

# Promote Focused Damage Hunts

**Intent:** Allow landowners and biologists to have a list of willing participants that are more localized to address issues. This is a harvest tool to help landowners strategically redistribute elk, mitigate disease, and improve stakeholder relationships.

**Justification:** Landowners and biologist need to access a list of folks they can trust and deploy within a certain radius and/or quick timeframe to address landowner wildlife/elk conflict. The process needs to be streamline and prioritize locals within the district of the issue is.

## Description:

FWP should consider reviewing the damage hunt list and process including a selection process for time to respond, and/or distance to location. At time of sign up, person must qualify by selecting a box - residing within 150 miles of desired unit and/or available within 24 hours of notice for selection. Non-residents cannot participate in damage hunts.

Consider charging a \$10 fee for registering on the list (intended to be value added so people are more likely to have the intent to participate), money collected from fee goes to landowner damage mitigation such as fencing, hay etc. All participants who are selected are provided a free B tag through the app or print through email prior to hunt.

Add second sign up period. Keep June 15- July 15 for Damage hunts occurring August- December 1st. Add December 1st 6- 15 sign up period for hunts between December 16th and February 15th .

All landowners who provide some degree of unpaid access are eligible. This includes block management participants, friends & family, participating in 454s etc. and is not limited to "open public" access.

FWP should reevaluate the random draw by giving the landowner and biologist the ability to select the hunters who signed up for roster to participate. Biologist and landowners can select a portion of people who sign up and a portion will remain randomized.

A tag (Bull elk/antlered deer) damage hunts can occur with biologist approval. Participants for A tag damage hunts will be chosen from tag holders who did not fill their tag during general season. This is not an opportunity for participant to be selective in "quality" of animal but rather to fill the tag with the first animal who allows for shot opportunity.

Landowners and biologists have the ability to give participants a strike and they are removed from participation in the damage hunt roster in the future for bad behavior. Participants are removed the following year from participating if they decline or do not show up for damage hunt.

All game taken is mandatory to report to biologists within 24 hours.

*Note: A damage hunt is not the same a hunt to address Brucellosis.*

## People/Organizations:

- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
- Biologists
- Landowners

## Timeline:

Could be done immediately following recommendation approval for "fall registration list"

## FWP Authority to Take Action:

FWP should be able to alter damage roster selection

## Limitations/Unintended Consequences:

Tag distribution through app or email may be an issue not sure how it works on back end. May need a clear definition of "providing access" to qualify.

## Feasibility of Implementation:

Should be fairly easy to change the form online to add fee and qualification questions and create a second sign up period.