

**Elk Management in South Dakota: 2020 Public Opinion Survey Results
HDWI – ELK2020**



Faren R. Wolter, Ph.D., CWB®
Human Dimensions Specialist
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks



Department of Game, Fish, and Parks
Foss Building
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182

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Managing healthy elk populations across public and private land is complex and requires South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) to balance wildlife science with social considerations and expressed needs of important stakeholders, such as landowners and hunters, all of whom value and use elk differently. In 2013 GFP used a survey to gather broad public feedback to inform the first elk management plan (2015 - 2019). To update and write the next elk management plan (2021 – 2030), we conducted the *Elk Management in South Dakota: 2020 Public Opinion Survey*. This survey builds on the 2013 elk management public opinion survey, so questions are designed to understand attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about: elk conservation and management on private land, current and future elk conservation and management objectives and strategies, elk tolerance incentives for private landowners, and elk hunting experiences and overall satisfaction. This report summarizes survey findings. Information was collected from randomly selected 2019 elk license applicants (n=3,100) and recipients (n=1,324), in addition to state residents and non-residents (n=2,100) who own at least 40 acres of land in one or more of the 16 South Dakota counties that include GFP elk hunting units (EHUs). Adjusting for undeliverable and ineligible surveys, responses were received from 28% (n=1,194) of the 2019 elk hunting license applicant (n=839) and recipient (n=355) sample and 25% (n=410) of the landowner sample.

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Executive Summary

- Adjusting for a high proportion of undeliverable and ineligible surveys, the response rate for the landowner sample is 25% (n=410). Of these, 58% (n=234) have not ever applied for a South Dakota elk license and 9% (n=36) are non-resident landowners and therefore are not eligible to apply for an elk hunting license. Note that about one-third (n=133) of this sample have applied for a SD elk hunting license and 4% (n=6) drew a 2019 elk hunting license. In the population of those who own at least 40 acres in an elk hunting unit (EHU) it is not known what proportion of EHU landowners are also elk hunting enthusiasts.
- Adjusting for undeliverable and ineligible surveys, 839 (29%) elk license applicants (29%) and 355 (28%) elk license recipients responded to the survey for a combined response rate of 28% (n=1,194/4,197) with a margin of error of ± 2.7 percent with a 95 percent confidence interval. It is important to note that about 7% (n=83) of 2019 SD elk license applicants (n=43) and recipients (n=40) also own at least 40 acres of land in one or more EHU. In the population of SD elk license applicants and recipients it is not known what proportion also own at least 40 acres of land in EHUs.
- 58% of the landowner sample is between 50 and 69 years of age, followed by 32% who are 70 years old or older. 84% of the respondents are male and 93% are Caucasian. 48% of the elk hunting sample is between 50 and 69 years of age, followed by 38% who are 30 to 49 years old. 93% of the respondents are male and 97% are Caucasian.
- A total of 410 landowner and 83 elk hunter sample respondents indicate they own at least 40 acres of land in one or more EHU; however, due to a substantial amount of missing data with respect to number of acres owned basic descriptive statistics for all EHUs (e.g., average number of acres owned) could not be accurately calculated.
- 34% of the landowner sample and 80% of the elk hunting sample who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHU responded affirmatively to seeing evidence of elk using their property in 2019.
- 49% of the landowner sample and 4% of the elk hunting sample indicate that currently no elk exist (situation 1), while almost one-third of both groups report that elk are almost never seen (situation 2). Note that 65 % of the elk hunting sample who are also landowners report that elk are sometimes (situation 3) to regularly (situation 4) seen; whereas, only 20% (n=83) of the landowner sample selected either scenario.
- Over the next 10 years, 29% of the landowner sample, which is a 20% decrease, and none of the elk hunting sample desire that ‘no elk exist’ (situation 1). 29% of the landowner sample and 18% of the elk hunting sample desire that elk are ‘almost never seen’ (situation 2). Note that 82 %, which is a 17% increase, of the elk hunting sample who also own land in an EHU, indicate that over the next 10 years their tolerance for human-elk interaction will be for elk that are sometimes (situation 3) to regularly (situation 4) seen. About 42% of the landowner sample respondents indicate that over the next 10 years their tolerance for human-elk interaction will be for elk that are sometimes (situation 3) to regularly (situation 4) seen.

Together, data indicate landowner sample respondents, generally, desire to see a future increase in human-elk interactions on their land over the next 10 years, while those elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres of land in an EHU desire to maintain the current assessment (i.e., elk are sometimes seen).

- About 46% of the landowner sample and 39% of elk hunting sample respondents indicate 51% or more of their annual income is from farming and/or ranching activities. Another 38% of the landowner sample estimate 1 – 50% of their annual income is from farming and ranching activities and 15% selected ‘no income from farming and/or ranching activities’. Similarly, 46% of the elk hunter sample estimate 1 – 50% of their annual income is from farming and ranching activities and 16% selected ‘no income from farming and/or ranching activities’.
- 92% of the landowner sample and about 69% of the elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres of land in an EHU indicate that elk issues on their land are ‘minor’ to ‘not a problem at all’.
- 77% of the landowner sample do not currently allow elk hunting on their land; of these respondents, 46% indicate they would not allow hunting in the future, 20% would allow elk hunting in the future, and 35% selected ‘maybe, with financial compensation’. 40% of the elk hunting sample who also own land in an EHU do not currently allow elk hunting; of these respondents, 36% indicate they would not allow hunting in the future, 39% would allow elk hunting in the future, and 24% selected ‘maybe, with financial compensation’.
- 92% of the landowner sample said elk were not hunted on their land in 2019. For the 33 (6.2%) landowners on whose land elk were hunted in 2019, 24 (73%) provided access for ‘self and or an immediate family member’ and 16 (49%) provided ‘free access for at least one hunter’. One respondent from this sample provided some type of elk hunting-related service in 2019.

Elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHU were evenly split with 49% indicating elk were not hunted on their land in 2019. The remaining elk hunting sample respondents (51%) on whose land elk were hunted in 2019, provided a range of hunting opportunities. About 85% of elk hunting survey respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHU provided elk hunting access to ‘self and or an immediate family member’ and 80% provided ‘free access for at least one hunter’. The remaining responses include: 11% charged an access fee to at least one elk hunter, 11% charged at least one hunter for trip related services, and 14% leased hunting rights to people other than immediate family members.

- Only 3% of the landowner sample responded ‘yes’ that elk had been harvested on their own land in the last 5 years; of which, 10 (91%) were antlered bull elk and one (9%) was an antlerless elk. 27% of the elk hunting sample who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHU responded ‘yes’ that elk had been harvested on their own land in the last 5 years; of which, 11 (48%) were antlered bull elk, one (4%) was an antlerless elk, and 11 (48%) were both antlered bull and antlerless elk.

- Survey participants were asked their opinions about the current winter elk population objectives in the Black Hills. About 34% of the elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHU selected ‘no’ compared to 10% of the landowner sample. About 25% of the elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHU selected ‘yes’ compared to 12% of the landowner sample. It is important to note, 78% of the landowner sample and 41% of the elk hunting sample indicate they do not have enough information and/or knowledge about current winter elk population objectives to select ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Findings suggest there is a need to develop targeted outreach and education opportunities for landowners in EHUs, for both those who hunt elk and those who do not.
- About 12% (n=49) Of the landowner sample and 25% (n=297) of the elk hunting sample indicate the Black Hills elk winter population objective should be adjusted. Using a Likert-type rating scale (1=substantially decrease to 4= substantially increase), a follow-up question asks those who responded ‘yes’ to indicate their opinions about the desired direction change. As expected, a little more than half of the elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHU want to ‘slightly increase’ the Black Hills elk winter population objective and about one-third prefer to ‘substantially increase’ it. Responses from the landowner sample are more evenly distributed with about 33% preferring ‘slightly increase’ and 25% selecting to ‘substantially increase’ the current winter elk population objectives for Black Hills elk. About 15% of the elk hunting sample respondents desire to see elk population objectives decreased. Conversely, 42% of the landowner sample selected slightly or substantially decrease. Findings underscore the ongoing and unresolved conflict between those who want more elk hunting opportunity and the private landowners in EHUs who may want less elk-caused damage.
- Survey participants were asked their opinions about the current winter elk population objectives for Custer State Park. 34% of the elk hunting sample respondents selected ‘no’ compared to 10% of the landowner sample and about, 23% of the elk hunting sample respondents selected ‘yes’ compared to 6% of the landowner sample. As expected, of these respondents, almost half of elk hunting sample want to ‘slightly increase’ the Custer State elk winter population objective and a little more than one-third prefer to see it ‘substantially increase’. It is important to note, 84% of the landowner sample and 43% of the elk hunting sample indicate they do not have enough information and/or knowledge about current winter elk population objectives to select ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Findings suggest there is a need to develop targeted outreach and education opportunities for both those who hunt elk and those who do not.
- About 6% (n=40) Of the landowner sample and 23% (n=271) of the elk hunting sample indicate the Custer State Park elk winter population objective should be adjusted. Using a Likert-type rating scale (1=substantially decrease to 4= substantially increase), a follow-up question asks those who responded ‘yes’ to indicate their opinions about the desired direction change. As expected, almost half of elk hunting sample want to ‘slightly increase’ the Custer State elk winter population objective and a little more than one-third prefer to see it ‘substantially increase’. Similarly, half of the landowner sample want to ‘slightly increase’ the Custer State elk winter population objective and about one-fifth prefer to see it

‘substantially increase’. On the other hand, only 14% of the elk hunting sample but almost one-third of the landowner sample desire to see Custer State Park winter elk population objectives decreased. Findings underscore the ongoing and unresolved conflict between those who want more elk hunting opportunity and the private landowners in EHUs who may want less elk-caused damage.

- To inform the updating of the elk management plan for the next 10 years, we asked survey participants whether the agency should actively manage for self-sustaining and huntable elk populations across the newly established West River Area EHU. As expected, 61% of the elk hunting sample and about one-third of the landowner sample selected ‘yes’. About half of the landowner sample and a little less than one-third of the elk hunting sample indicate s/he/they do not have enough information and/or knowledge about current winter elk population objectives to select ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Findings suggest there is a need to develop targeted outreach and education opportunities for both those that hunt elk and those that do not.
- 61% of the landowner sample and 38% of the elk hunting sample think the current proportion of available landowner-operator elk hunting licenses is ‘about right’. A little over half of the elk hunting sample believe the number of available landowner-operator elk hunting licenses is ‘too many’ or ‘far too many’ and almost one-third of the landowner sample responded similarly. Lastly, 27% of the landowner sample but only 6% of the elk hunting sample indicate the number of available landowner-operator elk hunting licenses is ‘too few’ or ‘far too few’. Findings underscore the ongoing and unresolved perception issue that elk license allocation favors private landowners over hunting enthusiasts.
- To assess preferences for incentives designed to increase landowner tolerance for elk, survey participants were asked to rank their top three choices using a list consisting of six predefined options and three blanks to offer their own suggestion(s).
 - Landowner sample
 - 1st Choice (n=369): responses are nearly evenly split between ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (32%) and ‘increase regulated hunting opportunities only for landowners who own property in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage’ (28%).
 - 2nd Choice (n=339): responses are nearly evenly split between ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (24%) and ‘increase regulated hunting opportunities only for landowners who own property in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage’ (21%).
 - 3rd Choice (n=337): nearly one-quarter of the landowner sample respondents (22%) selected ‘increase regulated hunting opportunities for anyone in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage’ as the preferred 3rd choice. Followed by a nearly even split between ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops,

fences, personal property)’ (19%) and ‘work with interested landowners to promote recreational non-hunting opportunities (e.g., elk viewing, shed hunting) that may generate additional income for landowners’ (18%).

- Other choices offered to increase landowner tolerance for elk: Open-ended text responses (n=57) are broadly grouped by themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap. All text responses and qualitative analysis are listed in Appendix B.
- Elk hunting sample
 - 1st Choice (n=1,032): half of the respondents chose ‘increase regulated hunting opportunities only for landowners who own property in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage’ (51%), followed by ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (19%).
 - 2nd Choice (n=1,021): almost one-third of elk hunting sample participants selected ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (28%). The remaining five choices fall within a couple percentage points of each other (i.e., 12 – 16%).
 - 3rd Choice (n=1,019): about one-quarter of elk hunter sample respondents ranked ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (27%) as their third choice, followed by one-fifth preferring ‘create an annual public recognition of landowners who are excellent stewards of elk habitat’ (20%).
 - Other choices offered to increase landowner tolerance for elk: Open-ended text responses (n=92) are broadly grouped by themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap. All text responses and qualitative analysis are listed in Appendix B.
- Because growing elk populations may damage private property, we asked respondents if s/he/they would support the creation of a new ‘landowner own-land’ elk license for the purpose of assuring a landowner an elk hunting license in elk management units in which GFP determines the elk population objective is “slightly decrease” or “substantially decrease”. Just over half of the landowner sample (53%) responded ‘yes’ and 42% selected ‘I’m not sure, depends on eligibility requirements.’ The distribution of elk hunting sample respondents is fairly even among the choices: ‘yes’ (33%), I’m not sure, depends on eligibility requirements’ (35%) and ‘no’ (32%).
- A ‘landowner own-land’ elk license has not been officially proposed to GFP’s Commission solicited input on potential license eligibility criteria by asking participants to select one choice only from either Choice A or Choice B columns that best represents their preference for each license eligibility criteria.

- Where allowed to hunt?
 - The landowner sample split evenly between the two choices (49% vs. 51%) and 82% of the elk hunting sample selected ‘permit landowners to hunt any private land in the same elk hunting unit in which they also own/lease land’ as an eligibility criterion over ‘permit landowners to hunt only on their land in the same elk hunting unit’.
- Type of land use?
 - 57% of the landowner sample and 70% of the elk hunting prefer ‘owns or leases land for any purpose’ as an eligibility criterion over ‘owns or leases land for agriculture production (>\$1,000/year sales receipts)’.
- Minimum acreage owned or leased?
 - 59% of the landowner sample and 80% of the elk hunting prefer 240 acres or more’ as an eligibility criterion over ‘40 acres or more’.
- Demonstrate elk land use?
 - 54% of the landowner sample and 85% of the elk hunting indicate that private landowners should have to demonstrate elk use of their land as an eligibility criterion.
- Elk hunting license type?
 - The landowner sample split evenly between the two choices (50% vs. 50%) and 70% of the elk hunting sample selected ‘single antlerless elk license per ranch/farm unit’ as an eligibility criterion over ‘multiple antlerless licenses per ranch/farm unit’.
- Elk hunting season dates?
 - 63% of the landowner sample and 78% of the elk hunting sample prefer that elk hunting season dates criterion are the ‘same as regular season dates for that elk hunting unit’ over ‘August to March’.
- During their lifetime, one-third of the landowner sample and 100% of the elk hunting sample have applied for an elk hunting license in South Dakota. Of these survey participants, 70% of the landowner sample and 94% elk hunting sample plan to purchase a license in the future. A follow-up question asked those who responded ‘no’ or ‘not sure’ to describe what would increase the likelihood the person would apply for an elk hunting license in the future. Open-ended text responses from the landowner sample (n=25) and the elk hunting sample (n=65) are broadly grouped by themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap (Appendix B).
- 4% of the landowner sample respondents and 30% of elk hunting sample drew an elk hunting license in 2019. A follow-up question asked survey participants to use a Likert-type rating scale (1=not satisfied at all to 4= extremely satisfied) to indicate their overall level of satisfaction with their 2019 elk hunting experience in South Dakota. The landowner sample respondents were ‘very to extremely satisfied’ and the elk hunting sample respondents were also ‘very satisfied’ (25%) or ‘extremely satisfied’ (50%).

- Of those survey participants who hunted elk in 2019, we asked on what type of land and about what percentage of time was spent hunting elk. See Tables 5 and 6 on page 37 for summary counts and percentages.
- To assess preferences for structures elk hunting seasons (i.e., whether to increase, decrease, or maintain elk population numbers), survey participants were asked to rank their top three management options choices using a list consisting of six predefined options and three blanks to offer their own suggestion. No text responses were given in either sample.
 - Landowner sample
 - 1st Choice (n=130): responses are nearly evenly split between ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support health elk’ (27%) and ‘manage elk populations to decrease private property damage claims’ (25%).
 - 2nd Choice (n=127): almost one-third selected ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support healthy elk.’ (32%), followed by ‘manage elk to not exceed the tolerance of landowners in or adjacent to elk hunting unit boundaries’ (24%).
 - 3rd Choice (n=118): responses are nearly evenly split between ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support health elk’ (23%) and ‘manage elk to not exceed the tolerance of landowners in or adjacent to elk hunting unit boundaries’ (22%).
 - Elk hunting sample
 - 1st Choice (n=1,070): 42% selected ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support health elk’ followed by 36% who selected ‘manage elk populations to increase the number of recreational hunting opportunities’.
 - 2nd Choice (n=1,059): 34% who selected ‘manage elk populations to increase the number of recreational hunting opportunities’ followed by 26% selected ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support health elk’.
 - 3rd Choice (n=1,046): 23% selected ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the tolerance of landowners in or adjacent to elk management unit boundaries’ followed by ‘manage elk populations to increase the number of trophy bull hunting opportunities’ (21%).
- 125 landowner sample participants and 440 elk hunting sample survey participants provided additional comments (see Appendix C for text responses). These comments did not have to be specific to any question asked on the survey and provide a qualitative description of respondents’ experiences and opinions regarding elk management in South Dakota.

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Introduction

According to the Public Trust Doctrine and reaffirmed through the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, fish and wildlife populations are held in trust and managed by the agency within each state charged with conserving those resources for current and future public use and enjoyment (Organ et al., 2012). This public trust thinking is clearly reflected in South Dakota's Department of Game, Fish, and Parks' (GFPs) 2021 Mission and Vision statements (<https://gfp.sd.gov/agency/>). In 2013, when the first South Dakota elk management plan was written, elk were primarily in and around the Black Hills area (roughly parts of 9 counties). Since then elk have thrived and some are moving out of the hills range onto parts of the prairie. In response, GFP increased the number of elk hunting units (EHUs) that currently encompass all or parts of 16 counties: Bennett, Butte, Custer, Fall River, Gregory, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Jones, Lawrence, Meade, Mellette, Pennington, Perkins, Stanley, and Tripp counties. The expanding elk management range brings with it, new landowners and variety of land uses, different (and sometimes competing) preferences for accessing and using elk (both hunting and other recreation), and most importantly, varying degrees of tolerance for elk among landowners.

Moving from a relatively small-scale management scope (Black Hills Fire Protection District region only) to one on a larger landscape-scale (currently nearly half of the state), while at the same time acknowledging changing land use and ownership patterns as well, is a complex setting in which GFP is tasked with managing public trust resources (elk) for the benefit of current and future generations. Effectively managing elk populations at multiple spatial scales requires flexible and adaptive management goals and objectives that strike a balance between biological/ecological needs of elk and elk habitat with social needs/expectations (to the extent possible). To be sure, successful implementation of landscape-scale management goals and objectives will take all interested elk enthusiasts working together and adapting to biological/ecological and social changes, that will surely effect elk, over the next 10 years.

The purpose of the *Elk Management in South Dakota: 2020 Public Opinion Survey* is to inform the updating GFP's elk management plan for the next 10 years. Managing healthy elk populations across public and private land is complex and requires GFP to balance wildlife science with social considerations and expressed needs of important stakeholders, such as landowners and hunters, all of whom value and use elk differently. This survey builds on the 2013 elk management public opinion survey. Questions are designed to understand attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about:

- elk conservation and management on private land
- current and future elk conservation and management objectives and strategies
- elk tolerance incentives for private landowners
- elk hunting experiences and overall satisfaction

Additional public involvement opportunities (e.g., public meetings, open comment forms on GFP's webpage, public comment during Commission meetings) were used to better understand social aspects of managing elk in South Dakota. Using multiple and mixed-methods helps GFP meet its public trust commitment by collecting input and feedback from a broad range of South Dakota elk enthusiasts through transparent public engagement and decision-making processes.

Methods

A mixed-methods approach is a research design popular in social science disciplines, in which researchers collect, analyze, and integrate both quantitative (e.g., counts, numbers) and qualitative (e.g., text, pictures) data. Using both qualitative and quantitative means of data-collection offsets weaknesses inherent to each method, while also strengthening the interpretation phase of data analysis through data integration (Creswell 2003). Numerous peer-reviewed studies demonstrate that a mixed-methods approach enhances applied research when the aim is to identify and describe multiple stakeholder perspectives or where researchers desire a more complete understanding of a phenomenon, particularly from the perspective of the population of interest (Creswell & Clark 2018). Hence, mixed-method approaches enhance a robust research protocol because they allow researchers to confirm quantitative findings with qualitative experiences.

Sampling Frames

To make informed decisions about how to manage elk populations in South Dakota, biologists seek information from elk hunting enthusiasts and private landowners in the 16-county area that encompasses all EHUs (Figure 1). The sampling frame for this survey includes two samples: (1) 2019 elk license applicants and recipients (hereafter referred to as *elk hunting sample*) and (2) those who own at least 40 acres in any EHU (hereafter referred to as *landowner sample*).

Every survey situation is unique and what works well in one context may not in another. Recognizing this, ‘tailored design’ refers to customizing survey procedures to encourage all sample members to respond to the survey (Dillman et al. 2014). Accordingly, we employed a tailored design method with three waves of contact for each sample. The same survey was simultaneously administered to both samples. In the final contact, to augment lagging response rates, all respondents were offered the opportunity to respond either online to an electronic survey or mailed paper-based survey. Numerous social science studies show that when comparing single mode surveys (e.g., internet only) to mixed-mode surveys (e.g. paper and electronic), the latter can improve response rates and reduce non-response error, in addition to lowering costs, improving timeliness, and reducing coverage error (Dillman et al. 2014).

Elk hunting sample

The demand for elk hunting licenses in South Dakota far exceeds the number of available licenses each year. To minimize recall bias when answering certain questions, this sample includes those who either applied for or received a 2019 elk hunting license. In 2019, about 15,000 unique elk hunters applied for an elk hunting license. A random sample of 2,100 applicants with valid email addresses were drawn from this population. Due to a low response rate, another 1,000 applicants were randomly selected from the same population as the first draw. About 1,400 applicants drew a 2019 elk license and of these 1,323 provided a valid email address. To ensure sampling coverage this subgroup of elk hunters was censused (i.e., a survey sent to every 2019 elk license recipient with a valid email address). A total of 4,323 (3,100 elk applicants and 1,323 elk license recipients) surveys were administered electronically to the elk hunting sample.

Landowner sample

Since the 2013 survey, the number and land coverage of EHUs have expanded from nine to all or parts of 16 counties: Bennett, Butte, Custer, Fall River, Gregory, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Jones, Lawrence, Meade, Mellette, Pennington, Perkins, Stanley, and Tripp counties. There is no comprehensive database of South Dakota landowners available for drawing a random landowner sample; therefore, a variety of sources were used to identify potential landowners for this survey (e.g., internal databases, *Landowners Matter* newsletter, County tax offices) . Staff collected 7,829 addresses of residents and non-residents that own 40 acres or more in at least one of the 16 counties in which there are designated EHUs (Figure 1). A random sample of 2,100 addresses were drawn from this population and mailed a paper survey with a postage-paid return envelope. To ensure sampling coverage, the addresses were disproportionately stratified so that half of the sample represents landowners in Black Hills EHUs and half represents landowners in Prairie EHUs (including the newly established West River Area). In disproportionate stratified sampling the sizes of the different subgroups (strata) may vary and not represent the percentage of the subgroup within the larger population. This type of sampling provides the advantage of being able to examine responses of subgroups, particularly in cases where some subgroups are small and a proportionate sample might include only a few individuals with a particular subgroup.

It is not known what proportion of elk hunting enthusiasts also own land in EHUs (or conversely what proportion of landowners are also elk hunting enthusiasts). Because of this, names and contact information from the ‘landowner sample’ and the ‘elk hunting sample’ were cross-checked and duplicates were removed from the ‘landowner sample’ list. This was done for several reasons: (1) to ensure, to the extent possible, that each person has an equal chance of being randomly selected (i.e., not double-counted by being in both sampling frames), (2) collected mailing addresses are not 100% accurate (no know list exists), so to increase sampling frame accuracy deference was given to keeping the name from the elk license sampling frame, (3) removing duplicates from the landowner sampling pool is to ensure that the ‘landowner’ database, to the best of our ability, cleanly represents the landowner criteria only (no known elk hunting interests). This becomes important during the data analysis and interpretation phases. Based on decades of human dimensions research, it would stand to reason that those who own land in an EHU but do not hunt elk likely differ in held attitudes, beliefs, values, and opinions than landowners who are also elk hunting enthusiasts. Lumping these sub-groups together and broadly referring to those respondents to as ‘landowner’ may skew the data. Similarly, elk hunting enthusiasts who do not own land in an EHU may relate to and think differently about elk management than those who elk hunt and also own land in an EHU. Likewise, lumping all elk hunting enthusiasts together, may cause subtle, yet important differences, to be missed. In sum, it is important to understand the differences among the three stakeholder groups (assuming response rates are sufficient and missing data is minimal): (1) EHU landowners who do not hunt elk, (2) EHU landowners who do hunt elk, and (3) elk hunters who do not own land in a EHU.

Data Analysis and Limitations

Statistical analysis is a method of calculating the likelihood of one outcome occurring in a situation given a specific set of circumstances. The practical application for statistical analysis is that it provides unbiased data from which the agency can make informed operational and management decisions. Additionally, it provides the foundation for developing scientifically-defensible policy that also is acceptable to affected stakeholders. Though this report is not an exhaustive statistical review and synthesis of all data collected, it does provide and summarize much of the depth and breadth of data collected, which includes a significant amount of valuable raw data from which future statistical analyses and insights can be drawn. Computerized software packages include Microsoft Excel, IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27), NVivo Plus (Version 13).

Descriptive Data

Descriptive statistics to calculate measures of frequency for every question and measures of central tendency for questions with interval or scale measurement levels. Responses to a single Likert-type scale item (more below) are treated as ordinal data (i.e., not interval nor ratio data). Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the data's: (1) central tendency (i.e., the location of the data distribution using mean, median, mode), (2) dispersion around the central tendency (e.g., standard deviation, range, percent distribution), and (3) distribution of responses (e.g., frequency, percentage of responses). These statistical measures describe the basic features of the data and provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. For instance, calculating the frequency (i.e., count) and percent of categorical variables (e.g., landowner type, attitudes, age) can be used to describe the sample by assessing the proportional distribution of responses. Together with simple graphics analysis, descriptive measures form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis strategy by helping to simplify and describe large amounts of data in a sensible way. Additionally, descriptive data often helps inform targeted communications, outreach, and education strategies, in addition to strategic planning needs and direction.

Cross-Tabulation tables

Describing and understanding more complex research and management questions require a statistical cross-tabulation approach which assesses the association of multiple variables (nominal and ordinal) in a single table where columns correspond to independent variables and each row to dependent variables. Cross-tabulation tables are used to obtain the expected number of cases under the assumption of no relationship between the two variables. The most widely used statistical test used with a cross tabulation is the chi-square statistic (χ^2) test (or test for independence) with a p-value of .05 to determine significance. The Chi-square test tells you whether the relationship between two categorical variables is significant. However, it is important to note, when 20% or more of contingency table cells have less than the expected count certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated. This often results in surveys with small sample sizes; especially, when analyzing *N*-way tables (i.e., higher than 2-by-2 or bivariate tables).

Effect size describes the strength of association between the two related variables. In 2-by-2 tables, the phi-value (ϕ) is noted and, in larger tables, the Cramer's V value is used regardless of sample size. Figure 1 compares Cramer's V value descriptors to typical Eta Squared (η^2) value descriptors used to interpret effect size for analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests.

Cramer's V		Eta ²	
Value	Relationship	Value	Relationship
.01 to .10	negligible	.01 to .05	small
.11 to .30	minimal	.06 to .13	moderate
.31 to .50	moderate	≥ .14	large
≥ .51	very strong		

Figure 1. Cramer's V and Eta-squared values and measures of association (adapted from Cohen 1988, Vaske 2008, Gigliotti 2012).

Another test to measure not only the association but the strength of this association between nominal variables is Lambda (λ), and ranges from 0 (no relationship) to 1 (perfect association). You can interpret its score as a percentage of how much of one variable can be explained by knowing the values of the other. One potential problem with Lambda is that it tends to underestimate the relationship; therefore, using it together with the Chi-square test is always recommended. Additionally, when the two variables studied are ordinal the following tests measure significance, strength, and direction of the relationship: Gamma, Sommer's D, Kendall's tau.

Psychometrics and Likert-Type Scale Measurement

The psychometrics field in psychology looks at the theory and technique of psychological measurement, which quantifies knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and personality traits (American Psychological Association 2020). Increasingly, natural resources conservation and management challenges and opportunities are linked inextricably to human attitudes, beliefs, norms, and value orientations (i.e., social constructs). Because these attributes cannot be directly observed and measured, social scientists make indirect inferences from survey responses to questions that serve as proxies. A 'Likert scale' is a type of psychometric response scale (e.g., a 7 point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree) is often seen in surveys and is by definition a multiple-item scale designed to create summated rating scales for measuring social constructs like attitudes, beliefs, or norms (Likert 1932). It is important to note that disagreement exists amongst scholars about whether Likert-scaled data should be analyzed with parametric statistics (e.g., t-test, analysis of variance, regression) or nonparametric statistics (e.g., Mann-Whitney test, Wilcoxon signed-rank test, Kruskal-Wallis test). Often the difference in statistical approach depends on the analyzed distribution of a given dataset (Carifio & Perla 2008, Jamieson 2004).

In contrast, a 'Likert-type scale' is used to measure a single item and is never combined with other measured items to create a summated scale. All questions in this survey are Likert-type scale measurements. Understanding the difference between the two is critical to selecting the appropriate statistical analysis and interpreting the data. Responses to a single Likert-type scale item are treated as ordinal data (not interval nor ratio); however, one cannot assume that respondents perceive differences between adjacent levels as equidistant, particularly when using ≤ 5 response levels (Cohen 1988). Because of this, the mean (or average), and sometimes the

median (or middle value), should not be calculated from ordinal variables to measure the variable's central tendency.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data typically arise from open-ended survey questions with participants and descriptive text data from observation surveys. Data generated through qualitative measurements (e.g., text, pictures) do not produce numbers. Instead, they represent rich descriptions from the perspective of the participant that reflect the complexity and detail of the underlying tasks, behaviors, or problem of interest. Qualitative data often is used to reveal and identify deeply held values, which establish meaning from the perspective of individuals influencing or being influenced by a phenomenon of interest. As such, qualitative data provide a powerful foundation that produces new theories or hypotheses, allows one to conduct comparisons and evaluations, and/or provide examples that illustrate or challenge ideas from other sources (Bazeley & Jackson 2013). For the purpose of updating the “Elk Management Plan” qualitative text data was collected from open-ended survey questions. Using NVivo Plus (Version 13), and guided by a grounded theory approach, survey data was sorted, coded, and themed accordingly.

Data Limitations

Despite the best efforts of multiple GFP staff, we cannot not be sure of the accuracy of every mailing address collected, nor can we be 100% sure the name associated with owning a specific parcel of land is the appropriate person to whom the survey should be sent. For example, a substantial amount of land ownership across the EHUs is held in various companies, trusts, and other legal entities, for which the person of record is often a third party (e.g., accountant, law firm, corporate office). Additionally, the overall low response rate combined with information received from intended survey participants who felt s/he/they were not qualified to respond, indicate a broad lack of knowledge about and/or interest in managing elk in South Dakota (i.e., not a salient topic).

Results

Elk Hunting Sample

Adjusting for undeliverable and ineligible surveys, 839 (29%) elk license applicants (29%) and 355 (28%) elk license recipients responded to the survey for a combined response rate of 28% (n=1,194/4,197) with a margin of error of ± 2.71 percent with a 95 percent confidence interval. All else being equal, in 95 out of 100 samples of the same size and type, the results would vary within plus or minus three percentage points from the result if all elk license applicants and recipients in this population were surveyed. It is important to note that about 7% (n=83) of 2019 SD elk license applicants (n=43) and recipients (n=40) also own at least 40 acres of land in one or more EHUs. In the population of SD elk license applicants and recipients, it is not known what proportion also own at least 40 acres of land in one or more EHUs.

Landowner Sample

Adjusting for a high proportion of undeliverable and ineligible surveys (~30%), the response rate for the landowner sample is 25% (n=410/1,648). Of these, 58% (n=234) have not ever applied for a South Dakota elk license and 9% (n=36) are non-resident landowners and therefore are not eligible to apply for an elk hunting license. Note that about one-third (n=133) of mailed paper survey respondents have also applied for a SD elk hunting license and 4% (n=6) drew a 2019 elk hunting license. In the population of those who own at least 40 acres in an EHU, it is not known what proportion are also elk hunting enthusiasts.

Since the relationship between the landowner sample and the larger landowner population in the 16-county area is unknown it is not possible to calculate a margin of sampling error; hence, there is no way to confidently know how representative the sample is of the landowner population as a whole. Consequently, results from the landowner sample should not be used to make inferences about the total landowner population in the 16-county area in which there are GFP EHUs. Nevertheless, data do represent the opinions and perspectives of responding landowners for whom elk management in South Dakota is a salient topic and should not be discounted.

Sample Demographic Characteristics

Table 1. Landowner sample and elk hunter sample respondent demographic characteristics.

Elk Management in South Dakota: 2020 Public Opinion Survey		
Demographic Characteristics	Elk Hunting Sample (n=1,194)	Landowner Sample (n=410)
<i>Age category</i>	<i>n=1,167</i>	<i>n=395</i>
Under 18 years old	-	-
18 – 29 years old	68 (5.8%)	2 (0.4%)
30 – 49 years old	442 (37.9%)	38 (9.6%)
50 – 69 years old	554 (47.5%)	229 (58.0%)
70 years old and over	103 (8.8%)	126 (31.9%)
<i>Gender</i>	<i>n=1,164</i>	<i>n=391</i>
Female	75 (6.4%)	62 (15.9%)
Male	1,086 (93.3%)	327 (83.6%)
Prefer to self-describe	3 (0.3%)	2 (0.5%)
<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>n=1,161</i>	<i>n=391</i>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	13 (1.1%)	6 (1.5%)
Asian	1 (0.1%)	-
Black or African-American	2 (0.2%)	-
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish	4 (0.3%)	2 (0.5%)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	-	-
White or Caucasian	1,122 (96.6%)	363 (92.8%)
Other	19 (1.6%)	20 (5.1%)

Q1: A total of 410 landowner and 83 elk hunter sample respondents indicate they own at least 40 acres of land in one or more EHU; however, due to a substantial amount of missing data basic descriptive statistics for all EHUs (e.g., average number of acres owned) could not be accurately calculated for either sample (Table 2).

Table 2: Count and acreage range owned in each elk hunting unit by landowner sample and elk hunter sample respondents.

Elk Management in South Dakota: 2020 Public Opinion Survey				
Elk Hunting Unit*	Landowner sample (n=410)		Elk Hunting Sample (n=83)	
	Count (%)	Count (acreage range)	Count (%)	Count (acreage range)
<i>Black Hills</i>				
H1 B	10 (2.3%)	4 (147 – 680)	6 (6.2%)	6 (100 – 1,200)
H2 B	7 (1.6%)	4 (80 – 350)	8 (8.2%)	6 (106 – 36,000)
H2 E	4 (0.9%)	3 (50 – 360)	8 (8.2%)	8 (25 – 36,000)
H2 HIJ	1 (0.2%)	1 (250)	2 (2.1%)	2 (201 and 20,000)
H3 BCD	11 (2.5%)	7 (25 – 305)	5 (5.2%)	5 (49 – 2,400)
H3 EFG	13 (3.0%)	8 (108 – 3000)	12 (12.4%)	12 (240 – 7,500)
H4 B	18 (4.1%)	9 (60 – 2648)	3 (3.1%)	3 (76 – 3,000)
H5 A	3 (0.7%)	3 (68 – 1,040)	6 (6.2%)	6 (27 – 500)
H7B	14 (3.2%)	8 (47 – 580)	7 (7.2%)	9 (41 – 5,000)
H9 B	6 (1.4%)	2 (80 and 160)	3 (3.1%)	
<i>Prairie Elk</i>				
09 A	18 (3.8%)	8 (95 – 2,677)	4 (4.1%)	4 (40 – 20,000)
11 ABCDEF	44 (10.0%)	20 (55 – 13,000)	2 (2.1%)	2 (2,000 and 5,000)
15 A	11 (2.5%)	5 (47 – 900)	4 (4.1%)	4 (40 – 1,100)
27 A	14 (3.2%)	2 (240 and 6000)	1 (1.0%)	1 (20,000)
35 A	20 (4.5%)	16 (80 – 17,000)	2 (2.1%)	2 (1,000 and 20,000)
35 B	18 (4.1%)	10 (77 – 25,000)	5 (5.2%)	5 (160 – 30,000)
WRA	228 (51.8%)	113 (40 – 21,000)	19 (19.6%)	19 (40 – 50,000)
<i>Total</i>	440 (100%)		97 (100%)	

*respondents may select more than one EHU, totals may exceed 100%

Q2: To adaptively manage elk populations in South Dakota, GFP elk biologists need EHU-level information from landowners in those areas. After identifying how many acres and in which EHUs the survey participant own land, respondents were asked to select one EHU to think about while answering a series of questions. Figure 2 shows the count distribution of the individual EHUs selected by landowner sample respondents (n=410) and elk hunting sample respondents (n=83) who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHU.

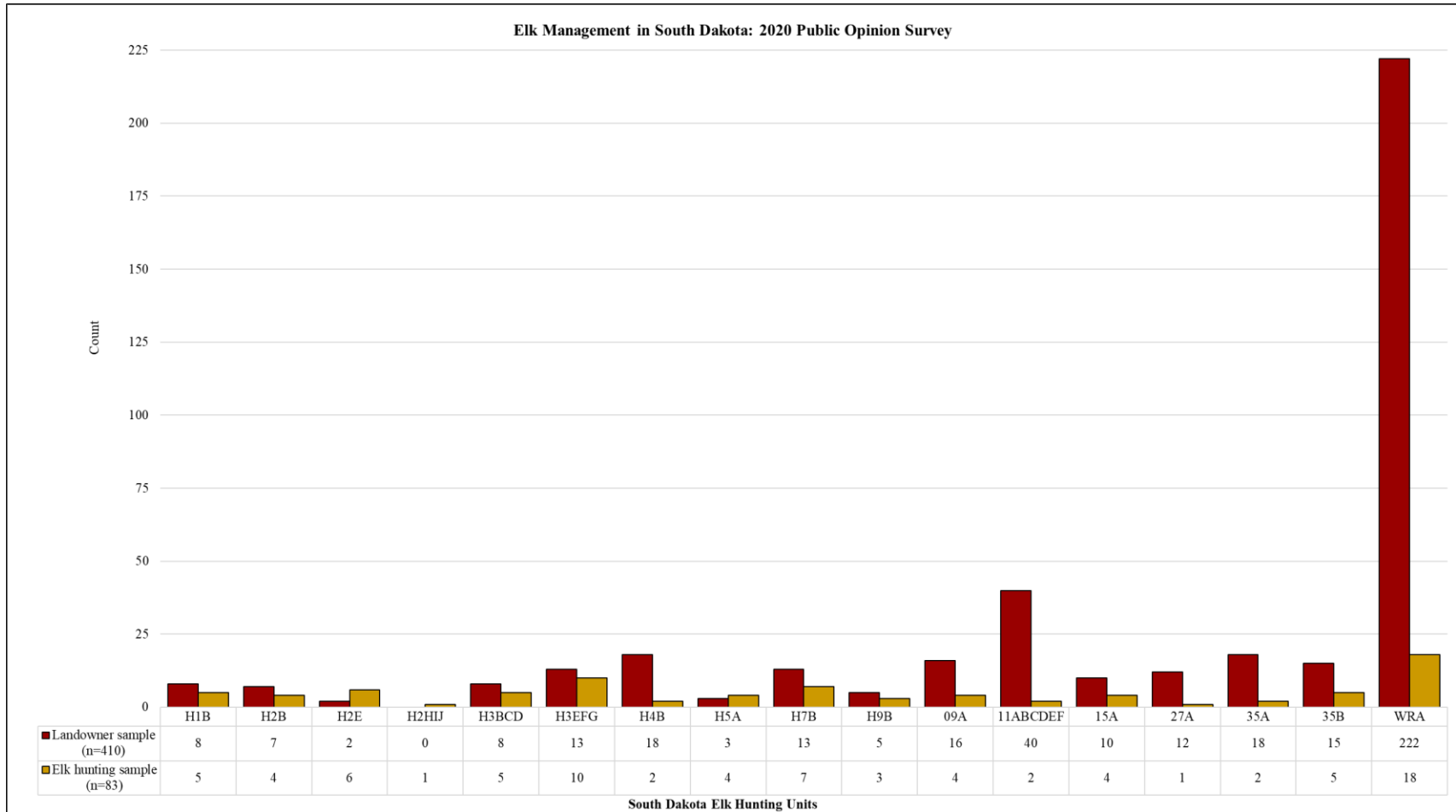


Figure 3. South Dakota Elk Hunting Units selected to think about while answering a series of questions by landowner sample and elk hunter sample respondents.

Q3: 34% (n=135) of the landowner sample and 80% (n=66) of the elk hunting sample responded affirmatively to seeing evidence of elk using their property in 2019 (Figure 3).

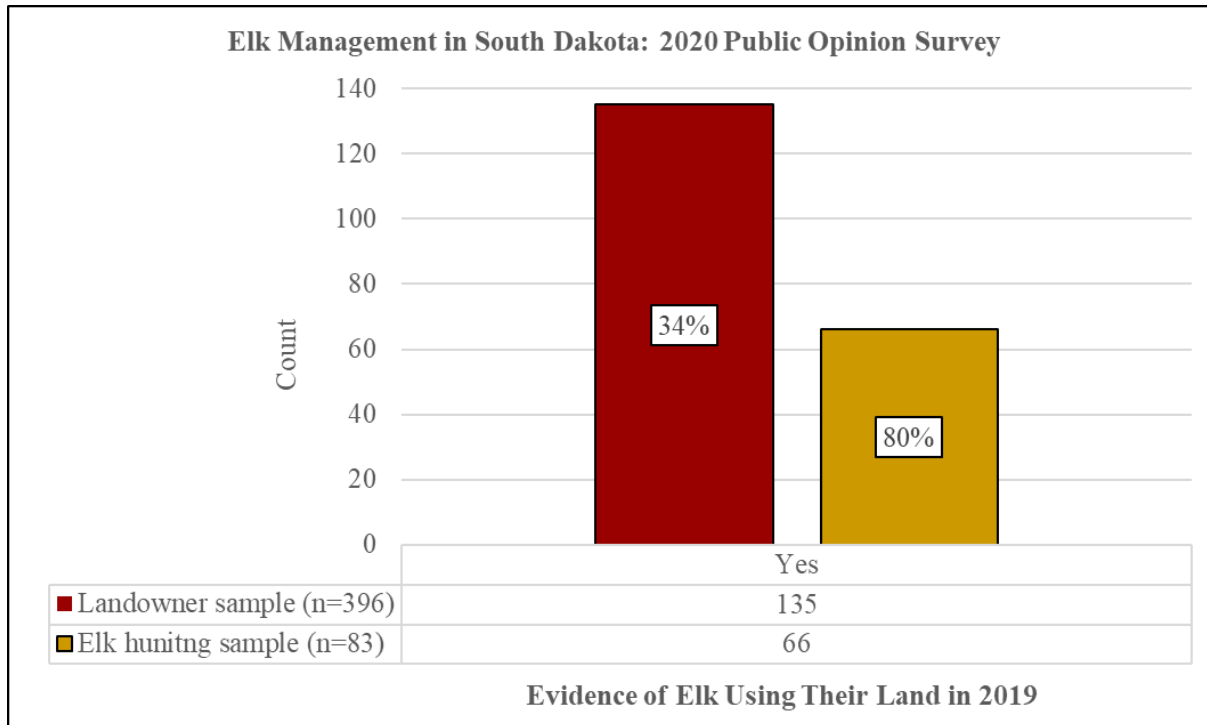


Figure 4. Count and percent of landowner and elk hunter sample respondents who indicate elk used or travelled through their land in 2019.

This variable was cross-tabulated with EHUs selected in question 1 to understand the proportional distribution of elk using private land within each selected EHU in 2019 (Table 3). It is important to note that response rates to this question vary considerably with the landowner sample, and therefore, caution against drawing broad inferences. Due to missing and low responses, 47% of the landowner and 91% of the elk hunting samples had less than the expected count. When 20% or more of contingency table cells have less than the expected count, certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated. Nonetheless, Table 3 shows that survey participants provide broad representation of all of the designated EHUs.

Table 3. Count, response percent, and case percent of selected elk hunting units cross-tabulated by affirmative responses to elk use in 2019, displayed by landowner sample and elk hunter sample respondents.

Elk Management in South Dakota: 2020 Public Opinion Survey						
Elk Hunting Unit*	Landowner Sample (n=396)			Elk Hunting Sample (n=83)		
	Count	response % within EHU	case %	Count	response % within EHU	case %
<i>Black Hills</i>						
H1 B	5	71.4%	3.7%	4	80.0%	6.1%
H2 B	5	71.4%	3.7%	4	100%	6.1%
H2 E	1	50.0%	0.7%	6	100%	9.1%
H2 HIJ	-	-	-	1	100%	1.5%
H3 BCD	5	62.5%	3.7%	3	60.0%	4.5%
H3 EFG	11	84.6%	8.1%	10	100%	15.2%
H4 B	13	72.2%	9.6%	2	100%	3.0%
H5 A	2	66.7%	1.5%	4	100%	6.1%
H7 B	7	58.3%	5.2%	7	100%	10.6%
H9 B	4	80.0%	3.0%	3	60.0%	4.5%
<i>Prairie Elk</i>						
09 A	7	43.8%	5.2%	3	75.0%	4.5%
11 ABCDEF	22	56.4%	16.3%	2	100%	3.0%
15 A	4	50.0%	3.0%	3	75.0%	4.5%
27 A	4	33.3%	3.0%	1	100%	1.5%
35 A	8	20.0%	3.9%	2	100%	3.0%
35 B	3	20.0%	0.8%	3	60.0%	4.5%
WRA	34	15.8%	25.2%	8	44.4%	12.1%
<i>Total</i>	135		34.1%	66		79.5%

*if respondents selected more than 1 EHU in Q1, they were asked to select one EHU for responding to a series of questions about that EHU.

Q4 and Q5: To better understand landowner tolerance for elk using their property, using four distinct scenarios respondents were asked to select one scenario that best represents the current situation on or near your property and the desired situation over the next 10 years (life of next management plan) (Figure 4).

<input type="checkbox"/> Situation 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No elk exist 	<input type="checkbox"/> Situation 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elk are <i>almost never</i> seen Landowners (including you) <i>rarely</i> have damage to fences, crops, gardens, or trees from elk A <i>low number</i> of elk are present for regulated hunting, wildlife viewing, or other elk-related recreational activity
<input type="checkbox"/> Situation 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elk are <i>sometimes</i> seen Landowners (including you) have <i>occasional</i> damage to fences, crops, gardens, or trees from elk A <i>moderate number</i> of elk are present for regulated hunting, wildlife viewing, or other elk-related recreational activity 	<input type="checkbox"/> Situation 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elk are <i>regularly</i> seen Landowners (including you) have <i>frequent</i> damage to fences, crops, gardens, or trees from elk A <i>high number</i> of elk are present for regulated hunting, wildlife viewing, or other elk-related recreational activity

Figure 5. Hypothetical human-elk interaction scenarios used in the public opinion survey to better understand landowner tolerance for elk using their property’

As shown in Figure 5, 49% (n=195) of the landowner sample and 4% (n=3) of the elk hunting sample indicate that currently no elk exist (situation 1), while almost one-third of both groups report that elk are almost never seen (situation 2). Note that 65 % (n= 54) of the elk hunting sample who are also landowners report that elk are sometimes (situation 3) to regularly (situation 4) seen; whereas, only 20% (n=83) of the landowner sample selected both scenarios.

- Landowner sample: median=2.00 (situation 2 ‘elk are almost never seen’) and mode=1.00 (situation 1 ‘no elk exist’).
- Elk hunting sample: median=3.00 (situation 3 ‘elk are sometimes seen’) and mode=3.00 (situation 3 ‘elk are sometimes seen’).

Over the next 10 years, 29% (n=116) of the landowner sample, which is a 20% decrease, and none of the elk hunting sample desire that no elk exist (situation 1) . For the landowner sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHUs 29% (n=115) and 18% (n=15) of the elk hunting sample desire that elk are almost never seen (situation 2). Note that 82 % (n= 68), a 17% increase, of the elk hunting sample who also own land in an EHU, indicate that over the next 10 years their tolerance for human-elk interaction will be for elk that are sometimes (situation 3) to regularly (situation 4) seen. About 42% (n=166) of the landowner sample respondents indicate that over the next 10 years their tolerance for human-elk interaction will be for elk that are sometimes (situation 3) to regularly (situation 4) seen. Together, data indicate landowner sample respondents, generally, desire to see a future increase in human-elk interactions on their land over the next 10 years, while those elk hunting sample respondents who also own land in an EHU desire to maintain the current assessment (i.e., elk are sometimes seen) status quo.

- Landowner sample: median=2.00 (situation 2 ‘elk are almost never seen’) and mode=3.00 (situation 3 ‘elk are sometimes seen’).
- Elk hunting sample: median=3.00 (situation 3 ‘elk are sometimes seen’) and mode=3.00 (situation 3 ‘elk are sometimes seen’).

Variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of current and future levels of human-elk interactions within each selected EHU. Due Small sample sizes from missing data, 77 - 84% of landowner and 91-96% elk hunter samples had less than the expected count. When 20% or more of contingency table cells have less than the expected count, certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated.

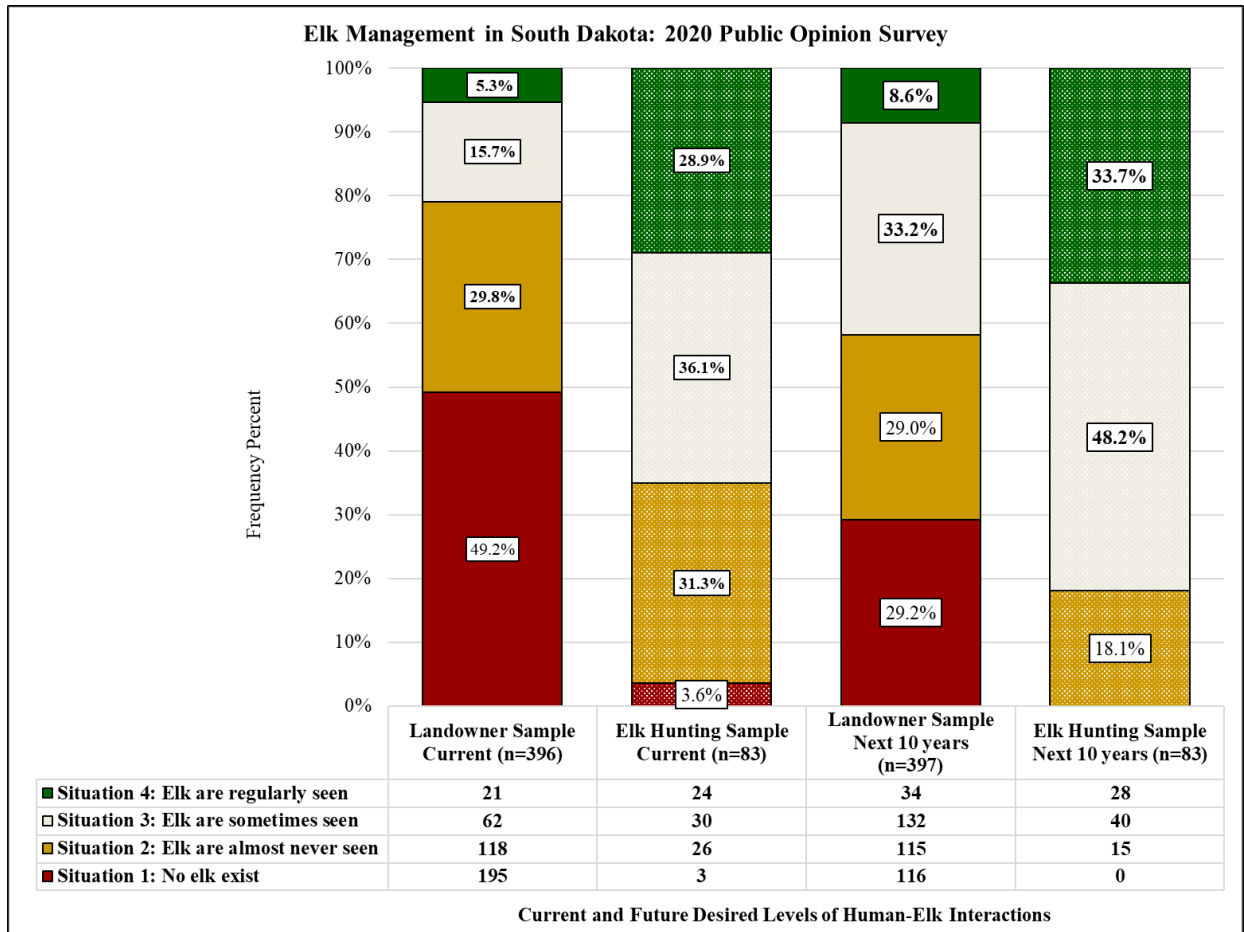


Figure 6. Frequency and percent of current and future desired levels of human-elk interactions of landowner and elk hunting sample respondents.

Q6: About 46% (n=183) of the landowner sample and 39% (n=32) of elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHUs indicate 51% or more of their annual income is from farming and/or ranching activities (Figure 6). Another 38% (n=149) of the landowner sample estimate 1 – 50% of their annual income is from farming and ranching activities 15% (n=58) selected ‘no income from farming and/or ranching activities’. Whereas, 46% (n=38) the elk hunter sample estimate 1 – 50% of their annual income is from farming and ranching activities and 16% (n=13) selected ‘no income from farming and/or ranching activities’.

- Landowner sample: median=3.00 (‘26 – 50%’) and mode=2.00 (‘1 – 25%’).
- Elk hunting sample: median=2.00 (‘1 – 25%’) and mode=2.00 (‘1 – 25%’).

Variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of estimated annual income within each selected EHU. Due Small sample sizes from missing data, 89% of landowner

and 90% elk hunter samples had less than the expected count. When 20% or more of contingency table cells have less than the expected count, certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated.

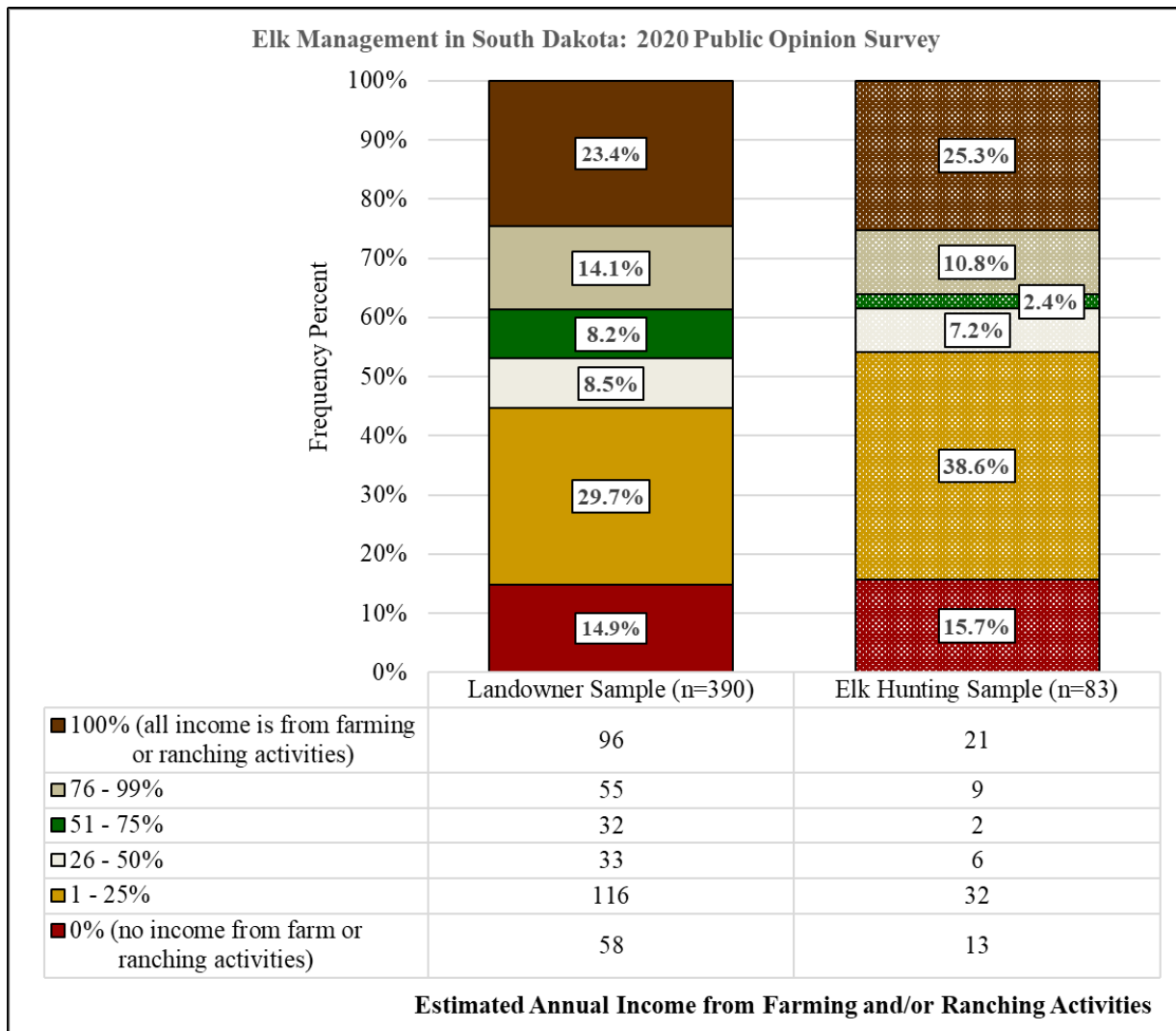


Figure 7. Frequency and percent of estimated annual income from farming and/or ranching activities, displayed by landowner and elk hunting samples.

Q7: We asked survey respondents to rate their perception of elk-caused damage on their land (Figure 7). Nearly all landowner sample respondents (92% [n=361]) and about 69% (n=57) of elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHUs indicate that elk are ‘minor’ to ‘not a problem at all’.

- Landowner sample: median=5.00 (‘not a problem at all’) and mode=5.00 (‘not a problem at all’).
- Elk hunting sample: median=4.00 (‘minor problem’) and mode=5.00 (‘not a problem at all’).

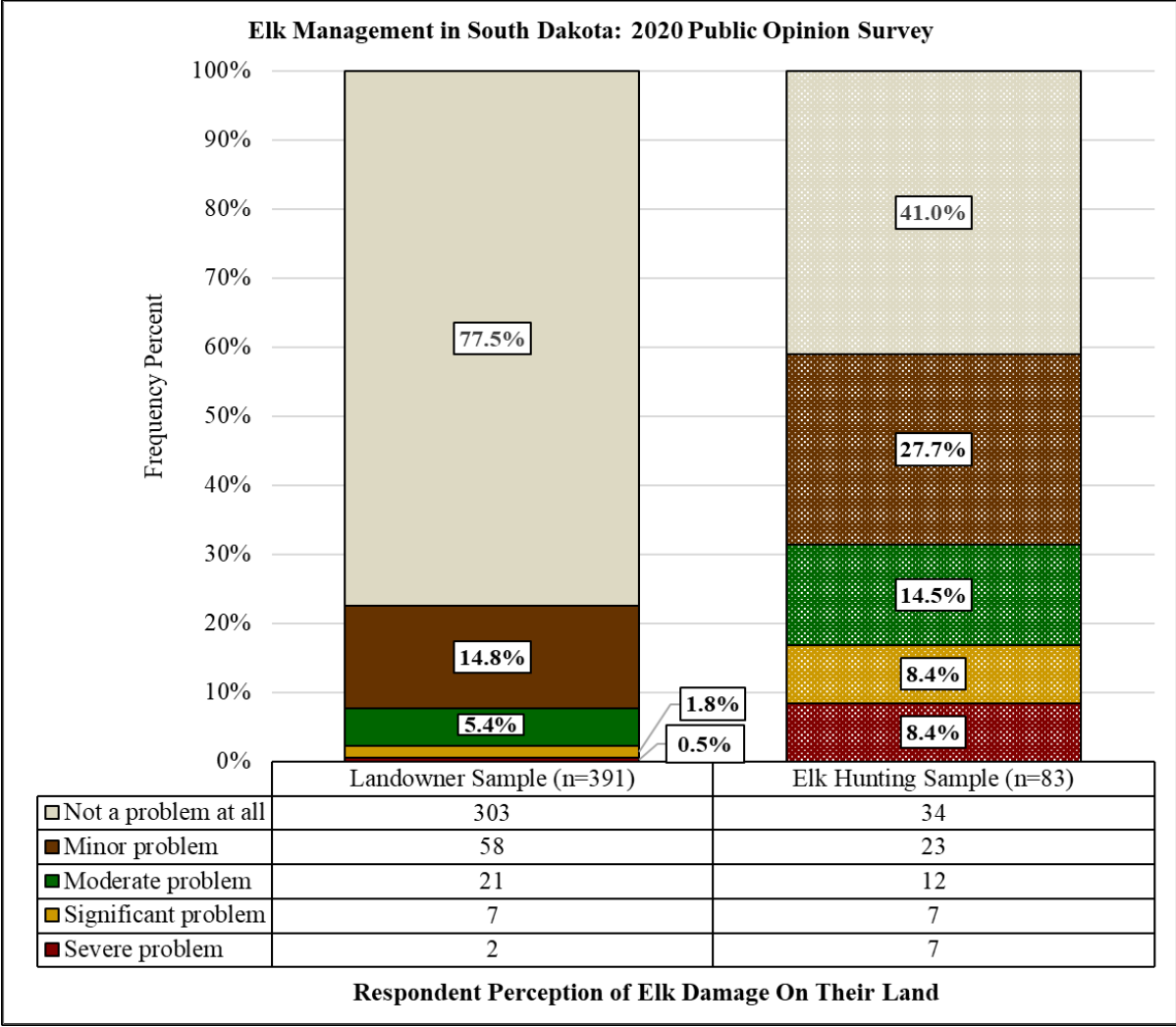


Figure 8. Frequency and percent of respondent perception of elk caused damage on their land, displayed by landowner sample and elk hunting samples.

It may be important for elk managers to know if there is a relationship between perception of elk-caused damage and percent of annual income from farming/ranching activities. We cross-tabulated categorical variables ‘percent income from farming and/or ranching activities’ by ‘perceived degree of elk damage. Accordingly, variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of perceived elk-caused damage within each selected EHU. Due Small sample sizes from missing data, 83% of landowner and 99% elk hunter samples had less than the expected count. When 20% or more of contingency table cells have less than the expected count, certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated. However, fine-scale descriptive data is informative for elk managers. For example, nearly three-quarters (74% [n=70]) of those landowner sample respondents who estimate 100% of their income is from farming and/or ranching activities (n=95) and 70% (n=38) who estimate 76 – 99% of their income is from farming and/or ranching activities, indicate elk are ‘not a problem at all’. Of elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHUs, 29% (n=6) with 100% of their annual income is from farm and/or ranching activities indicate that elk damage is ‘not a problem at al’. Also from this sample, of those who

estimate 76 – 99% of their income is from farming and/or ranching activities, about 44% (n=4) indicate elk are ‘minor to no problem at all, while another 44% (n=4) also indicate elk-caused damage is a ‘significant to severe problem’.

Q8 and 8a: 77% (n=298/388) of the landowner sample do not currently allow elk hunting on their land; of these respondents, 46% (n=135) indicate they would not allow hunting in the future, 20% (n=59) would allow elk hunting in the future, and 35% (n=102) selected ‘maybe, with financial compensation’. 40% (n=33/83) of the elk hunting sample do not currently allow elk hunting on their land; of these respondents, 36% (n=12) would not allow hunting in the future, 39% (n=13) say they would allow elk hunting in the future, and 24% (n=8) selected ‘maybe, with financial compensation’.

Variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of whether elk hunting is currently allowed within each selected EHU. The landowner and elk hunting samples had 59% and 91%, respectively, of cells with less than the expected count. When $\geq 20\%$ of cells have less than the expected count certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated. However, fine-scale descriptive data may be informative for elk managers interested in EHU-level information. For example, 54% (n=2111) of landowner sample participants identify as owning land in the West River Area EHU and, of these, 88% (n=185) do not currently allow elk hunting on their land.

Q9 and 9a: 92% (n=362/395) of the landowner sample respondents said elk were not hunted on their land in 2019. For the 33 (6.2%) landowners on whose land elk were hunted in 2019, 24 (73%) provided access for ‘self and or an immediate family member’ and 16 (n=49%) provided ‘free access for at least one hunter’. One respondent from this sample provided some type of elk hunting-related service in 2019.

Elk hunting sample respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHUs were evenly split with 49% (n=41) indicating elk were not hunted on their land in 2019. The 51% (n=42) of elk hunting sample respondents on whose land elk were hunted in 2019, provided a range of hunting opportunities. Together, 85% (n=16) of elk hunting survey respondents who also own at least 40 acres in one or more EHUs provided elk hunting access to ‘self and or an immediate family member’ and 80% (n=29) provided ‘free access for at least one hunter’. The remaining responses include: 11% (n=4) charged an access fee to at least one elk hunter, 11% (n=4) charged at least one hunter for trip related services, and 14% (n=5) leased hunting rights to people other than immediate family members.

Variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of whether elk were hunted within each selected EHU. The landowner and elk hunting samples had 59% and 91%, respectively, of cells with less than the expected count. When $\geq 20\%$ of cells have less than the expected count certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated. However, fine-scale descriptive data may be informative for elk managers interested in EHU-level information. For example, for the landowner sample respondents selected EHU H3 EFG seven times (or 20% of responses) when responding ‘yes’ to hunting elk on their own land in 2019), followed by 11 ABCDEF (18% [n=6]). Whereas, the elk

hunting sample selected EHU H3 EFG nine times (or 20% of responses), followed by EHUs H2 E and H7 B, 12% (n=5) each).

Q10 and 10a: Only 3% (n=11/398) of the landowner sample responded 'yes' that elk had been harvested on their own land in the last 5 years; of which, 91% (n=10) were antlered bull elk and 9% (n=1) was a antlerless elk. Slightly higher proportions, 27% (n=23/84) were reported by elk hunting sample participants; of which, 48% (n=11) were antlered bull elk, 4% (n=1) was an antlerless elk, and 48% (n=11) were both antlered bull and antlerless elk.

Variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of whether elk were harvested on the respondent's land during the last 5 years within each selected EHU. The landowner and elk hunting samples had 59% and 91%, respectively, of cells with less than the expected count. When $\geq 20\%$ of cells have less than the expected count certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated. However, fine-scale descriptive data may be informative for elk managers interested in EHU-level information. For instance, 8 elk hunting sample respondents have harvested elk on their own land in the last 5 years, this represents one-third of all 'yes' responses. (n=23); of which, 38% (n=3) were antlered bull elk, 12% (n=1) was an antlerless elk, and 50% (n=4) were both antlered bull and antlerless elk.

Section 2: Opinions about managing elk populations in South Dakota

To manage elk, population objectives (to *increase, maintain, or decrease*) are set every two years when season recommendations are brought forward to GFP’s Commission for consideration. The current elk management plan (2015 – 2019) uses estimates of forage production, forage allocation on public land, elk distribution, and drought models to set winter elk population objectives for Black Hills and Custer State Park elk management units (Table 4).

Table 4. Current winter elk population objectives and 2020 winter elk population estimates for Black Hills and Custer State Park elk.

Management Unit	Current Winter Elk Population Objective	2020 Winter Elk Population Estimate
Black Hills Elk	6,000 - 8,000	6,500
Custer State Park Elk	700 - 900	500

Using the above information, survey participants were asked their opinions the current winter elk population objectives in the Black Hills and Custer State Park (Figures 8 and 10). For those who selected ‘yes’ to adjusting either Black Hills or Custer State Park elk winter populations objectives were asked to use a Likert-type rating scale (1=substantially decrease to 4=substantially increase) in a follow-up questions to indicate their opinions about the desired direction change (Figures 9 and 11). When considering the response data for questions 11 – 13 (below), recall that 34% (n=135) of landowner sample and 80% (n=68) of elk hunting sample responded affirmatively that s/he saw evidence of elk using their property in 2019 (Figure 3). Clearly, the groups have varying levels of interaction with and, therefore, knowledge about elk in South Dakota. Also, 58% (n=234) of the landowner sample respondents have not ever applied for a South Dakota elk license and 9% (n=36) are non-resident landowners and therefore are not eligible to apply for a SD elk hunting license. Together, findings suggest the topic ‘elk management in South Dakota’ and more specifically ‘adjusting winter elk population objectives’ is not salient to a large proportion of landowner sample respondents and a moderate proportion of the elk hunting respondents who also own land in an EHU.

Q11 and 11a: In response to a question asking whether GFP should change the current Black Hills elk winter population objective, 34% (n=407) of the elk hunting sample respondents selected ‘no’ compared to 10% (n=38) of the landowner sample. About 25% (n=297) of the elk hunting sample respondents selected ‘yes’ compared to 12% (n=49) of the landowner sample (Figure 8). It is important to note, a substantial proportion (78% [n=313]) of the landowner sample and 41% (n=549) of the elk hunting sample indicate they do not have enough information and/or knowledge about current winter elk population objectives to select ‘yes’ or ‘no’(Figure 8). Findings suggest there is a need to develop targeted outreach and education opportunities for landowners in EHUs, both those who hunt elk and those who do not.

- Landowner sample: median=3.00 (‘I don’t know (lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations)) and mode=3.00 (‘I don’t know (lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations)).
- Elk hunting sample: median=2.00 (‘no’) and mode=3.00 (‘I don’t know (lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations)).

About 12% (n=49) Of the landowner sample and 25% (n=297) of the elk hunting sample indicate the Black Hills elk winter population objective should be adjusted. As expected, a little more than half of the elk hunting sample (55% [n=163]) want to ‘slightly increase’ the Black Hills elk winter population objective and about one-third (32% [n=96]) prefer ‘substantially increase’. Responses from the landowner sample are more evenly distributed with about 33% (n=16) preferring ‘slightly increase’ and 25% (n=12) preferring to ‘substantially increase’ the current winter elk population objectives for Black Hills elk. Very few elk hunting sample respondents (15% [n=38]) desire to see elk population objectives decreased, but 42% (n=20) of the landowner sample selected slightly or substantially decrease (Figure 9). Findings underscore the ongoing and unresolved conflict between those who want more elk hunting opportunity and the private landowners in EHUs who may want less elk-caused damage.

- Landowner sample: median=3.00 (‘slightly increase’) and mode=3.00 (‘slightly increase’).
- Elk hunting sample: median=3.00 (‘slightly increase’) and mode=3.00 (‘slightly increase’).

Variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of whether GFP should change the current Black Hills elk winter population objective within each selected EHU. The landowner and elk hunting samples had 69% and 94%, respectively, of cells with less than the expected count. When $\geq 20\%$ of cells have less than the expected count certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated.

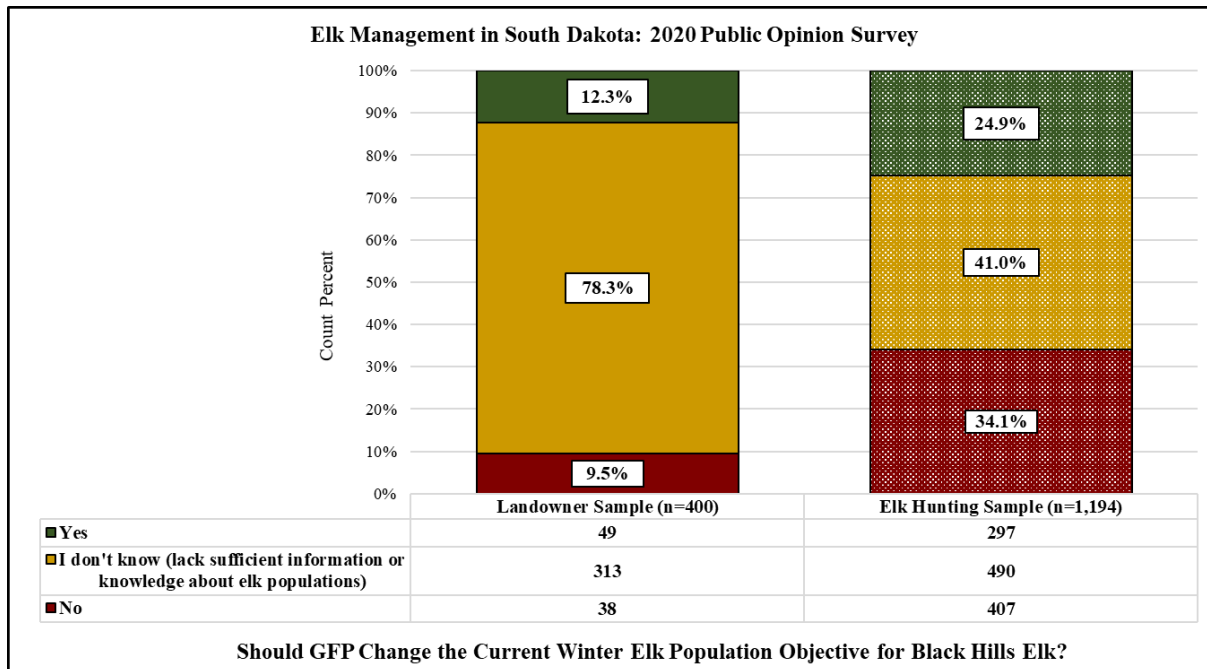


Figure 9. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample responses to whether GFP should change the current winter elk population objective for the Black Hills.

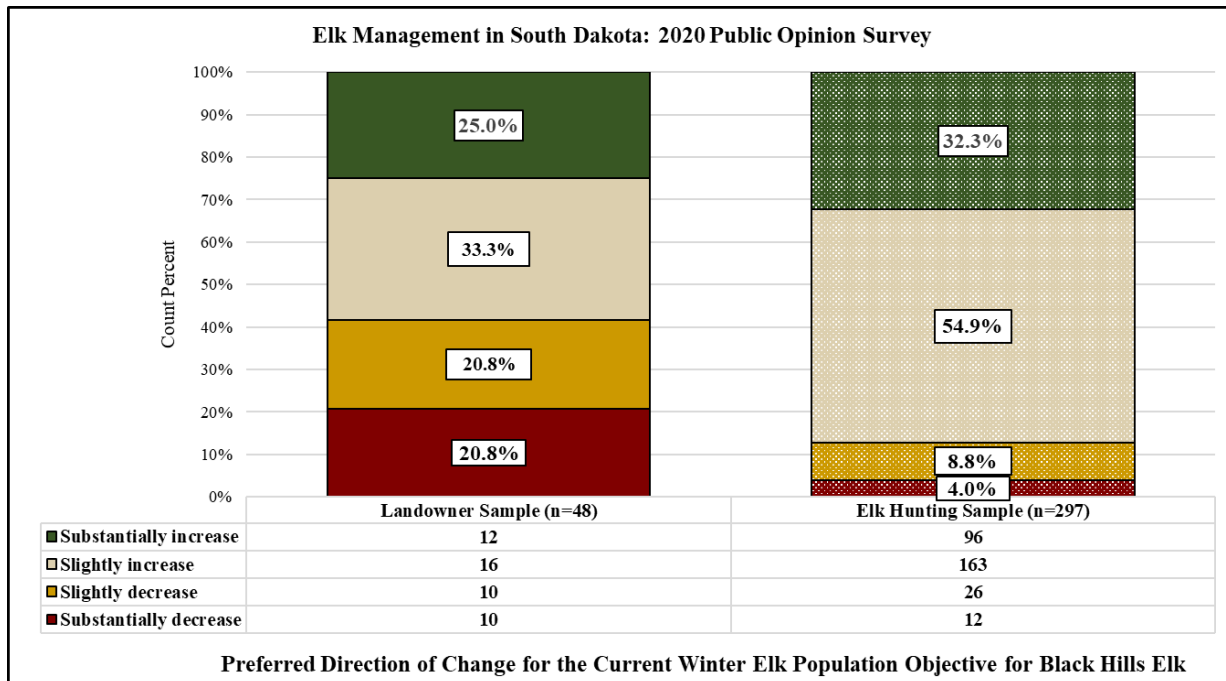


Figure 10. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondent preferred direction of change for the current winter elk population objective for the Black Hills.

Q12 and 12a: In response to a question asking whether GFP should change the current winter elk population objective for Custer State Park, 34% (n=409) of the elk hunting sample respondents selected ‘no’ compared to 10% (n=25) of the landowner sample (Figure 10). About, 23% (n=271) of the elk hunting sample respondents selected ‘yes’ compared to 6% (n=40) of the landowner sample. It is important to note, a substantial proportion of the landowner sample (84% [n=337]) and 43% (n=514) of the elk hunting sample indicate they do not have enough information and/or knowledge about current winter elk population objectives to select ‘yes’ or ‘no’ (Figure 10). Findings suggest there is a need to develop targeted outreach and education opportunities for both those who hunt elk and those who do not.

- Landowner sample: median=3.00 (‘I don’t know (lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations)) and mode=3.00 (‘I don’t know (lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations)).
- Elk hunting sample: median=2.00 (‘no’) and mode=3.00 (‘I don’t know (lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations)).

About 6% (n=40) Of the landowner sample and 23% (n=271) of the elk hunting sample indicate the Custer State Park elk winter population objective should be adjusted. As expected, almost half of elk hunting sample (48% [n=131]) want to ‘slightly increase’ the Custer State elk winter population objective and a little more than one-third (37% [n=101]) prefer to see it ‘substantially increase’ (Figure 11). Similarly, half of the landowner sample (50% [n=19]) want to ‘slightly increase’ the Custer State elk winter population objective and about one-fifth (21% [n=8]) prefer to see it ‘substantially increase’. Generally, very few elk hunting sample respondents (14% [n=39]) but almost one-third (29% [n=11]) of the landowner sample desire to see Custer State Park winter elk population objectives decreased. Findings underscore the ongoing and

unresolved conflict between those who want more elk hunting opportunity and the private landowners in EHUs who may want less elk-caused damage.

- Landowner sample: median=3.00 (‘slightly increase’) and mode=3.00 (‘slightly increase’).
- Elk hunting sample: median=3.00 (‘slightly increase’) and mode=3.00 (‘slightly increase’).

Variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of whether GFP should change the current Custer State Park elk winter population objective within each selected EHU. The landowner and elk hunting samples had 69% and 96%, respectively, of cells with less than the expected count. When $\geq 20\%$ of cells have less than the expected count certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated.

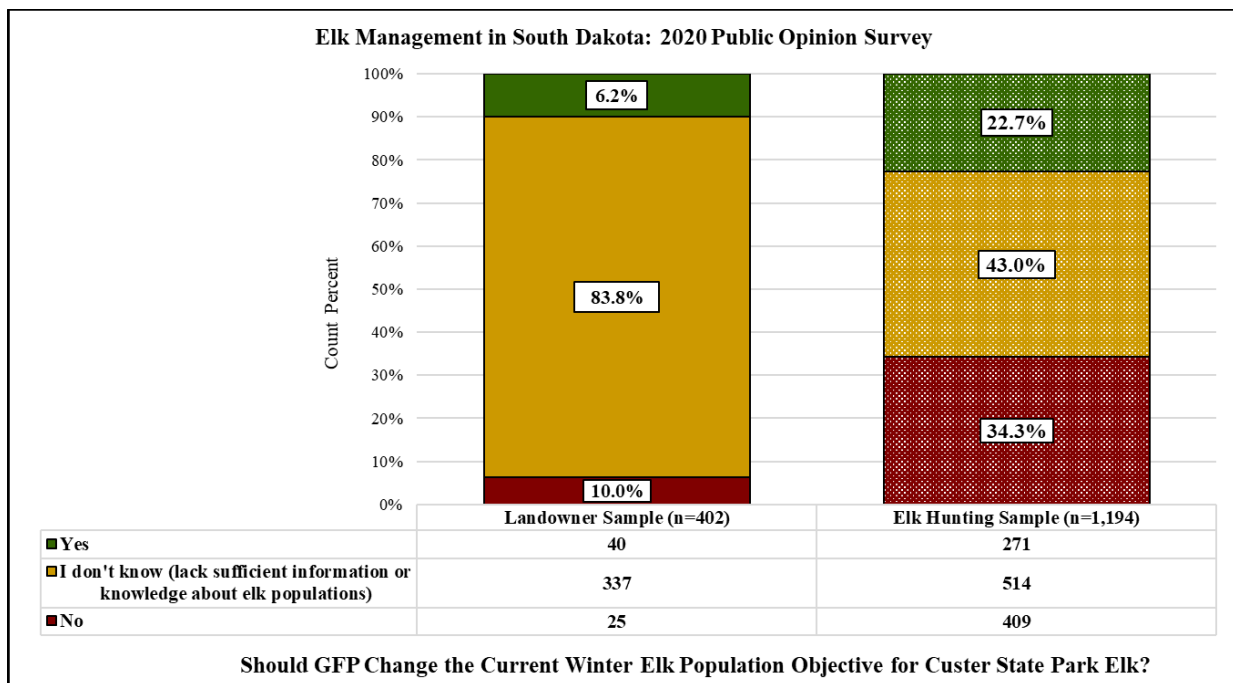


Figure 11. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample responses to whether GFP should change the current winter elk population objective for Custer State Park.

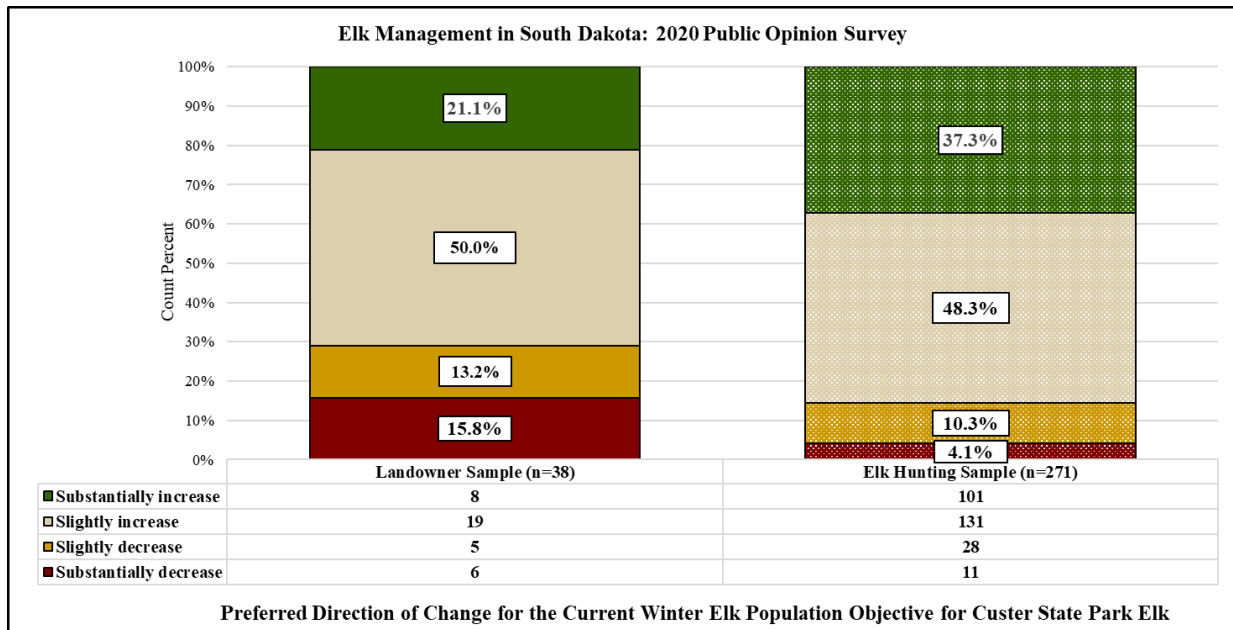


Figure 12. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondent preferred direction of change for the current winter elk population objective for Custer State Park.

When the first elk management plan was written in 2013, elk were primarily in and around the Black Hills area (roughly parts of 9 counties) and, overall, there were fewer private landowners back then. Thinking about how to effectively manage elk and developing management goals and objectives that strike a balance between biological/ecological needs of elk and elk habitat with social needs/expectations (to the extent possible). Since then, elk have thrived and some are moving out of the hills range onto parts of the prairie. In response, in 2020 GFP increased the number of elk management units and established the West River Area (WRA) prairie EHU. GFP has not set elk population objectives (to *increase, maintain, or decrease*) and due to budget and logistical challenges, GFP does not conduct biological surveys outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District. As such, no winter elk population estimates are currently available for the Prairie EHUs.

Q 13: To inform the updating of the elk management plan for the next 10 years, we asked survey participants whether the agency should actively manage for self-sustaining and huntable elk populations across the newly established West River Area EHU.

- Landowner sample: median=2.00 ('no') and mode=3.00 ('I don't know (lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations)).
- Elk hunting sample: median=1.00 ('yes') and mode=1.00 ('yes').

As expected, 61% (n=731) of the elk hunting sample and about one-third (35% (n=25) of the landowner sample selected 'yes' (Figure 10). About half of the landowner sample (48% (n=196), and a little less than one-third of the elk hunting sample (29% [n=348]) indicate they do not have enough information and/or knowledge about current winter elk population objectives to select 'yes' or 'no' (Figure 13). Findings suggest there is a need to develop targeted outreach and education opportunities in the West River Area EHU, for both those that hunt elk and those that do not.

Variables were cross-tabulated to explore the proportional distribution of whether GFP should actively manage for self-sustaining and huntable elk populations across the WRA within each selected EHU. The landowner and elk hunting samples had 65% and 94%, respectively, of cells with less than the expected count. When $\geq 20\%$ of cells have less than the expected count certain test statistics (e.g., chi-square analysis of association, effect size) cannot be accurately calculated.

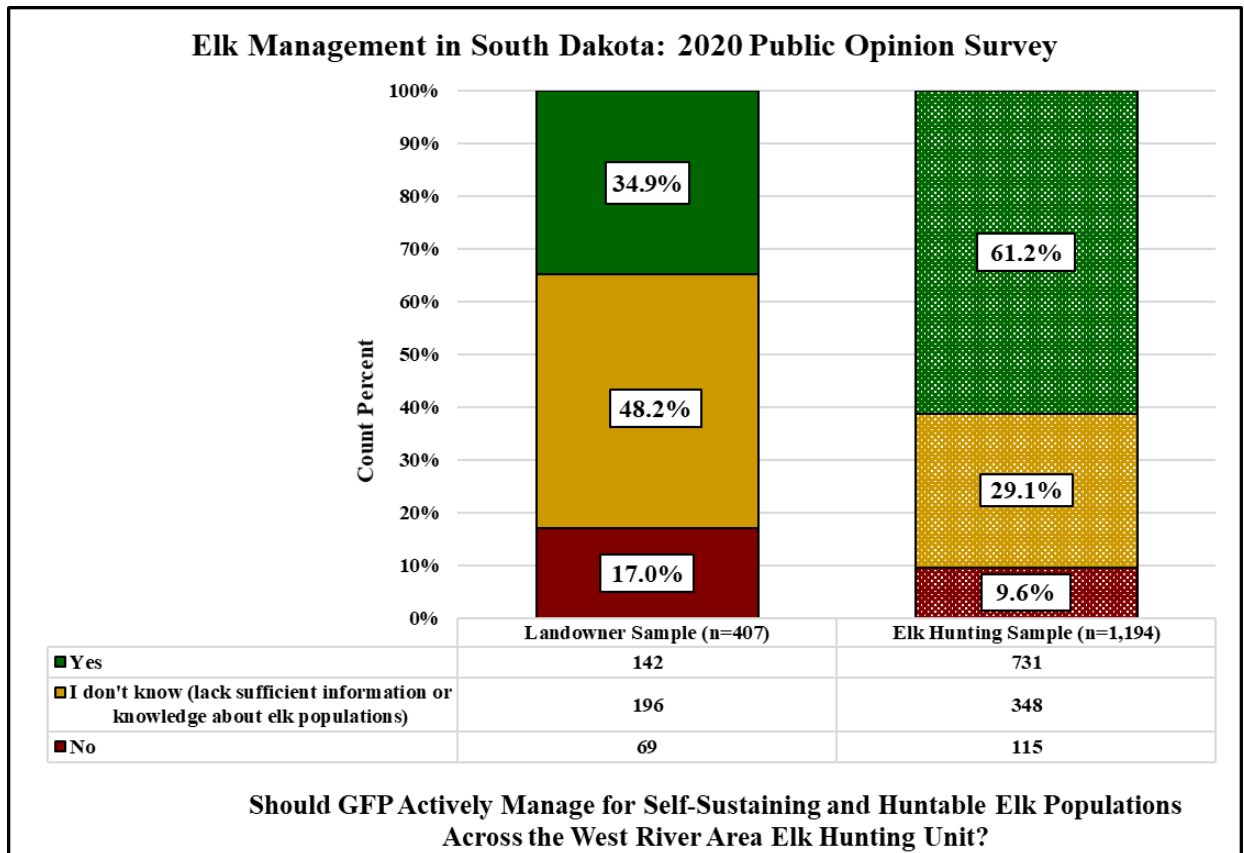


Figure 13. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondent opinions about whether GFP should actively manage for a self-sustaining and huntable elk population across the West River Area elk hunting unit.

Section 3: Attitudes and opinions about elk tolerance incentives for landowners

Q 14. GFP recognizes a significant proportion of elk range includes privately owned land. Currently, up to half of available annual elk licenses are set aside for qualifying *landowner/operator applicants* (to be eligible, must own a minimum of 240 acres in the elk management unit with at least 500 days of documented annual elk use). If not enough landowners/operators apply for available licenses, then the remaining are added back to the general elk license drawing. Based on this, we asked respondents to rate the current proportion of elk licenses available to landowner/operator applicants (Figure 13).

- Landowner sample: median=3.00 ('about right') and mode=3.00 ('about right').
- Elk hunting sample: median=4.00 ('too many') and mode=3.00 ('about right').

About 61% (n=250) of the landowner sample and 38% (n=454) of the elk hunting sample think the current proportion of available landowner-operator elk hunting licenses is 'about right'. A little over half of the elk hunting sample (56% [n=664]) believe the number of available landowner-operator elk hunting licenses is 'too many' or 'far too many' and almost one-third of the landowner sample (32% [n=32]) responded similarly. Lastly, 27% (n=105) of the landowner sample and only 6% (n=93) of the elk hunting sample indicate the number of available landowner-operator elk hunting licenses is 'too few' or 'far too few'. Findings underscore the ongoing and unresolved perception issue that elk license allocation favors private landowners over hunting enthusiasts.

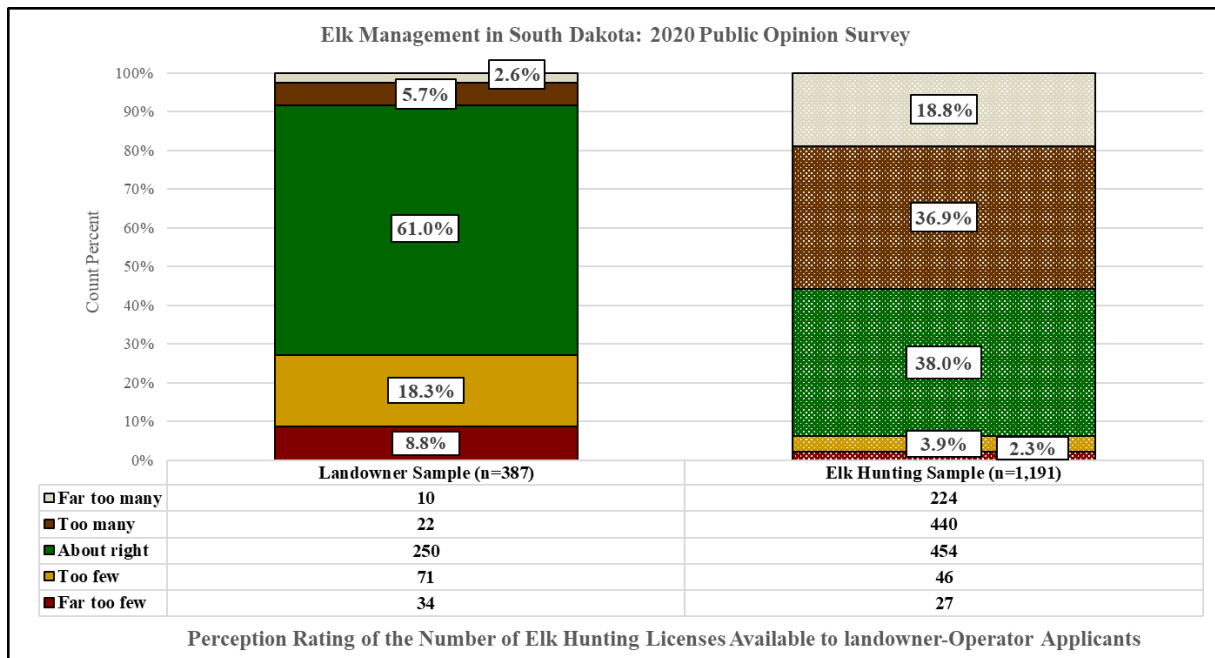


Figure 14. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondent ratings of the current proportion of elk licenses available to landowner-operator applicants.

Q 15. To assess preferences for incentives designed to increase landowner tolerance for elk, survey participants were asked to rank their top three choices using a list consisting of six predefined options and three blanks to offer their own suggestion (see Appendix B for text responses and qualitative theme analysis). Responses varied considerably among the three samples and across the choices.

Landowner sample

1st Choice (n=369): responses are nearly evenly split between ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (32.0% [n=118]) and ‘increase regulated hunting opportunities only for landowners who own property in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage’ (28.2% [n=104]).

2nd Choice (n=339): responses are nearly evenly split between ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (23.6% [n=80]) and ‘increase regulated hunting opportunities only for landowners who own property in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage’ (20.6% [n=70]).

3rd Choice (n=337): nearly one-quarter of the landowner sample respondents (22.3% [n=75]) selected ‘increase regulated hunting opportunities for anyone in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage’ as the preferred 3rd choice. Followed by a nearly even split between ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (19% [n=64]) and ‘work with interested landowners to promote recreational non-hunting opportunities (e.g., elk viewing, shed hunting) that may generate additional income for landowners’ (18% [n=62]).

Other choices offered to increase landowner tolerance for elk: Open-ended text responses from the landowner sample (n=57) are broadly grouped by themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap. All text responses and qualitative analysis are listed in Appendix B.

Elk hunting sample

1st Choice (n=1032): half of the respondents chose ‘increase regulated hunting opportunities only for landowners who own property in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage’ (51% [n=530]), followed by ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (19% [n=191]).

2nd Choice (n=1021): almost one-third of elk hunting sample participants selected ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (28.2% [n=288]). The remaining five choices fall within a couple percentage points of each other (i.e., 12 – 16%).

3rd Choice (n=1019): about one-quarter of elk hunter sample respondents ranked ‘provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property)’ (27% [n=270]) as their third choice, followed by one-fifth preferring ‘create an annual public recognition of landowners who are excellent stewards of elk habitat’ (20% [n=203]).

Other choices offered to increase landowner tolerance for elk: Open-ended text responses from the elk hunting sample (n=92) are broadly grouped by themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap. All text responses and qualitative analysis are listed in Appendix B.

Q 16. Because growing elk populations may damage private property, we asked respondents if s/he/they would support the creation of a new ‘landowner own-land’ elk license for the purpose of assuring a landowner an elk hunting license in elk management units in which GFP determines the elk population objective is “slightly decrease” or “substantially decrease” (Figure 15). Just over half of the landowner sample (53% [n=206]) responded ‘yes’ and 42% (n=164) selected ‘I’m not sure, depends on eligibility requirements.’ The distribution of elk hunting sample respondents is fairly even among the choices: ‘yes’ (33% [n=391]), I’m not sure, depends on eligibility requirements’ (35% [n=421]) and ‘no’ (32% [n=379]).

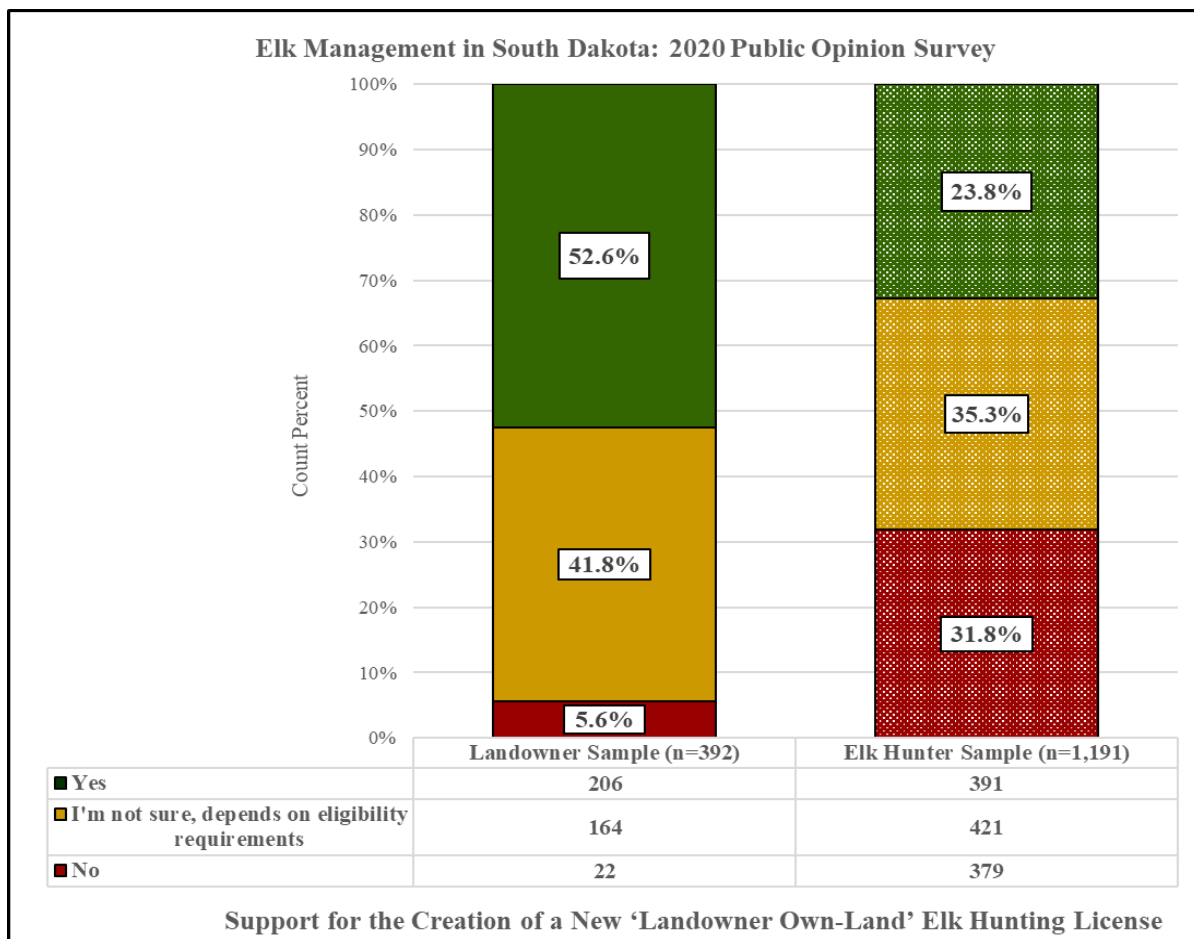


Figure 15. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondent support for the creation of a new ‘landowner own-land’ elk hunting license.

Qs 17 - 22. A ‘landowner own-land’ elk license has not been officially proposed to GFP’s Commission. We asked survey participants to choose their preference for each license eligibility criteria (Figures 15 to 20).

The landowner sample split evenly between the two choices (49% vs. 51%) and 82% (n=708) of the elk hunting sample selected ‘permit landowners to hunt any private land in the same elk hunting unit in which they also own/lease land’ as an eligibility criterion (Figure 15).

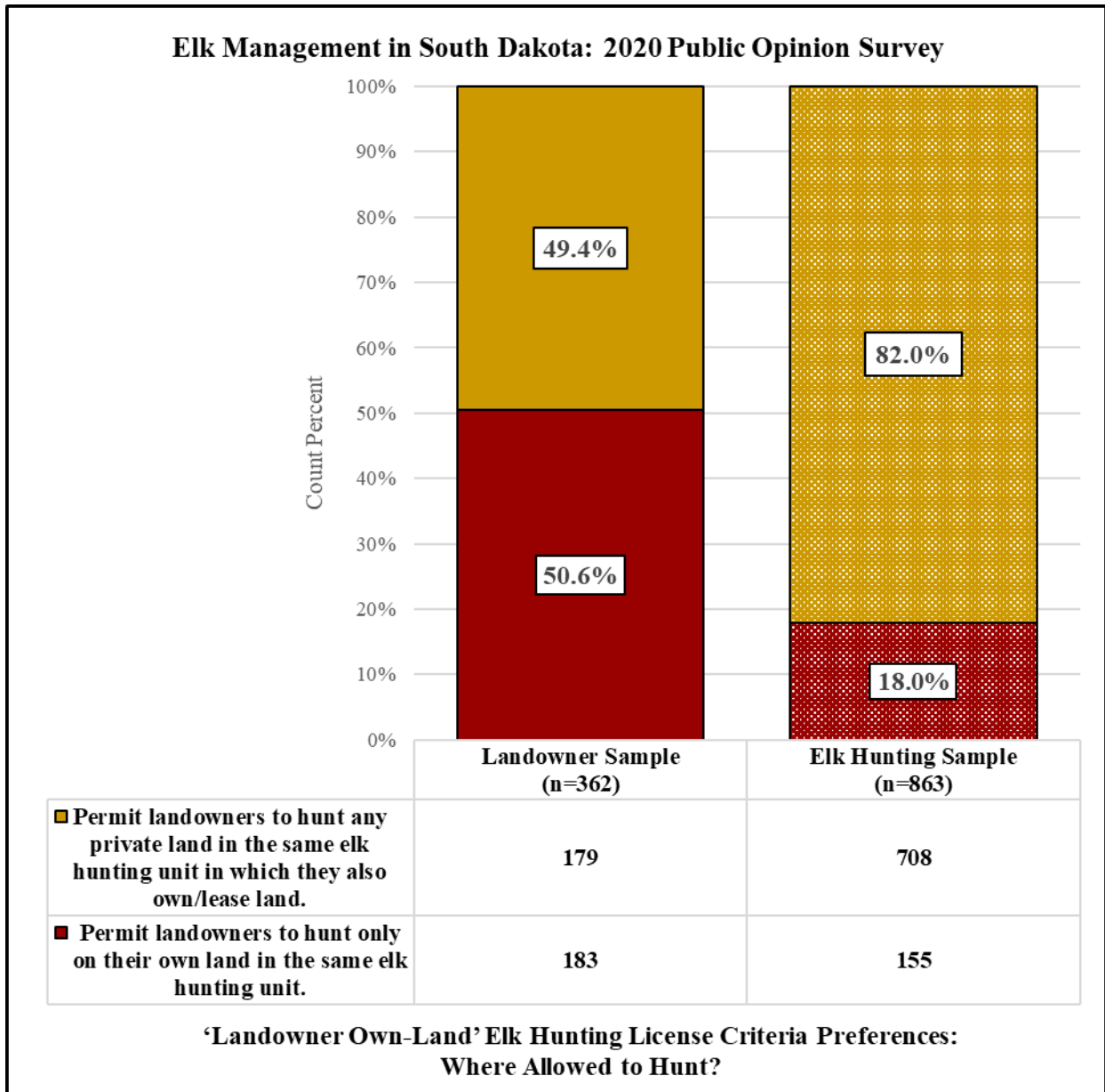


Figure 16. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondents for ‘Landowner Own-Land’ elk hunting license criteria preferences: where allowed to hunt?

57% of the landowner sample (n=196) and 70% (n=563) of the elk hunting prefer 'owns or leases land for any purpose' as an eligibility criterion (Figure 16).

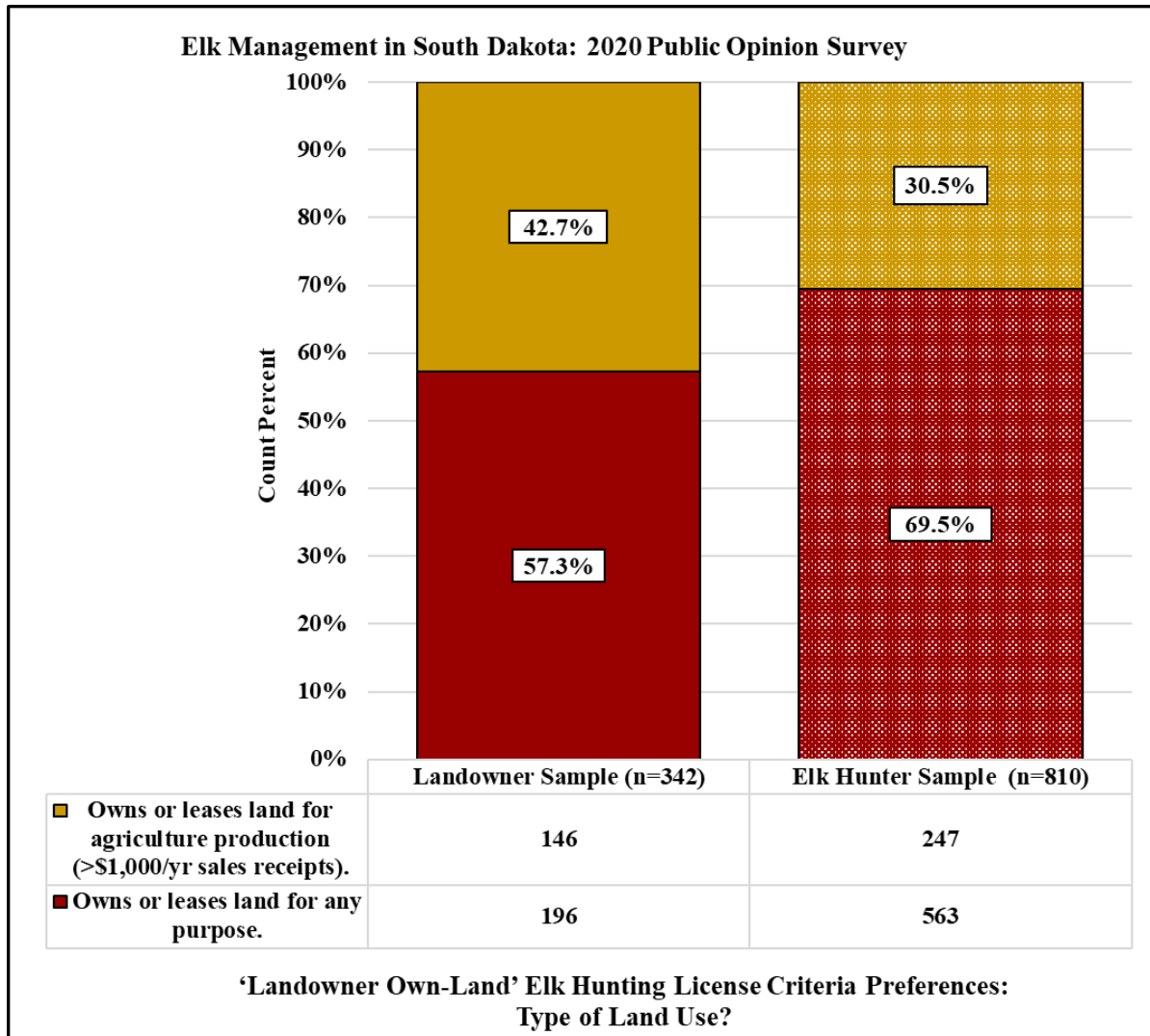


Figure 17. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondents for 'Landowner Own-Land' elk hunting license criteria preferences: type of land use?

59% of the landowner sample (n=200) and 80% (n=687) of the elk hunting prefer 240 acres or more' as an eligibility criterion (Figure 17).

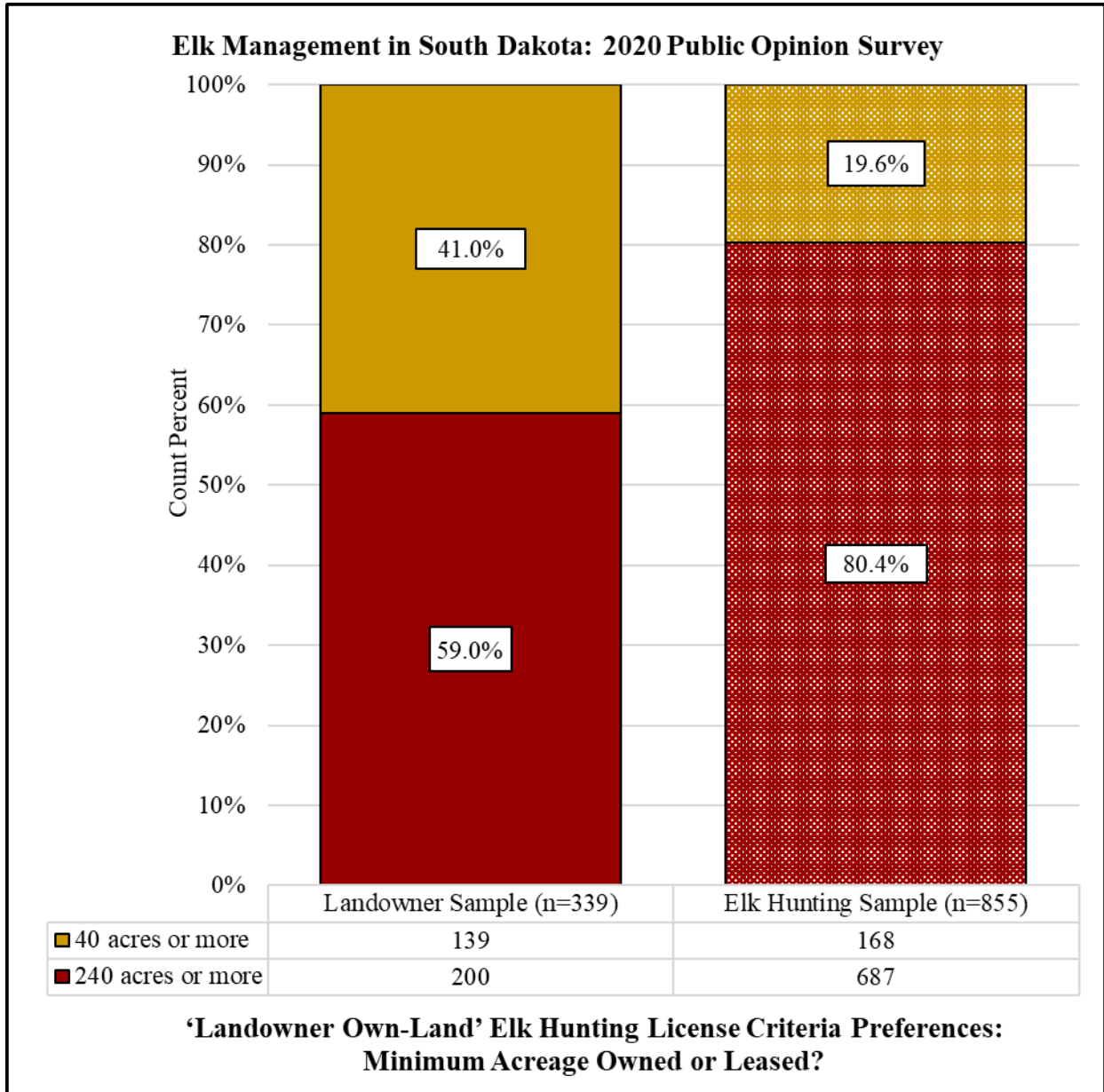


Figure 18. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondents for 'Landowner Own-Land' elk hunting license criteria preferences: minimum acreage owned or leased?

54% of the landowner sample (n=171) and 85% (n=751) of the elk hunting indicate that private landowners should have to demonstrate elk use of their land as an eligibility criterion (Figure 18).

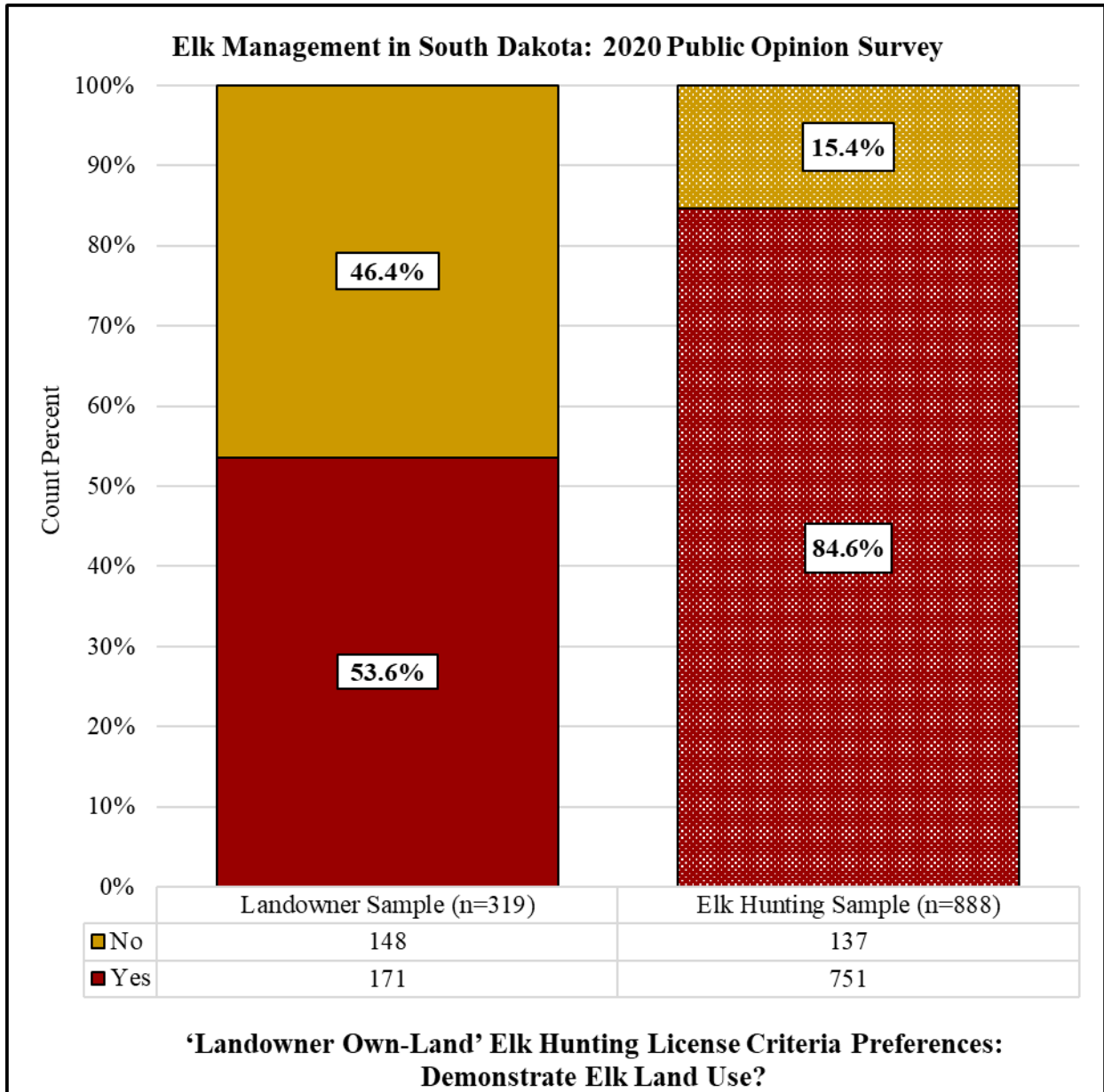


Figure 19. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondents for ‘Landowner Own-Land’ elk hunting license criteria preferences: demonstrate elk land use?

The landowner sample split evenly between the two choices (50% vs. 50%) and 70% (n=627) of the elk hunting sample selected ‘single antlerless elk license per ranch/farm unit’ as an eligibility criterion (Figure 19).

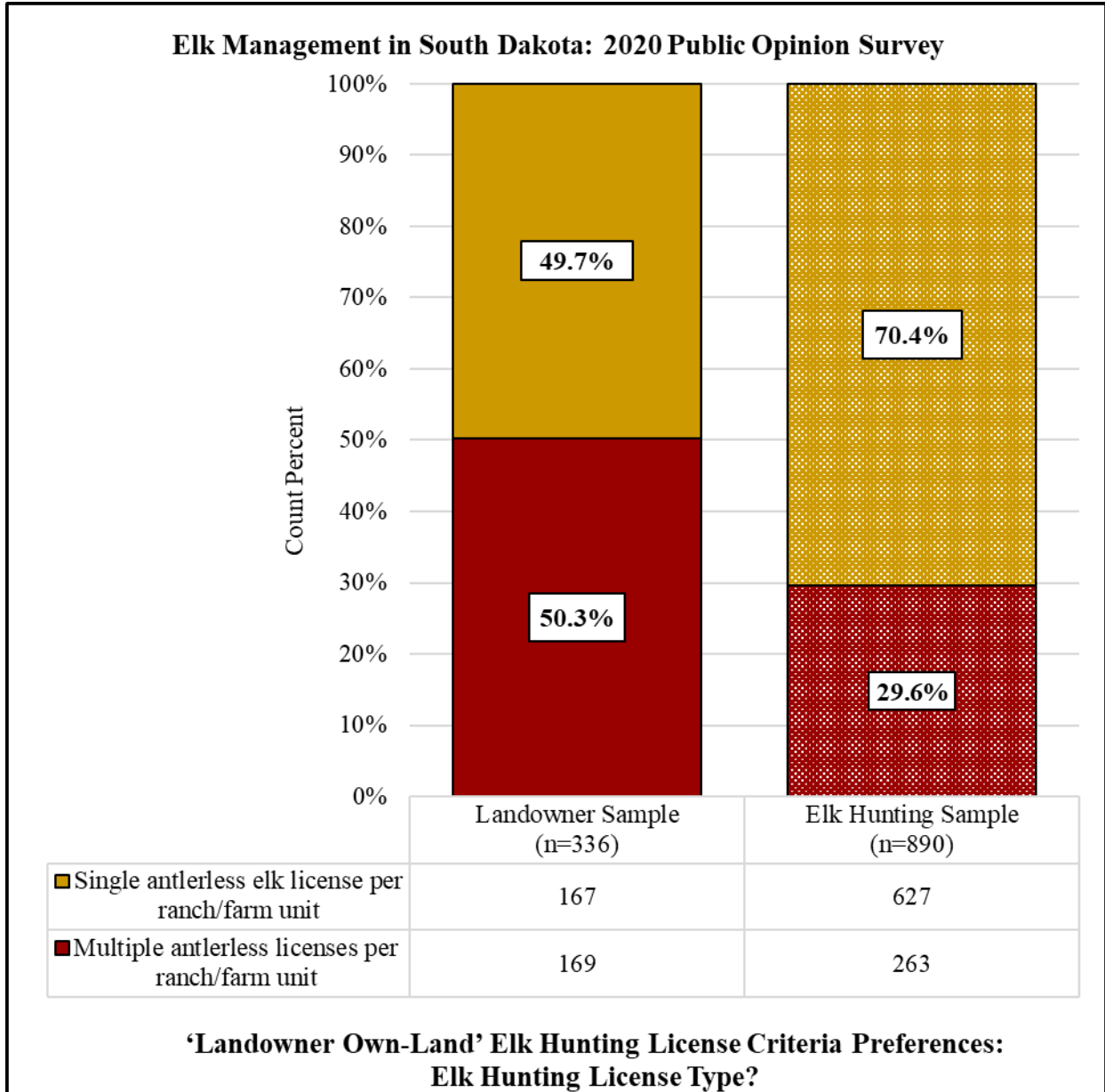


Figure 20. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondents for ‘Landowner Own-Land’ elk hunting license criteria preferences: elk hunting license type?

63% (n=214) of the landowner sample and 78% (n=681) of the elk hunting sample prefer that elk hunting season dates criterion are the ‘same as regular season dates for that elk hunting unit’ (Figure 20).

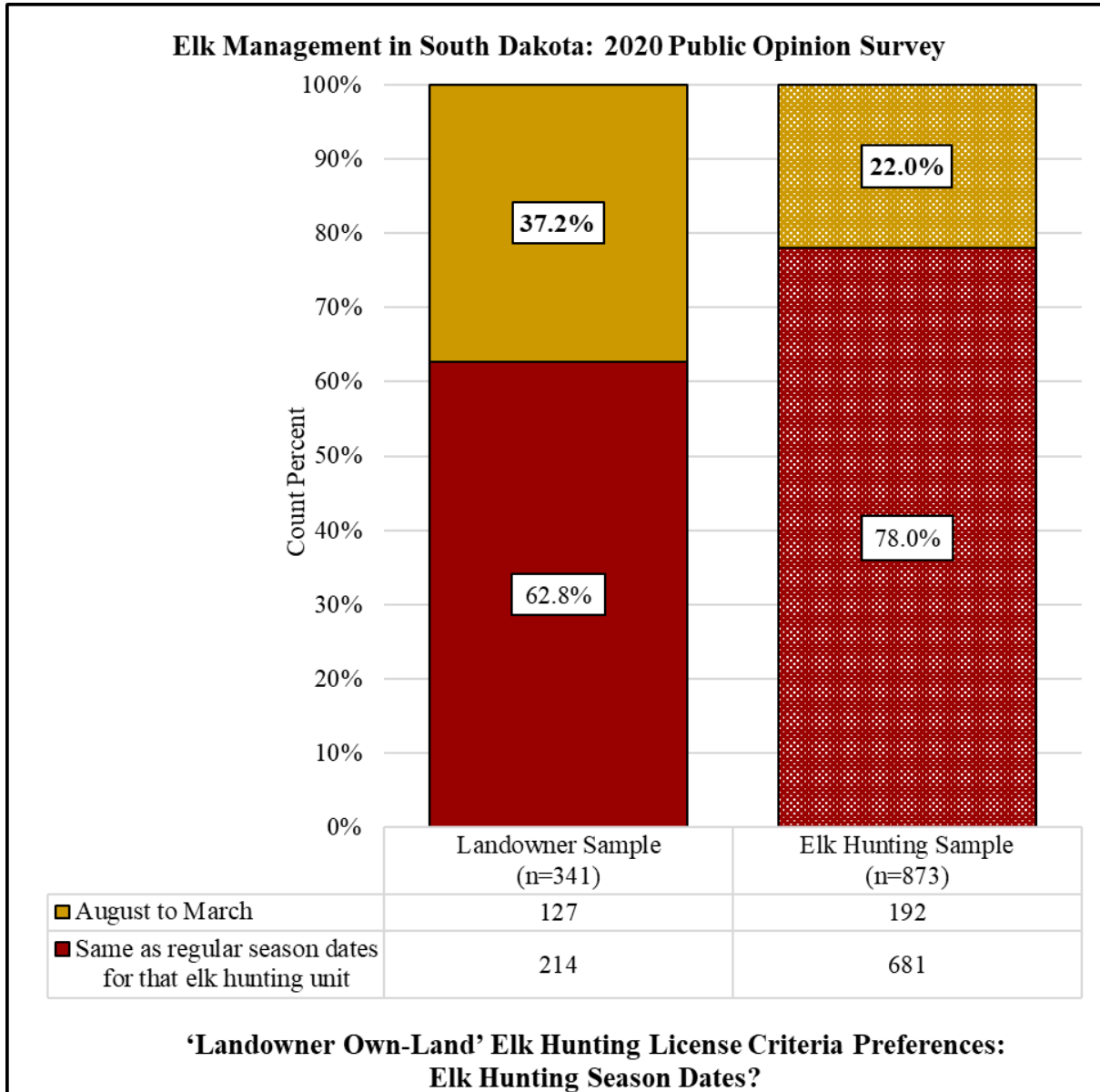


Figure 21. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample responses for ‘Landowner Own-Land’ elk hunting license criteria preferences: elk hunting season dates?

Section 4: Attitudes and opinions about elk hunting experiences and overall satisfaction

Q 23 and Q25. South Dakota residents hold different viewpoints about elk hunting and participate for a variety reasons and experiences. To meet elk hunter expectations, it is important for GFP to understand these differences. During their lifetime, one-third of the landowner sample (n=133) and 100% of the elk hunting sample (n=1,194) have applied for an elk hunting license in South Dakota (Figure 21). Of these survey participants, 70% (n=95) of the landowner sample and 94% (n=1,105) elk hunting sample plan to purchase a license in the future. 67% of the landowner sample responded ‘no’ or ‘not sure.’ A follow-up question asked respondents to describe what would increase the likelihood the person would apply for an elk hunting license in the future. Open-ended text responses from the landowner sample (n=25) are broadly grouped by themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap. All text responses and qualitative analysis are listed in Appendix B.

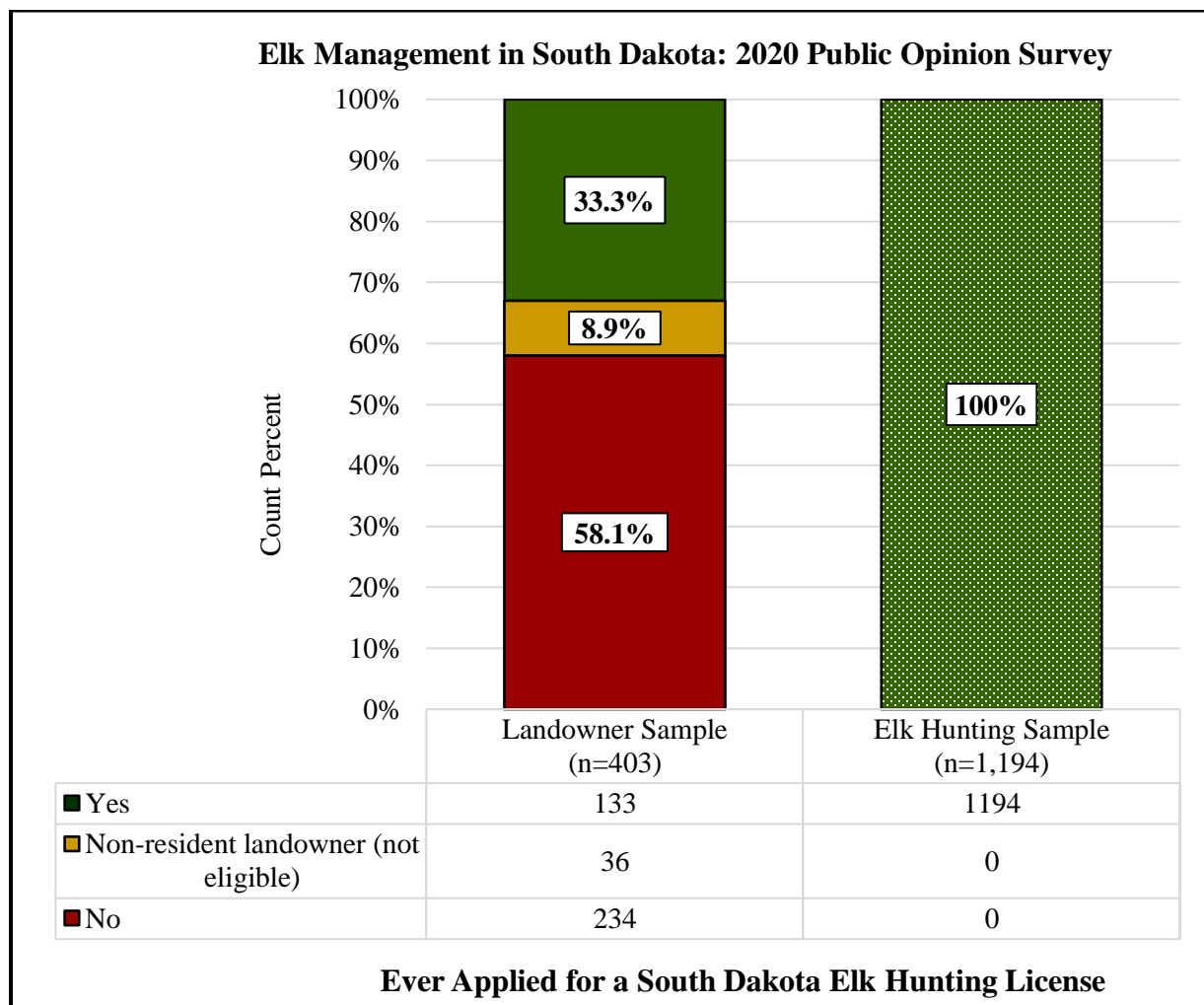


Figure 22. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample responses that have ever applied for a South Dakota elk hunting license.

Q 24. To assess preferences for structures elk hunting seasons (i.e., whether to increase, decrease, or maintain elk population numbers), survey participants were asked to rank their top three management options choices using a list consisting of six predefined options and three blanks to offer their own suggestion. No text responses were given in either sample.

Landowner sample

1st Choice (n=130): responses are nearly evenly split between ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support health elk’ (26.9% [n=35]) and ‘manage elk populations to decrease private property damage claims’ (25.4% [n=33]).

2nd Choice (n=127): almost one-third selected ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support healthy elk.’ (31.5% [n=40]), followed by ‘manage elk to not exceed the tolerance of landowners in or adjacent to elk hunting unit boundaries’ (24.4% [n=31]).

3rd Choice (n=118): responses are nearly evenly split between ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support health elk’ (22.9% [n=27]) and ‘manage elk to not exceed the tolerance of landowners in or adjacent to elk hunting unit boundaries’ (22.0% [n=27]).

Elk hunting sample

1st Choice (n=1,070): 42.3% (n=453) selected ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support health elk’ followed by 35.9% (n=384) who selected ‘manage elk populations to increase the number of recreational hunting opportunities’.

2nd Choice (n=1,059): 33.5% (n=355) who selected ‘manage elk populations to increase the number of recreational hunting opportunities’ followed by 26.3% (n=278) selected ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat’s ability to support health elk’.

3rd Choice (n=1,046): 23.4% (n=245) selected ‘manage elk populations to not exceed the tolerance of landowners in or adjacent to elk management unit boundaries’ followed by ‘manage elk populations to increase the number of trophy bull hunting opportunities’ (20.5% [n=214]).

Q 26 and Q 27. 4.3% (n=6) of the landowner sample respondents and 30.2% (n=355) of elk hunting sample drew an elk hunting license in 2019. A follow-up question asked survey participants to use a Likert-type rating scale (1=not satisfied at all to 4= extremely satisfied) to indicate their overall level of satisfaction with their 2019 elk hunting experience in South Dakota (Figure 22). The landowner sample respondents were ‘very to extremely satisfied’ and the elk hunting sample respondents were also ‘very satisfied’ (25% [n=87]) or ‘extremely satisfied’ (50% [n=176]).

- Landowner sample: median=4.00 (‘very satisfied’) and mode=4.00 (‘very satisfied’).
- Elk hunting sample: median=4.00 (‘very satisfied’) and mode=5.00 (‘extremely satisfied’).

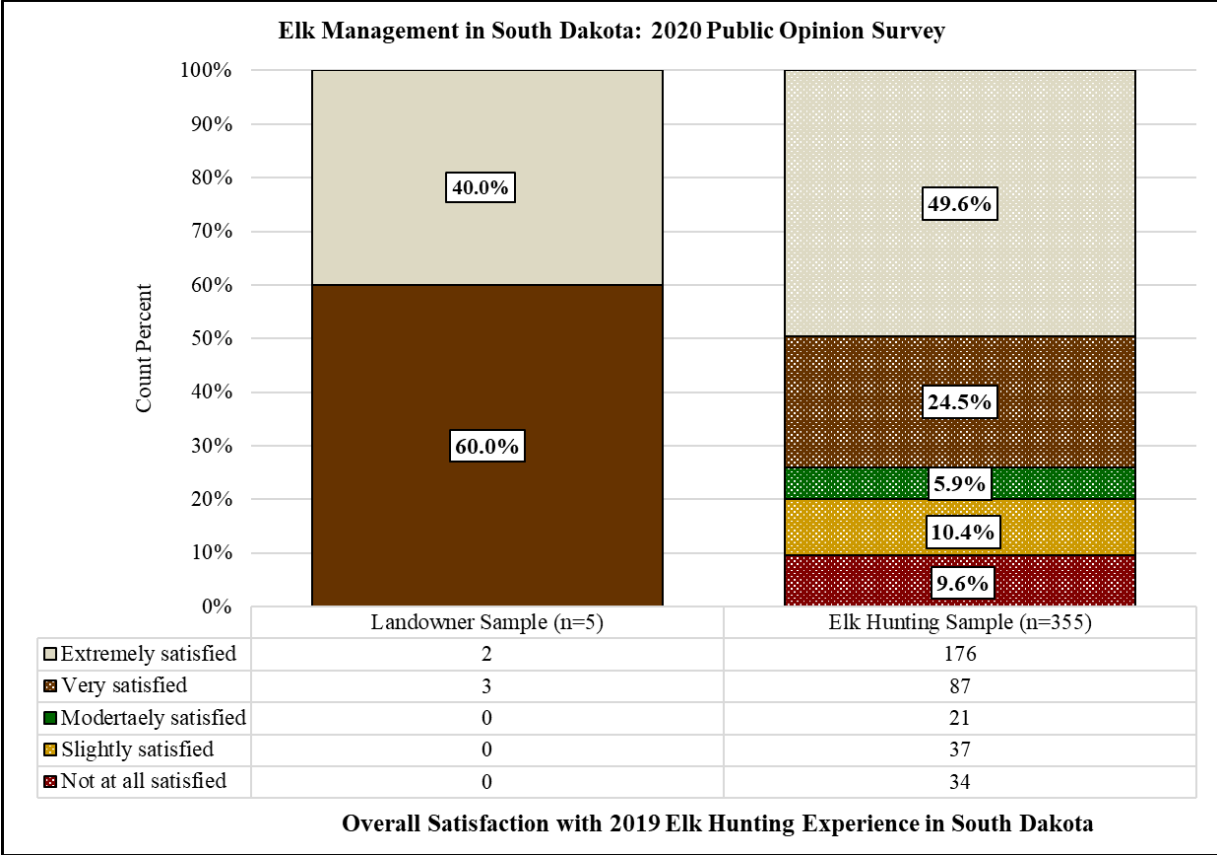


Figure 23. Count and percent of landowner sample and elk hunting sample ratings of overall satisfaction rating with 2019 elk hunting experiences in South Dakota.

Q 28. Of those survey participants who hunted elk in 2019, we asked on what type of land and about what percentage of time was spent hunting elk (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. Count and percent of elk hunting land type used in 2019 by the landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondents.

Elk Management in South Dakota: 2020 Public Opinion Survey		
Hunting Land Types*	Landowner Sample (n=6)	Elk Hunting Sample (n=351)
	Count (%)	Count (%)
Own land	6 (50.0%)	43 (7.9%)
Private land, not your own (no fees)	3 (25.0%)	88 (16.2%)
Private land, not your own (fees charged)	-	8 (1.5%)
Public land (state owned)	1 (8.3%)	128 (23.5%)
Public land (federally owned)	2 (16.7%)	235(43.2%)
Private walk-in land	-	42 (7.7%)

*multiple response question, count and percent may exceed 100%

Table 6. Range of percent time the landowner sample and elk hunting sample respondents spent hunting elk on each type of land.

Elk Management in South Dakota: 2020 Public Opinion Survey		
Hunting Land Types*	Landowner Sample (n=6)	Elk Hunting Sample (n=351)
	Range of percent time hunting on land	Range of percent time hunting on land
Own land	10 – 100%	10 – 100%
Private land, not your own (no fees)	10 – 50%	1 – 100%
Private land, not your own (fees charged)	-	50 – 100%
Public land (state owned)	100%	3 – 100%
Public land (federally owned)	40 – 80%	5 – 100%
Private walk-in land	-	5 – 100%

* multiple response question, count and percent may exceed 100%

Closing question comments

Many survey participants (landowner sample n=125, elk hunting sample n=440) provided additional comments. Responses did not have to be specific to any question asked on the survey and provide a qualitative description of respondents’ experiences and opinions regarding elk management in South Dakota. All text responses are listed in alphabetical order in Appendix C.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument (format adjusted)

ELK MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH DAKOTA 2020 Public Opinion Survey

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks (GFP) is responsible for conserving and managing elk populations and their habitats for current and future generations of residents, visitors, and sportswomen and men to enjoy. In 2013, GFP used a survey to gather broad public feedback to inform the first elk management plan (2015 - 2019). It is time to update and write the next elk management plan (2021 - 2030) and we want your input. On average, it should take 15 – 20 minutes to complete the enclosed survey.

Managing healthy elk populations across public and private land is complex and requires GFP to balance wildlife science with social considerations and expressed needs of important stakeholders, such as landowners and hunters, all of whom value and use elk differently. This survey builds on the 2013 elk management public opinion survey, so questions are designed to understand attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about:

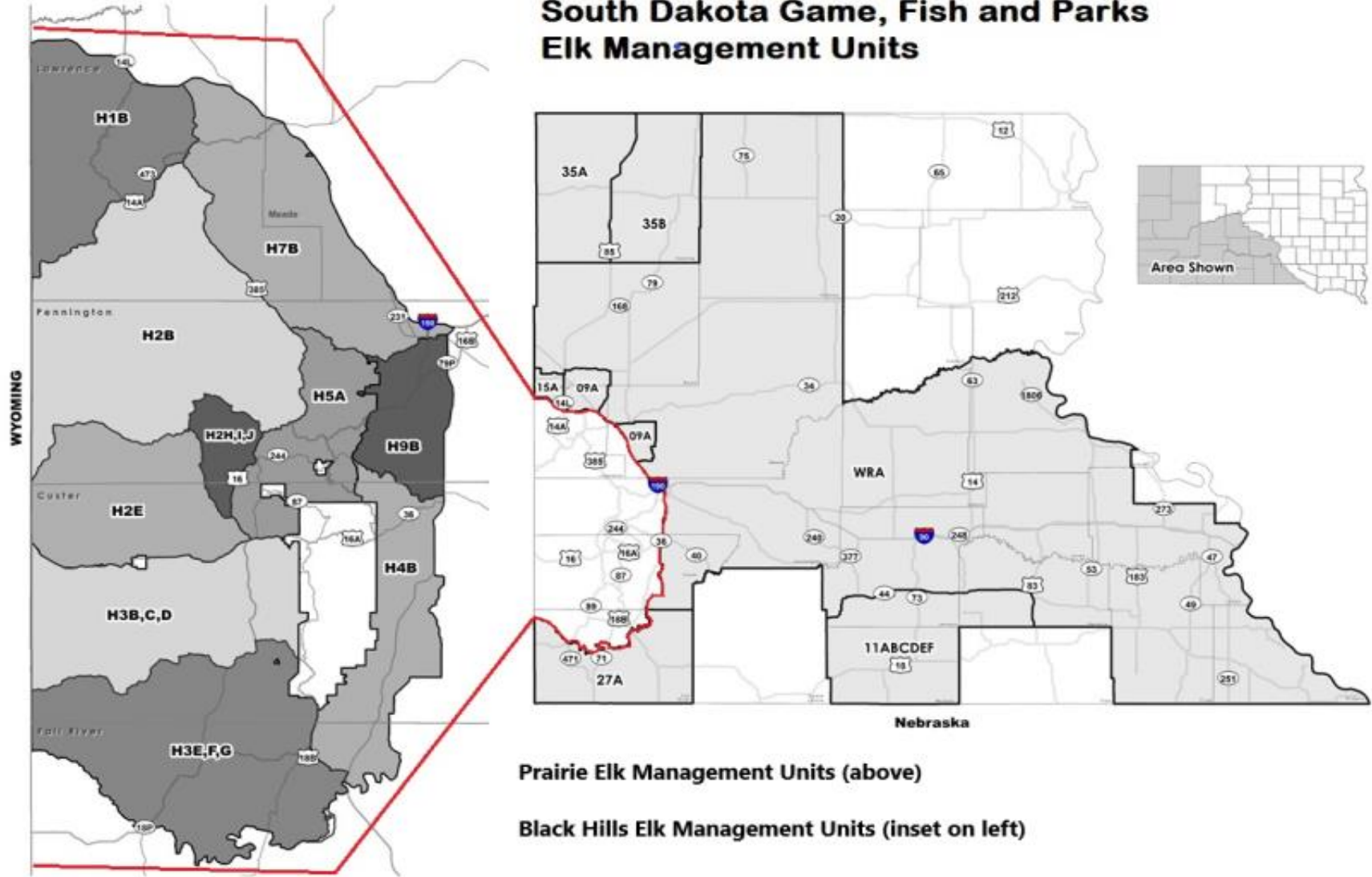
- elk conservation and management on private land
- current and future elk conservation and management objectives and strategies
- elk tolerance incentives for private landowners
- elk hunting experiences and overall satisfaction



Responding to the enclosed survey is *voluntary*; there is no risk associated with your participation. By completing and returning a survey, you are providing your implied consent to participate in this public involvement process and acknowledge data may be used in public documents and/or settings. Your responses will remain *confidential* and *never will be associated with your name, contact information or any identifiable characteristic*. The identification number on your survey is there so I can check your name off the mailing list once I receive your completed survey. Return the survey using the postage-paid envelope provided.

Questions? Contact Dr. Faren R. Wolter, Human Dimensions Specialist, Game, Fish & Parks, 605.773.4231 or faren.wolter@state.sd.us

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Elk Management Units



Prairie Elk Management Units (above)

Black Hills Elk Management Units (inset on left)

Section 1: Attitudes and opinions about elk conservation and management on private land: A healthy, self-sustaining elk population is dependent on having adequate habitat year-round, which includes privately owned lands. GFP values and works closely with landowners to balance the public's desired elk population numbers with land use and agriculture production needs.

1. In which of the following elk management units (see map above) do you own or lease at least 40 acres of land? (select all that apply) Using the blank, about how many acres do you own in each management unit?

I do not own or lease at least 40 acres of land in any designated elk management unit listed below.

<i>Skip to Q11 on pg. 4</i>

Black Hills elk management units

H1 B _____ H2 E _____ H3 BCD _____ H4 B _____ H7 B _____

H2 B _____ H2 HIJ _____ H3 EFG _____ H5 A _____ H9 B _____

Prairie elk management units

09 A _____ 15 A _____ 35 A _____ WRA _____

11 ABCDEF _____ 27 A _____ 35 B _____

2. If you selected more than one elk management unit in Q1, please select **ONLY ONE UNIT for responding to the remaining questions in this section (Q3 - Q10). The elk management unit I select is: _____.**

3. In 2019 (January - December), did you see elk or find evidence (e.g., tracks) that at least one elk used or travelled through your property (in the elk management unit selected in Q2)?

Yes No

4. Below are four scenarios that describe various levels of interactions between elk and people. Select one scenario that best represents the current situation on or near your property (in management unit selected in Q2).

<input type="checkbox"/> Situation 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No elk exist 	<input type="checkbox"/> Situation 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elk are <i>almost never</i> seen Landowners (including you) <i>rarely</i> have damage to fences, crops, gardens, or trees from elk A <i>low number</i> of elk are present for regulated hunting, wildlife viewing, or other elk-related recreational activity
<input type="checkbox"/> Situation 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elk are <i>sometimes</i> seen Landowners (including you) have <i>occasional</i> damage to fences, crops, gardens, or trees from elk A <i>moderate number</i> of elk are present for regulated hunting, wildlife viewing, or other elk-related recreational activity 	<input type="checkbox"/> Situation 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elk are <i>regularly</i> seen Landowners (including you) have <i>frequent</i> damage to fences, crops, gardens, or trees from elk A <i>high number</i> of elk are present for regulated hunting, wildlife viewing, or other elk-related recreational activity

5. For the next 10 years, which of the above scenarios best represents your preferred future situation on or near your property (in management unit selected in Q2)?

- Situation 1
 Situation 2
 Situation 3
 Situation 4

6. About what percentage of your total income is from farming and/or ranching activities (do not include income from leasing land)?

- 0% (no income from farm or ranching activities)
 1 - 25%
 26 - 50%
 51 - 75%
 76 - 99%
 100% (all income is from farming or ranching activities)

7. In 2019, how would you describe the severity of the elk damage on your land?

- Severe problem Significant problem Moderate problem Minor problem Not a problem at all

8. Do you allow elk hunting on your land?

- Yes No

8a. If no, would you be willing to allow elk hunting on your property in the future?

- Yes No Maybe, with financial compensation

9. In 2019 (January - December), were elk hunted on your land?

- Yes No



9a. If yes, what type(s) of hunting opportunities did you provide in 2019? (select all that apply)

- Self or immediate family member(s) only
 I provided free access to at least one hunter
 I charged an access fee to at least one hunter
 I charged at least one hunter for trip related services (e.g., hunt guide, room, meals)
 I leased hunting rights to people other than immediate family

10. In the last 5 years, have you harvested an elk Yes No on your own land?

10a. If yes, what type(s) of elk have you harvested on your own land?

- Antlered bull elk Antlerless elk Both antlered bull and antlerless elk

Section 2: Opinions about managing elk populations in South Dakota: To manage elk, population objectives (to *increase, maintain, or decrease*) are set every two years when season recommendations are brought forward to GFP’s Commission for consideration. People have different opinions about current and future elk populations. It is important to understand those differences. Questions in this section ask for your opinion about current winter elk population objective directions.

Background: The current elk management plan (2015 – 2019) uses estimates of forage production, forage allocation on public land, elk distribution, and drought models to set winter elk population objectives for Black Hills and Custer State Park elk management units. The current population objectives and the 2020 winter elk population estimates are listed to the right. Due to budget and logistical challenges, GFP does not conduct biological surveys outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District. As such, no winter elk population estimates are currently available for the Prairie elk management units.

Management Unit	Current Winter Elk Population Objective	2020 Winter Elk Population Estimate
Black Hills Elk	6,000 - 8,000	6,500
Custer State Park Elk	700 - 900	500

11. For the next elk management plan, should GFP change the current winter elk population objective for Black Hills elk (6,000 - 8,000)? *If you lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations in this region, select ‘I don’t know’.*

Yes No I don’t know

11a. If yes, how should the winter elk population objective number be adjusted?

Substantially Decreased Slightly Decreased Slightly Increased Substantially Increased

12. For the next elk management plan, should GFP change the current winter elk population objective for Custer State Park elk (700 - 900)? *If you lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations in this region, select ‘I don’t know’.*

Yes No I don’t know

12a. If yes, how should the winter elk population objective number be adjusted?

Substantially Decreased Slightly Decreased Slightly Increased Substantially Increased

13. In 2020 GFP established the West River Area (WRA, see map inside front cover), a new prairie elk management unit for which GFP has not set elk population objectives (to *increase, maintain, or decrease*). Should GFP actively manage for self-sustaining and huntable elk populations across the WRA? *If you lack sufficient information or knowledge about elk populations in this region, select 'I don't know'.*

Yes No I don't know

Section 3: Attitudes and opinions about elk tolerance incentives for landowners: GFP recognizes that a significant proportion of elk range includes privately owned land. As such, GFP wants to know your attitudes and opinions about potential incentives to encourage landowner tolerance for elk using their property.

14. Currently, up to half of available annual elk licenses are set aside for qualifying *landowner/operator applicants* (minimum of 240 acres in the elk management unit with at least 500 days of documented annual elk use). If not enough landowners/operators apply for available licenses, then the remaining are added back to the general elk license drawing.

Based on the above information, how would you rate the current proportion of elk licenses available to landowner/operator applicants?

Far Too Few Too Few About Right Too Many Far Too Many

15. To increase landowner tolerance for elk, which of the below incentive options do you rank as your top 3 choices? Using the blank space next to the incentive option, rank 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. To offer and rank additional incentive(s) use ‘other suggestion(s)’.

_____	Increase regulated hunting opportunities for <u>anyone</u> in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage.
_____	Increase regulated hunting opportunities <u>only for landowners</u> who own property in the unit(s) with verified elk property damage.
_____	Work with intrested landowners to promote recreational non-hunting opportunities (e.g., elk viewing, shed hunting) that may generate additional income for landowners.
_____	Create an annual public recognition of landowners who are excellent stewards of elk habitat.
_____	Raise elk license price specifically to help offset costs associated with remedies for elk caused property damage.
_____	Provide technical and financial programs and services to those landowners who experience verified elk property damage (e.g., crops, fences, personal property).
_____	Other suggestion(s)?
_____	Other suggestion(s)?
_____	Other suggestion(s)?

16. Because growing elk populations may damage private property, would you support the creation of a new ‘landowner own-land’ elk license for the purpose of assuring a landowner an elk hunting license in elk management units in which GFP determines the elk population objective is “*slightly decrease*” or “*substantially decrease*”?

- Yes
 No
 I’m not sure, depends on license eligibility requirements

A 'landowner own-land' elk license has not been officially proposed to GFP's Commission and the agency wants your input on potential license eligibility criteria. In the below table, different requirements are listed in the middle column, please select one choice only from either Choice A or Choice B columns that best represents your preference for each license eligibility criteria.

Choice A	Landowner Own-Land Elk License Eligibility Criteria	Choice B
<input type="checkbox"/> 17a. When GFP determines the elk population objective is " <i>slightly decrease</i> " or " <i>substantially decrease</i> " for an elk management unit, this license would permit landowners to hunt <u>any private land in the same elk hunting unit</u> in which they also own/lease land.	Where allowed to hunt?	<input type="checkbox"/> 17b. When GFP determines the elk population objective is " <i>slightly decrease</i> " or " <i>substantially decrease</i> " for an elk management unit, this license would permit landowners to hunt <u>only on their own land</u> in the same elk hunting unit.
<input type="checkbox"/> 18a. Owns or leases land for <u>agriculture production</u> (>\$1,000/yr sales receipts).	Type of land use?	<input type="checkbox"/> 18b. Owns or leases land for <u>any</u> purpose.
<input type="checkbox"/> 19a. 240 acres or more.	Minimum acreage owned or leased?	<input type="checkbox"/> 19b. 40 acres or more.
<input type="checkbox"/> 20a. Yes.	Demonstrate elk land use?	<input type="checkbox"/> 20b. No.
<input type="checkbox"/> 21a. Multiple antlerless licenses per ranch/farm unit	License type?	<input type="checkbox"/> 21b. Single antlerless elk licenses per ranch/farm unit
<input type="checkbox"/> 22a. Same as regular season dates for that elk management unit.	Elk hunting season dates?	<input type="checkbox"/> 22b. August to March.

Section 4: Attitudes and opinions about elk hunting experiences and overall satisfaction: South Dakota residents hold different viewpoints about elk hunting and participate for a variety reasons and experiences. To meet elk hunter expectations, it is important for GFP to understand these differences.

23. Have you ever applied for a South Dakota elk hunting license?

If you selected 'no' or 'not eligible' to Q23, skip to Q29 on pg. 9

- Yes
 No
 As a non-resident landowner in South Dakota I am not eligible to apply for an elk hunting license.

24. When GFP structures elk hunting seasons (i.e., whether to increase, decrease, or maintain elk population numbers), which of the below management options do you rank as your top 3 choices? Using the blank space next to the statement, rank 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. To offer and rank additional population management options(s) use 'other suggestion(s)'.

_____	Manage elk populations to increase the number trophy bull hunting opportunities.
_____	Manage elk populations to increase recreational viewing or listening opportunities (i.e., other than hunting).
_____	Manage elk populations to decrease private property damage claims (e.g., broken fence, crop loss).
_____	Manage elk populations to increase the number of recreational hunting opportunities.
_____	Manage elk populations to not exceed the habitat's ability to support healthy elk.
_____	Manage elk populations to not exceed the tolerance of landowners in or adjacent to elk management unit boundaries.
_____	Other suggestion(s)?
_____	Other suggestion(s)?
_____	Other suggestion(s)?

25. In the future, do you plan to apply for a South Dakota elk hunting license?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure
-

25a. If no or not sure, what would increase the likelihood you would apply for a South Dakota elk hunting license in the future?

26. In 2019, did you draw a South Dakota elk hunting license?

- Yes
 No
 If 'no' skip to Q29 on pg. 9

27. Overall, how satisfied are you with your <u>2019</u> elk hunting experience in South Dakota?	Not at All Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. For the 2019 elk hunting season, estimate the percentage of your elk hunting time on each type of land (total 100%).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Own land _____%
<input type="checkbox"/> Private land, not your own (no fees) _____%
<input type="checkbox"/> Private land, not your own (fee charged) _____% | <input type="checkbox"/> Public land (state owned) _____%
<input type="checkbox"/> Public land (federally owned) _____%
<input type="checkbox"/> Private walk-in land _____% |
|--|--|

Section 5: Public engagement: As a public agency, it is important to engage and consider all opinions, attitudes, and perspectives. GFP wants the process to be both easy and effective, while also reducing costs associated with collecting this valuable information.

29. When using surveys to reach the public, to which format would you most likely respond?

- Mailed paper survey with a postage paid return envelope Emailed link to a secure online survey

30. If willing, please provide a valid email address for the purpose of receiving occasional electronic survey invites. This email will not be shared and will only be used to send survey invites and to notify you of other public engagement opportunities. Thank you!

Section 6: Demographics and closing question: The following questions ask basic descriptive information to help GFP better understand their constituents.

31. What is your age?

- under 18 years old 18 – 29 years old 30 – 49 years old 50 – 69 years old 70 years old and over

32. How would you describe yourself?

- American Indian or Alaskan Native Asian Black or African American Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander White

Other → Name or describe it: _____

33. What is your gender?

- Female Male Prefer to self-describe _____

Final question on back page (turn over)

Appendix B: Open-Ended Survey Questions

The views expressed in survey comments are the views of the commenting respondent(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks or the author(s) of this report. Neither the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks nor the author(s) guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of any opinion or view expressed in respondents' comments. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks reserves the right, but not obligation, to remove at its discretion any language which discloses personally identifiable information about respondents or any other individual, as well as language which is obscene, profane, offensive, malicious, discriminatory, defamatory or otherwise unlawful.

Note: Respondents' comments did not have to be specific to any question asked on the survey, but rather they were free to provide additional comments at the end. Text which appears inside brackets [...] has been added to clarify respondents' reference to specific survey questions, to indicate where a comment was not legible, or in some cases to indicate where personally identifying information has been omitted. Comments presented here are organized by the landowner and elk hunting samples.

Section 3: Q15. Text responses to offer additional incentive(s) to increase landowner tolerance for elk using their land.

Landowner sample (responses n=57)

The landowner sample provided 57 open-ended text responses to Section 3: Q15. All or parts of each response are broadly grouped by 10 themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap.

Elk damage (n=16)

Reference 1 - Create a landowner tag for documented damage.

Reference 2 - Don't incentivize complainers who can't document real elk damages

Reference 3 - Elk are hell on fences and haystacks

Reference 4 - Give applicants the opportunity to donate to a fund created to help landowners fix/remedy verified elk damage.

Reference 5 - Half of tag costs given to landowners to help offset damages from the elk.

Reference 6 - Help landowners with financial compensation for elk damage, i.e. pay for seed.

Reference 7 - Help landowners with hay yard fencing to prevent damage in the future.

Reference 8 - Increase hunting opportunities for landowners based on the amount with damage sustained.

Reference 9 - Use increased non-landowner fees to reimburse for landowner damages

Reference 10 - Landowners with minimum elk on their land or damage should have land preference

Reference 11 - Pair landowners in Hills with WRA to take elk on damaged areas.

Reference 12 - Pay property damages to landowners who have damages from elk.

Reference 13 - Property owners with damage should receive at least one tag.

Reference 14 - Provide assistance to property owners that are willing to provide winter feeding crops/forages that will help to control fence issues as well as vehicle damages.

Reference 15 - Provide fencing to keep animals off private land

Reference 16 - Provide fencing to protect winter feed.

Elk license or tag (n=17)

Reference 1 - Create another class (unit resident)

Reference 2 - Decrease minimum acreage and number of tag elk use to allow more landowner licenses.

Reference 3 - charge elk tags same with deer.

Reference 4 - Don't issue hunting tags at all

Reference 5 - Free doe license per season

Reference 6 - Free license for landowner where elk are living, Give "ag income" owners preference over "elk" landowners

Reference 7 - Have filled tags require landowner signature.

Reference 8 - SD does not have enough elk hunting permits.

Reference 9 - If landowner receives financial compensation for elk damage, that landowner's elk tag should be a cow tag.

Reference 10 - Increase non-landowner license fees - lower (reduce) landowner license fees.

Reference 11 - Landowner transfer tag

Reference 12 - Lower acreage requirement

Reference 13 - More cow tags

Reference 14 - More licenses for prairie tags 35A, 35B

Reference 15 - Landowners should receive transferable licenses for out of state hunters & residents hunters.

Reference 16 - Provide a cow tag for qualifying landowners who don't draw a landowner tag.

Reference 17 - Up landowner tags

Elk population management (n=11)

Reference 1 - Allow landowners to let a limited number of hunters to help reduce the population

Reference 2 - Decrease the elk population significantly where depredation has occurred, do not want any elk in this area they are very destructive

Reference 3 - Have reduced price cow tags and quite a few.

Reference 4 - I do not want elk on my land.

Reference 5 - Manage so that no more elk come to the prairie, they cause more damage than GFP will compensate for.

Reference 6 - Raise the elk numbers so I see more of them.

Reference 7 - The elk are not an issue.

Reference 8 - Trap & transport surplus elk from damaged areas to sufficient prairie habitat.

Reference 9 - Up elk numbers

Reference 10 - We do not need elk in the WRA

Reference 11 - I would like to harvest elk on my land - but no elk available.

Outreach and Communication (n=5)

Reference 1 - Create or maintain information contacts as to CWD in Hills herd.

Reference 2 - Listen to the landowners

Reference 3 - Promote humane treatment of elk

Reference 4 - Publish individual elk unit population goals

Reference 5 - Work with SD Agri tourism to educate public & landowners for viewing opportunities

Non-resident Landowner (n=4)

Reference 1 - Allow nonresident landowners the gratuity to hunt their land.

Reference 2 - Create a GPFM guided non-resident elk tag draw

Reference 3 - Large qty of land in WRA is non-resident owned.

Reference 4 - Landowners regardless of residency need to be treated equally.

Financial Incentives (n=4)

Reference 1 - Give landowners extra tags they can sell or let people use

Reference 2 - Pay depredation dollars if landowners don't hunt.

Reference 3 - Promote and provide financial programs for habitat development

Reference 4 - must be a long term commitment.

Other (unrelated to other themes) (n=3)

Reference 1 - How to increase tolerance?

Reference 2 - More visits from Wardens

Reference 3 - They will be like your so called "wild" turkeys that I have chased off my corn pile every morning 50-100 turkeys.

New Incentives (unrelated to other themes) (n=2)

Reference 1 - Create a ranching for wildlife system similar to Colorado.

Reference 2 - Give hunts to wounded warriors

Open-ended text responses (n=57)

Allow landowners to let a limited number of hunters to help reduce the population as needed.

Allow non-resident landowners the gratuity to hunt their land.

Create a GPFM guided non-resident elk tag draw

Create a landowner tag for documented damage.

Create a ranching for wildlife system similar to Colorado.

Create another class (unit resident) I have neighbors with 10-15 years preference who cannot draw but people with no area interest do.

Create or maintain information contacts as to CWD in Hills herd.

Decrease minimum acreage & # of tag elk use to allow more landowner licenses.

Decrease the elk population significantly where depredation has occurred.

Do not want any elk in this area they are very destructive.

Don't charge me to support GFP and Elk. 2nd charge elk tags same with deer.

Don't issue hunting tags at all

Don't incentivize complainers who can't document real elk damages

Elk are hell on fences and haystacks

Free doe license per season

Free license for landowner where elk are living.

Give "ag income" owners preference over "elk" landowners

Give applicants the opportunity to donate to a fund created to help landowners fix/remedy verified elk damage.

Give hunts to wounded warriors

Give landowners extra tags they can sell or let people use

Have filled tags require landowner signature and have 1/2 of tag costs given to landowners to help offset damages from the elk.

Have reduced price cow tags & quite a few. The same elk that winter in SD are the same elk that summer in WY or do a lot of damage to fences & crops. SD does not have enough elk hunting permits.

Help landowners with financial compensation for elk damage, i.e. pay for seed. Help landowners with hay yard fencing to prevent damage in the future.

How to increase tolerance?

I do not want elk on my land.

I would like to harvest elk on my land - but no elk available.

If landowner receives financial compensation for elk damage, that landowner's elk tag should be a cow tag.

Increase hunting opportunities for landowners based on the amount w/damage sustained.

Increase non-landowner license fees - lower (reduce) landowner license fees. Use increased non-landowner fees to reimburse for landowner damages

Landowner transfer tag

Landowners with minimum elk on their land or damage should have land preference

Large qty of land in WRA is non-resident owned. Landowners regardless of residency need to be treated equally.

Elk hunting sample (responses n=92)

The landowner sample provided 92 open-ended text responses to Section 3: Q15. All or parts of each response are broadly grouped by 8 themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap.

Access (n=8)

Reference 1 - Compensate the landowner with walk-in money to allow public elk hunting on their property.

References 2 - Create an optional paid access permit program 50/50 split (e.g. \$50 fee paid as part of license application and \$50 paid by GFP) paid to private landowners for access redeemable through online submission

Reference 3 - Hunters gain land access and both parties benefit

Reference 4 - Have landowners work with hunters so more people get the opportunity to hunt elk!

Reference 5 - Landowners who allow Hunting on their land should get a financial incentive for doing so.

Reference 6 - Set up a system with landowners where hunters can contact landowners for hunting opportunities.

Reference 7 - Elk are purchased by the hunters and their license fees the landowners have way too much access to the elk now

Reference 8 - try and lease their land for Walk-in Areas

Elk damage (n=41)

Reference 1 - Create a program for hunters to get certified to hunt on private land to manage elk herd and also help landowners concerns about having people they don't know on their land.

References 2 - Create a team of workers to assist landowners with damage to property. Make it a necessity to follow up quickly with landowner's damage and assist with the needs of the landowners

Reference 3 - allocate tags based on how many elk use their place annually. Then make it to where they can sell or keep their landowner permits to offset the cost of damages. Make it if they choose to not allow other hunters to hunt their place then they can hunt only their place

Reference 4 - Do not give any money to the landowners if they are charging hunters to use their land

Reference 5 - Do not pay for damage, opens a huge can of worms!

Reference 6 - Don't give any assistance to landowners that charge people to hunt on their land what they're charging is enough for what elk do to their fences

Reference 7 - Far too many landowners complain about elk damage but don't allow public hunting.

Reference 8 - Us public hunters would love to help manage the herd and help manage land..

Reference 9 - Give landowner 1 cow elk tag who have elk damage and they must allow free access to other hunters

Reference 10 - Have a landowner voucher for property hunting access for those areas with historical elk damage that allows the property owner to redeem the voucher that hunter used to access the private property for hunting purposes.

Reference 11 - if landowners complain about damage caused by elk, to receive any financial assistance they must not close their land to public hunting.

Reference 12 - If landowners receive financial help for elk year after year then only allow them a cow tag.

Reference 13 - Incentivize hunters to possibly help with land and fence reconditioning.

References 14-Increase hunting opportunities only for resident landowners who own property in the units with verified elk property damage.

References 15 - It's about time a standardized, independent, economic driven system of evaluation of depredation damage claims be developed and implemented.

Reference 16 - The unverifiable depredation entitlement programs funded by license money and Pittman-Robertson must have much better accountability.

Reference 17 - Landowners need to let hunters kill elk on their land if they wish to reduce damages, plain and simple. Combined with other tools for the landowner, everyone will win.

References 18 - Landowners should not receive any financial assistance for elk damage unless they allow non landowner hunters and opportunity to hunt their land. Every documented elk kill would then qualify for financial assistance.

Reference 19 - We have a lot of youth in the state of south Dakota that would love to help with the problem. They just need the permission.

Reference 20 - the problem I have with paying them for damage is most ranchers in western south Dakota get money from paying hunters and if that is the case why would or should GFP give them more money.

Reference 21 - Private landowners should not get any help if they do not let people hunt.

Reference 22 - There are tags to help with the problem and not utilizing those tags at all they should forfeit any help from the state.

References 23 - provide financial assistance to landowners with elk damage who agree to allow hunters access to their lands.

Reference 24 - Put together a transparent listing of property owners with contact information who are claiming harm due to the elk population on their property.

Reference 25 - Have GFP verify damage and claims before further action taken.

Reference 26 - start a program that enables hunters and landowners to come together, I myself would be willing to help out with repairing damaged fences as long as I know that the landowner will also let private hunters access the land during the season

Reference 27 - support stringing cable at top of fence to prevent elk fence damage

Reference 28 - The landowners need to open up their land to public hunting to help get the elk off their land

Reference 29 - To get payment for elk damage a landowner must allow hunting by the people who have licenses

Reference 30 - Totally revamp the current program. Mandate that qualifying landowners with verified depredation use fence cable on top of their fencing to receive fence damage payments.

Reference 31 - Mandate they use haystack fencing in stack yards to receive hay store damage payments.

Reference 32 - If a qualifying landowner claims for depredation monies, they only qualify for a COW tag for depredation issues.

References 33 - Many Landowners compete on public lands for elk and that defeats the private land depredation claims. Tolerance is at the forefront of these programs and an abundance of the landowners don't seem to be tolerating the elk as agreed when claiming these hunter funded payments.

Reference 34 - work to allow hunting on those private lands by non-landowners.

References 35 - Perhaps a program where hunters could somehow be vetted by the landowners so that the opportunity to hunt was available. I have a hard time using tax-payer money to fix a problem if they will not allow elk hunting.

Reference 36 - Maybe hunters could sign up and be drawn along with a tag. Closely regulate the hunters' activity so no bad events happen.

Reference 37 - Work with interested landowners and give hunters the ability to their properties without having to pay a fee

Reference 38 - Work with landowners to allow more open hunting on their property to control the elk causing damage.

Reference 39 - Work with landowners with property damage to provide access to hunters.

Reference 40 - How many landowners prohibit hunting and have issues with elk causing property damage?

Reference 41 - Work with the landowners to allow public hunting access to help decrease property damage

Elk license or tag (n=39)

References 1- Bench cow tags on private property late season, with higher cost, with a percentage of that back to participating landowners!

Reference 2 - hunters have to attend a meeting similar to other special draw tags.

Reference 3 - Far fewer landowner tags

Reference 4 - Give landowner 1 cow elk tag who have elk damage and they must allow free access to other hunters

References 5 - Give landowners cow tags instead of bull tags.

Reference 6 - Granting landowners priority tags, making tags to actual hunters is a singular mistake that actually hurts elk management funds and interest.

Reference 7 - Have tag cost pre-paid before the draw.

Reference 8 - If unsuccessful, refund the tag cost.

Reference 9 - to receive a landowner tag you must own land, leasing land doesn't qualify.

Reference 10 - a joke that we that are not landowner have to wait 16 plus year to draw a tag but someone can buy the right amount of land to get landowner and get a tag every year most all the landowners are doing this

Reference 11 - If landowners receive financial help for elk year after year then only allow them a cow tag.

Reference 12 - Not both money and a bull or any elk tag.

Reference 13 - The land and elk hunting will become un-affordable to the average joe if we let non-residents hunt elk.

Reference 14 - Increase tags in units where there is damage and should go out to the public

Reference 15 - Increase the number of licenses available for general public so there isn't a need for depredation hunts.

Reference 16 - Landowners who draw tags should have to hunt on the land they are claiming for elk habitat only.

Reference 17 - Make the land requirements 80 acres but they can only hunt elk on that specified land.

Reference 18 - Landowners should have to wait 9 years between applications like everyone else.

Reference 19 - Landowners are the priority however those of us who don't own land contribute the majority of money in license fees through license fees.

Reference 20 - Landowners eligible for elk tags should be required to alternate bull and cow tags every other year and be restricted to hunting their own land.

Reference 21 - Landowners should not get a Elk License every year and if they do it should be a cow only.

Reference 22 - landowners should only be able to get a cow tag every year and only be able for any elk every 10 years same as everyone else

Reference 23 - Make landowners apply like everyone else

Reference 24 - Make sure resident landowners actually reside in South Dakota before giving them a license.

Reference 25 - There is no reason they deserve elk tags every year.

Reference 26 - No landowner preference should be given for a bull elk ever.

Reference 27 - Make this landowner license valid only on their own land-no state/federal/walk-in use.

References 28 - Only let the landowners have a cow tag each year, let them have a bull tag every ten years

Reference 29 - people with most preference should get tags

References 30 - Provide cow tags to landowners, not bull tags

Reference 31 - Create a conservation tag in addition to the depredation tag for the people who are willing to provide habitat for elk.

References 32 - Provide landowners with cow tags rather than bull tags as this will have a more significant impact on their elk numbers

Reference 33 - Raise out of state fishing and hunting fees to offset costs

Reference 34 - Show the public why it is not fair to give 50% to landowners, when 50% of the entire elk population is not on private land.

Reference 35 - If a qualifying landowner claims for depredation monies, they only qualify for a COW tag for depredation issues.

Reference 36 - If a qualifying landowner does not ask for payment monies and they choose to receive an either sex elk license, then they can qualify for that either sex permit.

Reference 37 - Mandate that all Landowner permits are only valid for their owned and rented operating lands. Then they won't be annually competing with other resident elk hunters that have waited 15-20 years for their permit to hunt.

Reference 38 - You should not get a tag every year because you own 240 acres! Most South Dakotans stand in line for 20 plus years to get a tag

Reference 39 - A landowner tag is only good for the landowners' land

Elk population management (n=6)

Reference 1 - Let landowners harvest cow elk and not charge high trespassing fees for harvesting bull elk.

Reference 2 - Make the landowner shoot cows

Reference 3 - only allow landowners to harvest cow elk that's how most ranchers manage their herds

Reference 4 - Open up a January-March late cow hunt in high population areas and sell tags instead of doing the deprivation hunt that only a select few can participate in

Reference 5 - NO PRAIRIE ELK

Reference 6 - Way too many bull to cow ratios. I see at least 50-50 ratio.

Incentives (n=22)

Reference 1 - Allow landowners to sell their licenses.

Reference 2 - Compensate landowners via Walk-in, CHAP, etc. Both private and public benefits from these.

Reference 3 - Create opportunity for landowners to profit from elk on their property.

Reference 4 - Use increased hunting opportunity to pay for it.

Reference 5 - Raffles, allow landowners to sell or auction their tags.

Reference 6 - Give license holders vouchers to give to landowners who allow them to hunt elk on their property.

Reference 7 - Give the landowners a few tags they can sell to hunters which would help them recover loss of crops or damages. Like \$250 tag and have them document the info so that the state could keep track of where that tag went.

Reference 8 - Possibly incentives could include reference points or guaranteed tag in some shape or form

Reference 9 - Land improvement projects

Reference 10 - Landowners already have significant incentives the get a license every year most people are lucky to get one in a lifetime.

References 11 - How about financial incentives to those landowners who don't charge a fee for people to hunt?

Reference 12 - Offer the landowner (must have the minimum acres of land ownership in the elk area) the option of selling their 1 elk landowner license.

Reference 13 - Give the landowner the option to sell this tag for whatever price they want & they will want more elk on their land. This revenue is the landowner's reimbursement for tolerating elk on their land and they would not be eligible for additional SDGFP financial assistance for feed or fencing. The landowner would get the tag or the financial assistance but not both.

Reference 14 - Provide a "carcass coupon" that the hunter can give the landowner after killing and elk on their property and provide a monetary incentive to the landowner.

Reference 15 - Provide financial incentives for landowners who allow zero cost hunting on their property

Reference 16 - Provide food plot incentives (seed and planter) for landowners who want elk on their land.

Reference 17 - Some landowners take zero payment from SDGFP and are happy with the opportunity to apply for an any elk tag.

Reference 18 - South Dakota should look at implementing sellable landowner licenses much like the program Colorado has.

Reference 19 - Tell landowners it's the cost of farming in the hills.

Reference 20 - The elk were here when they bought the land - no privilege

Reference 21 - This is a non-issue in the Black Hills area. If there are any landowners who are truly negatively impacted by elk herds in a significant way, I am aware of it. Honestly, our herd spend nearly all their time on National Forest lands. Bottom line, this is an issue landowners have taken advantage of in the Black Hills for far too long, and the majority of hunters are aware of it - and tired of it!

Law enforcement or safety (n=2)

Reference 1 - there are landowners that I have been witness to hunter harassment.

Reference 2 - the landowner has a large concentration of elk on his property and drives up and down the highway at dawn and dusk to prevent the herd from leaving. this is done all the while knowing the adjoining landowner is very hunt friendly.

Other (n=9)

Reference 1 - Do nothing

Reference 2 - Make it fair for people with west river address not just for tourism numbers

Reference 3 - Most landowners in the hills do not rely on said land for significant income.

Reference 4 - As long as it is about money for landowners things don't change.

Reference 5 - Part of being a landowner is feeding wild animals that use your land!

Reference 6 - They need a place too and every landowner should not be crying that elk are eating all my this or that!

Reference 7 - Tell landowners it's the cost of farming in the hills.

Reference 8 - The hunters are not in the business to make the landowners rich!

Reference 9 - Tribal/State relations. I know it's easier said than done but OST Parks Dept. needs to be put in their place as they make anything or everything difficult in the Jackson/Bennett County areas.

Public lands (n=5)

Reference 1 - They get grazing rights for little or nothing their cows eat all the grass elk should have

Reference 2 - Create better habitat on state land to pull elk off private land.

Reference 3 - increase the amount of public lands whenever possible.

Reference 4 - Stop livestock from grazing on public lands and destroying their habitat so there only choice is to graze on private land and stop landowners from whining about their land being damaged

Reference 5 - Keep elk in forest and public lands.

Open-ended text responses (n=92)

Allow landowners to sell their licenses.

Bench cow tags on private property late season, with higher cost, with a percentage of that back to participating landowners!

Compensate landowners via Walk-in, CHAP, etc. Both private and public benefits from these.

Compensate the landowner with walk-in money to allow public elk hunting on their property.

Create a program for hunters to get certified to hunt on private land to manage elk herd and also help landowners concerns about having people they don't know on their land. Also, hunters have to attend a meeting similar to other special draw tags.

Create a team of workers to assist landowners with damage to property. Make it a necessity to follow up quickly with landowner's damage and assist with the needs of the landowners

Create an optional paid access permit program 50/50 split (e.g. \$50 fee paid as part of license application and \$50 paid by GFP) paid to private landowners for access redeemable through online submission

Create opportunity for landowners to profit from elk on their property. So, they desire to be stewards of them. Use increased hunting opportunity to pay for it. Raffles, allow landowners to sell or auction their tags.

Do like New Mexico and allocate tags based on how many elk use their place annually. Then make it to where they can sell or keep their landowner permits to offset the cost of damages. Make it if they choose to not allow other hunters to hunt their place then they can hunt only their place

Do not give any money to the landowners if they are charging hunters to use their land

Do not pay for damage, opens a huge can of worms!

Do nothing

Don't give any assistance to landowners that charge people to hunt on their land what they're charging is enough for what elk do to their fences

Far fewer landowner tags

Far too many landowners complain about elk damage but don't allow public hunting. Us public hunters would love to help manage the herd and help manage land.. we would like the opportunity.

Give landowner 1 cow elk tag who have elk damage and they must allow free access to other hunters

Give landowners cow tags instead of bull tags. They won't leave or diminish the heard by shooting bulls.

Give license holders vouchers to give to landowners who allow them to hunt elk on their property.

Give the landowners a few tags they can sell to hunters which would help them recover loss of crops or damages. Like \$250 tag and have them document the info so that the state could keep track of where that tag went.

Granting landowners priority tags, making tags to actual hunters is a singular mistake that actual hurts elk management funds and interest.

Have a landowner voucher for property hunting access for those areas with historical elk damage that allows the property owner to redeem the voucher that hunter used to access the private property for hunting purposes. The landowner benefits in reduced carrying and financially rewarded at same time. Vouchers could be worth \$200-\$500 based on prior losses. Hunters gain land access and both parties benefit

Have landowners work with hunters so more people get the opportunity to hunt elk!

Have tag cost pre-paid before the draw. If unsuccessful, refund the tag cost.

I think in order to receive a landowner tag you must own land; leasing land doesn't qualify.

I think It a joke that we that are not landowner have to wait 16 plus year to draw a tag but someone can buy the right amount of land to get landowner and get a tag every year most all the landowners are doing this it's a joke

if landowners complain about damage caused by elk, to receive any financial assistance they must not close their land to public hunting.

If landowners receive financial help for elk year after year then only allow them a cow tag. Not both money and a bull or any elk tag.

Incentivize hunters to possibly help with land and fence reconditioning. Possibly incentives could include reference points or guaranteed tag in some shape or form

Increase hunting opportunities only for resident landowners who own property in the units with verified elk property damage. The land and elk hunting will become un-affordable to the average joe if we let non-residents hunt elk.

Increase tags in units where there is damage and should go out to the public

Increase the number of licenses available for general public so there isn't a need for depredation hunts.

It's about time a standardized, independent, economic driven system of evaluation of depredation damage claims be developed and implemented. The unverifiable depredation entitlement programs funded by license money and Pittman-Robertson must have much better accountability.

Land improvement projects

Landowners who draw tags should have to hunt on the land they are claiming for elk habitat only. Make the land requirements 80 acres but they can only hunt elk on that specified land. Most states are that way you are required to hunt on the land you are claiming landowner on

Landowners already have significant incentives they get a license every year most people are lucky to get one in a lifetime. Landowners should have to wait 9 years between applications like everyone else. They get grazing rights for little or nothing their cows eat all the grass elk should have

Landowners are the priority however those of us who don't own land contribute the majority of money in license fees through license fees. How about financial incentives to those landowners who don't charge a fee for people to hunt.

Landowners eligible for elk tags should be required to alternate bull and cow tags every other year and be restricted to hunting their own land. Or limit to depredation.

Landowners hunt on just the 240 allotments, not all of the Black Hills unit. Like owning 240 or more, they hunt the whole unit, not fair as they get the tag for, use or damage to the 240 allotment.

Landowners need to let hunters kill elk on their land if they wish to reduce damages, plain and simple. Combined with other tools for the landowner, everyone will win.

Landowners should not get an Elk License every year and if they do it should be a cow only.

Landowners should not receive any financial assistance for elk damage unless they allow non landowner hunters and opportunity to hunt their land. Every documented elk kill would then qualify for financial assistance.

landowners should only be able to get a cow tag every year and only be able for any elk every 10 years same as everyone else

Landowners who allow Hunting on their land should get a financial incentive for doing so.

Leave current plan in place.

Let landowners harvest cow elk and not charge high trespassing fees for harvesting bull elk.

Make it fair for people with west river address not just for tourism numbers

Make landowners apply like everyone else

Make sure resident landowners actually reside in South Dakota before giving them a license.

Make the landowner shoot cows

Most landowners in the hills do not rely on said land for significant income. There is no reason they deserve elk tags every year.

No landowner preference should be given for a bull elk ever.

Offer the landowner (must have the minimum acres of land ownership in the elk area) the option of selling their 1 elk landowner license. Make this landowner license valid only on their own land-no state/federal/walk-in use. Give the landowner the option to sell this tag for whatever price they want & they will want more elk on their land. This revenue is the landowner's reimbursement for tolerating elk on their land and they would not be eligible for additional SDGFP financial assistance for feed or fencing. The landowner would get the tag or the financial assistance but not both.

Only allow landowners to harvest cow elk that's how most ranchers manage their herds

Only let the landowners have a cow tag each year, let them have a bull tag every ten years

Open their land up to hunt. That will help push them out elsewhere. As long as it is about money for landowners' things don't change. Farmers and ranchers get enough government help. We have a lot of youth in the state of South Dakota that would love to help with the problem. They just need the permission. The problem I have with paying them for damage is most ranchers in western South Dakota get money from paying hunters and if that is the case why would or should GFP give them more money.

Open up a January-March late cow hunt in high population areas and sell tags instead of doing the deprivation hunt that only a select few can participate in

Part of being a landowner is feeding wild animals that use your land! They need a place too and every landowner should not be crying that they are eating all my this or that! That's part of it where you live.

people with most preference should get tags

Private landowners should not get any help if they do not let people hunt. There are tags to help with the problem and not utilizing those tags at all they should forfeit any help from the state.

Provide a "carcass coupon" that the hunter can give the landowner after killing an elk on their property and provide a monetary incentive to the landowner.

Provide cow tags to landowners not a bull tag

provide financial assistance to landowners with elk damage who agree to allow hunters access to their lands.

Provide financial incentives for landowners who allow zero cost hunting on their property

Provide food plot incentives (seed and planter) for landowners who want elk on their land. Create a conservation tag in addition to the depredation tag for the people who are willing to provide habitat for elk. Create better habitat on state land to pull elk off private land.

Provide landowners with cow tags rather than bull tags as this will have a more significant impact on their elk numbers

Put together a transparent listing of property owners with contact information who are claiming harm due to the elk population on their property. Have GFP verify damage and claims before further action taken.

Raise out of state fishing and hunting fees to offset costs

Reduce the amount of private property within the BH Fire Management area, and/or increase the amount of public lands whenever possible.

Set up a system with landowners where hunters can contact landowners for hunting opportunities.

Show the public why it is not fair to give 50% to landowners, when 50% of the entire elk population is not on private land.

Some landowners take zero payment from SDGFP and are happy with the opportunity to apply for an any elk tag. Most of the public, SDGFP staff, and SDGFP Commissioners are not aware these landowners exist.

South Dakota should look at implementing sellable landowner licenses much like the program Colorado has.

Start a program that enables hunters and landowners to come together, I myself would be willing to help out with repairing damaged fences as long as I know that the landowner will also let private hunters access the land during the season

Stop livestock from grazing on public lands and destroying their habitat so there only choice is to graze on private land and stop landowners from whining about their land being damaged

support stringing cable at top of fence to prevent elk fence damage

Tell landowners it's the cost of farming in the hills.

The elk are purchased by the hunters and their license fees the landowners have way too much access to the elk now! They get to see them and enjoy them and then charge for or not let anyone hunt them. Then they turn around and want the GF&P to pay them for what the elk have done...when the hunters have paid for them to start with!! Keep elk in forest and public lands. NO PRAIRIE ELK! The hunters are not in the business to make the landowners rich!

The elk were here when they bought the land - no privilege

The landowners need to open up their land to public hunting to help get the elk off their land

there are landowners that I have been witness to hunter harassment. the landowner has a large concentration of elk on his property and drives up and down the highway at dawn and dusk to prevent the herd from leaving. this is done all the while knowing the adjoining landowner is very hunt friendly. Those landowners should never be able to apply for any elk property damage.

This in a non-issue in the Black Hills area. If there are any landowners who are truly negatively impacted by elk herds in a significant way, I am in aware of it. Honestly, our herd spend nearly all their time on National Forest lands. Bottom line, this is an issue landowners have taken advantage of in the Black Hills for far too long, and the majority of hunters are aware of it - and tired of it!

To get payment for elk damage a landowner must allow hunting by the people who have licenses

Totally revamp the current program. Mandate that qualifying landowners with verified depredation use fence cable on top of their fencing to receive fence damage payments. Mandate they use haystack fencing in stack yards to receive hay store damage payments. If a qualifying landowner claims for depredation monies, they only qualify for a COW tag for depredation issues. If a qualifying landowner does not ask for payment monies and they choose to receive an either sex elk license, then they can qualify for that either sex permit. Mandate that all Landowner permits are only valid for their owned and rented operating lands. Then they won't be annually competing with other resident elk hunters that have waited 15-20 years for their permit to hunt. Many Landowners compete on public lands for elk and that defeats the private land depredation claims. Tolerance is at the forefront of these programs and an abundance of the

landowners don't seem to be tolerating the elk as agreed when claiming these hunters funded payments.

Tribal/State relations. I know it's easier said than done but OST Parks Dept. needs to be put in their place as they make anything or everything difficult in the Jackson/Bennett County areas.

try and lease their land for Walk-in Areas

Way too many bull to cow ratios. I see at least 50-50 ratio.

Work to allow hunting on those private lands by non-landowners. Perhaps a program where hunters could somehow be vetted by the landowners so that the opportunity to hunt was available. I have a hard time using taxpayer money to fix a problem if they will not allow elk hunting. Ideas like the C.R.A.P. program. Maybe hunters could sign up and be drawn along with a tag. Closely regulate the hunter's activity so no bad events happen.

Section 4: Q24. Text responses to offer additional management options when GFP structures elk hunting seasons (i.e., whether to increase, decrease, or maintain elk population numbers). No text responses were given in either sample.

Landowner sample (responses n=0)

Elk hunting sample (responses n=0)

Section 4: Q25a. Text responses to "If you responded 'no' or 'not sure' what would increase the likelihood you would apply for a South Dakota elk hunting license in the future?"

Landowner sample (responses n=25)

The landowner sample provided 25 open-ended text responses to Section 4: Q25a. All or parts of each response are broadly grouped by 5 themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap.

Access (n=6)

Reference 1 - Elk on my land or on a close neighbor's land.

Reference 2 - I don't own land where elk are - in 70 years I've seen elk here twice.

Reference 3 - Hunting area available

Reference 4 - If elk were on my land.

Reference 5 - No elk on property

Reference 6 - Population of elk in and around the ranch

Elk damage (n=1)

Reference 1 - Increase of property damage

Elk license or tag (n=16)

Reference 1 - Being able to get one. Gave up applying in CSP after 20 years of being unsuccessful.

Reference 2 - Easier application process

Reference 3 - More landowner preference

Reference 4 - Eligibility requirement - chance of drawing without preference

Reference 5 - Quit applying several years ago because I thought I'd never get one

Reference 6 - 26 years preference in CSP and no draw

Reference 7 - Applied several times and never drew a tag

Reference 8 - Out-of-state hunters took preference when we applied

Reference 9 - Never got drawn

Reference 10 - More licenses issued.

Reference 11 - Ridiculous that with the vast amount of area that elk use that you can apply all your life and never draw a license.

Reference 12 - Should not have to go to Wyoming to hunt elk

Reference 13 - Too hard to get license

Reference 14 - Price

Reference 15 - Too hard to get one

Reference 16 - Waste of time since in the past I had applied for about 18 years with no success.

Individual limitations (n=10)

- *Age (n=5)*

Reference 1 - 68 years old

Reference 2 - Being 20 years younger

Reference 3 - age 77

Reference 4 - If I get younger.

Reference 5 - If I were younger

- *Physical ability (n=2)*
Reference 1 - At age 77 I really don't know if I have the stamina to hunt

Reference 2 - Not able to physically hunt elk.
- *Time (n=2)*
Reference 1 - Time

Reference 2 - Time availability to get away to go hunting
- *No interest (n=1)*
Reference 1 - Interest in doing so

Other (n=3)

Reference 1 - Cut and wrap it and put it in my freezer

Reference 2 - If I changed my opinion that a live elk is always more beautiful than a dead one.

Reference 3 - When I move back to SD

Open-ended text responses (n=25)

68 years old

Actually, being able to get one. Gave up applying in CSP after 20 years of being unsuccessful.

Being 20 years younger

Cut and wrap it and put it in my freezer!

Easier application process & more landowner preference.

Eligibility requirement - chance of drawing without preference

Elk on my land or on a close neighbor's land.

Even though I helped friends next to the WY border because of them I quit applying several years ago because I thought I'd never get one, I don't own land where elk are - in 70 years I've seen elk here twice.

Have 26 years preference in CSP and no draw. Now at age 77 I really don't know if I have the stamina to hunt as vigorously as I did in Montana and Wyoming.

Hunting area available

I applied several times and never drew a tag now I am not able to physically hunt elk.

If elk were on my land.

If I changed my opinion that a live elk is always more beautiful than a dead one.

If I get younger.

If I were younger

Increase of property damage

It always seemed like out of state hunters took preference when we applied - never got drawn.

More licenses issued. It is ridiculous that with the vast amount of area that elk use that you can apply all your life and never draw a license. Should not have to go to Wyoming to hunt elk.

No elk on property - too hard to get license.

Population of elk in and around the ranch

Price

Time and interest in doing so

Time availability to get away to go hunting.

Too hard to get one.

When I move back to SD and since it might be a waste of time since in the past I had applied for about 18 years with no success.

Elk hunting sample (responses n=65)

The landowner sample provided 65 open-ended text responses to Section 4: Q25a. All or parts of each response are broadly grouped by 6 themes, recognizing there may be some topic overlap.

Access (n=5)

Reference 1 - landowners that do not let anyone hunt the elk on their land should not get any help from the state if the elk ruin their property.

Reference 2 - Any landowners that charge for the hunting should lose any help for damages from the state

Reference 3 - local hunters are being pushed out because of these things and all have to hunt state grounds.

Reference 4 - Quit restricting access.

Reference 5 - If I knew of a landowner that would allow hunting on their land

Elk hunting (n=2)

Reference 1 - CHANGES IN THE DATES, DROP THE SPLIT SEASONS

Reference 2 - Wyoming has much better elk hunting.

Elk license or tag (n=50)

Reference 1 - People have put in for years and can't get a license when some others from out of the area put in and get one their first year.

Reference 2 - why have years of preference points when they mean nothing to getting a license?

Reference 3 - People that work their whole life in a certain county or area get to watch others take trophies home to some place else when just the landowners and one or two people from the area can get a tag.

Reference 4 - People from the area should have first chance for these trophies before others

Reference 5 - The numbers should be flipped one or two from out of the area getting tags and the majority going to local people.

Reference 6 - No one should get a license on their first application until everyone with more than 5 preference points get a license.

Reference 7 - It's been a number of years since I applied at the time I applied I believe the fee was \$5 no response no license so I quite applying.

Reference 8 - A chance of drawing one in a good unit.

Reference 9 - Lower tag prices across the board.

References 10 - I will not hunt big game in south Dakota anymore. Once every ten years or longer for an over-priced bull tag with restricted access is bs.

Reference 11 - If habitat expansion into the prairie regions adjacent to the Hills were to occur and should the herd prove stable and healthy over the coming decades, I would be more likely to apply for future tags.

Reference 12 - close to being cheaper to hunt out of state somewhere else then it is to hunt in South Dakota or fish

Reference 13 - WILL BE TOO OLD TO HUNT ELK AFTER THE 9 YEAR WAITING PERIOD

References 14 - I was 55 when I drew my rifle tag with 12 years preference points. Drew my archery tag this year at 60 with 16 preference points.

Reference 15 - Moving back to SD. I would apply again if we lived there.

References 16 - I am 62 I shot a bull in 2019. with the probation period, 9 years and the number of points required to get a bull tag. I'm not hunting a bull at 85 years of age. Put a guaranteed license for anyone 75 or older with a probation period in between and I will hunt again.

References 17 - The odds of actually drawing a tag are very low at best. I know many residents that apply for out elk season and most have over 15 years of preference points. That is already \$300 they've invested into a tag they haven't drawn. I most likely to apply for a tag in another state with better draw odds in order to obtain a tag while I'm still physically capable of enjoying the hunt.

Reference 18 - Had a cow tag last

Reference 19 - As it is, the elk tags are a once in a lifetime tag. the fact that it takes 20 years to get a tag is horrible. By the time a person does get a tag, it pretty much takes a person out of getting another tag.

Reference 20 - better chance at getting a license.

Reference 21 - Took 19 years to get a tag. Will have to wait 9 years to apply again. I'll be 79 years old when I apply again. Hope I can still get out and hunt. If it takes another 19 years I'll be dead.

Reference 22 - If I was guaranteed a tag. My chances of getting a tag are about like buying a lottery ticket.

Reference 23 - Be able to draw a tag within 15 years

Reference 24 - After 24 tries I give up

References 25 - Not as long of a waiting period between licenses.

Reference 26 - Will I ever get a license in my lifetime?

Reference 27 - Wait is too long

Reference 28 - drew a 2020 tag this year and it takes about 18 years preference with 9 years after you get a license to get another one, being as I am 67 years old this seems very unlikely that I could ever get another tag for South Dakota.

Reference 29 - very strongly in favor of a true preference point system. it has been shot down because people say no one would apply when they know they had no chance of getting a license the first 10 or 12 years but then hold out 5 tags that everyone is eligible for.

Reference 30 - moving out of state this fall; otherwise, I would certainly be applying

References 31 - I have many years of preference points. The problem is I am getting older and I don't know if I can do the hunt properly anymore.

References 32 - I got a 2020 cow tag.

Reference 33 - If I move back to South Dakota in the future I will most definitely apply for elk licenses

References 34 - Remove the nine year waiting period to apply after drawing a license

Reference 35 - The ability to draw another tag in this lifetime.

Reference 36 - I do not have 25 to 30 years to get a license.

Reference 37 - I am 66 years old. I probably would not get a license in the next coming years. it takes too long to get a tag for elk.

Reference 38 - I do apply for the special tags. maybe more special tags

References 39 - Making it available to non-residents. I am about to move out of state so I will no longer be able to apply.

Reference 40 - If the ability to draw a tag was better.

Reference 41 - If there is a possibility of getting a license sooner than once in 10 to 20 years.

Reference 42 - Not waiting 10 years.

Reference 43 - Decrease the number of years between licenses

References 44 - I am 69 years old and I shouldn't have had to apply for 30+ years without a obtaining a license. Your preference system sucks! I give up!

Reference 45 - If you made term every 5 years

Reference 46 - I am now 66 years old. If I have to wait another 25years to get another tag I will be 91.

Reference 47 - Probability of actually getting one.

References 48 - I moved out of state. Allow for non-resident lottery of elk tags

Reference 49 - If I could get a license in the last 10 to 15 years, I did apply.

Reference 50 - increase antlerless prairie tags.

Elk management (n=5)

Reference 1 - In my area the number of elk has gotten out of hand. But it is next to the reservation so nothing gets done about it.

Reference 2 - A huge amount of tags are being taken out of one small area so herds do not get taken care of properly.

Reference 3 - like to see some studies regarding climate change effects on herd foraging prospects as well as studies regarding the proliferation of CWD in the Black Hills elk population before applying for a second tag.

Reference 4 - Better cow to bull ratio. Had a cow tag last. Saw almost exclusively young bulls--rag horns, 2 to 3 points. Very few cows. May need to cull more younger bulls.

Reference 5 - Manage elk numbers so more hunting opportunities were available.

Individual limitations (n=18)

- *Age (n=7)*

Reference 1 - I am getting too old to hunt and have never gotten a tag. I am a life-long hills resident.

Reference 2 - I will be too old to hunt elk ethically, on foot. Not by a vehicle.

Reference 3 - I am 62 I shot a bull in 2019. with the probation period, 9 years and the number of points required to get a bull tag. I'm not hunting a bull at 85 years of age.

Reference 4 - I am 66 years old. I probably would not get a license in the next coming years.

Reference 5 - My age

Reference 6 - Being ten years younger

Reference 7 - 83 years old

- *No interest (n=1)*

Reference 1 - I don't hunt or fish.

- *Physical ability (n=5)*

Reference 1 - Good health.

Reference 2 - have had two knee replacements. If I was younger I would keep applying. As it is I don't know if I can physically do it anymore.

Reference 3 - as I get older, it gets harder to go very far in the woods

Reference 4 - My health

Reference 5 - Maybe – health

- *Social aspects (n=1)*

Reference 1 - Encouragement from elk hunting friends.

- *Time (n=1)*

Reference 1 – Availability

Other (n=7)

Reference 1 - landowners that charge for the hunting should lose any help for damages from the state period.

Reference 2 - Many out of area hunter from say rapid and Sioux falls come in and disrespect landowners in our area. The local hunters are being pushed out because of these things and all have to hunt state grounds.

Reference 3 - Just the meat, not a trophy hunter.

Reference 4 - We get some other people with some other ideas in office that are going to actually help us be able to pass on our hunting heritage and traditions instead of turn it into a commercialized hunting state that the tags get sold to the highest bidders and out of state To maximize your profit

Reference 5 - Weather

Reference 6 - If I move back to South Dakota in the future I will most definitely apply for elk licenses

Reference 7 - bad experience with a landowner name [...] and his own personal game warden named [...] in unit 3 absolutely ruined my elk hunt that I applied for 17 years to get I am done

Open-ended text responses (n=65)

83 years old

A chance of drawing one in a good unit.

After 24 tries I gave up!!!

As it is, the elk tags are a once in a lifetime tag. the fact that it takes 20 years to get a tag is horrible. By the time a person does get a tag, it pretty much takes a person out of getting another tag.

Availability

Be able to draw a tag within 15 years!!!

Being ten years younger

better chance at getting a license.

Better cow to bull ratio. Had a cow tag last. Saw almost exclusively young bulls--rag horns, 2 to 3 points. Very few cows. May need to cull more younger bulls.

CHANGES IN THE DATES, DROP THE SPLIT SEASONS

Decrease the number of years between licenses

Don't know

Good health. Encouragement from elk hunting friends.

I am 62 I shot a bull in 2019. with the probation period, 9 years and the number of points required to get a bull tag. I'm not hunting a bull at 85 years of age. Put a guaranteed license for anyone 75 or older with a probation period in between and I will hunt again.

I am 69 years old and I shouldn't have had to apply for 30+ years without a obtaining a license. Your preference system sucks! I give up!

I am now 66 years old. If I have to wait another 25years to get another tag I will be 91.

I do not have 25 to 30 years to get a license.

I don't hunt or fish.

I don't know

I got a 2020 cow tag.

I had a bad experience with a landowner name [...] and his own personal game warden named [...] in unit 3 absolutely ruined my elk hunt that I applied for 17 years to get I am done

I have drawn a 2020 tag this year and it takes about 18 years preference with 9 years after you get a license to get another one, being as I am 67 years old this seems very unlikely that I could ever get another tag for South Dakota. I am very strongly in favor of a true preference point system. It has been shot down because people say no one would apply when they know they had no chance of getting a license the first 10 or 12 years but then hold out 5 tags that everyone is eligible for.

I have many years of preference points. The problem is I am getting older and I don't know if I can do the hunt properly anymore. I have had two knee replacements. If I was younger I would keep applying. As it is I don't know if I can physically do it anymore.

I have other opportunities to hunt elk.

I moved out of state. Allow for non-resident lottery of elk tags

I was 55 when I drew my rifle tag with 12 years preference points. Drew my archery tag this year at 60 with 16 preference points. Guessing I will be too old to hunt elk ethically, on foot. Not by a vehicle.

If habitat expansion into the prairie regions adjacent to the Hills were to occur and should the herd prove stable and healthy over the coming decades, I would be more likely to apply for future tags. I'd also like to see some studies regarding climate change effects on herd foraging prospects as well as studies regarding the proliferation of CWD in the Black Hills elk population before applying for a second tag.

If I could get a license in the last 10 to 15 years, I did apply.

If I knew of a landowner that would allow hunting on their land

If I move back to South Dakota in the future I will most definitely apply for elk licenses

If I needed the meat.

If I saw a decrease in 4-wheeler trails in the Hills

If I was guaranteed a tag. My chances of getting a tag are about like buying a lottery ticket.

If I would ever get one before I die. No one should get a license on their first application until everyone with more than 5 preference points get a license. I am getting too old to hunt and have never gotten a tag. I am a lifelong hills resident.

If the ability to draw a tag was better. Manage elk numbers so more hunting opportunities were available.

If there is a possibility of getting a license sooner than once in 10 to 20 years.

If you made term every 5 years

In my area the number of elk has gotten out of hand. But it is next to the reservation so nothing gets done about it. People have put in for years and can't get a license when some others from out of the area put in and get one their first year. Curious to know why have years of preference points when they mean nothing to getting a license? People that work their whole life in a certain county or area get to watch others take trophies home to some place else when just the landowners and one or two people from the area can get a tag. People from the area should have first chance for these trophies before others. The numbers should be flipped one or two from out of the area getting tags and the majority going to local people. They are the ones that keep things going in these areas. Also, landowners that do not let anyone hunt the elk on their land should not get any help from the state if the elk ruin their property. If they let hunters take elk off the land and still have damages then the state should step in to help. Any landowners that charge for the hunting should lose any help for damages from the state period. They can use the money they make to fix things. They make 100 times what the state does on that tag. Many out of area hunter from say rapid and Sioux falls come in and disrespect landowners in our area. The local hunters are being pushed out because of these things and all have to hunt state grounds. A huge amount of tags is having to be taken out of one small area so heard do not get taken care of properly. It has been something that has been said many times but nothing is ever taken seriously with it.

Increase antlerless prairie tags.

It's been a number of years since I applied at the time I applied I believe the fee was \$5 no response no license so I quite applying.

Just the meat, not a trophy hunter.

Making it available to non-residents. I am about to move out of state so I will no longer be able to apply.

Maybe - health

Moving back to SD. I would apply again if we lived there. I recently moved from SD to WY. Wyoming has much better elk hunting.

My age

My health

Not as long of a waiting period between licenses.

Not sure

Not waiting 10 years.

Probability of actually getting one.

Quit restricting access. Lower tag prices across the board. I will not hunt big game in south Dakota anymore. Once every ten years or longer for an overpriced bull tag with restricted access is [...].

Remove the nine year waiting period to apply after drawing a license

The ability to draw another tag in this lifetime.

The odds of actually drawing a tag are very low at best. I know many residents that apply for out elk season and most have over 15 years of preference points. That is already \$300 they've invested into a tag they haven't drawn. I most likely to apply for a tag in another state with better draw odds in order to obtain a tag while I'm still physically capable of enjoying the hunt.

Took 19 years to get a tag. Will have to wait 9 years to apply again. I'll be 79 years old when I apply again. Hope I can still get out and hunt. If it takes another 19 years I'll be dead.

Wait is too long

We are moving out of state this fall; otherwise, I would certainly be applying.

We get some other people with some other ideas in office that are going to actually help us be able to pass on our hunting heritage and traditions instead of turn it into a commercialized hunting state that the tags get sold to the highest bidders and out of state To maximize your profit it's actually pretty close to being cheaper to hunt out of state somewhere else then it is to hunt in South Dakota or fish

Weather

well, as I am 66 years old. I probably would not get a license in the next coming years. it takes too long to get a tag for elk. but I do apply for the special tags. maybe more special tags, I guess. as I get older, it gets harder to go very far in the woods. but I do have two young boys to help.

WILL BE TOO OLD TO HUNT ELK AFTER THE 9 YEAR WAITING PERIOD

Will I ever get a license in my lifetime?

Appendix C: Additional Comments

The views expressed in survey comments are the views of the commenting respondent(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks or the author(s) of this report. Neither the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks nor the author(s) guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of any opinion or view expressed in respondents' comments. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks reserves the right, but not obligation, to remove at its discretion any language which discloses personally identifiable information about respondents or any other individual, as well as language which is obscene, profane, offensive, malicious, discriminatory, defamatory or otherwise unlawful.

Note: Respondents' comments did not have to be specific to any question asked on the survey, but rather they were free to provide additional comments at the end. Text which appears inside brackets [...] has been added to clarify respondents' reference to specific survey questions, to indicate where a comment was not legible, or in some cases to indicate where personally identifying information has been omitted. Comments presented here are organized by the landowner and elk hunting samples.

Final question: Closing Comments?

Landowner sample (responses n=125)

A few years ago, GFP provided cable to be placed or installed on the perimeter fence. The cable has worked amazingly well to prevent or reduce damage to the fence from elk & deer crossing. Just this last weekend I saw 3 bull elk grazing on my property by one of the dams then one by one they jumped over the fence when they were finished. Thank you GFP for the great service you do for wildlife and the general public.

A landowner should be allowed an any elk license if they have elk usage on their property. #21: number of tags should be determined by %of elk usage.

All CRP should be public hunting, this would greatly increase the use of hunting to all those that love hunting but can't afford it.

Also have a daughter & son in law that live on the ranch.

Any landowner with elk damage and is paid by the state for damages should not receive free elk tags or sell elk hunts. If there selling hunts and getting paid by the state for damages they are getting paid 2 times and if these landowners are receiving free tags they should allow other people with paid tags to hunt on this land for free!

As a smaller landowner we all feel our losses more than larger landowners. Smaller landowners like me 320 ac. need a scale of loss different than large landowners. Thank you for all you have done this year. I will work with you in the future. I am surrounded by irrigated corn. A lot of broken wire & posts trashed new trees that get broken and grass loss. I will apply for a landowner antlerless cow elk and hope to get it. At least have a little meat for the family.

As we move forward, I think it is important to realize the GFP wardens have far too much authority. When managing elk and working with landowners to do so it is good to recognize this relationship is important. Landowners already feel threatened by the GFP and want nothing to do with them. Please understand if you would like to have more elk and more opportunity to manage them, the key is to reduce the power of the game wardens & the GFP.

At CSP LO Elk meeting, the elk access program was said to have expanded. We voiced interest in signing up but the WCO has never come out, said he would but no show!

By issuing landowner own land, allowing owners to sell the tag(s) to any party in or out of state and proof of harvest success to repeat tag issuing on subsequent years you could prevent unsubstantiated complaints and give reimbursement for unrealized damages and shift the financial burden off the tax payers to manage the problem lands.

Currently, elk do not reside on our property, at least that I have seen. I was told several years ago that a bull elk was sighted at dusk, along the highway next to our property approximately 1.5 miles from our headquarters but that is unsubstantiated. Further, a neighboring rancher found a nice set of 6x6 sheds on his property, just a few miles from us. Have they ventured this far? I presume they have, even though I have not seen elk here. As far as I know, there has been no damage caused by them.

Determination about reservation land with non-resident landowners is or will it be just like the deer situation?

Direct contact with the landowners would offer a better opportunity to know what is going on with the elk herds, winter kill, predators, drought conditions of the land, water shortages for livestock. If the landowner has raised a herd of elk (or deer) the landowner should receive at least one free license per year providing hunting is allowed in their unit that year.

Do not have elk in South Tripp County. We have enough deer damage at times and I have heard elk are worse. There are elk at large in Cherry County, NE to our south to my knowledge non have moved into our area..

Do not live there, lease to a rancher.

Elk are not needed on my land. We have plenty of wildlife now.

Elk conservation is no elk - not going to let any conservation officer set on my land to count elk. Remember GFP has no landownership and pay no tax - our wildlife has been overrun with coyotes. No GFP showed up to execute them- our deer population has dwindled this year because no fawns I have feed and the best habitat, keep your elk out of here.

Elk do a lot of damage to the livestock industry. They carry virus and have a pink eye virus that infects cattle. They destroy fences and haystacks. They put added finance stress on the average ranch. There is not any upside to the elk for livestock producers.

Elk hunting should be regulated so that the population of elk do not inflict damage to the land. The properties in our area have various soils and must be protected as we have drought in many areas and do not want or need unnecessary damages. Especially elk because they aren't so native to our Western SD area. Buffalo have enough numbers as seen around and they need to be regulated. The land in our area is used for cattle ranching with some farming for people to make a living and provide a substantial food base for our country, so therefore, it needs to be protected from over-use and damage of any kind.

Elk move a lot and don't stick around long when people are about. Small land tracks are tough to hunt for that reason. When disturbed they travel. Bulls head to where the cows are.

Elk should never be in cropland areas like where I live near Oakton. Crop damage would be like having free roaming herds of cows. I already have deer damage in the thousands every year not counting traffic accidents and tires on the pickup that are punctured by sheds. No elk ever!

Every time the elk leave the cover of the trees someone along the highway has to stop to look causing the elk to turn tail and head back to across the fence usually a different spot from where they crossed before. It sure would help the mindset of the people fixing the fence if someone of the landowners would receive a tag, even though the elk aren't around when the season is open.

For landowners - how to be a good steward to increase & attract an elk herd.

For landowners to open up hunting on their land for youth and handicap.

GFP needs to stop the predator bounty program.

Give out 5-10 licenses to landowners and let us select who we want hunting on our land. After all, we are the ones who feed them and repair their damage.

Glad to be asked & appreciated the opportunity to provide input. My family would like to improve habitat to attract more elk - probably sounds unusual but like many SD's we enjoy seeing them. Excellent job on survey structure.

Good job! I highly recommend promoting elk watching and not just hunting.

Grant licenses to the people with the most preference points numerically. I applied for over 20 years without success while first time applicants get drawn - I have quit now due to my age & ability to hunt elk.

Greater emphasis should be placed on landowner tolerance of elk number as opposed to recreational opportunities. One person's recreation should not come at the expense of another's livelihood. A better license preference system should be established giving more preference to more proven damage. I work for an operation where 70-100 head of elk have been observed and filmed on the property grazing on crops and nobody in the family successfully drew a landowner tag. That is wrong! I also strongly believe license fees should be increased to defray the costs of reimbursing landowners for the damage they sustain for running elk on their land. Landowners within management units who are sustaining elk damage should have greater input into elk population management objectives in their respective units but as a collective group as opposed to individually.

Have never seen elk on my land. None have ever been reported to me. Survey is incomplete.

How SD GFP would help manage elk on private land if the elk are coming from land preserves, state or federal lands or tribal land within WRA.

Hunting fees the GFP charges are ridiculous. I feed the wildlife with no compensation & hunters get pissed when I don't allow hunting. GFP should set aside 1 BILLION dollars for the damage the elk will do in the WRA. If I was taking in cattle I can receive \$50 month/cow, GFP should pay the same for elk. Every hay yard in West River will need to be rebuilt, maintenance of border and cross fences will require more time for repairs, gathering livestock when they get out because of elk tearing down the fence. Is GFP going to pay me for my time for all this? We both know that answer and if you don't, it will be a Hell no! Keep the elk off of my place.

I allow placement of elk to allow herd population to increase (start) on the property.

I am a landowner in Lyman County. To my knowledge we have not seen any elk on our property.

I am a nonresident with minimal acreage but support an increased elk herd in South Dakota.

I am actually pursuing a game plot on 30 acres of drainage and tree cover for game birds (pheasant, grouse, partridge, doves). This same area may be of interest for elk as well as the whitetail, mule deer, antelope and turkeys that pass through frequently.

I am filling this out for my mother-in-law with whom I co-own the land in WRA. The demographics are for me, not her (she received the survey).

I am in favor of local (SD residents) having first choice to hunt.

I am retired and lease my land out for ag purposes. If my land was overrun by elk I don't think my lesser would want to pay me what I am getting now or not lease at all. My future depends upon my lease money.

I believe anyone who owns 40 acres of land is eligible for landowner licenses to hunt their own land for big game.

I believe GFP does a good job of managing wildlife.

I believe if I am to support any number of elk, deer & antelope, the latter 2 of which probably number in the range of 200 to 500 during any given year simply because I live part of the year in another state should not prohibit entitlement to a few or even or even one license. This wildlife eats as much of my forage as the rancher next door who personally declares SD residency but may spend even less time in SD. I could own 50 or 750 thousand acres and not draw a nonresident deer tag to hunt on my land for 3, 4 or 8 years yet I feed them my forage every day!

I believe it is economically important for an increased elk population wherever the habitat will provide the needs. As a lifetime resident of Colorado, I have seen the highly economic pay off of selling licenses to hunters, particularly out of state willing to spend big bucks. Some no doubt South Dakota.

I do not live on or near this land - it is leased to someone.

I do not want elk in the WRA area. We are already carrying a heavy burden with deer between feed, crop losses, damages to hay supplies, antlers in tires.

I don't feel it's right for a landowner to charge to hunt and take financial compensation from SDGFP!

I don't keep up on this so can't say one way or the other.

I don't want elk on the prairie. We have enough damage from deer already. The crop, hay and fence destruction with elk is way more costly than any benefit that comes with having elk.

I feel that the 240 acre requirement for landowner eligibility is strictly arbitrary. It should be based on an elk use system i.e. my land is 160 acres but I see a very high elk use days. I feel that elk hunting in the BH is a tremendous world class opportunity. It's unfortunate that more don't get the opportunity. Selfishly, I want more landowner access to licenses, however, I know guys that get the tags every year and that's excessive considering the extreme demand. Please see earlier comment regarding ranching for wildlife perhaps some %(10-20) of landowner tags should go to ranching for wildlife.

I have found over the years as a small landowner that landowners of large holdings, that get deer, elk, antelope tags, would come on our land in Custer or Meade Counties and hunt as we did not live on the properties. Trail cameras verified this.

I have hunted and killed several elk in Montana. I would like to have elk on my land to harvest in South Dakota.

I have hunted elk near the Cloud Peak Wilderness area in Wyoming. It seems that SD has too many applications for the number of elk available so I have chosen not to apply for a license here. I have lived on the same place all my life. 71 years seeing an elk or mountain lion was very rare. In the late 80's or early 90's we had a few elk and mt. lions. Then in the late 90's & early 2000's we had a lot of elk and many mt lions. Now few elk but still too many mt. lions. The elk were over hunted 10 or 12 years ago!

I haven't spent much time on the ranch in the last 20 years. I'm now retired and might make more visits. I appreciate you folks protecting both the elk population and also trying to help landowners as well. It's a fine line to help elk population and protect private land. Keep up the good work.

I may have not helped much. I left a few questions unanswered. I don't have a lot of strong opinions regarding elk hunting in SD because we don't see any elk here. But Thanks for asking me to participate.

I never joined work in program because I want to know who is on my land. I have land on both sides of the new school.

I really don't want elk around on my property. We already have enough deer (destroying our crops) that you are not controlling well enough. What little corn I have I figured I lose \$2000 to \$3000 a year from deer -- I can't imagine elk. The fact that we see groups of 40-60-80 deer is disgusting. To me, deer are nothing but crop predators at the present numbers. Adding elk is just a negative to add to it all. Also, you should be paying people \$10 to do this survey in my opinion. I let hunters in but you can only let so many in for safety purposes. If you end up taking care of the elk populations like you have the deer, it will be just another thing for us to contend with.

I think overall, SDGFP does a poor job of taking care of our resources. The fishing regulations are not customer friendly and have multiple lengths etc. for each area. CSP used to have excellent elk populations, but now you can visit the park and never see any elk. Mountain lions should be declined, a predator and killed on sight. They are partly responsible for the elk population decrease.

I think South Dakota hunters should only be able to apply for one elk tag per year and also the Custer State Park tag.

I think that if a landowner is experiencing damage to property due to too high of an elk population on his property he should be able to request extra licenses to be disbursed by him or her to whoever that they want to hunt on their property. The number would have to be determined by the local Game Warden that is familiar with the property and the actual number of elk on said property.

I think that landowner preference should include being able to transfer the hunting license to their friends or business associates. I believe this should also be extended to other hunting species.

I think you should be able to apply for license if you own 160 acres at least not 240.

I took a friend out to fill a cow tag in December. In a 2 mile radius I saw over 350 elk. Yes, they were bunched for winter, but this is one of many in this area. You wonder why people are fed up with elk and the GFP. Talk is cheap and that's all we are receiving, just talk.

I wish you would go back to over the counter purchase for deer & elk license in the Hills areas.

I would like for landowners to get a tag that they can use or sell, give away or whatever they choose.

I would like to be able to transfer a depredation tag (landowner) to a hunter of my choice as that would be a tool of reward to someone that helps me on occasion without pay and would solve the problem of friends who "don't draw but apply often" and those who draw but don't have permission to hunt on private land. And this would be directed also to WR Big Game (deer and antelope).

I would like to see South Dakota people get more elk licenses and not have to wait so long to get them.

I would like to see the elk management plan for SD to continue and grow & thrive for the benefit first and foremost for South Dakotans and to promote hunting for out of state residents thru higher licensing fees. In Colorado, it became more and more difficult for residents to draw licenses as more and more nonresident tags were sold to the increase revenue. A properly managed program should still allow a greater percentage of resident tags be made available with an extra or 2nd draw made available to non-residents, non-landowner.

I'd like to see elk expand in the prairie unit - particularly Gregory County. Landowners need to be educated on the realities of elk damage: fences, crops, disease...

I'm 85 years old and don't hunt anymore.

If I don't hunt myself why can't I let my son-in-law or grandson or daughter from either out of state or in state fill my tag? Somebody needs to harvest animals.

If it affects the population of deer and if they bring more diseases to the deer population.

If landowners get a license based on number of acres and depredation they should allow limited hunting on their private land (maybe the asking & getting permission from owners).

If the elk population spreads on its own, so be it. I don't want to see GF&P transplanting elk populations as they are destructive.

If they promote (farmers) assistance and damage to problems arising from population and is agreeable then be ok. Since I don't live there little hard to answer questions.

If you have 2nd & 3rd drawings for elk, how come it seems to take so long to get an elk tag when you get kicked out of the first drawing?

If you have a limited budget and logistical difficulties in getting information about the West River Area and other prairie units, why are you adding more units?

In 1982 I drew a CSP elk license. That year to my memory there was 62 bull licenses. The habitat in the park is still there why not increase the elk herd. There has been very poor herd management since.. There is no excuse for 8 or 9 permits each year.

In Jones County there is a growing elk population. I work for the county and regularly get the opportunity to enjoy seeing them. For the most part, they maintain residence on Ted Turner's land. I have only seen them once not on his property. The number of acres that he owns, gives them more than ample range to remain safe and away from any normal public hunting. It seems it would be in his benefit for higher dollar pay hunting on his property. I know he gets a ridiculous amount to hunt deer on his property. I know of no local who have or could afford to pay for a deer hunt, let alone an elk hunt. I know that occasionally they do leave his property but I don't know if it would be enough to control the herd. I would love to see numbers to allow a season out here, but I don't think it would benefit anyone besides Turner at the time being. They are amazing to watch, me and my family have been enjoying them for years, would be nice to enjoy one in the freezer!

Elk hunting Sample (responses n=440)

100% for landowner tags, when they hunt ground that they own! I understand hunting season may not coincide with the time frame that elk are on property but owning 180 acres in non-elk country shouldn't allow you to draw a tag. I have a friend whose family owns 180 acres 2 minutes outside of Custer, elk never set foot on that property. He doesn't deserve a tag.

2019 was the most rewarding elk season I have ever spent in 40 years. I saw large numbers of mature bulls and heard the same from every hunter I visited with. We are impressed with your management of our incredible shared resource. Good Job.

A 10 year wait until you apply again it took me 23 years to draw now can't apply for 10 years it's a once-in-your-life hunt and it's in your state

A different format for license allocation, I believe raising the tag cost, would generate additional revenue to assist landowners that sustain damage, increase tag numbers and set a harvest limit as the mountain lion season utilizes, set an antler point restriction to 4 or 5 point bulls, you're going to substantially increase revenue, get more South Dakota hunters afield and kill the same target number of elk. There are a great number of South Dakota elk hunters that seek out of state tags to get us afield hunting elk, a great majority would happily spend \$500+ annually for a South Dakota elk tag, even with a harvest limit. A great number of us resident hunters weren't born into a family with land or have deep pocketbooks that afford us to buy land to increase our odds, we instead put in the time and effort required to be successful on public land.

A family member recently got a Black Hills Elk archery tag after waiting for 16 years so it is very likely to be a once in a lifetime tag. SDGFP decided to start a Black Hills Archery deer season for the exact same time. You could not walk on to a single ridge without running into another hunter, whether it be another elk hunter or more often a deer hunter. Either that or there would be one or more camp sites set up. All of this was bad enough but not as bad as you would just get set up with a possible chance at an elk and all of a sudden there would be a whole herd of recreational side by sides/four wheelers going through (every one of them with a cow call and a bugle) to, either by accident or on purpose, mess up our once-in-a-lifetime hunt. I have to believe there are far more deer hunting opportunities available than there are elk hunting opportunities. I don't understand why they would need to be overlapping seasons. Very discouraging!

A hard look needs to be taken at our walk in and hunting access programs in this state. The opportunity on most of these lands is mediocre at best for all types of hunting, and the out of state hunting numbers are showing it especially if you remove pheasant hunters on private lands, most of which are commercial in nature shooting pen raised birds. This type of hunting has its place but should not be looked at in the scope of wildlife management. Landowners have no reason to improve the habitat and nothing seems to be done about any assessment of these paid for acres. South Dakota hunters have no reason to continue funding this. We need a plan that makes landowners value hunters as a way to create income to compensate for any losses due to the wildlife, and also have both parties understand their part in the continued wildlife resource we have.

A larger more publicly accessible prairie elk herd

A majority of the elk populations are very close to Wyoming. Whatever decisions are made need to be in conjunction with Wyoming state game and fish for their hunting units that are along the South Dakota and Wyoming border areas

About 1/2 the landowners in Unit 3 shouldn't be considered for tags every year. They don't meet 1/2 the requirements to get a tag. They are cheating non landowners out of tags. If they get a landowner tag make them hunt on private land!

About 30 acres of the 40 that I own are managed to attract deer and elk use. I also have on occasion had antelope and bighorn sheep on my property. Currently the 30 acres mentioned is being farmed with a winter wheat crop, and in the future it will be seeded to alfalfa and alsike clover.

Age and preference points should be considered in drawing

All in all, I believe the number of Elk in South Dakota should be proportionate to the ability to maintain their health and having a trophy bull hunting experience. I've always been an advocate of harvesting mature animals. Also, the number of tags given out landowner vs. non-landowner should be proportionate to how many acres are being hunted publicly vs. privately. Landowner tags should only be for private land owned by that landowner.

All landowner tags should only be good for their own land. The way everything else is done with the draw is fair in my opinion.

Allow/work with landowners to create more habitat and even possibly 'elk-farms' to improve recreational hunting while preventing harm to ag land.

Although I did not draw a 2019 SD elk license, I was selected for the Wind Cave Elk Reduction program in February 2020. This kind of management might be useful for other areas where elk need to be reduced.

Although I like to see large numbers of elk on or around my property, I know that other neighboring landowners do not - primarily due to fence damage, etc. For those landowners in my area that have the large concentrations of elk, it would probably be the most acceptable to them if they and their families were able to get multiple licenses to harvest cows or an occasional bull.

an increase in elk on the prairie only give landowners another opportunity to charge hunter more fees. Every elk heard on private land will be pay to hunt only. I don't think it right to wait all your life for a tag and then have to pay a landowner \$6-7000. to shoot one.

antlerless seasons need to be early in the season and antlered late in the season (pre and post rut) to allow the older age class animals (to get another season of breeding in) and for the cows to be taken out prior to breeding as not to waste energy by the bulls breeding a cow that will be hunted soon. This also allows for a faster calf recovery rate by allowing for more calves to hit the ground. Also, by eliminating the cows early, it lowers the lesser bulls (genetically) chances of covering more cows to pass along fewer desirable genetics. Range management 101 with our large scale operations with over 30 species in Texas, not difficult to implement in SD and actually provides more available hunting allocations in just a couple seasons.

Any person including landowners that successfully draw any 1st Drawing elk tag (Any Elk or Antlerless Elk) should be not be eligible to apply for 10 years. Greater incentive's for landowners to enroll land into CHAP program. Create an access program where landowners allow hunters to cross but not hunt private land to access public hunting land.

Anyone who has accumulated 20 preference points (or anyone who currently has 20 or more), should automatically get an elk tag. I know guys who have drawn at 12 and 14 years of preference points. The guy who drew at 12 years could draw again in 12 years and have 2 opportunities to hunt when people with over 20 preference points hasn't had 1 tag yet. Over the course of 20 years, age and health may make it impossible for someone who finally does draw.

Anyway, the state could do an incentive program to encourage landowners to allow hunters to take Bulls on their property. It seems landowners will let you take a cow but want to be compensated for a bull. Unfortunately, most people can't afford the \$5000+ fee.

Applicants should never get a tag on the first try until all multiple preference point applicants have received a tag. Anyone over 60 should get at least one tag in a lifetime if they have more than one preference point. The downed timber in the hills creates an obstacle for anyone over 60 to negotiate. I am unsure if I will apply again due to the difficulty in traversing the hills due to downed timber and the fact that there are houses all over the hills in historical hunting spots.

Applicants with excessive preference points need better odds to draw tags.

appreciate the efforts to manage SD elk herds.....the quality of the elk herds has improved over the last number of years.

As a landowner of 240 or more acres with elk on and off my property throughout the year with the elk use days as they are I think I should be able to get an elk license every year, the elk may not live on my property all year round but are there enough I don't think it would be fair to make us landowners hunt only our land because elk are very migratory animals and as you know the elk move around a lot we might not catch them when they are on our land even though they frequent the area, it is the right thing to let us hunt the entire unit the elk travel the entire unit, leave the licenses the way they are.

As a resident landowner, I do not want to see tags made available to non-resident landowners, as this will drive up the value of property and possibly close more privately owned land to public hunting.

As for elk seasons in CSP you really need to find a solution to getting the people with the most preference points their elk first. In time those numbers will decrease and the elk population would increase slightly.

As I have been applying for a elk permit most of my life (67 years) and have accumulated some preference points in the system (have never drawn a tag), I would like improvements to the system to give more older SD Hunters a better chance of obtaining a license to hunt their home state before they are too old to hunt elk. This would be before we start giving landowners additional permits further reducing the opportunities that the non-landowners in South Dakota hunter have. Thank you

As I stated earlier I would really like to see the elk herd expanded in western South Dakota. If that means allotting some tags to appease landowners and to reduce conflicts I am in full support.

Before a landowner receives payment for depredation, they should allow public hunting. Not paid hunting on their land. At least allowing so many publics non pay hunters on land.

Better management of mountain lions

Better management of mountain lions. mountain lions are the number one reason why the numbers went down in Custer State Park the Black Hills.

Black Hills National Forest supports elk herds much more than any private land invasion. While landowners' concerns need to be addressed, it should not be the only consideration when setting numbers for elk populations. They knew elk and deer and turkey and all forms of wildlife were part of the story when setting up shop in the National Forest and theirs are not the only interest in Wildlife management.

By giving landowners preference to elk tags, you have created a situation where wealthy out of state residents are buying up 240 acre plots, then registering vehicles in state and receiving a small amount of mail at the property in order to "qualify" as a resident landowner. Therefore, these residents are edging out hunters who actually live in the state full time. This and the very limited number of licenses available, are creating a situation where hunting elk in our home state is a once in a lifetime event for most hunters.

Calf mortality, over the years I have been blessed to hunt twice and assist a few other years with friend's elk hunts and it sure seems like each year I see less cows with healthy calves. I hope this is being talked about.

Change in unit boundaries so that not everyone is applying in one unit, H2. If portions of H2 were added to other units it may make it more desirable to apply in said units.

Change so landowners can get a tag every year and they should have to pay just like everyone else. It takes some of us 16 plus year to get a tag it is [expletive] that they own enough land and get a tag every year and [expletive] about the elk damage and they won't let anyone else hunt.

Change the drawing percentage. It took me 20+ years before I drew a Rifle Bull Black Hills Elk tag. Should not have to wait that long to draw a tag. Now I have to wait another 9 years to apply. If it takes another 20+ years to draw a Bull Elk tag I'm going to be too old to go.

Change the landowner tags to multiple antlerless tags. Too many landowners have bought land in the Black Hills with a specific purpose of getting a license every year for a bull.

Change the lottery system of drawing a tag so after eight years of applying you automatically receive a tag

Change your deer hunting draw system back to how it was.

Change your drawing system so people who have over twenty preference points get a tag

Citizens with substantial number of preference points should get more consideration for elk tags

Clean up the outstanding preferences before issuing license to new applicants. Numbers don't mean anything if a person has 15+ preference points and never can draw a license.

Completely do away with a preference point system. We will never catch up its a complete disappointment. A true draw system would be better for the future of hunting and make an elk tag a once in a lifetime system.

Continue to keep up on CWD surveillance /occurrence as it can become a major mortality factor. I like the current population goals but would like to see both populations (Black Hills and CSP) toward the high end of target populations. Keep up the good scientific work to guide your management strategy.

Could the revenue from cattle grazing be offset by fees too sportsman? This would allow more vegetation and ultimately higher carrying capacity of elk and thus more license. More needs to be done once you hit 20 years in draw. You are aging, obviously put in time, and definitely deserve a reasonable chance at a tag before you die.

Create a Ranching for Wildlife tag system for limited hunters, on private land to reduce number on private land if there is so much damage. The possibility of a lottery draw for private access would increase applications. Pay the farmers for this opportunity.

Current habitat structure within the Black Hills National Forest is driving a large portion of our game species - including elk - onto private lands. There are several factors causing this, including over-harvest, past wildfires, and dramatically increasing at/Ut use throughout the Black Hills National Forest. SDGFP needs to work with the Black Hills National Forest to address this issue, or this problem will only intensify. Specifically, need to close more roads and stop over-cutting!

Custer State Park tags should be issued to residents with over 20 years preference only. Too many residents will get to old to hunt before they ever draw. I had 24 years in this year and still nothing.

Disability hunters season only.

Do a better job of educating the young in our state given the push by the PETA type liberal press in this country for long term viability of hunting in general.

Do better letting the public, SDGFP staff, and SDGFP Commissioners know that some landowners take zero payment from the SDGFP for wildlife damage and are happy with the opportunity to be able to apply for an elk tag. Also, there should be SDGFP payment made available to landowners that have wildlife damage and would like to receive payment for the damage. If you take away the landowner elk tag opportunity, it will be difficult to maintain the current elk population because the landowner elk tolerance will decrease. Thank you for taking time to listen.

Do not commercialize elk hunting.

Do not let land lessors apply for an elk license

Don't over think the management. I know it is not at all simple but you have your number to keep the herd healthy. Landowner tags should only be valid on the land they own and should be limited to 1 any sex tag and if depredation is needed it would be antlerless only.

Don't show on maps where the elk population is higher than other places. It takes away from people who put a lot of time in scouting spending days and weeks. Just to have someone look at a map and then go road hunt that area and ruin the ethical hunters experience.

Drop the current lottery and award tags to applicants with the most preference points first.

Drop the split seasons

Due to lower success rate during the archery season I think more tags should be allocated. For instance, in unit one you could take 5 tags from the rifle season and add 20 to archery season. Then the seasons could be split 20 for Sep 1-15 and 20 for Sep 16-30. As it currently stands it will take 35 to 45 years for a person newly in the system to draw an archery elk tag. As someone with over 17 points I would still be in favor of totally doing away with points for elk. It is the only fair system.

Easier check-in procedures and locations for harvested elk. Posted and/or printed information on manned check-in stations in the hunting units and seasons. Increased number of locations to have deer and elk tested for CWD.

Efforts to increase the number of elk in Custer State Park with the goal to reinstate the antlerless season in the park.

Elk are big animals. I am not sure landowners are going to tolerate them much outside the Black Hills. Continue your surveys and continue to try to improve the SDGFP/ and landowner/hunter relationship. I also realize you cannot please everyone. Good luck.

Elk conservation, in my opinion, should be based exclusively on the health and benefit of the herd. I understand landowners may suffer, but ultimately they are stewards of the land and the wildlife that use it. The land will still be there, as will, God willing, the wildlife that uses it long after the landowner is dead and gone.

Elk Habit, population density and landowner understanding of the management plan should be the heart of the plan.

Elk hunting in Black Hills on public land is very high on many peoples lists and is more than likely a once in a lifetime event, I would like to see that change so more of the general public have a chance to do this. I don't have anything against landowners and am friends some in the Black Hills but feel they get way too much any elk tags awarded to them.

Elk hunting in South Dakota is a great opportunity however the difficulty in drawing a tag as a resident is very disheartening. Sometimes by the time you actually draw a tag your age and physical capabilities are a major limitation. I do understand the landowners desire to automatically receive an elk tag I do feel that other states do a much better job at allowing access and hunting opportunities.

Elk Hunting in the Black Hills is a wonderful opportunity for SD residents to experience. The more we can manage for the general public the better.

Elk hunting in the hills has become too confusing and complex if you don't know anyone who owns land or has knowledge of the hills as I live 400 miles away and because of difficulty involved, I prefer to apply out of state on a guided hunt, especially now dictated by my age.

Elk hunting opportunities in this state are currently very limited, the concept of landowner preference should not be in place in any format for elk hunting in SD.

Elk management seems to be geared towards landowner preferences. How many landowners actually own the property vs. lessees? Lessees especially those with Forest Service leases shouldn't be allowed any more preference than anybody else. Preference system should be a true preference lottery vs. the makeshift system currently used.

Equal number of tags handed out between west river and east river. Seems like more east river people get tags due to more population.

Everyone needs to protect private property rights. Need to manage all land to protect what it will produce use half, save half keep private property in private land this pays for schools, roads, all services we've come to enjoy.

Farming or ranching is a risk like any other business. We should help to alleviate elk damage to property but landowners should also be willing to allow hunters to hunt the elk that they claim are doing the damage

Finding a better method for drawing licenses. A person should not have to wait for 15+ years to draw a tag. Preference points should be given each year without having to pay for them.

Focus on removal of the predators (mountain lions) to get the Elk and Deer populations back!!

For 68 years I have sat and watched what I would call the mismanagement of wildlife to basically be controlled by the farmers and ranchers. Which are being paid for by the hunters. Basically, if they are having problems with wildlife they have better be fully committed to letting people hunt and or letting SDGFP come in and remove them. Not put stipulations down and then have their hands out looking for a payment! They all say they love living on the land and managing it...well wildlife is just part of it!

Get rid of the cubed point system for at least 50% of the tags available and eliminate at least 50% of landowner's preference system for elk. Hunter recruitment is down and this is preventing more people from applying. Demand for elk tags is very high, but tags are almost unattainable for anyone who doesn't have 20 preference points or owns land in the Hills. I go to Colorado every year and pay big money to do so. You could charge more for the tags by eliminating landowner preference, adding a few nonresident tags to drive revenue (10% to 15% of tags at \$800 to \$1,200 per tag) and then set aside half of the tags for purely random draw to give people a chance at a tag with less than 11 preference points. I think you lost an opportunity to improve recruitment and the drive for future generations to conserve the awesome resource we have in SD. Overall management of the elk herds has been fantastic and made the SD elk herd the envy of a lot of other states.

GFP is doing a terrible job for allowing non landowner hunters to hunt, in all big game systems they use. The deck is stacked against the no. Landowners and pushing out the everyday hunter. SD GFP is heading toward a pay to play system. And I wonder why I still hunt here

Go back to the old draw system it shows in draw results all the ones with the highest preference points sent drawing many tags pretty sad when you have 30 years in and you can't pull a tag. Issue more cow tags on the prairie I have heard it's out of control in Harding county I'm sure the landowners would like some cow tags they already get the bull tags

Have meetings on the elk issue in western South Dakota. This is where problems occur not east river. To get feedback people who have a viewpoint will attend

Help the landowner that has to deal with elk getting into hay, breaking fences, eating grass

Herd managed to the upper end of the holding numbers instead of the lower end.

Highly reduce nonresident tags. Reduce landowner tags to make more tags available for general public. Encourage landowners to allow general hunting. These suggestions are for deer and elk. Thank you!

Historically elk habitat extended across America. There is ample habitat across east river as well. Have we considered this? I drive across the hills from Strandburg to Southshore often and there is vast prairie, creek bottoms, and fields that would likely support both Mule Deer and elk. I realize landowner issues are the main issue but it would be wonderful to see populations thrive in their native habitats.

Honestly, I think you are doing an excellent job managing the elk herd! Thank you!

How the drawing is. Unfair to people like me who have 20 some years in and other getting it on second drawing

Hunting is becoming a rich person sport. Guaranteeing tags to big landowners is only going to increase the number of rich people buying land in South Dakota to guarantee them a license while the average person has to wait 15-20 years. The landowners will continue to get more tags and the average person will have to wait longer and longer. If the landowners have elk problems, then they need to be more open to allowing hunting on their land - otherwise the problems aren't as bad as they are made out to be.

Hunting season was very short and hard to work around with work and school schedules. I was only able to take a couple days in the given allotted timeframe and on my last day I had to take what I could get resulting in a disappointing hunt. I think there needs to be extended hunting time and/or time split between a few different months.

I am familiar with the system for East River Deer tags and would support a system similar for Black Hills Elk tags. I do not want to see people buying land for the sole purpose of having land they can elk hunt on every year!

I am in an area when deer population is doing a lot of damage to crops and fences. I hope you control the elk population better.

I am in favor of opening more opportunities to recreational hunting as well as elk viewing opportunities for all people, not just landowners. I don't feel it necessary to give landowners in the Black Hills the opportunity to hunt elk every year just because they were lucky enough to be born into a ranching family with elk, or those rich enough to buy enough land in the Black Hills when others have to spend years accruing preference points with little statistical hope of drawing an any elk tag. If landowners really have issues with an over-abundance of elk then it seems appropriate that they receive cow elk tags because the only way to decrease the herd and reduce elk damage is by removing cow elk, not bulls. I really believe that SD will be losing revenue as people spend their money traveling to other states to hunt elk because the opportunities here in SD are limited.

I am not a veteran. That hunt in North Dakota for veterans in the national park is amazing. South Dakota should definitely do something similar.

I am not convinced that the depredation hunt in Wind Cave during January and February is an effective means of population control, the weather conditions are tough that time of the year and the animals are already stressed due to the winter. Requiring hunters to pack out the animal is a huge ask, especially if the snow is deep. Perhaps the animal could be removed via snowmobile or

horseback by a GFP or Wind Cave official if the snow is deep, hunters would be required to give GPS coordinates as soon as the animal is harvested to the officials for removal. Another option would be additional cow tags during the normal seasons or a depredation hunt during a different time of the year could also be more effective.

I am not qualified to answer a lot of these questions at the moment. I am not in the Hills enough to see what is happening. I spent 16 days bow hunting H3 last year and was very satisfied with the number of Elk and the opportunities I had. I thought the population was "healthy" maybe could even possibly afford to give a few more tags. I can see how delicate of a situation that can be, as I can see pretty clearly how more hunters last year could have quickly changed my view on this. A little hunting pressure can push, quiet, and change elk in a hurry! the numbers seemed good then.

I am very pleased with the quality of elk hunting in the Black Hills. Anyone willing to get out of their vehicle should have a successful hunt. License holders should also realize that not everyone is guaranteed a nice 6 point. I believe that the populations should only be controlled by antlerless tags. I am also pleased with cubing the current preference points for people with over 10 points. Please consider cubing people who have 20+ points. A hunter who starts applying in their late 20's shouldn't have to wait until their 50's for this tag!

I appreciate your concerns about landowners in elk areas. Some landowners are more tolerant of elk than others. Increasing landowner's ability or opportunity to harvest elk will increase tolerance and opportunities for non-landowners. Access will be easier to obtain if landowners have opportunities to harvest elk themselves.

I appreciate your hard work!

I believe 50% of tags going to landowners only is not fair, especially in units that are mostly public land. And if a landowner is given any preference over others, they should only be able to hunt their own land.

I believe a limited draw youth only cow elk season would benefit hunter recruitment.

I believe all landowner licensees should only be Allowed to hunt on their own land and for antlerless only. The restriction of hunting on your own property is much like the landowner deer license. The purpose of the landowner license is to manage animals on their own property.

I believe elk could be hunted better. I think there are more elk than believed. I also don't want to have to many elk that would destroy the land, what the land will support.

I believe half of the licenses for landowners is enough. If there is a need to reduce the amount of elk and you increase the number of licenses that would also increase the landowner tags. I own land and would expect to have an increased opportunity to draw a tag but the general public should also have the right to draw a tag.

I believe I have 14 preference points. I am 62 years of age. I wonder if I will get a tag before I get to old to hunt.

I believe it is very important to maintain resident only ability to elk hunt in SD, this includes special 'lottery' draws as well. The attention to land-owner tags is disappointing, unless allowance is given to non-landowners the ability to hunt the land-owners land. I am also going to state a very controversial stance here, but also believe that the Preference Point system must be looked at more fairly. Preference points, especially when a person gets 15-20 years, should have priority.

I believe SD GFP is doing a great job I wish there was a little more done to improve the trophy bull levels. I am even for an antler point limit to allow younger bulls a chance to grow up I believe it would help with mature bull availability in the years to follow after it was put on. I hunt almost entirely on or near my land but at the same time the elk that come to my land go all over so I am not

for the only own land permit I believe with the way elk move that it would limit land owners if at a certain time of season not to have the availability if needed to be able to go to another location. I really do appreciate the help with landowner appropriated tags helps with the damages and incentives to better the land for elk. Thank you

I believe that landowners should get an opportunity to hunt on their own land, and I also believe that giving them the first 50% opportunity preference should be dropped. We do not need both systems in place like we do for deer and that should be changed as well.

I believe that the landowner type tags are warranted and justified. The problem is that, unlike east river deer licenses, when a landowner purchases an elk tag they are not limited to their own land. Isn't the purpose of a landowner tag to help with damages done to their own property? This needs to change. Landowner permits need to be limited to the landowner's property. Thank for your time.

I believe the black hills and surrounding area can support a higher population of elk. I think the antler less tags should be reduced for the next management plan. The logging practices over the course of the last ten years and pine beetles has opened up the forest and allowed much better vegetation. Hopefully those improvements continue. This allows the black hills to support a higher number of elk. I think the South Dakota game fish should also do a better job of collecting harvest data on bull elk. I think the data should go beyond just age and do a better job of collecting the data of quality of bulls. A, B, and C scoring system should be added to the survey cards with an explanation of why that data is important. More data and info allow the management team to make better decisions.

I believe the Black Hills has excellent Elk hunting opportunities if you devote enough time, hunt hard, and don't give up you will be successful.

I believe the season dates for unit 27A need to be changed back to September and October. Or maybe have it be September October and December. I believe the number of landowner's tags that are available (5) should be increased (10). Let landowners get an any elk tag for all units they own over 240 acres in. Maybe collar some of these elk in unit 27A or unit H3 FGH to see how much they go back and forth between units along the Cheyenne River.

I believe the state has done an excellent job of developing the elk population in our state. I am wondering how fair our lottery system works as myself and a lot of others are still hoping to draw a first tag with 20 years when others are drawn for with a lot less years of preference. Some have drawn tags for a second time. Something seems to be off with the system.

I covered the whole southern unit for the Dec 1 2019 season finding only one elk track in the snow after 3 days. Very disappointing.

I do believe that there are some landowners that are actively managing their property to produce cattle and cattle feed that are being impacted severely by elk. The SDGFP needs to appropriately help these folks with assistance to protect their forage and also financial reimbursement for damage that occurs.

I do believe there is a risk in taking these types of surveys. Surveys have been used against deer and turkey hunters that reducing South Dakota resident's opportunities in the last few years. 80% of the public opposes this deer drawing and even Legislature's Rules Review Committee rejected the first time. But commission would rubber stamp it like they do with anything the GFP wants. I do like data being collected, you can't fix or know if there is a problem without data. But it only seems when GFP only uses data when it is in their favor. When sportsman's group and the hunting public had something to say like Lions driving out the elk of Custer state park several people voiced their concern, but it was too little too late. So, forgive me for coming across strong about an elk

management plan voicing my observation. But I when I hear management plan from GFP I think of lost opportunities. The people want opportunities, not limitations. I want to keep South Dakotans with the same Opportunity, Heritage and Tradition now and for future generations

I do not believe the definition of a landowner should include "Leased land". Land under lease by an individual or business should not benefit by these programs funded by my license fees.

I do not think landowners should get an any elk license every year

I do wish GFP would either offer landowners the ability to sell their landowner tags or have a raffle each year on 5-10 bull tags to raise money for elk management. This would easily offset the management cost of SD elk herds. I know I would bid on it every year so I didn't have to drive out west. I paid over 5000 dollars just for access on my prairie elk tag to have the opportunity to shoot a big bull. It was totally worth it!

I don't believe landowners should be allowed licenses every year because I know several cases of wealthy individuals who have purchased land just to obtain an elk tag. That's not fair to the rest who don't have the funds to do so. Older ranchers who have owned land for a long time may be the exception

I don't feel that SDGFP does enough habitat improvement in the Black Hills to help reduce crop issues on private land. SDGFP relies too much on forest service's management of the Black Hills resources which are not aimed at wildlife but more on timber and grazing. Quality "Habitat" including food and escape cover is the biggest factor for managing elk.

I drew an elk license for the Prairie Unit in Bennett County in 2019. Some of the WIAs had no public access, according to the Conservation Officer for Bennett County. WIAs are not much good if hunters can't get to them. The CO suggested several landowners that may allow hunters. I called these landowners, who said they would not be allowing hunting due to dissatisfaction with GFP management of elk in Bennett Co. (they wanted more harvest of cow elk). I did try several WIAs, but there was no sign of elk - no tracks or droppings. The net result was there was no chance for me to harvest an elk. I've hunted elk all over the west and don't harvest an elk every hunt, but I've always felt there was at least a small chance to harvest an elk. I don't know why licenses were issued for Bennett Co., if there is no opportunity to harvest an elk.

I drew my "once in a life-time" any elk last year. It really isn't a "once in a life-time tag", but the reality is that I will never apply for an any elk tag again. It takes too long to draw a tag and I'll be nearly dead before I can draw again. I don't like waiting 9 years between tags...what arbitrary number did this come from...it's always been this long too...never has changed. I know that it takes people out of the pool of applicants, but it does seem a little wrong to have to wait nearly a decade before you can start applying again.

I feel it is important to remember that the wildlife belong to everyone (Public). So if hunting can be allowed as a management tool to control population numbers along with other recreational opportunities, those opportunities should be equally available to all citizens eligible to hunt or be on public lands. Therefore, I do not feel that providing additional opportunities to those that have land that the wildlife inhabit is fair. It establishes a view of ownership of those animals because they are on that particular property. If landowners want compensation for damages from animals like elk, then there are opportunities to gain revenue for allowing hunters with valid tags or compensation from the state by the way of tag fees. Just because I may have elk, deer, sheep pheasants, rabbits (etc.) on my land, should not dictate any preference to gain a tag to take any or one of those animals.

I feel that at least half of available elk tags (or at least a significant number) should go to applicants who: are over 70 years of age, have been unsuccessful in at least 15 draws and have never been drawn for that particular unit. Just a thought.

I feel that pay for hunting on private land should not be allowed. I do believe all should be allowed who follow the rules to hunt " fair game" only on public lands and let landowners allow people to hunt with permission who are good stewards as hunters. Just seems like hunting is for those who have more money and less for those who have less. Just level the playing field and manage the forest for all equally .

I feel the depredation hunts for elk should be changed. Biologist should decide if they are trying to decrease numbers or get elk out of a certain area (for the landowners' sake). If trying to decrease numbers killing dozens of elk in an area in a weekend makes sense. If you are trying to increase the numbers in a unit but keep elk off of a ranchers field wouldn't in make more sense to have one hunter out each weekend to kill one elk off the specific piece of land that is getting damage to try to keep the heard off of the field. I feel like if elk were consistently pressured they would be more likely to stay in the woods. If you just go out one time and kill a bunch they will just been back a week later causing the same issues. I just do not feel like the difference between 90 and 100 elk on an alfalfa field is going to make much difference. What would make a difference is if those 100 elk were there a fewer amount of days and nights. Also, why not allow those landowners to sell the depredation tags. They would be more accepting of the elk if they had value.

I feel the GFP is doing a good job

I feel the prairie tag should not be limited to the ten year wait after drawing. Those areas are for thinking out the numbers for depredation. The place I have gone he has damage and they kill 50 elk every year on his ground and plenty there.

I feel we need to manage the herd for opportunity at this time. The top tier preference pool members need additional Consideration. Options could include first opportunity for depredation hunts for elk. Shortening the season for archery and rifle and adding another season within the current season dates for 25 additional licenses to top remaining pref. Point holders. Have two seasons each for two weeks and increase license by 10 percent.

I feel you need to take a hard look at how preference points are used.

I firmly believe the license draw structure needs to be revisited. With the new cube system and ability to purchase preference points at a very young age have really created a bottle neck to the draw structure. There are more and more folks applying for tags and few elk tags allotted so maybe SD elk becomes a once in a lifetime opportunity or a bracket system for those with 0-10 years of points, 1-15 years, 15-20 years? Or something to that affect...

I had a prairie elk tag. (2019) Saw some herds (100-200) I saw a lot of spike bucks in those herds. Could be a problem. My antlerless tag was in Bennett County.

I have 15 preference points and I sure would love to help elk management if I got a license before I can't walk the terrain. Thanks

I have 29 years preference in CSP. would like an opportunity to hunt before I die.

I have a lot to say about conservation of elk but don't really believe the state would change to support my opinions.

I have applied for a Custer state park elk tag for 25 years and still have not drawn. I know someone who drew the tag the first year they applied. In my mind, this should not happen.

I have been applying for elk license in Custer State Park for several years. (I believe from about 2001 or so.) Prior to that I had applied for approximately 7 years so lost those preference points because I moved out of SD for a few years. It seems like the number of licenses available for Custer State Park has decreased over the years and I see the herd size is less than the current management plan. Why? Can it be increased? I'm 74 and it looks like my dream of shooting a park elk is down the drain. I hope you can do better for other guys getting older.

I have been applying for nearly 40 years and have yet to draw a license under current system, would like to see a system where one could be able to get a license after a certain number of applications.

I have had the good fortune to hunt elk in the Black Hills several times, either myself or with a friend or family member. There is no better place to hunt elk in the US. The only thing I can say is we need more elk! Thank you for including me in your survey.

I have hunted elk in a number of states and I think GF&P does an excellent job in providing us residents with a high quality elk hunt at a very reasonable cost. I am concerned with the hunting pressure on animals in unit 2 (where we live and graze cattle) during the season -- it can seem like the herds are being driven instead of a legitimate, sporting hunt. I like the idea of a landowner hunting on her land only -- but how can it be policed? Thanks for what you do here in SD.

I have landowner friends who get landowner deer tags and I see the way they abuse this privilege (hunting off their land - filling other tags etc.). This will happen also with elk landowner tags.

I have only one problem with landowner elk and big game tags. These are purportedly to control damage from overpopulation. So why then are these tags not for female animals? Controlling game populations can only be done by controlling the female population. I would support bull or buck tags occasionally to the landowner. But every year? For supposedly controlling the population. When many people will only have one tag in their lifetime? And when most depredation can be controlled locally by very willing hunter's?

I haven't got a tag in over 18 years

I highly recommend that you charge for the full tag price up front and issue a refund less the preference point after the draw. Increase the cost of the license to raise more money vs. letting everyone apply for \$10. Create a separate bucket for those over 25-30 years and get them a tag and out of the system. Please implement no ATV traffic after 9/15 they completely ruin elk hunting and scouting.

I hunted Elk in 2003 and 2019. I was amazed at the fact that during my most recent hunt, Elk territory and the Black Hills in general is being overrun and ruined by the allowed use of 4-wheelers.

I hunted most of the month of September with my bow for an elk last year. There were so many recreational vehicles tearing around the black hills national forest going off trails, raising hell, spooking animals being disrespectful to hunters it made me sick. Having to wait so many years to get a tag and have it interrupted by in state and out of state people disrespecting the land and other people. Now having to wait so many years to draw another tag suck.

I hunted unit 2 in 2018. I hunted 24 days and saw elk on 13 of those days. I had permission to hunt on several private landowners. The elk tended to follow private land corridors. The old burn NW of Custer had large amounts available feed, water and elk. If you want more elk ask the forest service not to replant Pine trees on Burn Areas. I also noted private property owner posting public land. You could also ask the forest service to cut down on the AUMs on elk habitat areas.

I just wish there's better opportunities for disabled hunters like myself who can't walk 10 plus miles to hunt elk and pack out an elk if you do happen to get lucky enough to get one. Meaning

some of the walk in areas should allow disabled folks like myself to have better opportunities to pursue game with At or ATV only. That would level the playing field for people like myself. I am very dissatisfied with the 2019 elk season. I spent so much money and fuel and lodging just to try to get a chance at an elk, but to see what we seen and after calling a few landowners and they requested us to pay to pursue elk is absolutely stupid. Just want better opportunities and or chances for people like me.

I know individuals that have been applying for elk tags for over 20 years and have not been successful in drawing a tag. As you manage the elk population, it is definitely not favorable to anyone who wants an opportunity to hunt elk in SD. I thought the cube rule was supposed to substantially increase long term applicants. This hasn't benefitted anyone that I know of. I will probably die before I receive even one chance to hunt elk in SD.

I know it would never go through but I would like to see the draw change so that there are no preference points. It is the only TRUE way to FAIRLY distribute tags. The preference point system favors the older hunters and does not give a chance to the new/young hunters (which is currently hurting hunter recruitment)

I like the program that helps pay ranchers for allowing people to hunt on their property. They have issues with elk then they should allow more people to access their property. They shouldn't be the only ones that get tags to cull the herd. They more elk taken by hunters on their private property the more they receive from the state for repairs to fences and crop. I also think with the new habitat stamp you now charging you should look into the prairie elk and elk population growth in the Northwestern part of the state

I like the weighted scale on preference to get a license but sad to see so many go to 1-5 year applicants when so many are much higher. Many states like Colorado have certain preference sections like get 5-9 before you can get in the drawing. You might lose a few putting in for preference but that's ok, helps the rest of us.

I may be a little strong on my position and to be fair, I'm not currently a landowner, but hope to be soon. I would still say it is not SDGFP's responsibility to worry about providing monetary incentives for landowners. We live where there are animals and sometimes they do damage; that's just reality.

I needed more info on the Landowner own-land tag. Would this replace landowner tags that are currently offered or are they in addition to them?

I only have experience with the H2 and H1 unit, as I've spent some time up there over the past few years. The herd seems very solid and about right sized. I grew up in AZ and saw how that state managed elk and they basically went 'all-in' on elk and their deer herds suffered, so if we want to keep our deer opportunities where they are, then let's keep the status quo on elk.

I only support the landowner own land tag if it does not reduce opportunity for the general public. Qualifying landowners already receive more tags, more often than general public. That is why the tag should only be valid for their own land - to help offset damage issues.

I question how much help should be given to landowners who refuse to work with the SDGDP or hunters to solve damage issues and how many times the landowner should be issued a reduction tag to the landowner. ALL reduction tags should be antlerless regardless of who is receiving the tag!

I started applying for elk season pretty late in my life. I have been fortunate to draw a rifle elk and an archery elk tag. the issue is, I will not have an opportunity to apply for either drawing again until I am near 70 years old. With the present success rate of drawing another one of these tags, I will be in my eighties. I agree with some sort of waiting period for eligibility, but I would suggest

that the waiting period be dropped once a person reaches the age of 60 or so. Something to keep us interested elk conservation.

I strongly oppose any person leasing land of the 240 acres and receiving a landowner tag. Only the landowner should be able to apply for the landowner tag with 240 acres and can only kill a bull elk on their own property from September to March. A cow elk could be harvested anywhere in the unit. There are way too many people leasing land, getting a landowner tag and then never shooting a bull on the land they use as landowner. Most of the mature bulls are shot by landowners but rarely on the own property. This is such a disadvantage for the people who wait 15 to 30 years building up preference points to finally draw a tag. A landowner can usually get a tag every year and hunt anywhere in the unit and a lot of the time they kill a trophy bull on public land. This is unfair to the public. I own over 240 acres and I believe a bull should be killed on your own property and a cow anywhere in the unit if needed. I sure hope GFP will eliminate the landowner tag for anyone who just leases property. This is becoming a huge problem. Thanks for your considerations.

I strongly disagree with the slaughter of the elk in wind cave. The way they were herded into wind cave and slaughtered doesn't sit well with me, especially when no cow elk tags were issued for the reduction of the heard in Custer state park. Poor management practices.

I think deer hunters should not be able to hunt the black hills area during elk season. Elk hunters apply for years to get a tag during archery season and you have to deal with deer hunters taking spots to hunt. I think roads closed to vehicles should be closed to ATVs also because I had walked in a couple of places for a half mile only to find a at parked where I was going to hunt

I think if the landowners want the elk shot, they could allow hunters to harvest the animals on their land. They could have a list of willing landowners that would be willing to host elk hunters. It should take so long for a SD resident to draw an any elk tag. I do think landowners should have first pick of licenses since they are providing some of the habitat. I realize elk know no boundaries which is frustrating for a hunter, but if the landowner claims the elk are destroying their property they better have some proof of destruction, before allowing limitless hunting on their land by themselves. I think the depredation program could be a good thing although I have not participated in it. Landowners need to have respectful people on their land doing the hunting otherwise they will not want to participate again. They may find another means to get rid of the problem.

I think if you go to a landowner, hunt your own land tag, you better watch out for out-of-staters and animal groups to start land grabbing.

I think it is quite unfair that a landowner has the opportunity to take an elk every year because of the current rules regs. Give those tags to the public who have been waiting 20 years for the opportunity to hunt an elk. I only own 41 acres but I plant shelterbelts and food plots exclusive for wildlife conservation. I would love the opportunity for a landowner tag once every day 4 years on a revolving schedule.

I think it's overlooked that landowners get tags every year. Tags that other sportsmen wait years to draw . The landowners should not be using these tags on public land. Landowner tag should only be used on their private land. If they want to hunt public land they need to send for tags in the draw system like everyone else.

I think landowners have too much preference when it comes to elk licenses.

I think that if we decreased the amount of grazing rights in half we could produce lots more elk! and make the GFP more money in the process in the tags.

I think that older SD residents should receive some type of preference and maybe the opportunity to add a son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter etc.

I think the Elk population just East of Martin S.D. is too large.

I think we need to first address timber management and motorized trail usage in the BH National Forest. We need to see more pre-sale thinning with post treatment and more prescribed fire. The current BH timber plan only address 25% of the post logged forest and does not address pine regeneration, invasive species, and therefore reduces elk habitat. Let's increase the number of elk by building better habitat and therefore hunting opportunities. The State foresters need to stand up for wildlife habitat. Let's pull for more non-motorized areas in the Black Hills especially in primary elk habitat.

I think you are doing a lot of good things with your management of elk in SD. Small changes/adaptions may be good and always good to look for ways to improve the process, but just to change to change is not always good. Some good work has been done in the past.

I think you should consider restricting or preventing archery deer hunters from accessing the same land/areas used by elk hunters during archery elk season. Someone who draws an archery elk tag has likely been applying for 15-20 years and I hate the idea of the opportunity being wasted due to deer hunters.

I understand the elk lottery is difficult to manage but as a solid born and raised resident of South Dakota It has been frustrating for me to draw an elk tag. I also understand elk management comes with its own unique challenges but I do not support the creation of opportunities by in state and out of state raffles that favor a person's ability to purchase an unspecified number of chances to win a tag. The lottery should be running clean and fair where the number of years preferences are your number of entries in the lottery. That offers a fairest opportunity for all hunters. I am 58 years old and still work my tail off to take game but There are no guarantees and my abilities to work and enjoy the land pass with every year. As the current system stands I may not ever have a successful opportunity to draw rifle or archery.

I understand the reason for establishing overall population objectives, e.g. for Black Hills. My experience this past season was that in individual units, especially smaller ones, distribution of elk can really create a false sense of where the population is relative to its objective. And it can cause above average damage to landowner's resources. Based on the number of elk we saw; it would be easy to say the elk population in that area was way above its population objective. Yet on a larger scale, numbers were considered to be within their objective. One of the nuances of elk management, I guess.

I want to point out that I have family and close family friends with plenty of land in and around elk units. The one tag they draw year after year only takes or harvest one animal. That is minimal. Maybe make landowner tags more balanced (1 every 3 or 5years, most of us non landowners get 1 every 20 years if lucky) and strive for providing more opportunities for everyone not just the wealthy that own land or ranchers themselves.. I realize your job is not easy and I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion.. I just wish the public had the opportunities the landowners had and that more landowners would provide opportunities for the public.

I wanted to start out by saying I have a bachelor's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Management....not really relevant, but I am not blind to how conservation works :)

I was fortunate to hunt on private land in 2019 and was able to get an elk. It was great. In 2018 I had an antler less elk tag for Custer State Park. It was a total disaster! We were allowed to hunt only a two mile area next to Wind Cave Park! I hunted hard for 6 days and never saw an elk! Only one out of the ten hunters killed an elk. The R and D Fence on the north was broken down in two places and the elk were gone. The other hunters also said they did not see any elk. CSP personnel did not even know that the fence was down! A few years prior to the this, CSP welcomed

approximately 300 head of elk from Wind Cave National Park many of which had chronic wasting disease! This is what we were hunting only to discover that they escaped through the downed fences across the R and D fence. The Center for Disease Control recommends that you never eat the meat from a chronic diseased elk! When we asked if we could hunt in the rest of the park we were told: NO! WE DO NOT WANT YOU TO SHOOT OUR GOOD ELK! The elk numbers in the park were extremely low. Management became very agitated when we discussed the management of the park numbers in which they tagged 30 elk calves in the park only to confirm that 29 of them had been killed by mountain lions. Great! They now know that if the calves are killed the present and future population of the elk goes down! Most people that I visit with agree that the SD GFP needs a complete overhaul! I also have other complaints but this will do for now! Thank You! We have a great state with great outdoor opportunities!

I would be fine with not drawing a license for a few years in order to get the guys who have a ridiculous number of preferences points their tags that they deserve. We need to get them the tags they have waited for. Just go down the list for the highest number of points and start issuing tags for them.

I would be in favor of youth cow hunt to reduce landowner issues. I also believe landowners should have a better opportunity, but not the only opportunity, i.e. public reduction by 50 % of tags to landowners. I would like to see more funding go to critters in SD than just by active hunters. Maybe a license plate tax/fee, not a special plate per say. To keep the critters in SD, it will take more than hunter dollars. The Colorado option with Ranching for Wildlife might be something to consider, the landowner could apply for limited number of tags, to forgo their individual option to hunt and possible sell the tag to be used on their deeded land. I portion of funds goes to critters and portion to landowner. I would like to have better idea of what the average or worst case landowner issues are due to elk damage. To be better informed.

I would be interested in serving on the elk management panel

I would like to see a change in the 10 year waiting period to maybe 5 year (or less) after a successful draw...especially for cow tags. (Or maybe strictly for cow tags)

I would like to see it easier to draw a cow tag as I know guys have a lot of years of preference points for bull tags. Would love to hunt elk each year in my home state.

I would like to see more licenses go to the average person, nothing against landowners but it's kind of goes along with the saying the rich get richer. When your blessed with land you automatically get deer tags, your chances for elk tags increases greatly and the average guys gets left waiting 25 years for an elk tag or 5 to 10 years waiting for a deer tag.

I would rather spend more money out of state for better opportunities.

I'd also like to see more tribal cooperation and perhaps even tribal-specific elk hunting licenses provided as a part of a future management strategy. It seems right that indigenous citizens should be allotted a portion of licenses not subject to fees as an effort to return certain tribal rights to these communities.

I'd like to take this opportunity to disagree with qualifying landowners getting a guaranteed bull tag every year while the rest of us have to wait years and years to draw what may possibly be a once in a lifetime tag. I find it absolutely ridiculous that a privileged few get to hunt every year just because they're rich or inherited some land. There are people who've been applying for 20 plus years for the chance to hunt once. Give the landowners a cow tag and make them apply for the bull tag like everyone else.

I'm pretty bummed out with the elk management in SD. SDGFP and the US Forest Service need to get on the same page. The amount of UTV's in the Black Hills is staggering. The fact that elk take a

backseat to cattle and buffalo in the black hills is sad. The elk program in CSP is a travesty. I'm not a biologist and don't pretend to have all the answers. I know your job is tough and trying to find the perfect balance is not easy. Some accountability would be nice though!

I'm very happy SDGFP has encouraged the hunting of mountain lions which were limiting our elk population.

I've been waiting a long time to hunt Elk. Next year I think I will have 24 years of preference points in Custer State Park.

I've never drew an elk tag anywhere in the hills I want a better chance to get a tag. I should Receive a tag before other people draw 2, 3, or 4 tags before I even get one. Landowners especially

I'm all for a landowner being allowed to get tags. I just believe they should have to hunt their own property if that is the case. Should not be able to receive a landowner tag and hunt all the public property in the unit.

I'm super proud to be a South Dakota Hunter and Angler. SD GF&P does amazing work. I fully support the efforts of your agency.

I've never hunted a bull because it's too hard to draw a tag

If a landowner gets an automatic license - that license should only be valid on his/her land. Also, if a landowner gets an automatic license - GF&P needs to make available all the licenses for each unit to anyone that applies and not devote 50% just to landowners. Landowners should have the same chances as everyone else for a license allowing them to hunt public land if they get an automatic license to hunt their own land. It makes no sense to allow them to get 50% of the draw licenses and then allow them to get a license automatically. I have talked to landowners who get a license and then they never hunt. It's a screwed up system that should also be discontinued for both deer and antelope. Give them a license to hunt their own land but if they want to hunt somewhere else they have the same chances of drawing a license as everyone else. Wyoming has it figured out - go talk to them about their system.

If allowing landowners to hunt elk because of depredation on their property, they should only be able to hunt on their OWN property, own 240 acres or MORE, and kill any time of the year with GFP check in. One animal per property ownership per year. This assures that since depredation is an issue animal are being killed while on that property.

If grazing leases on public land decrease the management objectives for elk populations significantly, I believe the livestock quotas need to be reviewed. It would seem that the recreational value of having significantly more elk on public land would greatly outweigh the agricultural value—because of the relatively small number of ranchers who benefit. Also, it is my understanding that the revenue generated from grazing is minimal.

If landowners are having trouble with the herd damage from the elk they need to allow people to come and hunt to help reduce the population of the elk herd if not they should receive any assistance I'm not patient

If landowners are so concerned about property damage they can promote hunters to come and hunt on their property. I am tired of being a part of the group that has to put in for 15+ years to draw an elk tag while landowners draw one every year.

If landowners could have licenses they can transfer/sell to others like they can in some other states they would likely be very open to tolerating elk on their land.

If landowners enrolled their property into Walk in Areas or CHAP lands, their elk damage would decrease substantially due to increased hunting pressure. Hunters today are respectful of private

property and would cause no additional damage or hindrance to the property. I myself would also pay additional license fees to increase elk habitat, population, and public access.

If landowners receive tags, they should be antlerless only. It's fine to attempt to compensate landowners for the habitat they provide/elk damage, however if landowners continue to shoot bulls every year that does nothing to impact the population dynamics. It seems pretty unfair that folks wait 20 odd years to draw a bull tag, meanwhile if you are wealthy enough to own a large piece of land you can hunt a bull every year. If we want hunting to remain a vibrant sport and a consistent land management/wildlife management tool, it's important not to become too much a sport of the wealthy. While those with more resources will always have access to more opportunities, it's crucial the state does not play an active role in this by allowing large landowners such a high percentage of the bull tags issued. I am a meat hunter; I see every year that folks who put cow elk as first choice draw that tag. Maybe these excess cow tags should go to landowners and save the bull tags for the draw, the once-in-a-lifetime hunt?

If over 20 years of applying they should have an increased odd of being successful.

if the landowner leases land in the federal forest than the landowner should not be able to get a landowner license

If the objective is to reduce elk populations on private ground then why allow landowners to shoot any elk on forest service ground. Allowing landowners to shoot only antlerless on their own land only would be much more effective herd reduction on private ground. In addition, the reduction of ATV and UTV recreational trails (forest service trails) should be closed, especially dead end trails, to give elk a buffer zone with reduced human pressure from motorized vehicles that often push elk on private ground and also bring additional fair chase principles back to the Black Hills. Thanks.

If there is too much damage caused by elk to the landowners they may need to be more open to allow nonpaying hunters to harvest elk on their land

If you apply for H2 rifle any elk you are looking at approximately 15 plus year (unknown) wait plus 9 year bar to applying. Archery elk is the same. There are people that have applied for Custer state park longer than I have been alive. Bottom line, not sure elk hunting really exists in South Dakota. The hunts are too far in between to really mean anything. It's a novelty now. Creating more landowner hunts will make it more exclusive and simply force out everyday hunters.

If you do not harvest an elk during the regular season then maybe have it so that person doesn't have to wait 9 years to reapply. Or give them an opportunity on a depredation hunt.

If you don't keep the elk herd under control and help manage for the private landowners they may have to sell and that will decrease the management area because it will probably be subdivided.

If you would have sent this out right after elk season last year I'm sure I would have written a book. As in most things in life timing is very important especially when it comes to hunting if you send this survey out the week we find out who drew elk tags you would get a bunch of negative responses towards all land owners and the whole licensing system do it the week after elk season it might be more evenly distributed good and bad. Maybe do the same survey twice a year once to people that have had a south Dakota elk license and to ones that have not had SD elk license I bet the answer would be way different. Is there a place someone could go to see results of these surveys?

Impact of elk on deer management

In 1985 my father died the second day of the Custer Park any elk season. I unfortunately had drawn a tag (on my 1st application) but was not able to complete the hunt as my Dad's funeral was in Missouri. I had taken the entire season off work to give every opportunity possible to bag an elk. I

believe there should be hardship considerations reviewed and give a pass to be able to apply again if found to be credible.

In high populations of elk especially in drought years help with fences and possible feed subsidies for example help with a load of hay

In my opinion very important points would be to have a healthy elk herds west river and the Black Hills, without exceeding the lands capacity to support the elk, also keeping in mind the rancher's opinions on private land that can cause crop damage, fence damage etc. I believe SDGFP is doing a great job and elk are a highly prized animal to view, hear and hunt! There are always complexities though considering what certain landowners, like farmers and ranchers are willing to deal with though, I believe its finding that happy middle for the general public to enjoy and not overwhelm the landowners making a living. Hunter conservation is huge in my opinion due to the revenue brought in by hunters, I believe the majority of hunters would be willing to pay a little higher tag price to help offset the expenses due to property damage done to the landowners property when that occurs, I know I wouldn't mind paying more; especially for the hunting opportunity. I also believe that depredation tags are also a great idea when landowners have an exceedingly high number of problems that can't be fixed without huge financial losses.

In the Black Hills there are quite a few illegal elk taken each year. I live in the hills and find carcasses with only the antlers or hind quarters gone. I also have seen tree stands up all year long. One even positioned over an elk guzzler. They're on forest land and no one wants to handle it. I've reported it to you and the Forest service.

Increase Elk Licenses in the Bennett County of 11A Unit. Approx. 900 + elk in this unit. Been putting in for 11 or 12 years no draw. Landowner get all the licenses.

Increase fees for elk hunting opportunities

Increase resident tag amounts and decrease nonresident tags

Increase the preference point system to weight longer term applicants higher. It should not take a resident 20 years to draw a bull tag and you risk loss of interest and even age-related death for many of these people who diligently paid their dues.

Instead of having depredation hunts in the winter they should offer more tags during the regular seasons. I don't think they should make a landowner land elk tag. If the elk are damaging their property maybe those landowners should allow hunters the opportunity to hunt on their private land.

Are there really 500 elk in Custer Park? If so why so few licenses? Different subject. You should have a survey of what people think about the agency and commission relationship.

Issue licenses starting with those having the most preference points. At the present rate I may be dead before getting enough points.

It appears more and more that hunting is being commercialized. If we could create a tax that would allow more CHAPs to be established so LO still had the ability to kind of select who could come hunt without having the Hunters pay high fees that would be awesome. The land I hunted down by Martin was really nice, the landowners were nice. I had a cow tag and they were very receptive to hunting without fees. If I would have had a bull tag prices would make it so a regular joe wouldn't be able to afford a hunt like that.

It is very rare to see elk in the Black Hills.

It is widely believed in our area that there are too many out of state licenses available for draw. When you have in state hunters with 20 years preference points, it is frustrating for the hunters.

This is for the deer hunting as well. I am a backer of SDGFP but I see a lot of inconsistencies in the way tags are drawn.

It seems like it takes forever to draw a bull tag. Don't want to waste my bull tag/once in a lifetime opportunity on a cow...by the time I draw a bull tag, I may not be able to physically enjoy the hunt.

It seems that the S.D. GFP place more emphasis to private landowners.

It should not cost landowners the same for a tag as others, we already have expense in raising all wildlife.

It takes way to long a get a license in South Dakota

It took 20 years to draw a SD Elk tag, which made my physical ability to hunt these great animals very difficult. It was a great hunt, but one that I would much rather have had the opportunity in my 50's

It was Hard to hunt elk with all the four wheeler and side-by-side motorized units traveling through the hunting areas and very few of these people had hunting licenses

It was quite a few elk in the state and I was impressed by the herd but I was not impressed by the landowners that came on the public land thought they owned it and tried to push off myself and others that were trying to utilize our tag that took several years to achieve. why is this allowed?

It would be awesome to have more prairie elk farther east but would not want them cause to much damage. Wouldn't want it to be a burden for ranchers but I think it is a great new opportunity

It would be crap if it takes me 10 plus years to get an elk tag but a landowner could get one all the time. If the landowners don't want so many elk on their property let people hunt them. Let other people have a chance to try something that is very rare to do. I have pretty much quit applying in South Dakota for elk and just go to Montana every year they like to take my money. Charge more for tags or raffle some more to nonresidents and use that money to assist the landowners. Also, well I am on farmers, it has nothing to do with elk but goes along with letting others hunt if you want assistance. East River the farmers have tons of assistance for the geese and some are horrible like the drilling holes on the eggs. Also, the shooting of geese with rifle and leaving them in the field. Not to mention the canons and fencing that the state pays for . If the farmers really want the geese gone the first step should be to let hunters hunt them and if that step fails then move to the other options . Same should go for elk. On a good note I have been seeing some great elk in the hills over the last few years. The numbers seem good. And quality is also on point. I just wish I could have a chance to hunt my own state once. I am just brainstorming here, but what if there was some way you could do a quota limit like the mountain lion season. So, everyone could have a chance to at least get to hear an elk bugle in their face. It could be like a hybrid system . Still do draw tags that wouldn't expire when the quota was met. So, like 5 % goes to NR 75% to draw tags and 20% to the quota. You could apply and get preference points for the quota so the numbers are still limited but let like 10 times the people hunt. So, if there were 20 extra elk tags for the quota let 200 people try to be the first to get one. Archery would probably benefit the quota better.

It would be nice to get into a drawing system that would allow you to figure out what year exactly you will be up for getting an elk tag. I have a big problem with this system now and the way it allows people with very few preference points to receive a tag over those people with far more points. That should not happen! Please fix this for the future hunters. It is just a game of luck right now. Should rely on points!

It would be nice to have more tags available to non-landowner residents. I decided this year to use my preference point to apply for a cow tag because I felt like waiting 15+ years to get a bull tag was a waste of precious years. I plan to use this cow tag to learn how to hunt elk a little better and I will be applying/hunting for elk out of state after this year. I understand that the habitat can only

support so many elk and I am grateful for the opportunity to get an elk tag for a small amount of money in my home state before I spend a lot more money to hunt elk out of state.

It would be nice to see people with over 20 years of preference could have a better chance of drawing an elk tag.

It's very obvious that east river hunters are more likely to receive a license than west river. A lot of people feel this way. Need to make it fair!

Just curious to what SDGFP estimates yearly predation deaths in our elk herd. And secondly what is doing the most predation? Lions, coyotes, both or does disease play a larger role?

Just more opportunities for more people to hunt elk in any way. Not necessarily bulls, but cows. Also, A cooperative between landowners and hunters to keep elk populations in check.

Just to reiterate, I strongly believe that a person should have to own 40 acres or more of land to be considered for a depredation elk tag. Leasing land should not count or be considered as land ownership.

Keep an eye on the lions, when the cover gets good again for them to slip up to elk they can kill a lot of animals. In other words, when the calves start disappearing it is time to raise the quota on lions. Don't mess up like last time when the population was way down.

Keep cattle off national forest! How can landowners bitch about habitat loss, then charge to hunt their land? Which one is it? Do they want elk dead or profit off owning land!

Keep commercialization and nonresident use out. Decrease entitlement to tags through landownership. I have noted Black Hills properties for sale implying it was entitled to a tag

Keep elk license for residents only.

Keep expanding the herd. Keep mountain lions under control. Get the feds to allow a real season in Wind Cave NP. Make Custer State Park elk hunting great again.

Keep on managing the elk beards the way you do. People may bitch and it very well be a once in a lifetime tag to draw, but there is not another state in which you can have a chance to harvest such trophy class bulls when you are lucky enough to draw. I spend a lot of time watching elk and really enjoy the class of bulls that I can find in the black hills. The prairie unit you are referring to out to the Missouri River would not help the sportsman as all of the elk are on Ted Turner's land and you cannot hunt them anyways.

Keep the lion population down so the deer and elk thrive

keep up the good work

Landowner and operators should receive tags as they are who provide habitat for the wildlife to survive.

Land owner preference - need a dynamic process: a) increase the acreage authorizations commensurate with the greatly increased farm / ranch sizes and only authorize for folks actually living on the 4-corners of that land (adjust for the generally smaller land holdings in the Black Hills Fire Protection District) - absentee landowners out-number residing landowners and it is not the intent to give landowner preference to occupants of Denver, NYC, or even Pierre . . . ; b) the wildlife damage hunting (shooting) pool process negates any need for yet another special landowner license. There are fewer and fewer landowners, yet it appears the number of special landowner licenses increases or at least stays stable. When the number of occupying landowners decreases - the number of reserved landowner licenses must decrease.

Landowners encouraged to sustain elk habitat with monetary payments, with the stipulation it would be open to the public for elk hunting license holders.

Landowners with many elk on property should draw an elk tag every year.

Landowner deer

Landowner definitely needs to verify use. Landowner tag should be good only on private land.

Landowners choose to own land in elk populated areas, so they know the risks/damage that can occur because of them. I don't own the required amount of land to apply for landowner tags but still have deer, mountain goats, turkeys, and lions frequent my property. It's a part of living in the Black Hills. Landowners should only be allowed to hunt their own property if applying for a landowner tag.

Landowners experiencing depredation give them an option to sell landowner vouchers to hunters who have an elk tag in that unit. the money would be split 50/50 with SDGFP.

Landowners need to have their thoughts heard when determining elk hunting licenses for units. They live there and know how many are eating their alfalfa and hay.

Landowners need to let hunters come, in order to limit numbers. A lot complain about elk but won't let people hunt. I don't think the landowner can complain about elk damage.

Landowners should only be offered an antlerless elk tag, not an any elk tag. They are taking an advantage of SDGFP Wake up !

Landowners should only get a cow tag each year, let them get a bull tag like everyone else.

Landowners who complain about elk damage should allow a certain number of non-landowners with tags to hunt on their land.

Landowners with 240 acres should use land as agriculture and they should be only able to hunt their land. The black hills are owned by the public! The people of South Dakota should get a chance to hunt elk on public ground. It seems foolish that elk would only cause damage to private land! It would be great to get a tag at or before 20 years of preference. Rifle or archery!! The state of South Dakota has made it almost impossible for the public to get tags. If money is your plan just raffle tags off to highest bidders. In state or out of state! Rich people could get 20 tags if they bid high enough and then we wouldn't need so many wardens to watch the rich hunt. Saving money and making money right!

last couple of years I have seen more mountain lions , and less fawns and calves come the fall season. If a hunter has drawn a deer or elk license for the black hills allow them to also purchase a mountain lion license (if desired). We have not met the quota for the lion season for some time now.

Late Season Cow hunt, Unit east of Custer, north of Hwy 16. To many road hunters shooting from vehicles. Suggest more GFP to patrol and keep the hunting honest. It is good to see the GFP out interacting with hunters and educating in both a positive and enforcement manner.

Less driving. Mandatory walking while hunting Elk.

Let's do the right things in the future. We have a huntable population and healthy population in the hills. It takes a long time to draw a tag so it's nice to have a good opportunity for a good hunt which I believe is possible as we stand. Lions need to continue to be controlled as well as wolves if wolves show up I believe our herd is done. Please don't let that happen to many stories of Wyoming and Montana guys whose herds have been depleted by the wolves. Our population is too small to hold up to these animals if they show up.

Like the idea of landowner license to hunt only their own land. However, the options for hunting dates only include hunting dates specific to current unit or dates from August through March. Consider hunting dates for landowner license to be directly after the non-landowner license date ends. This could allow for better control of licenses and enforcement.

Limit out of state applications until population supports it.

List of landowners that might allow hunting on private land.

Look into doing an early (sept1-14) and late (sep15-end of month) archery season so there are more choices to split apart application strategies. Look into adding a muzzle loader season that would split up part of the rifle season to lower pressure on elk. Have the rifle season oct1-12. No hunting 13-18. And then have muzzle loader 19- end of the month This would again add choices to application strategy potentially increases odds for some hunts. Tag allocation doesn't need to change to do this. Elk mountain elk numbers seem to be very high in my observation. Maybe could even add a special season for just elk mountain or have it been a separate unit? Could have a stand-alone muzzle loader season in Dec for that too maybe? Or stand-alone archery unit.

Loss of forage should be at the top of the problem list for Elk with forage replacement (cash payment

lottery system is failed, people will get a tag with 9 years preference when someone with 14 doesn't.

Lottery system needs improvement. Example: I have 26 preference point for Custer Park. Really? 15 preference points for Black Hills - award those with preference points at high end first. No lower end preference points drawn.

Lottery system should be looked at as there are routinely applicants with 20+ years of preference points not drawing tags. Applicants with far fewer points are drawing tags in those units, which does not seem fair!

Love the opportunity to hunt elk in South Dakota. My son and I had an amazing time scouting and hunting elk last year. As a member of the RMEF, our Northern Hills Chapter is willing to take on habitat enhancement and fence protection projects for private land adjacent to public land.

Make a couple portions of the Black Hills be more remote and less accessible such as a 9x9 square mile section with no trail through it I think it would accommodate the younger crowd while also not taking a bunch of habitat away so the older crowd still has more than enough places to hunt. This would also provide an escape for the elk from all the ATV/UTV/Snowmobiles which would decrease the stress and provide a healthier herd of elk. You would also have an increase in vegetation because grass would grow where the trails used to be which would also increase the health of the overall elk herd and also possibly increase the population of the elk herd itself.

Make elk hunting especially in Custer State Park fair for everyone. We should not be so quick to offer money to landowners for elk habitat. There are ways to move elk from certain portions of land which do not giving more money or extra Licenses permits to landowners. Let us be very honest you know that, extra money either in cash or gifts is being given to Farmers/Ranchers to let the richest/giving hunters in to hunt private land. Elk are a South Dakota owned property. No landowner should make extra money off this State owned property. I believe in asking to hunt on private land but giving money for this does ruin our States Heritage. This is our Beautiful South Dakota state property let's use common sense. If landowners are experiencing damage, then they should invite more hunters on their property, simple solution where we don't have to give more money to landowners.

Make sure that this is about the elk....do not insult our intelligence. Be transparent and honest as to what the real objective is. Work with the national forest service to enforce the existing laws to get the range livestock removed when they are supposed to be removed! I have hunted elk in the Black Hills 5 times during the rifle season....ALL 5 TIMES THE LEASOR HAD LIVESTOCK STILL PRESENT. I HAVE HAD 3 HUNTS DISRUPTED DUE TO WRANGLERS ROUNDING UP CATTLE THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN REMOVED BY SEPTEMBER 30TH. IN

SOME CASES, MY HUNT WAS DISTURBED 15 DAYS INTO THE SEASON! This does not help with hunter and livestock owner relations.... FAIR AND EQUITABLE!!!!

Make sure you kill enough lions

Manage portions as "trophy" units and other areas as "opportunity" units. Opportunity units are straight draw, no preference.

Many South Dakota residents are only happy if they get an elk license every year...this is not practical with our limited elk population. Managing the elk population to maintain a healthy herd will ensure our future generations will have elk to hunt. I am in favor of a guaranteed landowner elk license as long as this license is used on the landowner's own land - no state/walk-in/BLM/corps of engineer's land, etc. South Dakota does this for deer and antelope and I think it can work for elk too. The landowners who enjoy & value wildlife will tolerate the animals and spend their own money to building habitat to keep more & healthier animals on their land. The habitat established by landowners who care will benefit all SD hunters. Non-Resident landowners who own large tracts of land are becoming more common in western South Dakota. While not popular to some residents, these non-resident landowners have a lot of wildlife on their land and pay a lot of tax money in our state. These non-residents will likely push to have some type of elk hunting opportunities on their own land. The landowners along the Cheyenne River basin are a good example of this. Some of these landowners (resident & non-resident) spend thousands of dollars every year to build habitat to help the deer and elk populations remain healthy. The growth of the elk herd in the Cheyenne River basin is proof that landowners who enjoy wildlife on their land can make a difference in the health and overall population of wildlife.

Maybe look at the preference point system to where the old-timers are not so dam old before they draw a tag

More elk hunting opportunities for SD residents

More elk in our area, before harvesting some.

More elk, less cattle, for more South Dakota hunters to have this great chance to hunt in their home state

More hunting opportunity for elk so that a person might have more than a once in a lifetime hunt.

More opportunities available at getting an elk license. Raffle, more tags, etc. Many SD residents will never be successful and draw an elk tag. Many go out of state to hunt elk where you can get tags easier.

More opportunities for residents to get a license. I believe raising prices on tags for out of state hunters would be beneficial for the management program. They will still pay it to hunt the hills.

Mountain lions are preying on the young elk. Need to thin the lions out to preserve the elk. Then you can offer more licenses.

My comment is not elk management related but regards tag allocation. I see a lot of people asking to go to a true preference point draw system where only top point holders are awarded tags. I do not support this idea. This would eliminate any chance for young hunters to ever have the opportunity to hunt elk in South Dakota. I like the system in place but I would remove the cubing of bonus points.

My concern is the landowner reselling the tag to nonresident hunters. I hope this never happens. If the landowner has too many elk they should ask the local firefighter, first responders to hunt their land.

My parents have over a thousand acres and get an elk tag almost every year. In 2019 they did not due to many landowners buying enough land to just get an elk tag. I think this is wrong. I think you should have you own more land to get a tag and be able to show that elk damage a lot. These people coming in and buying land just for an elk tag is wrong. I think the number of acres needs to go up to at least 500 and be able to show damage all year round. I know this will be hard to manage but the problem is cow elk because everyone wants a bull and I think we need to look at the cow populations. I have shot one bull and one cow and even the cow was a blessing for the meat and fun. I don't think landowners should be able to charge to let people come hunt either. If a landowner wants a landowner bull tag then they need to let people come in a shoot cows if they are not willing to do that they should not get a tag themselves. They should have to allow cows being taken on their own land because there have been some older folks that have asked permission from landowners that complain about to many elk but won't let people in to shoot a cow. These older and disabled people are limited on where they can go so private land would be an amazing opportunity for these folks. I live in elk country and see them all the time and would like to see landowners cooperate and let people in to shoot cows and if not then that landowner should not be able to get a tag either. Thanks for letting me take this survey and I do hope my opinion helps.

My son hunted elk last year in the hills and the elk numbers were good but I would highly suggest for the enhancement of the experience the GFP consider restricting at vehicles on trails unless it is to pick up a harvested animal. We witnessed many four wheelers and advs. running trails and hunting from vehicles. Two days before the season they were running everywhere which pushed the elk all over and while hunting on foot it severely changes the enjoyment of any hunting experience. There is easy walk in access from trail heads rather than allowing vehicles off main roads. I have also heard this from many other hunters that is nuts with ATV's- that is not the desired hunting experience that could otherwise be a fantastic experience Thank you

Need more elk tags in areas where the elk are overrunning property. Especially Bennett County.

Need to control predators like mountain lions. Way too many. Make it easier to get one like use of dogs.

Need to reduce mountain lion population

Need to review the preference point system. I feel the one with the most points should get the tag.

No licenses available for out of state hunters for elk. We have too many residents apply for multiple years and not receive even one chance to hunt or experience an in state elk hunt.

No thanks I had a very good hunt back in 2008 nice 6x6

No. Keep up the good work.

Number of tags increased for the drawing.

Once a person gets to a certain number of years with preference they should automatically draw. My stepdad has over 30 years in the park and still hasn't drawn. He will likely be unable to hunt in the next few years because of age and health issues. Give more tags out outside the park if possible. Waiting 9 years to re-apply seems like a once in a lifetime tag for some. I had an archery tag last fall and had a blast in the hills. Thank you for all the efforts to keep the elk population up.

One of the biggest things is if a landowner is having such big problems with any big game animal and they get assistance from the state they should be mandated to allow hunters on the property to hunt.

One suggestion I would have is to open the season for cow tags in the black hills units earlier and lengthen it. I had a December cow tag a couple years ago and by that time of the year all the cow elk had moved off the public land and were in just a few large herds on private alfalfa fields. The tolerance level of those few landowners trying to work with all those hunters (50) got to be an

understandable problem that would have been avoided if the cow hunters were given the opportunity to hunt them while they were in the forest.

Open doors for landowner/operators to help determine licenses for use on their properties. Thank You. Grace and Peace to you.

Our ranch has always maintained a healthy elk population. My brother has approximately the same amount of acreage and together we have appreciated the wild herds our entire lives. The proverbial fly in the ointment occurred in the 80's and 90's when "elk farms" were allowed into our unit. The outcome as you well know was disastrous to deer and elk. As with any disease, overpopulation combined with confinement can escalate the devastation, and yet these farms are allowed to exist. The enriched feed provided these animals, as in the case of mad cow in England during the 80's, allowed for prion mutation to occur, which in turn led to a wide spreading CWD that we have now. Why have we not learned our lesson? Elk farms have no place on lands surrounded by wild populations of deer and elk. Some disasters are preventable. CWD is case in point.

Overall, I believe the SDGFP does a great job with its resources. My experience with landowner tags is east river deer. Some landowners in my area are well known for tiling every slough on their property, cutting down shelter belts and making the land just for agriculture. Then I see these same landowners with a deer tag every year driving their trucks everywhere trucks can go to harvest their deer. That puts a very bad taste in my mouth about landowner tags. My experience with elk hunting and elk biology is limited. I trust you will make the best decisions based on the facts.

Plain and simple if a landowner receives help for any wildlife damage on their property they should be required to offer free hunting to all public. Otherwise they are just abusing hunters' dollars for their own personal use and benefit.

please consider changing the preference point system. I understand that everyone wants a chance to draw an elk tag when they apply for the first time, however, many other states, that also use preference points have it set up that you have to apply for multiple years to even be eligible to draw a tag. A lot of times these are for the more sought after "trophy units" but, I feel the whole elk herd in South Dakota is a trophy unit. I personally know a lot of people that have been applying for more than 20 years without success. It's very unfortunate that some of these people have aged enough now that they would not be able to fully enjoy having a much sought after tag when/ if they draw in the near future. A lot of times what some people consider fair, allowing first time applicants the chance to draw, isn't always right. I feel that the people that have been applying that long, or longer should have a much higher success rate at drawing a tag, like close to 100%. Let's face it, elk hunting is not an old person's sport. It's very physically demanding, in most cases. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Please keep Elk Tags in South Dakota for residents only!

Possibly a board of landowners in these private areas.

Predator control is a vital component to managing the elk, deer and big horn sheep. Don't wait to control the wolf the way the lion was. If you do you won't have an elk herd to manage.

Preference point makes it very difficult to get a license and I think a more weighted system for more years of preference.

Preference Points! There is no reason why someone with 28 PP should not draw an elk tag while multiple hunters with 11 points successfully draw. More points should bare more weight so that none of us have to wait 25+ years for a BH elk tag that on average takes 15 PP to draw. If there are two applicants that have more PP than all other SD applicants, they should both be guaranteed to

draw. Maybe Hunters with X amount of preference points could have an option to purchase a "trespass fee" that goes to a participating landowner experiencing elk damage. Landowner wins, old unlucky applicant wins, SDGFP wins.

Previously I mentioned a bad experience with a landowner. call if you'd like to know. In regard to the lottery draw and specifically to the Custer park bull tags, why does someone get the chance to draw the prize elk tag on their very first draw? I'm in the growing pool of elk hunters that have well over 25yrs trying to draw the tag, and it seems to me that you shouldn't even get the chance until at least 5yrs in. that's how other states do it for their prime tags and nobody complains. some states prime tags can't be drawn until the 7th year in. totally disgusted with how this state does the lottery system for Custer park bull tags because it's the prize tag of the state. I'm fine with the special 1 tag any elk lottery ticket sold at many of the banquets around the state, as I'm sure it brings in a fair amount for SDGFP . We can do better with the lotto can't we?

Provide better hunting opportunities for seniors i.e. easier getting a license after 65

Provide youth antlerless elk hunting opportunities.

26 years in CSP without a draw!

Qualified landowners should only be able to get an Any Elk tag every other year. If they are suffering depredation they should be shooting cows and not bulls. The "on own land" tag, should it be proposed, how would it be regulated, and what would be the criteria? Would these go to landowners who already qualify for a tag? Or is this intended to satisfy the smaller landowners in some units? I would like to know more before I could support it or oppose it.

Qualifying for landowner preference should be based on agricultural production. It should probably be more than the dollar amount you suggested. Tags should go to farmers and ranchers and not to the wealthy who purchase land just to hunt elk.

Ranchers should have their cattle out of the black Hills before September.

Really happy with the new cubed preference points system. Seems a lot fairer to those with lots of points, while still allowing for some random draws.

Recommend a landowner be allowed to sell the elk tag that is received to be used only on his private land by anyone resident or nonresident willing to purchase.

Relating to the lottery system for drawing elk tags, there should be a better way to distribute tags amongst hunters with 10+ preference than just grouping them all together. If a true preference point system is not viable, (giving tags to those with the most preference and working down the list) than, at a minimum, create other groups for those with more preference to allow higher chances for those who have waited 20 years and have the same likelihood of drawing as someone with 10. For example, have groups each with a designated amount of tags for those with 10-15, 15-20, then 20+ preference and so on. I believe it would be the best way to allow those who have waited their time to finally draw that tag they have dreamed of.

Remind landowners that you can't complain about the elk if you never let others come and hunt them. Also remind them that they are South Dakota's elk, not just theirs. Landowners are quick to complain about the elk damage, but when it comes to when hunters ask permission, they hem and haw and say no. Not fair or right to complain, but not allow anything to be done with their "problem".

Remove [...] so we the people can have good hunting and fishing again.

Ridiculous that landowners get tags and can hunt every year in any part of the unit including public lands. People wait over 20 years to draw an elk tag here and yet someone goes out and buys 240 acres somewhere in the unit and gets a tag every year. If land destruction is such a big deal then let them shoot elk that are only on their land and currently destroying and also it shouldn't be a trophy animal. Trophy animals should be reserved for the general draw process which in this state is the same as a once in a lifetime chance

Ridiculous to give landowners so many elk tags when many people such as myself have

Ridiculous to wait 25 years to draw a tag and see people with way less years draw a tag I'm about ready to give my money to another state

SD is growing and people want more Wild game on the landscape. And this bonus point or pool system is going to get you all in trouble in ten years. Landowner tags should be restricted to the land they own. It doesn't take a mathematician to know that if we don't grow the elk herd or cut landowner tags you're going to have a mob on your hands.

SDGFP bends to the landowners in every instance. There is no reason these landowners need elk tags every year, and if so they should be landowner tags only. We are bringing money into the draw system and that is a slippery slope. I wish SDGFP would have the backbone to say no to the landowner once in a while when it comes to them getting more opportunities and the general public getting the short end of the stick

SDGFP has done a very good job over many years of growing and maintaining the Black Hills elk herd. I am impressed and enjoy seeing the numbers of elk increase since I began hunting there in 1982.

SDGFP is doing a great job of managing the elk herd, but I think you are falling victim to landowner whining. No group is better at whining for money and privilege from the government than landowner/ranchers/farmers.

SDGFP is doing a great job on our elk herds. Although I think wind cave should be handled different to help slow CWD from getting out of the park. It also really sucks that a South Dakota tag is turning into a once in a lifetime tag. With that being said I have no idea how that problem can be fixed. All in all, though, Keep up the good work!!

SDGFP needs to think about awarding those applicants who Have 20 or more years of preference points with a tag. A hunter who has applied for that many years and hasn't drawn a tag is crazy. You need to think about awarding everyone with 20-25+ years a tag. Get them off the books. It's ridiculous that someone with only a few years preference can draw over someone with 20+ years.

SDGFP should look at a program that would allow the landowners where there are sufficient elk populations to obtain a license and then be able to sell and guide on their land a person of their choice. It allows the ranchers a small income stream and better relations with the agency.

SDGFP should use the mail carriers and DOT operators and others to help with surveys Also feel that the SDGFP should work with the US Forest Service and do some prescribed burns to help provide better habitat and maybe take pressure off the landowner.

Seek more enforcement assistance in the BH Fire Protection District so that seasonal/permanent road closures are enforced. Seems that many people are using the closed roads during the elk season, this fact really disrupts the quality of a hunt. There are plenty of open roads to get the hunter to a location generally close to where they should walk for the remainder of the hunt. Too much driving and random bugling during the archery season--don't these people understand how that impacts the animal activity?

Seems like elk management is working well in the Hills. Not sure why the Custer numbers are down. I assume the landowner elk damage issues are coming from outside the Hills. It is nice to see more elk outside the Hills...would like to see more. While archery antelope hunting I have seen elk north of the Hills between Buffalo and Camp Crook...what a pleasant surprise and awesome experience. I love elk!

Seems like landowners get tags every year while the rest of us go a lifetime without ever getting a tag. This is not right.

Shorten the grazing leases in the Black Hills National Forest

Since the chance of getting drawn is so low, SDGFP should send this survey to people who have actually gotten drawn and hunted for elk in the past few years.

Some landowners (Elk mountain area) (NW Bennett County) have significant elk damage to their pastures and crop land, some may or may not have time to hunt an elk and already have plenty of beef. I think allowing the landowner the ability to turn back a bull tag to GFP in trade for a forage payment is a possible option. i.e. turn back tag, \$5,000 in forages delivered or in kind. GFP controls those tags in a lottery, allow the older/high preference point residents the option to pay \$5,000 for those tags and be put in a lottery. GFP controls the process/tags, landowner gets replacement forage, resident gets chance at dream hunt before "unable". This is only for bulls, use cow hunts for depreciation in slight or substantially reduce areas.

Somehow change the lottery system so the people with the most preference points get a tag first.

South Dakota could benefit from tag price increase coupled with non-resident elk opportunities.

South Dakota is such a special place to hunt elk, I would hope we can increase hunting opportunities to more hunters to have the ability to pursue these animals. I do feel biological studies are important in determining the future of SD's elk. If cost is an issue then gathering multiple conservation groups to donate towards covering the expense and extra fundraising is a real possibility. There are many volunteers/groups willing to help landowners with property damage (i.e. fixing fence, etc.), and also with volunteering to increase safe and efficient hunting opportunities on private land (i.e.: veterans, kids, disabled, other new adult hunters, etc.). My hope is that going forward we can find a balance with private and public land hunting, while acting in a way that is in the best interest of the elk. I would hope to see more hunting opportunities arise in the future, the more good South Dakota people we can get involved in being outdoors, experiencing the opportunity to hunt and harvest their own meat from one of the greatest animals to hunt is something we should strive for.

South Dakota seems to heavily cater to land-owners. Opportunities for those of us who don't have access to private lands is largely restricted to public lands. SD should provide incentives to landowners to allow the public to hunt elk on their lands, or the landowners don't get tags.

South Dakotas elk hunting is a wonderful experience. There are some real problems on how it is managed. I have had the opportunity to either hunt or be with someone that has had a tag the last 5 years. I have learned a lot about the herd the region other hunters' frustrations and the relationship with landowners. The license is so limited that I started just applying for cow tags. I knew if I didn't I would be too old to hunt when I finally received a tag. However, landowners enjoy 20 30 tags in their lifetime that not right. If the elk cause so much damage why are there no hunting signs on all the private land? why do they get to compete with us on land that may be 20 miles from their land? This is so wrong. Give the landowner a cow tag and when they are on their land they can choice to shoot a cow or not but they cannot use that tag on public land or shot a bull. I am very frustrated with how the commission caters to a very few that all south Dakota should be able enjoy more than once in their life time. Its time it changes for all citizens in South Dakota.

Stick to the 240 acre minimum for land owner elk license. We have heard of landowners with less land than the minimum getting multiple license for elk. (reliable source). There used to be US Forest Service areas set aside strictly for wildlife that excluded cattle grazing. Consider re-instating these areas.

Stop the hype on the CWD. As a physician there has never been a transference of a human case from elk to human in the date. Get the GFP Ranger out into the landowner area. Stop by the place, don't just go on the land without the cordial introduction, make contact, get to know the ranchers in his/her area. I have relation on family farms/ranches who don't even know and have never met their Game Warden! In the past when I was a kid on the place that was never the case. We knew and saw our warden frequently. Also, my dad would never have tolerated the game warden on his place without notification nor do I think our warden would have ever trespassed without our prior knowledge.

Survey was difficult to move subject matter and only given preprinted choices in most areas. SDGFP is doing a good job of trying to understand landowner concerns and issues. Increase depredation costs to better reflex landowner costs and concerns. Ensure that landowners that meet the 240 acre and 500 use days receives an any sex elk tag every year and can use it as he/she determines.

Tags and park fees to high. DON'T like out of state landowners' tags. Big problems.

Thank you for the opportunity

Thank you.

Thanks for all SDGFP does to try to balance landowner and public needs with regard to the effective management and long term sustainability of the elk herd in the Black Hills.

Thanks for doing the survey and managing the elk resource.

Thanks for the great job you do in managing SD's wildlife. It may not be possible, but I wish the waiting period after drawing a tag could be reduced to 5 years.

Thanks for your work on this. Please try to create more access to private lands for non-landowners. This will help ensure the future on hunting as we need to recruit new hunters and almost none of those people will be landowners.

The ability for hunters to draw elk tags in SD is becoming so difficult. I drew my archery tag last year. I may draw it again in 25-30 years. The rifle season is worse. I would love the opportunity to harvest a trophy animal but I believe it better to have greater opportunity for those of us that love and support the Black Hills. Unfortunately, I must accept that I will be physically unable to archery hunt the next time I may draw therefore I may not apply when I my opportunity returns

The amount of landowner elk management tags should be given out on a ranch by ranch basis, based on the population residing on the ranch. I would like to see more elk in the black hills, which could lead to more hunting opportunities for the general public.

The average Joe should be able to hunt elk with a decent chance at drawing a tag. Tag prices should defer damage created by elk plus increase their number in South Dakota. The pay to play system should not be South Dakota's system.

The blocks for preference points may need to be re-examined or explained more clearly. Why are the blocks separated at 0, 2, and 10 years of preference for the license draw?

The bull and cow seasons should be opened at the same time. Elk respond to hunting pressure rapidly. The whole herd will often move several miles after a few shots are fired in their normal summer range. They may move out of the hunting unit in one night. Many cow hunters are left with few or no elk in the area they have to hunt.

The cow tags issued for the prairie elk units should not start hunting until October 1st instead of September 15. I have been hunting with an individual who drew a Harding County bull tag. The areas with elk are not that big and the cow and bull hunters end up in very close proximity to each other and end up ruining the days hunt for each other, let alone safety reasons. There needs to be some cow tags in these special units, I just think that they need to have a later season start due to the small geographic areas that hold the elk.

The current lottery system does not make sure that hunters who have applied for a large number of years get permits. The system needs to make sure that hunters who apply for over 10 years receive additional preference for a license. Double the preference points for over 10 years and triple the preference points for over 20 years. I understand there are a large number of people applying for permits so how can the lottery process be made better?

The current lottery system is baffling to everyone I know who also attempts to get an Elk tag. In the past 30+ years I've lived in Rapid City - with my extended group of hunter-friends. I know three people who've actually gotten Elk Tags. One Tag was his first time ever submitting. The other two tags had 10+ preferences points. i.e. they had been unsuccessful in drawing a tag in over 10 years. My home is in the Black Hills National Forest. I frequently see Elk in my area. Now, you want to reduce the number of licenses again to give to landowners who already close private land and "occupy" public lands to which they have grazing rights during the hunting seasons.

The drawing preference system is not right people like me and many others will be dead before we are lucky enough to draw a tag. Thanks

The elk population in the Black Hills is not here to provide endless trophy bull hunting opportunities for landowners and permittees. You cannot manage a population by shooting the male of the species. If SDGFP and the landowners expect to reduce the elk herd due to overpopulation you must do it by shooting the cows. Not to let the landowners take a bull. I will venture to guess that the majority of the people buying the onto the lifetime tickets are looking to hunt trophy elk. This should tell you something about how valuable those bull tags really are. Give the crybaby landowners two cow tags if they feel deprived.

The first plan wasn't a plan at all. Where were the actionable goals and objectives? Where was the accountability and responsibility details? Where were the mechanisms in the plan to measure accomplishment? Where were the timelines for achievement of objectives? What elements in the plan were there to mitigate for failure to meet goals and objectives? What, if any, progress was made to achievement of goals and objectives that weren't at all either actionable or reasonably achievable? What public statements or invitations were made to demonstrate progress or failure to achieve plan objectives. This proposal assumes that revision and update to the plan is warranted based upon changing conditions and circumstances not previously identified in the original plan. I submit that the only reason this proposal surfaces is due entirely to an internal temporal directive. It wasn't a serious strategic or even operational plan. It was just a collection of platitudes to satisfy a political aspiration that went onto a shelf someplace and collected dust. You now drag it out, dust it off and ask the public to comment on a plan that hasn't been measured, publicly vetted nor evaluated. This survey is so full of confirmation bias as to be irrelevant. What sort of plan invites exploitation of a resource without any strong population measurement, assessment of distribution, and demographics? What sort of plan emphasizes socio-economic considerations over the

ecological sustainability and welfare of the resource itself? The confirmation bias in this survey is just offensive.

The grass quality in the hills is tremendous most years so cattle leases have little impact on elk herd health - despite the complaints I hear from casual hunters. However, in Custer state park, prairie dogs and buffalo overpopulations tremendously hurt forage levels. The recent fire in CSP will probably improve forage there!

The intrusion of the ATVs in the Black Hills has certainly had to have an impact on elk and other wildlife. I wonder if a study and extensive ongoing efforts to understand that impact should be done. In talking to some of the riders I was informed they seldom stick to designated trails.

The last month of the mountain lion season, run dogs to fill quotas.

The last time I hunted elk (2016), I observed a large number of road hunters, chasing elk seen near roads. One vehicle followed along a road below a ridge elk were moving along which I was trailing, stopping often to raise rifles and scopes in my direction. I had to keep trees between me and the vehicle. The elk eventually spooked and ran off. Stern reminders to not road hunt or something concrete need to be issued. Spooking elk doesn't help hunting or the elk population in general.

The lottery system is a joke. I now have 23 years of preference, and yet people with far fewer years continue to draw licenses. I will soon be too old to hunt elk in South Dakota, my home state.

The more public access on land with elk habitat the better. For example, I had a tag in the Southern unit and the landowners wouldn't work with us to access public land south of Hwy 79. On guy named Murdock would let us through for \$1000 and this was 12 years ago.

The mountain lion population is too high. It has hurt the elk population. Even female lions are migrating out of the hills to find a territory. Allow hounds or whatever it takes.

The one question on qualifying for a landowner license had a gross income of greater than \$1,000.00. I don't feel that is enough to qualify for a license. It should be someone who derives the majority of their income from farming/ranching. Part of living in an elk area is to have issues with elk and your property. No different than deer in other areas or other wildlife. I don't think you should get too much preference for licenses. I am not a real big fan of the landowner preference. A lot of people in South Dakota are not in the position or were not put in the position to own land that has wildlife on it, so they get penalized by the system. Too many licenses are allocated to landowners. The general public's access is too limited due to this.

The opportunity to get a license in SD is almost nonexistent. We have the opportunity to grow the herds and create more opportunities, would mean landowners and hunters work together.

The over grazing on some units and the onslaught of ATV/UTV'S that are pushing elk onto the private land, to which the damage will take place. Some of the most highly kept elk habitat is now crossed with hundreds of miles of ATV trails. In walking back to my truck last Oct, I had 41 ATV's pass me and while sitting and glassing many times they were areas that were not to be driven in, all at my displeasure. The elk do not like to put on the move all day long all summer, putting stress on cows and the young calves.

The people who have multiple years of preference points should get an elk tag before the people with less than 5 years.

The people with the highest number of preference points should get a license before they die.

The practices for a healthy heard are being done. My biggest concern and this don't even affect me is the lottery system. I think it is a very unfortunate that SDGFP allows people at 3 and 4 years preferences to draw a tag when there is 20+ years applicants out there. I'm not sure if it's taken into consideration or even if anyone cares. But it would be interesting to see the age of the people

that have that many years preferences. A good portion of them I'm guessing will be their last elk hunt. I will be 65 at the youngest if I ever draw again. And to know there are people that draw as early as 3 and 4 years just doesn't seem right.

The prairie unit I am in has a pre-opening day meeting with the landowners and those hunters that have drawn an elk permit to be certain that each hunter has a place to hunt. It is my fervent wish that this very successful procedure can continue. The pertinent landowners and conservation officer have worked together for many years and speaking for the landowners, we wish not only to continue our meeting but that the SDGFP consider having such meetings. Respectfully Toward this end I will be happy to meet and discuss this.

The preference point system for an elk tag needs some adjustment! Way too many of us will never draw a tag. Figure it out!

The questions at the beginning of the survey asked if numbers should be changed but did not indicate up or down.

The use of public lands by the landowners for grazing cattle. If a landowner wishes to use public lands to graze and wants elk tags or money for damages it should not be allowed.

the wait for resident tags is too long. figure out a way to weight the draw more for extra preference points. the current method and changes don't seem to help much.

The wolf and mountain lion populations are larger than they should be--killing off a lot of young elk and decreasing the population as a whole. these large predators are not needed in SD as they travel outside of the Hills, and kill livestock, horses and calves 200 plus miles away from the Black Hills.

There are far too many landowners' tags allocated it should be no more than 10%. Additionally, they should have the same requirements for wait times before being allowed to apply again.

There are landowners/lease that qualify for a tag every year under your current guidelines that never hunt their own land. They hunt public land miles from the property that got them a tag. While this is going on you also have landowners who don't get a tag who actually have elk most of the year and are doing real damage. If you could come up with a way to fix this problem it would go a long way towards making some of the landowners happy. In summary I feel it is too easy for some landowners to get a tag every year, maybe you could consider having 2 different landowner criteria for eligibility. Those who lease most of their acres are only eligible every 3 years to apply?

There are landowners that will always say there are too many elk. We live in elk country, yes, the elk cause lots more work for us, but this is elk country. It doesn't help when you keep giving landowners more money, but the attitudes don't change. The kill tags disgusts me, to kill a cow in July with a calve that won't survive without her is very sportsman all because a landowner indicated there are too many elk on his place. You put a \$500,000 water line on Elk Mt paid largely from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to better the habitat and guess what, more elk came. Now, you want to kill them off because landowners are complaining. His cows drink on the water that many sportsmen payed for. There are a lot more landowners in unit 3 than you know that want more elk. You need to get programs that help habitat and help those landowners that want elk on their properties. Praise the landowners that are ranching with the wildlife not trying to destroy it. Tell landowners this is how it is going to be, and if you want to sign up for our programs, great. We are tired of fighting with our neighbors and GFP over the population, set a population in each unit and keep it. The up and down up and down with the population is getting very old.

there are too many landowners with 240 acres that qualify for landowner preference. I would to see this raised to 500+

There is nothing in the survey that shows the SDGFP is working with the management at Wind Cave National Park. I understand that doesn't fall under the state GFP. But there has to be a better working relationship with Wind Cave. It's a squandered resource that's severely mismanaged. This impacts the states elk herd with chronic waste and other problems. In the past 10 years or so they've stopped the natural migration to the west out of the park with a high fence. They installed drop gates that they thought the cows would use to leave the park in the spring to calf on Forest Service. Cows can jump the gates but calves can't get across the gates so the cows don't leave. This has caused a huge spike in chronic waste disease. Also, in the past two winters they've had a mass reduction of elk number by killing them off. This elk migration should not have been stopped and needs to be reinstated while the elk still know the route to leave the park. Wind Cave is the national location for elk viewing and listening for bugling. But with the large reduction it's no longer the great experience it once was. Again, chronic waste plays into this. I also think GFP needs to work closer with the Forest Service to enhance the habitat in some key areas to hold elk on federal land. Keeping elk on the Forest Service would help to keep them away from private lands to cut down on desperation. Because of this being a semi-arid area water development would be a key element in accomplishing better habitat not only for elk but all game along with songbirds. I would rather see GFP money go towards habitat on Federal or State land then private landowners when they make it clear they don't want the elk. Landowners that like to have elk around need to be helped out with state funds. I think it's quit a problem with absentee owners. Individuals who buy up 250 acres or more just to get an elk license. If they don't live on the land use the land generate an income they shouldn't be allocated a license. It would be a step in the right direction if they had to take a cow license every other year. There are way too many licenses allocated to this type of individual.

There needs to be a concerted effort to lower the prairie elk population. We have been dealing with them for 30 years and the herd keeps growing. We need to kill more cows. Not just tags but actual killing of cows. Let the landowners do it if necessary. That would be the most efficient way.

There needs to be an elk season started in Wind Cave Park.

There needs to be more effort towards decreasing mountain lion populations. We are seeing too many elk kills (especially calves in the spring)

There needs to be more elk in Custer state park.

There needs to be more land and entry availability to elk hunt. The problem is there is so much private land and most of them don't allow you to hunt, deer also, so you have to rely on the little public land there is and that is a huge hurdle to deal with, especially when they are on private land where the food is. Need more land for public use and have enough population to at least have a chance to harvest one.

There should never be a nonresident license for elk, like there is for deer. A resident should not be denied when a nonresident gets one

There are 95% more grazing grasses available now that we've endured the beetle pandemic. We have an opportunity to not only raise our elk numbers within the fire protection district but also help break down the deadfall as a result of the beetles. Growing our Elk numbers will benefit not only our sportsmen and woman but also draw a larger nature viewing audience. Thus, providing a gain in revenue for our state!