

Info on SRD 2011 Proposals

1. *Standardized start dates for archery hunting* -- would start Sept 1 in those areas that now start on the Wed after the Labor Day weekend in September. Those areas that start earlier now (say Aug 25 in the NW) would stay the same.

2. *Inclusion of crossbows in the archery seasons* – Arguments against include differences in the weapon versus conventional bows. Not having to draw in the presence of game and being able to hold at full draw “forever” are definite advantages over conventional archery equipment. Harvest success similar to conventional bows. Can be currently used in primitive and general hunting seasons in Alberta.

Pressure from manufacturers, dealers across North America to create a new market that they will supply.

Some jurisdictions now allow crossbows in archery seasons but many do not; some do not even allow them in the general seasons. Areas that have allowed them have shown no significant “new” hunter enrolment; show a movement from rifle hunter ranks.

Those areas who have allowed them, most have only whitetail deer, have no bowhunter license or harvest limits, had no formal organized opposition.

This increase in hunter numbers (which can be significant) will change the bowhunting harvest regime in Alberta. Currently we are allowed app 15% of the harvest (based on being 15% of the hunting population) – IF our numbers increase or our harvest rate increases SRD has advised us we will be put on a draw (just as we have in the past). Should we not get 30% of the harvest if our numbers jump to 30% of the hunting population?

Crossbows on our archery antelope and prairie mule deer will be devastating – success rate will be high. 410 archery sheep? How will SRD manage that?

In areas where game harvest needs to be increased and firearms are not an option (WMU 212 for example) - ACCESS is the key. No matter what weapon is introduced, access to private property is the limiting factor. Adding more weapons may even compound the problem. Crossbows do not enjoy the acceptance level with the general public as do conventional bows – due to fact that they can be loaded at all times one reason.

Some jurisdictions where crossbows are allowed have shown a drop in conventional bow sales/use as the general hunting population gravitates to crossbows because they are closer to a firearm in structure, easy to master, less practice needed. The Wolf Den in Barrie, Ontario went from selling 400 conventional bows per year pre-crossbow to 40 bows and 350 crossbows post crossbow introduction.

Have a dramatic effect on bowhunting culture/tradition as this new weapon takes over bowhunting seasons.

What are the specific reasons for allowing them in Alberta? What is driving this agenda?

Will be a huge loss to present bowhunting opportunity.

What plan has been developed to deal with the ramifications of such a decision? None to our knowledge thus far.

3. *Muzzleloader seasons (pre rifle season) over a broad geographic area* – Preliminary talk indicates last 2 weeks of Oct. What will be the long term effect to current archery only seasons that are open at that time? In conversation with many “hunters” consensus is that muzzleloaders have evolved and the new in-lines are no different than many single shot centerfires. Can argue that most new muzzleloaders are not primitive in nature. Consensus is to create more “primitive weapon” seasons than just a muzzleloader season. How many hunters would take advantage of a muzzleloader season? Would there be a muzzleloader license created – should be to gauge use, harvest and success rate. Just like the bowhunting license does.

