

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Vore **DATE:** April 25, 2018

FROM: Ashley Taylor and Ray Mulé *Ray Mulé*

SUBJECT: Lee Hunting Access Agreement Assessment

This was the third year that Robert E. Lee had a hunting access agreement with FWP under the auspices of HB 454. In return for allowing access to elk hunters, Bob or a family member receives one 411-22 either-sex elk permit. FWP then issues four additional 411-22 either-sex elk permits by random drawing from among unsuccessful applicants for 411-20 either-sex elk permits; the permits are valid only on the Lee property. Mr. Lee allows holders of these permits to hunt either-sex elk throughout the general rifle season. Mr. Lee also allows holders of 411-20 either-sex elk permits, general elk licenses, or any valid antlerless elk licenses to hunt antlerless elk on his property. There are usually several cows shot and a few bulls on the property, and Mr. Lee generally allows unrestricted public access for cows.

Since this hunting access agreement began in 2015, twelve 411-22 either-sex elk permits have been issued to twelve residents. Ten hunters used those permits and two hunters did not use the permit. Table 1 summarizes the 411-22 permit recipient survey completed this spring. In 2017 three hunters used their permits but no elk were harvested. One hunter was in contact with Mr. Lee but the elk did not come on to his place during the general season. In 2016 all four hunters used their permits but no one harvested an elk. All of them enjoyed their hunting experience and most saw elk but weren't able to make contact with any. All of the hunters said they would participate in this program again if they had the chance. In 2015 three hunters used their permits and one hunter harvested a bull elk. One hunter never saw elk but wasn't disappointed he said that is how elk hunting goes sometimes. One hunter was unable to make it down to use her permit but she talked to Mr. Lee several times on the phone and said she would be interested in participating in the hunt again if given the opportunity.

Table 1. Summary of the 411-22 either-sex elk permit recipients survey, 2015-2017.

Survey Summary of Permit Recipients	Number of Permits
Successfully harvested elk	1
Hunted and did not harvest an elk	9
Not available when elk were on the property	
Unable to use permit due to personal reasons	1
Harvested elk during archery season, unable to use permit	
Hunted other areas, did not use permit	
Elk did not come on to Lee's property	1
Did not get elk permit	
No data available - unable to contact permit recipients	
Total Permits	12

One bull elk has been harvested on the Lee's property using these permits including: one-5x5 bull. The survey of permit recipients indicates that 11 hunters would participate in this hunt again and one hunter would not participate again. One hunter had unrealistic expectations of what this program provided. The hunter thought he would have exclusive access to the property and have a guaranteed elk harvest. He was not satisfied with the program and would not participate again if given the opportunity.

In addition to these permits another 411-20 either-sex permit holder from Billings harvested a 6x4 bull elk on the Lee property in 2015. A few cow elk were harvested during the late shoulder season on the Lee Ranch. The Robert Lee family's 411-22 either-sex elk permit use is summarized in Table 2. To date the Lee family has harvested two bull elk using their 411-22 either-sex elk permits.

Table 2. Summary of Mr. Lee family's 411-22 either-sex elk permit use, 2015-2017.

Year	Permit Holder	Permit Use
2015	Robert E. Lee	Bull elk
2016	Caleb Knoche (grandson)	Bull elk
2017	Walker Lee (grandson)	none

I recommend renewal of this agreement for the 2018 hunting season.