

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/23/2015 12:00:00 AM

First name: Tom

Last name: Toman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Forest Plan Revision

Please accept the attached letter as comments from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation as suggestions to be considered during your forest plan revision process. We are just beginning to engage in comments on plan revisions and are playing catch-up with the various calendars on the USFS websites. Unfortunately, our small staff size will not allow us to attend public input meetings on all of the 85 national forests with which we have partnered with, but we do plan on commenting of the final draft in addition to the attached comments.

Best regards!

Tom Toman

Director of Science and Planning

406-523-3443 Office

406-370-6443 Cell

tom@rmef.org

Excerpts from attachment copied here 9/30/15 for coding purposes.

"We also realize that there is an opportunity to consider focal species, and respectfully request that elk be considered in that regard in all planning efforts. While elk are not classified as a sensitive or endangered species, they are an excellent surrogate for early seral dependent birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. We strongly believe that early seral habitat is underrepresented in most habitat types on National Forests."

"We encourage the Forest Service to use the M.A.P. (Measure and Prioritize) habitat data in forest plan revisions."

"Accordingly, the forest plan should provide specific direction for managing elk habitat. Such management direction should be quantified, so its effectiveness can be clearly demonstrated and monitored. "

"RMEF supports actively managed landscapes to enhance elk forage based on the best available science. We strongly believe that early seral habitat is underrepresented in most habitat types on the National Forests as a result of historic wildfire suppression policy and lack of active management. "

"RMEF encourages the Forest Service to utilize State Comprehensive Wildlife Plans and data in developing desired outcomes and monitoring results related to the management of elk and other wildlife species on the National Forest."

"The plan should also consider and give direction for maintaining such aspects as dispersed camping (old traditional camp sites), outfitters and guides, and travel management. "

"The RMEF encourages the Forest Service to address the scourge of noxious weeds with forest-wide plans and integrated weed management tools (biological controls, mechanical options, chemical treatments, and education)."

"RMEF encourages the Forest Service to manage vehicular traffic to minimize displacement of elk from public lands or over-harvest of elk on public lands, while still providing for recreational use. There must be close coordination between the forest plan and the travel management plan."

"The forest plan should set direction as to how large landscapes (e.g., watersheds or state wildlife management units) will be managed for combinations of cover, access, and topography to meet state wildlife agency population goals for elk harvest, and to enhance elk hunting opportunities."

"RMEF encourages the Forest Service to employ grazing management systems and techniques compatible with maintaining desired levels of elk and other wildlife."

"RMEF supports the Forest Service Open Space Conservation Strategy. "