



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

- Remove HD 411 from 900-20 either-sex archery permit
- Create new, 411-21 either-sex archery elk permit (valid in HDs 411 and new HD 535; quota of 1100)
- Increase quota on 411-20 either-sex elk permit to 400
- General license: add antlerless only early shoulder season valid only on private land, and extend late shoulder season to February 15 (maintain “not valid on National Forest lands”)
- 004-00: add antlerless only early shoulder season valid only on private land, and extend late shoulder season to February 15
- 411-00: add antlerless only early shoulder season valid only on private land, and extend late shoulder season to February 15; increase quota to 1200
- Remove any separation or “split” in HD 411 (i.e., at Red Hill Road)

## **Biological Implications:**

Changes to license/permit types (LPTs) described above ensure the Snowy Elk Management Unit (EMU; currently HDs 411, 511, and 530, possibly changed to HDs 411 and 535 following combination of HDs 511 and 530) will still be managed as one elk population. Elk are well over-objective in the Snowy EMU, however the Elk Management Plan also speaks to managing for older age-class bulls. Thus, maintaining both archery and rifle permits for either-sex elk hunting is important to meet this management goal. Raising rifle permits and setting the archery quota accounts for the need to harvest more bulls and provides the opportunity for hunters to do so.

Expanding the shoulder season dates for antlerless elk on the general, 004-00, and 411-00 licenses accounts for elk being over objective and increases the likelihood of additional elk harvest in HD 411.

Elk in the Snowies function as one population, and elk on both ends (i.e., Little Snowies and west end of the Big Snowies) are over objective with increasing numbers each year. Elk numbers exceed landowner tolerance across most of the mountain range, including the west end. Thus, there should be no restrictions on elk harvest on the west end of the Snowies (i.e., west of Red Hill Road). With liberal harvest and with a full shoulder season, this portion of the elk population is not in danger of extirpation or overharvest.

## **Social Implications:**

Public comment pending regarding these possible changes. The removal of the 900-20 either-sex archery permit is primarily to simplify regulations and be consistent with the rest of Region 4 as well as other Snowy elk HDs (511, 530/new HD 535), which are also all removing the 900-20

either-sex archery permit. The creation of the 411-21 either-sex archery permit will replace archery hunting that formerly occurred in the Snowy EMU with the 900-20 permit. One consequence of this change is that hunters will have to choose between hunting the Snowy EMU or another district(s) that formerly fell within the 900-20 either-sex archery bundle.

Expanding the shoulder season dates for antlerless elk on the general, 004-00, and 411-00 licenses provides hunters maximum opportunity for harvesting an antlerless elk and landowners maximum opportunity for managing elk on their properties between August 15 and February 15. Expanding the shoulder season dates also makes these LPTs as consistent and simple as possible across the Snowy EMU, considering cross-regional boundary.