Develop User Friendly and Effective Methods to Collect Data

Intent: Demonstrate transparency on the part of the agency as to data collection methods. Create ways for the general public to receive, contribute to, and find data. Keeping in mind internet is still weak in some places, and not everyone is computer savvy. Utilize the citizen science accumulated in the recommendation "Establish (where possible) Working Groups" to involve the hunters and landowners in data collection. Raise the bar on data and create more inclusive methods of accumulation and dissemination of all info. This improves stakeholder relationships as everyone feels part of the process.

Justification: Misinformation, the suggestion that someone is not forthcoming with important information, leads to distrust of the agency. Lack of transparency, or appearance thereof will be enough to make questionable any data collected by FWP.

Description:

All of this falls on the agency. It also becomes part of the communication plan already recommended. Putting information on the website is not enough. The department needs more alerts, accessible links, and social media presence to reach everyone.

FWP should consider using data to do the following:
- Leveraging the FWP app for harvest reporting.
- Ability to improve the decision-making process (better data lead to better decisions)
- Ability to track elk movement trends, citizen science
- Ability to track the timing of the elk count in each district
- Ability to evaluate if an implemented recommendation was successful or not

People/Organizations:
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks: FWP personnel and IT department, as well as biologists and program managers.

Timeline:
First attempts to improve in this area could happen the fall of 2022.

FWP Authority to Take Action:
Yes

Limitations/Unintended Consequences:
Access to the internet is limited in areas.

Feasibility of Implementation:
Not identified by the Elk Management Citizen Advisory Group members.