



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

- Eliminate 410-01 archery only elk B-license
- Boundary change:
  - The Judith Mountains portion of HD 412 would be absorbed into HD 417
  - The portion of HD 426 north/east of PN Bridge Road to Stafford Ferry Road would become part of HD 417
- Remove HD 417 from 410-21 either-sex archery elk permit
- Create new, 417-21 either-sex archery elk permit (valid in HDs 417 and 426; quota 400)

## **Biological Implications:**

No biological justification behind removing the 410-01 elk B license; no negative or positive impacts to the resource predicted as a result of this possible change. Average annual harvest on this license in HD 417 from 2010-2020 was 0.8 elk.

Some, but very limited elk movement occurs between HDs 410 and 417. Elk are still fairly evenly distributed across public and private lands in HD 410, whereas in HDs 412, 417, and 426, elk are more commonly found on private lands. Biological consequences behind 410-21 possible permit change mainly impact HD 410; no negative or positive impact to the HD 417 elk resource as a result of change or status quo. Archery harvest from the 410-21 in HD 417 would be replaced with archery harvest with the potential new 417-21 either-sex archery only permit.

## **Social Implications:**

Public comment pending regarding these possible changes.

If adopted, eliminating the 410-01 will simplify regulations by reducing the number of LPTs (license/permit types) but result in a loss of opportunity for up to 300 license holders to hunt antlerless elk, archery only, in HD 417. However, with the 004-00, general license, and 417-00 elk B licenses available, this license is redundant and under-utilized in HD 417.

One possible change to the 2022-23 hunting regulations involves the absorption of HD 412 into HDs 417 and 426, and the addition of HD 426 into a “Breaks” archery elk permit described above (417-21). All three districts, HDs 410, 417, and 426 are considered part of the Missouri River Breaks Elk Management Unit (EMU), and currently HDs 410 and 417 have a bundled archery permit, while HD 426 is bundled with the 900-20. Since the 900-20 elimination is another possible change, and with HD 412 being absorbed into HDs 417 and 426, both former HD 412 and HD 426 would need to be placed into a “Breaks” archery permit.

Removing HD 417 from the 410-21 either-sex archery permit (and by default not including HD 412 and 426), would prevent crowding issues in HD 410 resulting from the influx of additional

hunters from HDs 412 and 426. In 2020, with the 410-21 archery permit, 1343 archery hunters hunted elk in HD 410 vs. 181 in HD 417. When included in the 900-20 archery bundle, 241 hunters archery hunted HDs 412 and 426 in 2020. Creating a new 417-21 archery permit would accommodate these displaced archery hunters from HDs 412, 417, and 426. Hunters formerly applying for the 410-21 archery permit to hunt 417 would be giving up the option to archery hunt elk in HD 410, however they would gain the option to hunt (former) HD 412 and HD 426 along with HD 417. Similarly, hunters applying for the 900-20 to hunt either HD 412 or 426 would be giving up the opportunity to hunt the Snowies (HDs 411, 511, and 530) and other districts in which the 900-20 is valid, but would be gaining the opportunity to hunt HD 417.