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

Promote Focused Damage Hunts

Division/Unit/Bureau	Staff Assessment
Accounting Bureau	If the distribution of $10 fee is complex, making it difficult for ALS to automate the accounting then manual intervention to deposit, distribute, refunds, etc. would need to be done by Accounting staff. It is difficult to quantify with the given information, making it difficult to determine if the activity could be absorbed by current staff.
Comm Ed	Direct email communication with hunt rosters participants would be relatively simple and may help increase response times, participation, and communicate changes to the program.
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	Expanding game damage eligibility to limited public access landowners might conflict with 87-1-225, MCA, and 12.9.803 ARM *(To qualify for game damage assistance in accordance with 87-1-225 , MCA, a landowner must allow public hunting or not significantly reduce public hunting through imposed restrictions during established hunting seasons, including the general big game season.)*
Licensing Bureau	Collecting a $10 sign-up fee and distributing the revenue would require additional legislative authority. HB140 in the 2015 Legislative session eliminated most no-cost licenses. Mandatory reporting would be required to effectively contact license holder with unfilled tags. This approached would only work well in limited permit areas where drawings were used to randomize applicants. Damage hunts included in general areas are difficult to implement as a general license is good statewide. Additionally, the staff time required to facilitate contact and connect license holders, biologist and landowners is significant and may require an additional FTE. ALS limited capabilities to disqualify hunters from specific licenses while maintaining eligibility for general licensure.
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division	No comment
Technology Services Division	The game damage list is not integrated into the state's payment processor. If payments are collected for list sign-ups, development work would need to be completed on the game damage app. The cost for using the state's payment portal should be passed on to the customer.

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Wildlife Division	Need to balance equitability with effectiveness. Therefore, some randomness has to be included in the process. Current process is to allow landowner to select 25% of hunters for a damage hunt. That could be increased per this recommendation. Biologists should not select hunters as that puts them in a position where it appears they are playing favorites. In addition, more information is needed regarding how the exact proportion (number) of each hunter types are selected (i.e., what proportion of the hunters are part of the random draw, and how many would be selected by the landowner (not the biologist)?). The A tag opportunity could be restricting for biologists trying to meet objectives. Since it cannot be used for early season GD hunts (as written, this option can only be offered to those hunters who didn't fill their tags during hunting season), biologists would be restricted to only offering this option post-season. A second hunt roster/list has been discussed by FWP in the past, but due to concerns of public confusion around whether they are on a list, or both a pre-season and post-season list, resulted in maintaining a single game damage roster. This could be revisited. The recommended access requirement basically would make anyone eligible for game damage hunt because of the friends and family provision. It is unclear if this new eligibility provision would also apply to other game damage assistance (e.g., stackyards). Unclear whether the proposed $10/hunter fee would be enough to help fund the GD program for materials; more study is needed. Implementing this recommendation would require revision of ARM and possibly statute. Including a part of the recommendation about restricting hunters holding out for a "quality" animal would be tough to decide/enforce if person didn't shoot for other reasons which could be perceived as "waiting for a big one" even when they aren't but didn't shoot for other reasons.