

2023 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (New Mexico) Special Order of Business

New Mexico Game and Fish EPLUS System

Whereas, the New Mexico State Game and Fish (NMG&F) has a program called Elk Private Land Use System (EPLUS) the goal of which is to: “Establish an equitable and flexible system that recognizes the contributions of private lands and landowners to the management of elk and their habitats, while providing hunting opportunities on private lands, and to support appropriate, biologically sound, and effective harvest goals set by the department for elk.”

Whereas, the EPLUS system and the management of game is overseen by the New Mexico Game Commissions, which has not held a quorum in over a year and is not effectively managing the EPLUS program according to its original intent.

Whereas, the management of game animals by NMG&F and the Game commission is largely disconnected from sound monitoring and clear management goals in much of the state and places undue burden on many land owners to prove their contribution to the management of Elk and elk habitat, while effectively privatizing over half of all hunting permits for the primary benefit of wealthy trophy hunters instead of farmers, ranchers, public and private land, or the general public.

Whereas, the elk population has rebounded to the point elk impact on both public and private land necessitates a comprehensive, inclusive, and rigorous management framework to balance the interests of the public owners of the elk herd, the farmers, ranchers, and land managers working on both public and private lands, private landowners, all while working to increasing the health of the ecosystems being managed.

Therefore, be it resolved, we strongly support reforming the New Mexico Game Commission to ensure that it will function effectively, free from political influence or control, to steward wild game in New Mexico for the benefit of the public, and especially for the benefit of the farmers, ranchers, and land managers who are most impacted by the elk herd.

Therefore, be it further resolved, we strongly support requiring the inclusion of a minimum of two land managers actively engaged in farming or ranching in New Mexico on the game commission.

Therefore, be it further resolved, we strongly urge depredation hunts in January to ensure population targets set by game management plans are met.

Therefore, be it further resolved, we support managing the elk herd in New Mexico primarily as a source of meat for New Mexicans, and insist that the allocation of hunting permits to private land owners be tied to the real benefit afforded to the public elk herd by their land management practices.