



Dear Citizen's Elk Committee Members,

Please find the following comments relative to the recommendation to ensure that non-traditional and amenity landowners understand the role they play in wildlife management.

We are greatly appreciative of this effort, and support the desire to increase understanding of new landowners who are not engaging in production agriculture. This is a major topic in conjunction with season structure that leads to problematic concentrations of elk that then become everyone else's problem.

As we saw in the late 2000's when real estate companies were marketing "exclusive access to" fish, wildlife and public lands, landowners who value their own experience over community engagement came to Montana to create their own private hunting and fishing nirvanas while ignoring the problems that they created, and ignored the longstanding traditions of access to navigable rivers as well as working with your local community to ensure proper wildlife management.

Our recommendation is to pursue this issue whole-heartedly, but put the focus less on government mandates and more on education through ensuring that real estate brokers do not simply sell "your own private hunting reserve." We would also encourage the Committee to focus amenity landowners' attention on the need to be a part of our community and that working with local grazing associations, rod and gun clubs, and agency biologists and wardens can lead to better outcomes for all, including new neighbors who may be unfamiliar with Montana's method of wildlife management, and our public trust doctrine that states that wildlife are owned by no-one, and held in trust for the citizens of Montana.

Rather than try to force landowners into confrontational roles, we suggest working with legacy landowners to find better approaches to dealing with problematic concentrations rather than simply throw bull elk permits at the wealthy elites currently purchasing large ranches. Certainly, equity among landowners is a noble goal, but the current iteration of the 454 agreements does not help solve actual wildlife management issues relative to problematic concentrations. This is another area where the Type III Block Management Concept could help provide a more community-based approach to the issue, rather than through single agreements that do not always fit together within the scope of desired outcomes within a distinct herd unit.

Sincerely,

Marcus Strange

On Behalf of the Montana Citizen's Elk Management Coalition