



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: June 12, 2026

Agenda Item: 2026 Elk Hunting Access Agreement Approvals

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 minutes

Background: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Elk Hunting Access (EHA) agreement program 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. The EHA program was first codified in 2001 (87-2-513, MCA) and requires commission approval of EHA agreements.

Landowners could apply for EHA agreements from January 23 to May 1, 2026. Once the application period closed, FWP staff reviewed applications and will present proposals for commission consideration at the June meeting. The EHA evaluation report resulting from the 2025 agreements is posted on the FWP website with the June Fish and Wildlife Commission materials. The evaluation was conducted during late winter 2026 as context for commission consideration of 2026 applications and agreements for those landowners who participated in the program in 2025.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The master list of applicants, applications, and proposed agreements will be posted to the FWP website no later than two weeks prior to the June meeting. This allows staff to review and evaluate applications after the May 1 application deadline (ARM 12.9.908 (2)). The 2026 agreements and 2025 program evaluation report will be discussed at the June commission meeting. The commission will hear public comments on the proposed 2026 draft agreements at the June meeting. Once the commission has decided on the issuance of permits/licenses under this program, the public will have an opportunity to sign up online for EHA opportunities from July 1 to July 15.

Alternatives & Analysis:

- A. No action. No 2026 EHA agreements would be approved.
- B. Approve 2026 EHA agreements as recommended by the department and if necessary, send to a random draw those applications in districts where the number of requests for permits/licenses for landowners/designees exceeds the department-imposed cap of 10 percent of the commission-adopted quota as displayed in the 2025 Deer, Elk, Antelope Hunting Regulations.
- C. Approve all the proposed EHA agreements rather than only those recommended by the department.
- D. Deny some of the proposed EHA agreements rather than only those recommended by the department.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the commission approve the 2026 EHA agreements as recommended by the department (Alternative B). The recommended agreements will allow for additional public elk hunting access opportunities.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the 2026 EHA agreements as recommended by the department and if necessary, send to a random draw those applications in districts where the number of requests for permits/licenses for landowners/designees exceeds the department-imposed cap of 10 percent of the commission-adopted quota as displayed in the 2026 Deer, Elk, Antelope Hunting Regulations.