



## **Draft Changes for 2022-2023 Hunting Regulations:**

- 1) Combine Hunting Districts 312, 390, 393 into one district, HD 312. Season structure would be brow-tined bull or antlerless elk for both general archery and rifle seasons; antlerless elk shoulder (post) season until Feb. 15, not valid on National Forest (USFS) land; 397-00 over-the-counter (OTC) antlerless elk B-license (not valid on USFS lands) for both archery, general rifle, and post general season shoulder season until Feb. 15, also valid in HDs 309 and 311. The current 389-00 elk B-license (valid in HDs 390, 393 and a portion of HD 391) would be eliminated. Youth/permission to hunt from a vehicle season structure would be retained.
- 2) Boundary change: The new HD 312 would include a portion of the current HD 380 between Highway 287 and the Missouri River.

## **Biological Implications:**

- 1) HDs 312, 390 and 393 are currently part of one elk management unit (Bridger EMU), and the Horseshoe Hills elk herd uses all three HDs. There are other herds in the units. Elk numbers in all the current HDs are over objective. The general season antlerless elk opportunity, the antlerless elk shoulder season, and the unlimited OTC Elk B license 397-00, which are valid off National Forest land in the new HD, and also valid in 309 and 311, are all designed to help address over objective elk populations.
- 2) The recommended portion of HD 380 to be included has an emergent herd not described in the 2005 elk plan. This herd may have come from elk in the Bridger EMU originally, but now stays year-round between the highway and river. The area is predominantly private land (excepting some BLM and state land), and landowners want more tools to manage elk like in HD 312. The commonality of habitat, likely origin of these elk, and management goals align to make this change. The change should not impact Elkhorns elk which are not believed to move into this area.

## **Social Implications:**

Some landowners may differ based on whether they do or do not want early or late shoulder seasons in their area. Some sportspersons may be concerned that areas that did not meet shoulder season harvest objectives would be able to retain a shoulder season. Some input received positive to this change.

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