



Elk Management Guiding Principles

Each Guiding Principle states how a single elk management issue can be successfully addressed or resolved. In other words, Guiding Principles state what success would look like if each issue was resolved perfectly.

Issue: *Disagreement about population objectives and how they are set and implemented*

Guiding Principles:

- Maximize public input in setting elk objectives
- Maximize local grassroot input

Issue: *Conflicts in concentrations, distributions, and behavior of elk*

Guiding Principles:

- Maintain hunting as a primary tool for elk population management
- Maximize partnerships between private landowners, land management agencies, and FWP
- Maximize hunter access to elk
- Maximize satisfaction with elk distribution in Montana for:
 - Hunters
 - Landowners
 - Wildlife enthusiasts
 - Outfitters
 - Agricultural producers
- Minimize prevalence and spread of CWD in Montana

Issue: *Impact on agriculture*

Guiding Principles:

- Minimize impacts on agricultural production, private rangeland, and infrastructure
- Minimize transmission of brucellosis to livestock

Issue: *Season Length and Structure (tradeoffs between hunting opportunity and quality)*

Guiding Principles:

- Maintain over-the-counter opportunity to hunt elk
- Minimize impacts of crowding on hunter experience
- Maintain limited-draw permit areas for hunting mature bulls
- Maximize the use of the general rifle season as a primary management tool, reducing the need for additional hunts
- Maintain the availability of a variety of hunting tools for addressing elk conflicts

Issue: *Recognizing landowners for providing elk habitat*

Guiding Principles:

- Incentivize collaboration among stakeholders
- Maximize landowner-hunter cooperation with elements of the Elk Management Plan
- Maximize opportunity for FWP to improve hunter-landowner relations

Issue: *Hunter behaviors (good or bad) have a significant impact on the effectiveness of MFWP elk management on the landscape*

Guiding Principles:

- Maximize internal and external programs that promote ethical hunter behaviors
- Maintain the fair chase principles in the management of hunting and regulation of hunting technology