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Commissioner Walsh, Director Warsech, & Mr. Kujala,

Please consider this a formal proposal to Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks to change the boundary of Hunting District 420 to exclude any private property. The private land would reincorporate into HD 448 in the manner it was prior to the formation of the Judith River WMA. The proposed boundary would be the eastern border of the Judith River Wildlife Management Area and/or the United States Forest Service from South Fork Road north to Bear Park Road. Please see attached map. Implementing this adjustment to HD 420 would increase the distribution of elk back to the public's property and change the generational habitats of the current elk population.

- Many landowners in Hunting District 420 have observed a yearlong presence and an increase in the number of elk using their private land competing with cattle for forage.
- The bull and cow license restrictions during rifle season in HD 420 create lower hunting pressure and harvest, especially compared to surrounding hunting districts HD 448 and HD 418.
- The stated objective of the Judith River WMA is to provide winter and spring range for elk as well as alleviate elk depredation on nearby private property.
- Game counts conducted by MT FWP in HD 420 and HD 448 have been counted and reported together indicating these districts share history and natural resources.
- The yearlong presence of elk utilizing private property degrades the native range historically used by cattle.

Removing the private property from HD 420 and placing it back into HD 448 will give the landowners the ability to manage their properties according to how best they see fit to apply hunting and harvest pressure during the five weeks of rifle season.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Hughes