

**PROPOSAL: 2021 Groover Brothers Ranch
Public Elk Hunting Access Agreement**

Under the provisions of 87-2-513 MCA, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (“Department”) is authorized to issue the following either-sex elk licenses and permits in the Groover Brothers Ranch (“Ranch”) Public Elk Hunting Access Agreement (“Agreement”):

Four (4) either-sex elk licenses and 411-20 permits to James Groover, Gordon Mooney, John Daniel, and Matthew Carlton (landowner and designated employees), for use only on land enrolled in this Agreement.

Additionally:

Four (4) 411-20 either-sex elk permit holders will be selected by the Ranch from one of the following categories (first time hunters from the hunter safety program, Wounded Warrior program recipient, Big Hearts Under the Big Sky trip recipients, Montana Hope Project trip recipients, firefighters, law enforcement, and other regional community members who contribute to the success of the Ranch). The successful applicant will have access, by permission as set forth herein from October 23 – November 28, to hunt on land enrolled in this Agreement. This permit is a valid permit in hunting districts 411, 511 and 530. The Ranch will coordinate with the Department to develop a selection process for eligible hunters.

Eight (8) 411-00 antlerless permit holders seeking to harvest an antlerless elk will be randomly selected from a list of applicants and will have access, by permission as set forth herein from October 23 – February 1, 2022 to hunt on land enrolled in this Agreement. These permits are a valid permit in hunting districts 411, 511 and 530. The Department will be responsible for managing the application and selection process, and coordinating the successful applicant results with the Ranch for scheduling purposes.

Terms of the Public Elk Hunting Access Agreement include:

1. Approximately 6,518 total acres of private land in Hunting District 411 will be enrolled – see attached Exhibit A Ranch Map, attached hereto and incorporated by reference.
2. Enrolled property will be open to free public elk hunting with any legal weapon, from October 23, 2021, through February 1, 2022, as set forth herein.
3. Access shall be coordinated with Drew Hill (“Ranch Manager”), who can be contacted at (406) 579-5165.
4. Terms of access include:
 - a) The twelve (12) hunters receiving 411-20 either-sex and 411-00 antlerless elk permits valid in HDs 411, 511 and 530, or those who qualify as general elk license holders under the terms of this Agreement and are selected for this program, must schedule their hunts with the Ranch Manager at least 30 days in advance. Each hunter agrees to be accompanied by the Ranch Manager or the Ranch Manager’s designee at all times while on the Ranch. It will be the hunter’s responsibility to contact the Ranch Manager to

arrange for access. The Ranch will not be responsible for contacting any hunter to report the presence or absence of elk.

- b) There are no restrictions on the number of days the Ranch or any of its designees or other invitees can hunt the Ranch property.
- c) Within reasonable limits, the twelve (12) designated public hunters under this Agreement should have sufficient time to harvest an elk. However, in fairness to all participants, the Ranch will restrict the number of days per hunter to five (5) calendar days, once they have been scheduled with the Ranch Manager.
- d) If a hunter wounds an elk, they will not be allowed to shoot at another elk on the Ranch. The Ranch Manager will use best efforts to assist the hunter in recovering the wounded elk.

5. Other obligations of hunters include:

- a) Executing a legal release of liability (for both hunters and guests) prepared by the Ranch.
- b) Photographing harvested animals and freely sharing those photos with the Ranch and Department to assist with elk management goals and objectives.
- c) Abiding by all state and federal hunting statutes, regulations, and rules.
- d) Following all Ranch rules, which will be provided in advance of the hunt.
- d) Maintaining proper safety procedures regarding firearms, including but not limited to, ensuring that all firearms are unloaded while in vehicles and in the vicinity of all buildings.
- e) Maintaining proper vigilance aimed at preventing damage to the Ranch, and to promptly report any damage that may occur on the Ranch to the Ranch Manager.
- f) Ensuring all Ranch gates are left as originally found.
- g) Using best efforts to keep the Ranch free of litter at all times.

A hunter's failure to abide by these requirements shall result in the hunter's Ranch access rights being immediately terminated, and the hunter dismissed from the Ranch.

6. Hunter/Ranch/Department satisfaction data will be acquired after the season through Department surveys of the Ranch and hunters involved with this contractual Public Elk Hunting Access Agreement.

Hank Worsech, Department Director

Date

Drew Hill, Ranch Manager

Date