



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

NEWS

FWP Headquarters • 1420 E. 6th Ave. • Helena, MT 59620-0701
Phone: 406-444-2535 • Fax: 406-444-4952 • Website: fwp.mt.gov

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Contact: Tom Palmer: 406-444-3051 • tpalmer@mt.gov

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ELK MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES IN AREAS WITH BRUCELLOSIS

Q. Do these recommendations include test and slaughter of elk?

A. No. While that option was considered by the working group, it is not part of the recommendations. The working group predicted that such action would not meet fundamental objectives, so the recommendation focuses instead on tools to manage elk distribution.

Q. Do these recommendations include fencing out elk?

A. Yes, but only at small locales such as feed lines or stackyards. They do not recommend "landscape level" fencing.

Q. Do these recommendations seek to eliminate brucellosis?

A. The working group did recognize the elimination of brucellosis as a desired outcome regarding brucellosis in general. The group also clearly recognized that eliminating brucellosis was outside of the sole authority of the FWP Commission, and therefore identified that eliminating brucellosis should not be a fundamental objective for consideration when setting elk management guidelines in areas with brucellosis. Given the multiple jurisdictions and decision authorities involved (for example, two national parks, and the livestock and wildlife agencies in three states) and the fact that no clear mechanism to eliminate brucellosis in wildlife populations exists, elimination of brucellosis is not a specific adoption item itself.

Q. Do these recommendations include killing elk?

A. The recommendations include potential adjustments to hunting seasons, additional harvest efforts after Feb. 15 and possible adjustments to elk numbers in specific areas. These efforts, however, would not be applied solely to kill or reduce elk numbers but rather to reduce the risk of comingling with cattle in areas where brucellosis exists in elk.

Q. Do these recommendations assign elk management authority to local working groups?

A. No. The FWP Commission will continue to hold all management authority. Specific actions identified by local working groups would require FWP Commission review and approval, including general hunting season adjustments and changes to elk plan objectives.

Q. Could some ideas by working groups be put in place without additional FWP Commission approval?

A. Yes. For example, a call for a small harvest of elk in a specifically defined area after Feb. 15 to instigate an adjustment to elk distribution would likely be handled in a manner comparable to a game damage hunt—with approval by the FWP regional supervisor and the FWP commissioner in that area, rather than needing approval by a full commission vote.

Q. Who would local working groups include?

A. FWP would look to assemble diverse perspectives to include landowners and hunters, as well as other stakeholders with an interest in elk and brucellosis management.

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