



Bitterroot National Forest

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News Release

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Tod McKay

Forest Seeks Comments on Updating Elk Habitat Objectives

Hamilton, Montana (December 18, 2019) – The Bitterroot National Forest is inviting the public to identify relevant literature and issues you wish to have the Forest consider in amending its 1987 Forest Plan’s Elk Habitat Objectives. The Forest is conducting the evaluation in coordination with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to consider using more recent scientific literature and updated metrics for elk standards than was available 32-years ago, when the Forest Plan was adopted.

For example, recent studies indicate that elk use patterns and distribution across the landscape are significantly impacted by numerous factors including abundance and availability of forage, distance from open roads during hunting seasons, and hunting pressure. FWP has also recently concluded several research projects on elk distribution and seasonal movements within the Bitterroot Valley. The evaluation of current forest plan standards for elk is an opportune time to incorporate these research results.

To learn more about the need to conduct a Forest Plan amendment for Elk Habitat Objectives visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57302>.

Public comments specific to this review are valuable in helping the Forest Service and Montana FWP identify concerns, develop alternatives, and refine the analysis to focus on issues. Comments are due by January 17, 2020.

If you wish to comment in writing, please address your comments to: Bitterroot National Forest, Attn: Forest Plan Amendment, 1801 N. 1st Street, Hamilton, MT 59840. Comments should include: 1) name, address, phone number, and organization represented, if any; 2) specific facts and supporting information for the responsible official to consider.

Electronic comments must be submitted via the project comment page:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=57302>

For additional information contact Justin Martens, Wildlife Biologist at 406-821-1213 or Jeff Shearer, Project Manager at 406-375-2608.

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