

ELK MANAGEMENT CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS
FWP STAFF ASSESSMENT
AUGUST 31, 2022

Access Plus Program

Division/Unit/Bureau	Staff Assessment
Accounting Bureau	The suggestion that the app could be used for transfer of funds (compensation payments) would require Accounting to deposit all funds, track the funds, process refunds, NSF, W-9's, 1099's, etc. It is difficult to quantify with the given information, making it difficult to determine if the activity could be absorbed by current staff. The preferred method is direct payments between hunter/landowner as it is most efficient for both parties.
Comm Ed	If implemented by FWP this program would likely rely on current hunter education instructors. One consistent challenge with our current hunter education program is retaining and recruiting enough volunteer instructors to operate the program. A possible solution to an expanded hunter education course as described might be instructor incentives (e.g., compensation). The new program would likely have to be operated in partnership with Kalkomey, like our current hunter ed program. It would mean an expansion of our contract with them. The cost of that expansion would depend on the size and scope of the new program. If an expanded program would be required for an access opportunity managed by FWP, one concern would be access to the education program and all its components. For instance, if the program has a cost, it couldn't be prohibitive for students. With a marksmanship requirement, would participants have access to a range or facility for practicing proficiency? What age group would the program target? Would people have time or access to volunteer opportunities? The success of the program would be dependent on making sure it was accessible to hunters who were interested. Additionally, there are other programs like this, particularly One Montana and their Master Hunter Program. The complete implementation of the program, beyond just the hunter education expansion, would require coordination between landowners, internal systems, hunters, and FWP staff. A feasible solution to this would be 3-4 FTE for statewide coordination and implementation. These FTE serve to manage the program, implement the program, be liaisons between the hunter education program and hunters and landowners, evaluate the effectiveness of program components, manage hunter opportunities and landowner participation, and provide necessary communication between the participants. Communication of this new program would fall to the division and would include developing website materials and outreach materials to ensure hunters and landowners are aware of the opportunity.
Enforcement Division	Considering mandatory reporting, Enforcement staff currently follow up and investigate harvests that have not been reported when mandated. This takes time and requires a review of violation details, interviews in person or by phone, filing court documents, authoring investigative reports and possibly providing court testimony. The enforcement challenge would be keeping continued workload and responding to increases in other areas of responsibility.
Legal Unit	Upon agreement the Department and landowners could require educational programs to qualify. As long as those educational programs are available to the public at large, it should comport with the law.

Licensing Bureau	Licensing can create individual licenses and permits types and set quotas per hunt through the Automated Licensing System. Development work would be required to prevent certain hunters from being eligible for this Access Plus program (one-strike rule) while maintaining eligibility for purchase of other licenses and permits.
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division	<p>The Private Land/Public Wildlife Council has been discussing the idea of a Type 3 Block Management Area that provides an enhanced quality hunting experience to hunters who've obtained additional certification on hunter behavior/ethics/landowner relations. The Council will discuss again on August 24. Regardless of whose recommendation such a program might be based on, establishment of an additional access program or category thereof would require additional workload to establish and execute contracts, sign properties, manage hunters, and collect hunter day coupons, etc., with the current administrative tools. If access program staff would be required to arrange for the suggested videography and manage that process, that would increase staff workload as well.</p> <p>Additionally, promoting a no cost program for skilled hunters but allowing landowners to charge a per day fee seems contradictory. The program could place significant burden on the landowner to select, invoice (if they choose), monitor, and manage hunters depending on its structure and technology available.</p>
Technology Services Division	<p>Training – person records in ALS would need to be expanded to allow additional training certifications to be stored and viewed by Enforcement. Development work would be needed to upload the training certs from the vendor. Currently we upload hunter ed certs from our vendor. Since customers sign-up for training through the vendor, it is not always possible to match their certs to their person record in ALS, resulting in orphaned training records. Additional development work would be required to integrate the vendor's training sign-up into MyFWP to avoid orphaned records.</p> <p>MyFWP mobile app – there are quite a few mentions of leveraging the mobile app. FWP does not have any mobile app developers on staff. All work on the mobile app would need to be contracted out. We received a bid from the vendor that developed the app to include mandatory harvest surveys. That work would cost \$3 mil.</p> <p>Virtual Check-in – development work would be needed to store and display check-in information for hunters and landowners. Given the lack of cell service in the field, this feature would need to be developed for offline use.</p> <p>Brokering funds – we would need to look into this one further. Currently the mobile app does not accept payments. There were additional PCI and security requirements from the app stores if your app takes payments. We would need to work with the state's payment processor for mobile app integration. We would also need to work with Accounting on setting up another fund to transfer those payments into to track who the payments would distributed to and work with state Accounting to issues checks. There is a cost for each check we issue and a cost to use the payment portal that would need to be passed on to the customer.</p> <p>Videos – development work would need to be to add a repository in the app for videos. Typically videos require additional bandwidth and phone storage that might introduce an unintended burden for the customer. Currently we store videos on YouTube. You can't download videos from YouTube so additional development work would be required to create a video repository and there would be a cost to the agency for the additional storage space required for this repository.</p>

	<p>License and permits – Licensing should be able to create the additional licenses and permits that are requested in this proposal. TSD would need to create all of the additional drawing required for each BMA that has applicants beyond the recommended amount.</p> <p>Dashboard – creating an interactive dashboard for landowners would require a lot of development work. We’d need to start keeping a database of vehicle descriptions for eligible hunters and make sure that they keep it up to date. We’d also have to program two distinct feature-rich workflows (one for hunters, one for landowners). I think there are quite a few other functional and privacy-related concerns we’d need to consider as well.</p> <p>Mandatory Reporting – additional development work would be needed to expand MRRE to allow additional species, block management areas, and experience.</p> <p>Ineligible – development work would be needed to create a database of landowners that are not eligible for this program. Hunter ineligibility could be tracked in their ALS person record.</p> <p>New BMA types – the creation of new BMA types would be required. The current GDS workflows for BMA would need to be refactored to allow additional BMA types.</p> <p>Timeline – given the amount of development work and the time required to procure mobile app developers, the request to test a pilot this fall is probably not feasible.</p>
Wildlife Division	<p>This recommendation contains a lot of complexity, from developing curriculum, and training hunters, to determining “optimal” stocking of hunters by staff and hunters to maintain quality opportunity, to developing a dashboard where landowners can adjust rules and hunters can access in real time. It is unclear how FWP would “manage” the hunter/landowner dashboard (i.e., what funds would be used), and who would manage it. FWP bios could assess habitat quality but are not the proper avenue for ranking “hunt quality,” as hunt quality is subjective. Sanctioning landowners to charge the access fees they want puts the department in the position of endorsing charging for access, and essentially serving as the landowners’ agent to do so, which differs from the long-standing FWP primary support for providing free public access. Charging access fees would also challenge game damage eligibility for landowners. This program may result in some participants in Block Management Program choosing to withdraw if they believed more revenue might be drawn through the new program. It is not clear how this proposal will help with elk population management (management will improve only if substantial new areas are opened without losses elsewhere) and may result in reduced public access if landowners opt for this option over the existing Block Management Program, which in turn will reduce elk harvest. There are private entities looking to start businesses that do essentially what is in this proposal.</p>