



The Different Ways Western States Use Big Game Licenses To Benefit Commercial Outfitters

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Authors
Micah Peel



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Introduction & Research Questions:

Mountain Pursuit is a Western states hunting nonprofit that advocates for resident hunters. In fighting for resident hunter license preference, one of the biggest arguments is that increased resident preference will provide less nonresidents for the outfitters. This argument suggests that the only way to increase outfitter business is to increase the number of nonresident tags sold. We wanted to see how the relationship between outfitters and nonresident hunters is currently managed by each Western state.

The three main questions this report is based on:

1. Which Western states give commercial outfitters some type of license set-aside or benefit, and how does the state accomplish this?
2. What are the different methods that Western states use licenses to benefit commercial outfitters?
3. Which Western states allow landowner tags to be transferred? (This benefits outfitters as they can lease land to gain tags or purchase them from landowners for nonresident clients)

Key Findings:

There are 3 main ways states use big game licenses to benefit commercial outfitters:

- A. Commercial guide requirement for nonresidents (3 of 12 Western States).
- B. Special outfitter draw and/or and outfitter set-aside (3 of 12 Western States).
- C. Landowner tags permitted to be transferred (6 of 12 Western States).

Outfitter Preference Method by State

Western State	Commercial Guide Requirement	Special Outfitter Draw/ Set-Aside	Transferrable Landowner Tags
Alaska	x		
Arizona			
Colorado			x
Hawaii			
Idaho		x	
Montana			
Nevada	x		x
New Mexico		x	x
Oregon		x	x
Utah			x
Washington			x
Wyoming	x		

Outfitter Preference In Each Western State:

Western State	Outfitter Preference
Alaska	Nonresident needs a commercial guide or an Alaska resident who is within the second degree of kindred to hunt brown bears, grizzly bears, dall sheep, and mountain goats.
Arizona	None
Colorado	Transferrable deer, elk, and antelope landowner tags.
Hawaii	None
Idaho	Up to 25% of nonresident tags go to nonresidents using an outfitter.
Montana	None
Nevada	Nonresidents need a commercial guide to get a restricted deer tag & landowner deer, elk and antelope tags are transferrable.

Western State	Outfitter Preference
New Mexico	10% of the total draw tags go to residents or nonresidents who have contracted with an outfitter & landowner tags are transferrable.
Oregon	50% of nonresident controlled buck deer, elk and antlerless deer tags drawn the previous year go to special outfitter draw. Deer and elk landowner tags are transferrable.
Utah	Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit tags may be transferred.
Washington	Transferrable landowner tags.
Wyoming	Nonresidents must have a commercial guide or a registered resident guide to hunt big game in Wilderness areas.

Outfitter Preference Details:

Alaska:

Alaska has a guide requirement for nonresidents hunting brown bears, grizzly bears, dall sheep or mountain goats. If you are a nonresident participating in one of these hunts, you either need to be accompanied by an Alaska-Licensed commercial guide, or an Alaska resident who is within a second degree of kindred (father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, grandparent, grandchild, brother- or sister-in-law, son- or daughter-in-law, father- or mother-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepsister, stepbrother, stepson, or stepdaughter). An Alaska resident who is accompanying a nonresident family member doesn't need to be registered, the only requirements are to be 19 years or older and to be holding a current Alaska hunting license.

Alaska does not offer landowner permits.

Colorado:

Colorado landowners may apply for landowner tags for deer, elk and antelope based on acreage owned. Tags are not guaranteed and there is a one time transfer limit for each tag.

Idaho:

Idaho has a 25% "Outfitted Hunter Set-Aside." In general hunts, capped zones and controlled hunts, the commission can set aside up to 25% of the nonresident deer and elk tags for outfitters. In capped and controlled hunt areas these tags are distributed base on the "outfitters proportional use."

For capped zones, this takes the average of an outfitter's outfitted tag use and divides it by all other outfitter's outfitted capped zone tag use and multiplying it by the total amount of allocated tags in the capped zone.

For a controlled hunt the outfitter's highest amount of outfitted tag use in the last two years and divides it by all other outfitter's outfitted controlled hunt tag use and multiplying it by the total amount of allocated tags in the controlled hunt.

In order for a nonresident to use one of these tags, the outfitter must submit the application on behalf of the client.

Idaho does not have transferrable landowner permits.

Nevada:

Nevada does not permit nonresidents to hunt restricted unit deer tags without a commercial guide. As a nonresident, you must have a guide in order to enter the draw. The outfitter may apply for the tag on behalf of the client if power of attorney is given by the client.

Landowners may apply for an issuance of deer, antelope or elk tags. They are then free to sell the tags to any hunter holding a Nevada hunting license, including nonresidents.

New Mexico:

New Mexico allows hunters planning to use a commercial guide to participate in a "10% Special Drawing Pool." For the hunter to enter this pool, they must provide a signed contract with the outfitter they will be using. The special drawing pool includes 10% of all big game licenses for each hunt code and is available to both residents and nonresidents. These tags are separate from the 6% allotted to nonresidents. They are sold at nonresident prices if more than 22% of the applicants for an area are nonresidents, and there have been more applicants than licenses available in the previous two years, or if the department of game and fish designates the unit as a "quality hunt."

Landowners in the primary or special management zones can be granted private land elk authorizations by the department of game and fish. With this, land owners can sell/trade their authorization for hunters to purchase a private land elk license.

Oregon:

Oregon sets aside an amount of tags equal to half the amount of tags sold to nonresidents in the previous year for a commercial outfitter special draw. The hunts included in this are: controlled buck deer, elk, and antlerless deer. Outfitters get the tags and then market them to nonresidents. The outfitter must be registered with the state of Oregon in order to participate in the special draw. Left overs are sold on a first come first serve basis.

Landowners get tags based on the amount of acreage owned, deer and elk tags may be transferred to nonresidents. Antelope tags may only be transferred to family members.

Utah:

Utah allows Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit (CWMU) tags to be transferred to nonresidents. CWMUs are hunt areas that are mostly private land with a specific purpose of managing a big game species. There are 2 million acres making up 115 CWMUs. In those, a maximum of 90% of the buck mule deer and bull elk, and a maximum of 60% of the bull moose and buck pronghorn are given to CWMUs. Nonresidents cannot apply for CWMU permits, but can purchase them from a CWMU landowner.

Washington:

Landowners enter into a contract with the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and may sell their deer and elk tags to nonresidents. Each landowner gets to distribute the tags on their land and charge an access fee.

Wyoming:

Wyoming has a guide requirement for nonresident big game and trophy (bears, wolves and mountain lions) hunters that are hunting on federally designated Wilderness areas. All nonresidents participating in these hunts must be accompanied by either a professional outfitter or a resident guide. Resident guides may not accept pay, they must have a resident guide license, and they can take up to two nonresidents per year.

Wyoming does not have transferrable landowner tags.

States Without Outfitter Preference:

Arizona

Hawaii

Montana

Further Research:

1. In 2018, how many hunters contracted a commercial outfitter in each Western State?
2. Are landowners taxed on the resale of their landowner tags?