



FLATHEAD INDIAN RESERVATION



CONFEDERATED SALISH & KOOTENAI TRIBAL MEMBER

2025-2026 YELLOWSTONE BISON HUNT REGULATIONS

OFF-RESERVATION BISON HUNT

Per Permit: A Tribal Member may take one-bison (either sex), or request a second Permit for a total of two-bison (either sex)

The language below in relation to additional regulations for take of cow vs. bull.

Bull

Hunting Season: September 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026

Harvest Quota: One bull bison per permit, or until January 31, 2026. (all permits are either sex, you are not limited by bull or cow)

Harvest Limits: No hunter shall kill more than one bull bison under a single permit.

*A Bull or Cow tag can be filled with a younger (1-2 year old) animal, as long as it is not a red calf. The tag does not need to be filled with an adult bison.

Cow

Hunting Season: September 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026

Harvest Quota: One cow bison per permit, or until January 31, 2026. (all permits are either sex, you are not limited by bull or cow)

Harvest Limits: No hunter shall kill more than one cow bison under a single permit ***unless in the event of an orphaned red calf due to the harvest of a cow bison, the permit may be used for a cow and a single red calf.** The take of a second animal **MUST** be reported to the CSKT Fish and Game warden on-site, and to the DFWRC office as soon as possible.

**Tribal members can request a second permit for a total of two either-sex bison permits per hunting season.*

The Seliš, Qlispe and Ksanka people have hunted bison in traditional territories since time immemorial. Then, as is today, bison was an important source of meat for Tribal families. Hunting for bison in the Yellowstone area is an exercise in our Treaty Rights under the 1855 Hellgate Treaty. Food sovereignty is an essential consideration for present day life, and big game animals both on and off the Flathead Reservation are available for this use. This hunt is tied to CSKT treaty rights and is the result of hard work by people within the Tribe to coordinate with the federal and state governments as well as an established Interagency Bison Management Plan that guides the activity. Bad choices made by individuals and their actions can jeopardize our Bison hunt, our Treaty Rights and the Treaty Rights for other Tribes as well. Please carefully review these regulations and visit our website at csktbisonhunt.org for updates to prevent violations. For updated bison availability from the field, call the bison hunt information hot line at (406) 275-2848.

- Any hunter convicted of violating any CSKT Tribal or Federal law, when engaged in the Yellowstone Bison Hunt, will lose their bison hunting privileges for a minimum of one year, or additional years depending upon the violation.
- Hunters will not be eligible for a permit for the bison hunt season until all outstanding citations for violations of prior Yellowstone Wild Bison Hunts have been resolved, including fulfillment of all sanctions imposed upon the hunter by the Tribal Court and/or Tribal Council.

This is a Bison targeted hunt, please refrain from taking other species near the Park, especially Moose or Elk. The State has limited or closed most hunting of Moose near the Park due to extremely low population numbers. Elk are abundant on the Flathead Reservation, please hunt elk there.

Emergency Bison Harvest Closures

In the case of unusual and/or unexpected factors which would cause unusual vulnerability (e.g., severe weather, drought, fire danger, food shortage, food attraction, poor conditions of animals, reaching targeted removal numbers, etc.), the Off-Reservation Bison hunt season/permits may be closed by Tribal Council action under emergency conditions. Closures will be implemented within 48 hours of Tribal Council action and such closures shall be announced through Tribal media venues. All permitted hunters are encouraged to call the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation during normal business hours (phone# 883-2888 or 675-2700) to verify the status of the bison hunt season before the start of any hunting trip.

YELLOWSTONE WILD BISON PERMITS REQUIRED

Hunters are prohibited from hunting or taking Yellowstone wild bison without having a valid permit in their possession. Permits are only issued to Tribal hunters who have attended a Bison Hunt Orientation (either a current year or previous season's orientation). *All first year Yellowstone Bison hunters and designated bison hunters must attend a scheduled Bison Orientation in order to receive a Permit for that year.* Permits expire on January 31 of each year. Successful Yellowstone wild bison hunters are required to report the take and return the permit report to the DFWRC office in Polson within 7 days of the harvest. The number of both filled and unfilled permits are used to assess future Yellowstone wild Bison hunting operations.

Designated Hunter Process for Yellowstone Wild Bison Permits

Bison hunters are prohibited from transferring their permit to another person or using a permit not issued to them. The only exception is when an elder (62 years of age or older), disabled/handicapped person, or someone otherwise deemed unable to hunt, applies for and receives official approval for a permit transfer from the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation. Designated hunters must attend a Bison Hunting orientation each year they are a designated hunter.

ELDERS, HANDICAPPED and those otherwise unable to hunt – Elders and the disabled/handicapped (or those otherwise unable to hunt) may request a designated hunter (must be a CSKT Tribal member) to hunt for them, through application from the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation. An application for the transfer of a permit can be obtained by the permit holder from this office or a copy is included at the end of these regulations. The application must include proof of age or doctor's documentation of injury or handicap or other reason why unable to hunt. Each application is reviewed and if approved, the valid permit can be transferred to the designated hunter of their choosing. Our office does not provide designated hunters. (See *Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Designated Hunter Application for Yellowstone Wild Bison* at the end of this document)

Violations incurred while acting as a designated hunter can have repercussions for the hunter, as well as the permit holder. Violations may result in loss of bison hunting privileges for a minimum of one year, or additional years depending upon the violation. Permit holder may lose their opportunity for a bison during the season their designated hunter incurred the violation.

YELLOWSTONE WILD BISON HUNTING

- Members may engage in wild bison hunting on open and unclaimed lands (and any federal public land otherwise open to hunting), and other lands as provided by agreement with the State of Montana, off of the Flathead Indian Reservation subject to the following conditions:
 - (1) Tribal Members eighteen (18) years of age or older, who have fulfilled bison hunt orientation requirements, may obtain an Off-Reservation Bison Permit from the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, and Conservation (unless otherwise restricted by special annual regulations set by the Tribal Council).
 - (2) A hunter must have his or her valid Tribal I.D. card and an Off-Reservation Bison permit in his possession while hunting or while in possession of a bison or parts thereof.
- If a hunter desires to take more than the annual harvest quota of bison in a permit year, or a member younger than eighteen (18) years old who has attended the current bison hunt orientation and wishes to obtain a permit, he/she may present his or her request to the Tribal Council at a duly convened council meeting. The Tribal Council shall have the right and power to grant or deny such a request based upon cultural or religious practices or need. If such a request is granted the Tribal Council shall direct the Division to issue the permit.
 - (1) Any hunter convicted of violating any tribal or federal law, when engaged in the Yellowstone Bison Hunt, will lose their respective bison hunting privileges for a minimum of one year and the Tribal Council may revoke those privileges for additional years depending upon the violation.

(2) No hunter shall be eligible for a permit for the current Yellowstone Bison Hunt season until all outstanding citations for violations of prior Yellowstone Bison Hunts have been resolved, including fulfillment of all sanctions imposed upon the hunter by the Tribal Court and/or Tribal Council.

- The hunting of Bison is restricted by these regulations, annual harvest quotas, and special annual regulations set by the Tribal Council.
- Bison hunting season is September 1st through January 31st of each winter season.
- The Off-Reservation Wild Bison Permit hunt area is described as those open and unclaimed lands found within the State of Montana and outside of Yellowstone National Park lands.
- Off-Reservation Bison permit shall consist of two parts, as follows:
 - (1) A hunt report card. All permit holders are required to return the hunt report card within 7 days of the date the animal is harvested. Hunters who do not kill a bison are required to return the hunt report portion of the permit by February 15th to be eligible to receive a permit for the next year. The report card can be returned by mail or by person to the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, and Conservation Office in Polson.
 - (2) A hunt tag. The tag must be notched for the day and date the bison was taken and must be so marked at the time of the kill. Permitted hunters must accompany the carcass during transportation unless otherwise authorized by Council. The tag must be attached to the animal once the animal is taken and must remain attached until processing of the animal has taken place.
- The only means of taking allowed are with a center- fire rifle with a 150 grain or larger bullet.
- The use or aide of over snow vehicles (snowmobiles) for Bison hunting is allowed (shooting from or across groomed snowmobile trails is prohibited).
- Non-Tribal members may assist a Tribal Member with the field dressing, retrieval and transportation of a downed bison to the Members' hunting vehicle but may not assist or accompany the Member with any aspect of the pursuit or harvest of the animal. Non-Tribal members may only help with the transport of downed bison while they are in accompaniment of the permitted Tribal member, therefore, a tribal member cannot send a downed bison with a non-member if the tribal member remains in Yellowstone to hunt.
- Hunters are encouraged to read the information and recommendations handout given with the permit to better care for the meat and be informed on Brucellosis.

Forest Service Regulations

- Know your hunt location and Forest Service use regulations for motorized use (off-roading, snowmobiling & ATVs): Forest Service enforces a **150-yard “no shooting zone” surrounding any developed facilities or sites** and safe food storage standards in bear country (**no gut piles within 200 yards of roads and facilities until December 1st**).
- The Forest Service **closed lands** east of US Highway 191 and north of the town of West Yellowstone **to all shooting**. Additionally, other lands above the town of Gardiner and the **road side buffer zone at Beattie Gulch** have **“no shooting” restrictions**.
- **Do not leave a downed bison unattended** or leave gut plies on or next to open roads (cut stomach (rumen) open when departing to spread/lower gut pile). For our use, **there is a 200-yard “clean area (no gut piles)” and “no shooting zone” from the Yellowstone Trail Road east into Beattie Gulch area**.
- **It is illegal to snowmobile without a Groomed Trail Permit** on groomed trails and on public roads open to wheeled (cars) traffic, **other than** in the town site of West Yellowstone.

Be Bear Aware!!

Both grizzly bears and black bears inhabit the greater Yellowstone area and have been seen frequenting the area, especially during hunting season scavenging left behind carcasses. Bears are often seen in heavy cover along streams and wetlands, but may also be found in open fields and shrub thickets. Be cautious when entering cover that limits visibility to avoid surprising a bear. Bring your current Tribal ID to the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, Conservation office in Polson (406 6th Ave E) to obtain a can of bear spray for only \$20. *While supplies last, only one can will be issued per person.

Food Storage

1. All food, refuse or other attractants must be acceptably stored or acceptably possessed during daytime hours.
2. All food, refuse or other attractants must be acceptably stored during nighttime hours, unless it is being prepared for eating, being eaten, being transported, or being prepared for acceptable storage.
3. Any harvested animal carcass must be acceptably stored, unless the carcass is being field dressed, transported, being prepared for eating, or being prepared for acceptable storage.
4. Camping or sleeping areas must be established at least 1/2 mile from a known animal carcass or at least 100 yards from a known acceptably stored animal carcass.
5. The responsible party shall report the death and location of livestock to a Forest Service official within 24 hours of discovery. Any Forest user finding dead livestock should contact the Forest Service.
6. Burnable attractants that cannot be completely consumed by fire (i.e., no post burning residue) must be packed out.

Hunting Essentials

Firearms and ammunition

The only means of taking a bison allowed are center-fired rifles. A 150-grain or larger bullet is required.

Hunter Orange or other Highly Visible Colored Vests

There will be several other hunters in the area. Wearing 400-square inches of hunter orange, or another highly visible color such as lime green or pink, is strongly recommended while hunting in the field.

Recommended equipment and tools

If you plan to field dress your own animal, bring:

- many sharp knives,
- sharpening system,
- large bone/meat saw,
- axe,
- sturdy rope, and
- large plastic tarps.

Block and tackle and a winch may be necessary, as well as a sled or game cart.

Snow machines, ATVs or horse may be necessary, but check with the US Forest Service for restrictions.

Help in the field

Due to the importance of this hunt, Tribal Council has approved for non-Tribal member family and/or friends to assist with field dressing and retrieving your animal after the harvest. This approval has been authorized for the off-Reservation Bison Hunt **ONLY**.

Hunting Outfitters

Local outfitter may be available to hire to assist with field dressing and retrieval. This expense would be covered by the hunter and is not the responsibility of CSKT.

Brucellosis Safety

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that affects many Yellowstone bison. Extra precautions are required when field dressing and processing bison carcasses. The bacteria is concentrated in the reproductive tract and lymph nodes.

To protect yourself when handling your carcass, consider the following:

- Assume every bison is potentially infected with brucellosis.
- Always wear protective gloves when handling the carcass or viscera.
- Avoid direct contact with materials from the reproductive tract or milk.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth until you've had a chance to wash carefully.
- Be extra careful if you have open sores or cuts.
- Discard organ meats.
- Cook all meat that you are going to consume thoroughly, 160 degree temperature is recommended.
- It is strongly encouraged to not possess or transport the reproductive tissues of a bison from the kill site.

Chronic Wasting Disease Precautions

- During the hunting season, carcass disposal is very important in preventing hunter spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Carcass parts, such as brain, eyes, spleen, lymph glands, and spinal cord material, should be left at the kill site when possible. If the animal is transported for taxidermy or meat processing, the brain and spinal tissue must be bagged and disposed of in a Class II landfill (Lake County Transfer Station). A carcass may be transported within the state regardless of where it was harvested if the carcass parts are disposed of in a landfill after butchering and processing. Dumping carcasses is illegal, unethical, and can spread diseases, including chronic wasting disease. This requirement applies to all deer, elk, and moose carcasses wherever in the state they are harvested by hunters or as vehicle-killed salvage.
- The CSKT Wildlife Management Program is asking all Tribal member hunters to participate in a statewide **CWD** study. Successful deer, elk and both on/off reservation moose hunters are strongly encouraged to submit their harvested animal (head with first and second vertebrae attached) to a Tribal Wildlife Biologists or to the afterhours drop off location within **TWO days** from the time of harvest. If you would rather meet up with a Biologist or Tribal Game warden to pull your sample, contact Kaylie Durglo-Bland, CSKT Wildlife Biologist at (406) 883-2888 ext. 7284, or Payton Adams, CSKT Wildlife Biologist, at (406) 883-2888 ext. 7299, to arrange a meeting.
- The drop off location will be made available at the Tribal Permit Office, located at 408 6th Avenue East in Polson, Mt. There will be a brief submission form that each hunter is required to fill out and attach to his or her sample. Testing is **FREE** to hunters and hunters will be notified when results return, this process generally takes two weeks. The hunters name and contact information, along with harvest location are required for testing and will assist biologists on who to notify with results.
- **CWD** is known to affect White-tailed deer, Mule deer, Elk and Moose and was first detected in a wild deer in eastern Montana in 2017. In 2019, **CWD** was detected for the first time west of the Divide in Libby, Montana.
- **CWD** is a contagious disease that affects the central nervous system of the infected animal, causing lesions to the brain, and is 100% fatal. There is no known transmission of CWD to humans, however The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend having your harvested animal tested prior to consuming. It is also recommended to wear rubber gloves and eye protection while processing your animal.
- **CWD** is spread through nose-to-nose (**Direct**) contact via saliva, urine and feces from an infected animal to an uninfected animal. It can also be spread through **Indirect** contact, through infected soil, once an animal with CWD dies, any part of the carcass can transmit the disease for at least two years!
- Signs of **CWD** are; poor body condition, excessive salivation and found near water (drinking frequently), lack of coordination, droopy head and ears. Always report sick-looking deer, elk, or moose to our Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation & Conserveation

Emergency Contact Information

Tribal Game Wardens will patrol the hunt area and assist in the enforcement of all applicable hunting and hunter laws. Wardens will also respond to bison hunt emergencies. Hunters may also contact the Gallatin County Sheriff's Dispatch (for areas west of Yellowstone National Park) or the Park County Sheriff's Dispatch (for areas north of Yellowstone National Park) in the event of an emergency.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will not direct hunters to the location of bison in the field or assist with the field dressing and retrieval of bison.

Tribal Game Warden Information:

| | | |
|----------------------|-------|----------|
| Dan McClure | TR-3 | 241-3345 |
| Sgt. Paden Alexander | TR-4 | 370-7759 |
| Sgt. Phillip Paul | TR-5 | 970-4856 |
| Jesse Drennan | TR-6 | 274-1803 |
| Noah Durham | TR-8 | 360-8193 |
| Arnold Torosian | TR-9 | 261-3872 |
| Rylee Arlee | TR-10 | 261-3872 |
| Brandon Couture | TR-12 | 970-6599 |

Tribal Dispatch: 406-675-4700

Tribal Game Warden Office Number: 883-2888 ext. 7270

Other Emergency Contacts:

1-800-TIP-MONT --- 1-800-847-6668

Gallatin County Sheriff's Dispatch: 406-582-2124

Park County Sheriff's Dispatch: 406-222-4172

The Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation is open Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Hebgen Lake Ranger District 406-823-6961

Gardiner Ranger District 406-848-7376

Bison hunt hot line

For updated bison availability from the field, call the bison hunt information hot line at 406-275-2848.

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Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
Designated Hunter Application for Yellowstone Wild Bison
CSKT Members Only

This form grants permission on this date _____ for the designation and transfer of one Yellowstone Wild Bison Hunting Permit to a designated tribal hunter. All of the following information needs, conditions, and terms must be provided and met at all times for this permission to be valid and lawful, including possession of valid tribal ID for designated hunter. If applying to transfer a permit due to a handicap or illness/injury, please attach doctor verification to your application. If you qualify as an elder (62 years or older), please attach a copy of your valid Tribal ID card.

| | | |
|--|---------------------|----------|
| Part 1- Tribal Member Permit Holder Information (mandatory) | | |
| Name: | Primary phone # | Work # |
| Physical Address | | |
| Mailing Address (if different than physical address) | | |
| Date of Birth: | Tribal Enrollment # | Permit # |
| Reason for Transfer Request: | | |
| Part 2- Member Transfer Recipient Information (mandatory) | | |
| Name: | Primary phone # | Work # |
| Physical Address | | |
| Mailing Address (if different than physical address) | | |
| Date of Birth: | Tribal Enrollment # | Permit # |

Part 3- Required Hunt Reporting (mandatory)

The designated member hunting is still bound by the hunter reporting requirements as stated in the applicable hunting regulations. **This completed and signed form is required to be in possession of the hunter while engaged in this permitted activity.**

Tribal Member Hunter Signature

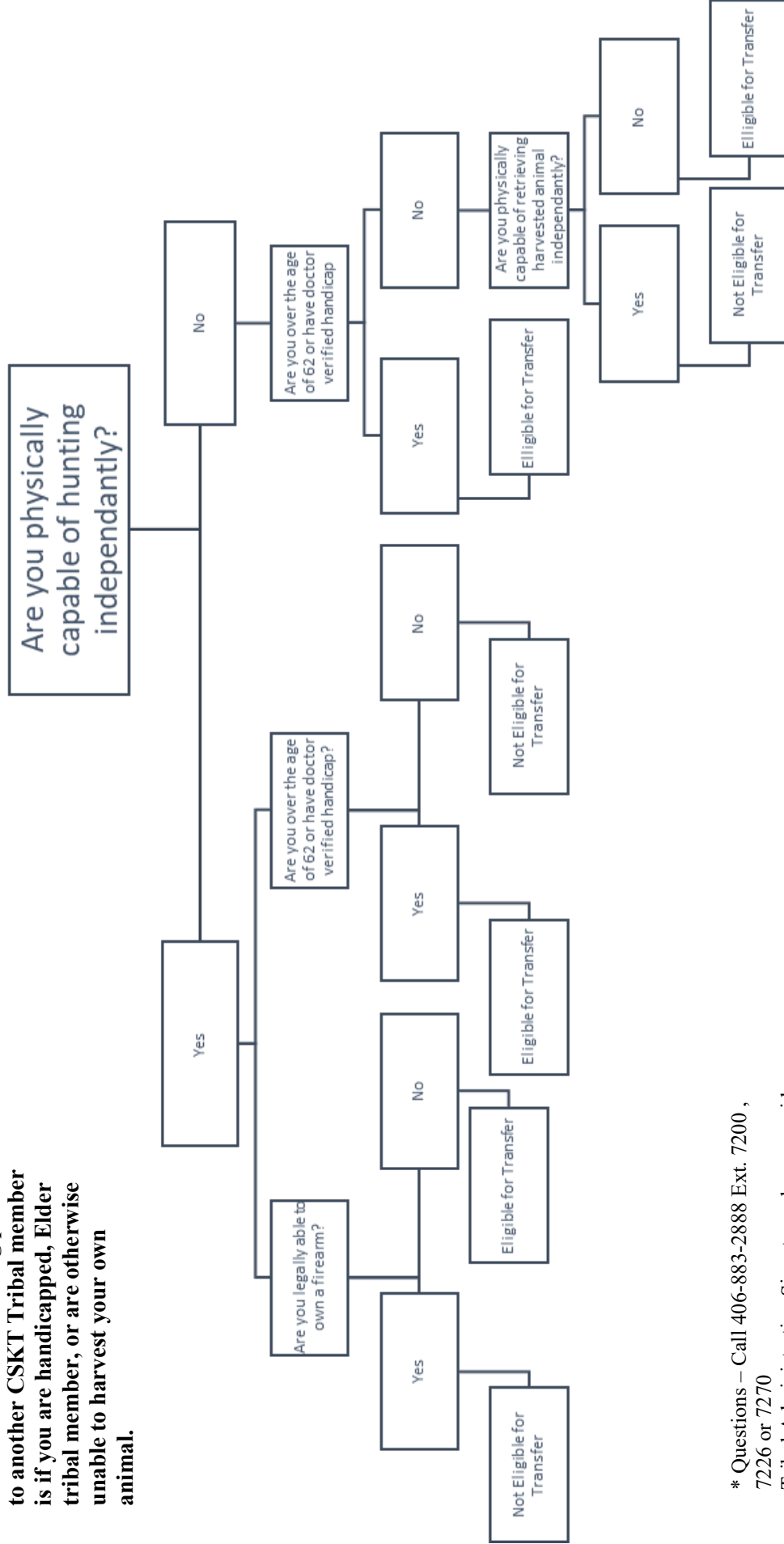
Date

Tribal Administration Signature

Date

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Application Status | |
| APPROVED | NOT APPROVED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

***Time and Travel limitations are not valid reasons for transferring a permit to a Designated Hunter. The only authorized reason to transfer a Tribal Hunting permit to another CSKT Tribal member is if you are handicapped, Elder tribal member, or are otherwise unable to harvest your own animal.**



* Questions – Call 406-883-2888 Ext. 7200 , 7226 or 7270
 Tribal Administration Signature please provide a photo copy of completed form to:
 The Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation, Attn: Permit Agent or Conservation Program Manager and another copy to Wildlife Management, Attn: Kari Kingery