



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

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Meeting Date: August 19, 2026

Agenda Item: 2026 Blacktail Breaks Ranch Elk Hunting Access Agreement Approval

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Elk Hunting Access Program (EHA) provides landowners and/or eligible designees with an opportunity to receive an elk license, permit, or combination of the two in exchange for allowing free public hunting access. For every three members of the public allowed to hunt under the EHA agreement, the department may issue one license, permit, or combination of the two.

Landowners could apply for EHA agreements from January 23 to May 1, 2026. EHA agreements were approved at the June commission meeting. However, one landowner who attempted to apply before the May 1 deadline was not included in the original June proposal because the size of the file was rejected by the state email system. The landowner contacted the department after the June commission meeting to find out why his application was not included in the June proposal. Because the landowner provided a copy of an email to the department dated April 22, 2026, showing he attempted to apply prior to the original May 1 deadline, the department is bringing this proposal to the August commission meeting. The request is for one 690-21 elk permit (archery only either-sex permit).

Public Involvement Process & Results: The application and proposed agreement will be posted to the FWP website no later than two weeks prior to the August 19 meeting. Since this agenda item occurs after the regular online public hunter sign-up period (July 1 to July 15), the public hunters that are required to be selected by FWP will be selected based on other previously approved 690-21 EHA opportunity sign-up lists.

Alternatives & Analysis:

- A. No action. 2026 Blacktail Breaks Ranch EHA agreement would not be approved.
- B. Approve 2026 Blacktail Breaks Ranch EHA agreement as recommended by the department. This agreement will provide access to private land and thousands of acres of public land for public hunters and provide an opportunity for the public during archery season. Approving this permit would not result in exceeding 10 percent of the total commission-approved quota for this specific permit type. The quota for the 690-21 elk permit is 50 and the commission previously approved three additional permits through the EHA Program in June. With approval of this permit, the commission will have approved a total of four 690-21 permits, which is still within 10 percent of the total quota.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the commission approve the 2026 Blacktail Breaks EHA agreement as recommended by the department (Alternative B). This agreement will provide access to private land and improve access to thousands of acres of public land for public hunters.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the 2026 Blacktail Breaks EHA agreement as recommended by the department.