

**GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION
PROPOSAL**

**Custer State Park Mountain Lion Hunting Season
Custer State Park Restrictions
License Forms and Fees
Chapter 41:06:62 – 41:06:07 – 41:06:02**

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	August 5-6, 2010	Aberdeen
	Public Hearing	October 7-8, 2010	Spearfish
	Finalization	October 7-8, 2010	Spearfish
Amendment _____	New Rule _____	Information _____	

PARKS DIVISION RECOMMENDATION

Season Dates: Mountain Lion Hunting Season in Custer State Park will occur from January 1 through March 31, or until 5 mountain lions are harvested.

Licenses: 5 “any” mountain lions within the fenced portion of Custer State Park.

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Modify licenses forms and fees to add a Custer State Park “any mountain lion” license for \$300.
2. The CSP mountain lion season will occur from January 1 through March 31, or until 5 mountain lions are harvested within the fenced portion of Custer State Park.
3. Hunters must attend a mandatory briefing.
4. No person may harvest more than one mountain lion in a season.
5. No person may harvest a mountain lion cub, or any mountain lion accompanying another mountain lion.
6. A person may hunt mountain lions with the aid of mountain lion hunting dogs in the fenced portion of Custer State Park.
7. Hunters must notify the Custer State Park office at least 12-18 hours prior to each day they plan to hunt in Custer State Park.
8. Licensed hunters may be accompanied by a registered houndsmen. Houndsmen, or mountain lion hound dog handlers must register at the hunter briefing or 24 hours prior to going into the field in order to pursue mountain lions with dogs in Custer State Park. A houndsmen registration form must be filled out by applicants so that Park officials have information on how many people and dogs will be pursuing mountain lions in Custer State Park. Houndsmen can only pursue mountain lions during an open season when accompanying a licensed hunter with a valid tag.
9. South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks staff reserve the right to accompany any mountain lion hunter hunting in Custer State Park.
10. Hunters and houndsmen will not be allowed to release dogs on tracks indicating multiple cats are traveling together. Female mountain lions with cubs may not be taken while using hounds. Hunters must harvest the first legal cat that they have reasonable opportunity to harvest and that they suspect with the best of their ability is non-lactating. If these restrictions of releasing dogs on multiple lions or failure to harvest the first legal cat are not obeyed the licensed hunter will lose his/her license.
11. A person may use an electronic call to hunt mountain lions. The prohibition against the use of electronic calls to hunt big game animals described in 41:06:04:03 does not apply to the mountain lion hunting season.
12. A person may use any firearm, muzzleloader, or bow and arrow established by statute or administrative rule as legal implements for taking of deer.
13. All mountain lions harvested must be presented to a department representative within 24 hours of harvest for inspection.
14. The license cost \$300 (+\$5 habitat fee) will only be available to South Dakota residents through the drawing system.
15. A person who received a Custer State Park mountain lion license in any of the preceding nine years may not apply for a license in that season.
16. A person may not have more than one mountain lion license in any one year.
17. A person may apply for and receive a preference point for the Custer State Park unit.

APPROVE _____ **MODIFY** _____ **REJECT** _____ **NO ACTION** _____

STAFF COMMENTS

The majority of the public supports reducing the mountain lion population in the Black Hills (South Dakota Mountain Lion Management Plan 2010-2015). Based on results of a public opinion survey conducted in 2010 there is evidence that the public supports a mountain lion hunting season in Custer State Park. The Custer State Park season is part of a holistic management approach with the Black Hills population, this action will provide additional harvest of lions to help reduce the population to the population objective of 175 lions. The season design will regulate hunter numbers and periods of activity to mitigate disturbance to other wildlife and services in the park. A hunting season in the Park would provide recreational opportunity and limited income under proposed license fees.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Based on radio-telemetry data collected by SDSU research investigators, all the acreage of CSP is occupied by at least one mountain lion. There is more home range overlap among females. By 2009, 22 lions (including cubs) had been radio-marked in the park. During the 2009 lion hunting season, 12 of those were located exclusively within the un hunted portion of CSP, and 3 were located exclusively outside of CSP. For the remaining 7 cats, the average time spent outside of Custer State Park during the hunting season in 2009 was 36%. Based on SDSU research data from 2009-10, it is estimated that the Park has an average of 18 mountain lions (SE = 2, 95% CI = 13–23) on any given day. This proposal will help with the Department objective to reduce the mountain lion population in the Black Hills and will reduce the subpopulation of lions in the Custer State Park

APPROVE _____

MODIFY _____

REJECT _____

NO ACTION _____