

## MSA Informal License Survey

This is an informal survey developed by MSA to assist in gaging attitudes of Montana Resident Sportsmen/women. It was sent out to our database. While we had more respondents than indicated, sample size was generally 52, as some just provided written comments.

### Results:

Elk tag ranged from \$20 to \$100. The weighted average was \$32.23.

Deer tag ranged from \$15 to \$50. The weighted average was \$24.28.

Antelope tag ranged from \$7 to \$50. The weighted average was \$26.50.

### Discounted licenses:

Non-Residents with relatives in Montana.....90% said No.

Non-Residents born in Montana.....83% said No.

Non-Resident college students.....73% said No.

Resident Seniors.....55% said Yes / 45% said No\*

\*anecdotal: very few seniors thought they should get reduced licenses/

There are also a number of comments that we will capture as well.

Based on the "Resident License Fee Comparison by State" document provided to the license council, we make the following resident fee recommendations:

Antelope	\$30
Deer	\$30
Elk	\$40
Bear	\$40
Bison	\$250
Mountain Lion	\$40
Turkey	\$15

All of these numbers are less than the average from the other states listed on the sheet.

## MSA License Survey Comments

Below are the comments from people who completed the License Survey. Approximately 55 people completed the survey. The comments are from those who chose to answer the questions at the end of the survey, which stated: **In your opinion, who, if anyone, should be eligible for reduced price license?**

1. Youth hunters (12-14) and disabled veterans should be eligible for reduced price license.
2. Wouldn't most of the short fall in funding be made up if all these special licenses were terminated? Is the number of licenses sold each year going up or down in proportion to the rising population of the state? Is raising the license costs going to improve that situation? At what point will the license fee increases have a null effect on the amount of revenue produced? What will FWP recommend then? Maybe a wildlife fee should be added to driver license since nearly as many deer and birds are killed by drivers as by hunters. So many questions, so few answers.
3. Nobody should be eligible for reduced price license.
4. Deer, Elk, and Antelope should each be \$25.00 for residents. Seniors, resident vets, and resident active duty service members should pay \$15.00 each. No other group or person should get any discount.
5. Senior citizens only, 65+.
6. Seniors, handicapped folks, military servicemen and women (all Montana residents)
7. People who were born here, lived here, and want to come home to hunt with family. Wounded vets should be getting reduced costs also.
8. Teenagers- reduced
9. High school students, college students, disabled vets, senior citizens.
10. First time youth, college students, and disabled veterans.
11. The reduced price license program is a visionary program that should be copied by all states. The loss in revenue is offset by promoting MT hunting in a way that will bring money in that would otherwise not be spent, and benefits residents also.
12. Retired military and disabled folks should be eligible for reduced price license.
13. I have no problem with seniors receiving a reduced price. Perhaps make it a \$15.00 for elk, and \$12.00 for deer. The major problem is with finding a place to hunt.
14. If a resident student is attending college in another state, they should be able to purchase a resident license. If a resident person is in the military serving in another state, they should be able to purchase a residence license.
15. In order to be eligible for reduced price licenses an individual should have to have an income at or below the poverty line, otherwise they should pay the full price.
16. I feel it is equitable for seniors to be eligible for reduced price licenses (except for the big 4 - bison, moose, sheep, and goat. Many are on fixed incomes and have little opportunity to increase their income to absorb increased license fees.
17. Seniors and Youth should be eligible for reduced price license.
18. College students, to encourage the next generation involved hunters.
19. No.
20. Truly disabled veterans. Not the ones who are 20-50% disabled per the VA.
21. Military and Disabled.
22. Youth and seniors.
23. Seniors perhaps, but no one else. Our current license fee structure is unrealistic in the context of what needs to be done to enhance our resources and public access to those resources.
24. In my opinion we need to increase the price of resident hunter licenses. The past few increases have been Nonresident. I think if we are resident hunters and want to control how our FWP is run (yeah I know, wishful thinking), we are the ones who will have to fork over the dough. There is no doubt that we as resident hunters have the lowest licenses fees of any western state. There are

about 4 ½ million dollars of discounted and some free licenses that could be done away with. So when you get the chance, look over the facts in the case and decide where you stand on the issue and let the FWP know about it.

25. We shouldn't just assume the answer to the revenue question is to raise licenses fees. When was the last time there was a reduction in force at FWP? If there are less people (non-residents) hunting then perhaps we need fewer workers to serve them.
26. One thing to consider is regard to the way your questions are phrased is that asking "Should non-residents who have relatives in Montana receive a reduced price license?" is likely to generate different responses that if the question were phrased, "should Montana residents be able to sponsor their non-resident relatives so they can purchase a reduced price license?" yet both apply equally to the same license discount.
- Another thing to keep in mind is that a survey distributed in the manner this one is will not result in statistically valid results that can be compared to the results FWP obtained back in '05 when the department used a random sample of licensed hunters as the basis for estimating "willingness to pay" at different license levels. In fairness, though, I have to admit that the fact that the data we had was scientifically sound didn't make a whole lot of difference to a significant number of legislators who based their positions and votes on the fee increase on ideology and their personal opinions about FWP, rather than valid information about hunter's willingness to pay higher license fees.
- Also, when surveyed a random sample of senior license holders to get their input on the senior discount, it was assumed they would say what many of the seniors I hang out with did, i.e. we don't need a discount. It was found to be just the opposite and appeared some heads would get chopped off if they did away with senior discount. I still think this should be on the table for discussion, but be prepared for some "blow back" for the "blue haired and bald set" (which I can say, cuz I are one now!).
- Good luck with our efforts to support a resident fee increase. It's long overdue and badly needed.
27. Thanks, I do believe our resident big game licenses are underpriced and we obviously need to support fee increase to keep important department programs in place. Further, I think that a simplified structure would be advantageous as well. However, I also think that a couple of things need to happen on the front end of the discussion to put any increase in context. First, it would be relevant to know what the costs of those same licenses are in at least WY, ID and CO. That establishes a market basis for any increases. I think WY is currently going back to their legislature with another fee increase request. Second, and maybe even more important, I believe it is critical to clearly articulate the objectives of the license fee structure. Those objectives should include recruitment and retention of new and infrequent or lapsed hunters to maintain the base of active hunters that will sustain the programs over the long term. A set of questions could be developed that would be applied to any subset of license holders to assess the utility and function of a particular price.
28. Youth—because we need to make it easier to get them involved from the start. Everyone else does not need a price break; they should be able to carry their weight. To equitable show a need for a price break we should be able to identify a class of individuals –across the board- who are economically disadvantaged by this and who's support of the sport would be negatively impacted and we cannot. Price breaks should be used to encourage/aid participation. Not a "reward" for being a vet, or disable, or elderly. By the way; as a retired active duty service member- I found that although appreciated, the veteran's discount was not needed, as my income was much higher than probably the average Montana sportsmen was. A nice touch. Perhaps the awarding of a bonus point would be good?!
29. Private landowners supporting wildlife and allowing fee public access to their lands. They should Not have to pay because of what they are already contributing toward the North American Model.

I support reduced priced licenses for nonresidents who grew up hunting Montana returning to Montana to hunt with family members. Being with friends and family is an important part of many hunting traditions and critical to hunter recruitment.

30. Non-resident youth should be eligible for reduced price licenses, as they are now, with either a Resident relative as their sponsor or with a non-resident (who has a full priced license) as a sponsor.

I would also change the MT license structure so that a non-resident who is not a youth could be sponsored by a resident relative to receive a full-price non-resident license without having to go through the drawing. That way, a non-resident brother/dad/sister/etc. could come hunt with you in Montana any year they wanted, without having to compete in the drawing with other non-residents. In my opinion, these licenses should not be part of the non-resident "cap". There would likely not be too many and they would all be hunting with a resident relative, so not likely to add to any "crowing" issues. This would also reduce the pool of applicants in the drawing, which would reduce competition for licenses among Outfitter clients, thus reducing the need to increase the "cap" to address their concerns.

31. I am glad that MSA has taken a leadership role in the resident licensing debate, but for any license fee increase, the resident will need to be sold on why. If its because the agency needs more money, then the whole FWP budget needs to be looked at especially the compensation levels of the staff that have increased in the last couple years. It is no secret that the agency has increased man- power by much in the last few years. Just because the resident license fees are so much lower than surrounding states will not sell an increase. As being part of the debate in 2005, there will be a large group of legislators that will not support it just because of fee increase. Another group will not give FWP any more money because of their past actions (moving bison, wolf management, etc.). Another group just doesn't trust the agency at all. The last increase came with a 50-50 House and a democratic majority in the Senate. I really doubt there will be a majority of Democrats in either House.
32. I have no problem with seniors receiving a reduced price. Perhaps make it \$15.00 for elk, and \$12.00 for deer. The major problem is finding a place to hunt.
33. When FWP gets wolf #'s under control and our game herds start coming back, then we can have a license increase.
34. I believe Senior citizens should get a reduced price license. I wouldn't even paying more for my License if this opened up more land, either in block management or some other avenue.
35. Seniors and students (not just NR college students). The purpose those already in the sport to remain active supporters, and the next generation to hunt and fish; FWP will need all their support in the future.
- On the Tag prices, it depends on what the money would be used for. I would support higher increases if the "extra" was used to provide hunter access (especially to all the land locked up because of surrounding private land and/or to allow corner hoping. I am not in favor of supporting increases if they merely offset other funds.
36. Seniors only.
37. Active Military.
38. No, especially not nonresidents.
39. Nobody, other that those residents under age 18. Seniors say they are on a "fixed income". Well unless you have a money tree in your back yard, we are all on fixed incomes. Get rid of all discounted licenses. If someone wants to move out of state and make greater income, then they should budget the cost of paying standard non-resident fees. My son lives out of state and I refuse to participate in this handout license program. If he can't afford to pay the standard non-resident fee, he doesn't deserve the privilege of coming home to hunt here.
40. Perhaps we should talk about Disabled Vets and first time hunters (youth who passed Hunter Education) getting a % discount for one or two years at the most. I'm advocating only a 20-25% discount. This is one issue (resident fee increase) that the hunting community needs to be the

leader on. If we aren't we will continue to have Legislators and other non-qualified folks making decisions that are wrong for the future. We have an absolute gift here in Montana; we owe it to the future generations to do what's right. No place left in the US that remotely compares with Montana!!! Another item that I feel needs to be addressed is how to make this fiscally sustainable going forward and we need to have the discussion of all recreational uses of our resource and how those might help the funding.

41. Speaking as a senior, I don't believe I should get a reduced prices license.

I particularly don't believe non-residents with relative here should receive a reduced price license, nor non-residents born in Montana. It simply doesn't make sense. They've chosen where they live.

I could go with non-resident college students at one of our public universities getting a reduced price after one-year continuous study here. They pay more than the cost of of the education in tuition and are subsidizing resident tuition costs.

I could also go along with reduced license fee for people on food stamps or below poverty level—but not free. I know this would be hard to administer.

When you consider al the other costs associated with hunting, license fees are such a small percentage of what hunters put out. The resource itself should be valued much higher. With all the gadgets and high tech stuff people are using these days, we've gone a long ways from our hunting heritage, and even fair chase hunting. Seventy years ago Leopold bemoaned the growth in gadgets. He'd be astonished today at compound bows, with range finders, graphite arrows with lighted nocks, etc., et., etc. He made his own long bows and overshot a buck on the slopes of the Gavilan River in Mexico- he wouldn't have missed with the gadgets of today. Shooting game at 500-1,00 yards with high tech sniper rifles, just because you think you can do it, is outrageous to me as it is so distant from fair chase.

Then came the gadgeteer otherwise know as the sporting-goods dealer. He has draped the American outdoorsman with infinity of contraptions, all offered as aids to self-reliance, hardihood, woodcraft, or marksmanship, but too often functioning as substitutes for them. Gadgets fill the pockets, and dangle from neck and belt. The overflow fills the auto-trunk, and also the trailer. Each item of outdoor equipment grows lighter and often better, but the aggregate poundage becomes tonnage. The traffic in gadgets adds up to astronomical sums, which are soberly published as representing "the economic value of wildlife' But what of cultural values?" Wildlife in American Culture by Aldo Leopold, p. 180 in Sand County Almanac. (~70 years ago).

To sum up, wildlife once fed us and shaped our culture. It still yields us pleasure for leisure hours, but we try to reap that pleasure by modern machinery and thus destroy part of it value. Reaping it by modern mentality would yield not only pleasure, but wisdom as well.