Veterans Special Big Game Tag Program

Dear Director Moore, *Virgil*

The Idaho Division of Veterans Services (IDVS) wishes to participate in the Department of Fish and Game's negotiated rulemaking process concerning the proposal to revise the provisions for Disabled Veteran Special Big Game Tags (IDAPA Rule 13.01.04.9.01).

As you are aware, since 2009, IDVS has coordinated an annual expense paid elk hunt for two (2) disabled Veterans. This annual hunt is coordinated on behalf, and is possible due to the generosity, of a very successful local businessperson and large landowner who is dedicated to helping meet IDVS's mission of providing a superior benefit opportunity to disabled Veterans. The purpose of this program is to offer an annual big game hunt for two (2) significantly disabled veterans who would otherwise be denied this option due to the seriousness of their disability.

Currently, this program is set up where in May of each year our selection committee meets, reviews the disabled Veterans' applications, and makes the top two (2) selections based on the information supplied. After selection, the hunts are then planned for October or November of each year, and take place on a private ranch. While hunters are expected to provide their own transportation to the Boise area, rustic cabin/bunkhouse (or hotel) accommodations, meals, and on-site transportation and assistance are then provided at the ranch at no cost to the Veteran. If the Veteran requires a medical caregiver, these items are also provided at no charge for the caregiver. This year, seventy-one (71) Veterans applied and two (2) Veterans with 100% disability ratings were selected.

This important program currently depends upon IDVS receiving two (2) Disabled Veterans Special Big Game Tags annually. While we understand the circumstances your agency is facing, and the need to establish protocols regarding allocation of these limited tags, we also fear the proposed rulemaking will

make it impossible for IDVS to continue to offer this important mission driven program each year. With the issuance of tags by random draw, there is a very significant chance IDVS will not receive any tag, thus denying this once in a lifetime program opportunity to our disabled Veterans.

As previously mentioned, IDVS supports IDFG's need to revise your existing rule to establish a defined application period for these tags and a fair method of allocation. As part of your agencies Rule Proposal, however, we ask that you think about identifying IDVS as a partner in meeting the intent of existing statute for making these big game tags available for disabled Veterans. As the State Agency empowered to support and serve Idaho Veterans, we believe it would be appropriate, and meet statutory intent, to reserve at least one (1) tag for use by an Idaho Veteran sponsored by IDVS. As such, we urge you to consider reserving at least one (1), if not two (2), of these tags for the Idaho Division of Veterans Services to allocate annually for our sponsored Disabled Veterans Elk Hunt.

IDVS is appreciative of you and your staff's past support and assistance in obtaining tags for this well recognized and supported program. We also appreciate your consideration of our recommendation described above, and for your continued support in "Caring for America's Heroes."

Please be sure to contact my Deputy Administrator, Tracy Schaner, or me should there be any questions.

Sincerely,


David E. Brasuell, Administrator
Idaho Division of Veterans Services

c: Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game