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Organization:

Title:

Comments: This is my response to the Forest Plan Amendment process dealing with elements of new guidelines for elk habitat objectives, also requirements.

I see where science based studies would be very helpful.

I do not see where hunter based field observations would be helpful or encouraged.

I observe that in winter, elk need to conserve energy by bedding down in tight forest out of winds. During hunting season elk like to bed down in a tight forest, next to another tight forest they will relocate to before daylight.

During hunting season elk must browse on a sequence of shoots of new vegetation. But not too much conifer new growth.

Elk habitat definitions should conserve elk access to browsing, and herd and bunch chosen bedding sites.

Therefore, evaluations of new roads, improved roads, and temporary roads in USFS lands must sustain Elk access to herd chosen bedding sites, and maintain, or provide, for elk browse of sufficient nutritional quality and quantity.

Therefore amendment to the 1987 standards for numbers of miles of road in different drainages, should conserve FWP indicated, diverse elk populations need for both deep forest, also need to sustain the nutritional needs of a sequence of elk browsing habits.

In terms of existing public opinion, MT FWP should be the lead agency communicating about new standards and objectives of elk habitat. Critically, we the public must know of MT FWP Elk and fisheries guidelines to be followed by the USFS.

Until that happens, there can not be a valid, reliable, credible, responsible public response to the amending elk habitat objectives relative to USFS proposed new, temp, or improved, road work.

I heartily criticize the USFS for not sufficiently communicating the issue of elk habitat, in context of road work, to the public.

Looks like there's time to do such outreach. I note the Bitterroot National Forest must wait for other USFS Districts to formulate elk habitat definitions.

I note small response to first deadline for public response.

I note only the Ravalli Republic 1/26/20 article by Perry Backus presented a few elements of the USFS talking points, and reminded the public of the extension deadline for public response.

I note the 1/15/20 short article in the Bitterroot Star contained only three sentences reflecting USFS reasons for new agreement about elk habitat requirements. But not even a phrase about allowable miles of USFS roads in elk habitat.

My point is I wish that USFS personnel would make a media wise, broad based, pitch to the public, about

amending Elk habitat requirements here in the Bitterroot National Forest.

Lacking such up front communication, there will be the misunderstandings, doubts, disbeliefs, and derision my family has heard.

More tangled up barbed wire fencing of social issues to untangle when its time for some new road work.

Barbed wire hammered on, stepped on, and driven over from both directions.

Sincerely,

Bob Williams