

Jackson Elk Herd Feedground Management Action Plan (FMAP)

- Draft Version 2/17/2026 -

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Purpose:

The Department is currently operating under the Commission-approved Wyoming Chronic Wasting Disease Management plan and the Wyoming Elk Feedgrounds Management Plan (Feedground Management Plan). Both plans incorporated multiple years-worth of public input through both collaborative processes and public comment.

...[The Feedground Management Plan] is a road map to identify a responsible set of actions that will guide the manner in which all involved make decisions to deal with current and emerging challenges and conflicts. The plan creates a process and venue to discuss and analyze ways to reduce our reliance on supplemental feeding in places where it's feasible, and in a way that protects the values and objectives feedgrounds achieve today...

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is acting in good faith to carry out its mission and statutory mandates to meet the expectations of Wyoming's citizens. It would be irresponsible for us to do otherwise or to ignore the facts we have before us...

Message from the Director, authored by former Director Brian Nesvik

Directive:

Under the Feedground Management Plan, the Department **Goals** are to: 1) Promote elk health by limiting disease transmission while providing supplemental feed and 2) reduce reliance of elk on supplemental feed while adhering to the Sideboards. The **Sideboards** are to continue to: 1) Adhere to standard Department process for elk herd unit population objective review with public process and Commission approval for any proposed changes, 2) Prioritize hunting opportunities as the primary tool to manage elk populations toward the Commission-approved herd unit objectives, 3) Minimize elk damage to private property, disease transmission to livestock, and negative economic impacts to livestock producers, and 4) Minimize competition with other wintering wildlife species.

A comprehensive list of **strategies** is compiled in the Feedground Management Plan (Section 3.5 and Appendix 1: FMAP Assessment Checklist Template). Per the Feedground Management Plan (pages 51 and 76):

- The FMAPs provide the mechanism to implement the [Feedground Management] Plan adaptively by uniquely assessing and implementing the **Strategies** as appropriate for each feedground.
- While the FMAPs will address each feedground, they will be conducted at the herd unit level
- FMAPs are intended to be a concise straightforward playbook that specifically identifies obstacles and solutions to implement **actions**.

How we drafted the Jackson FMAP:

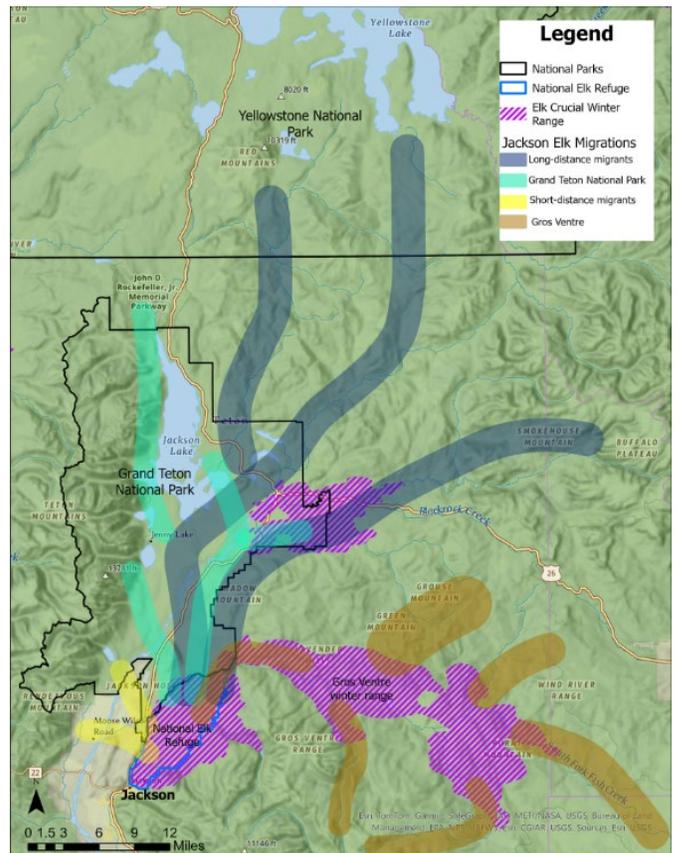
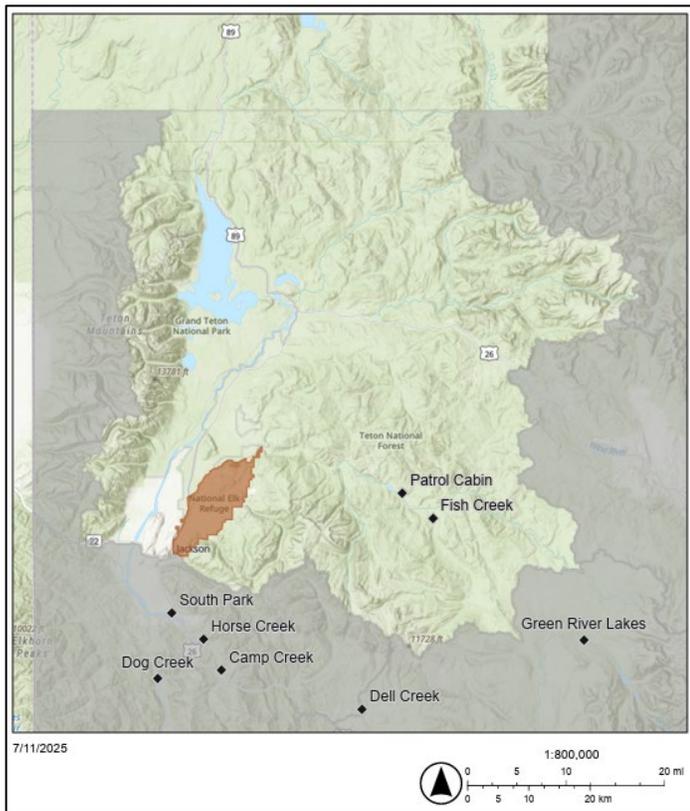
- **Oct 2024-Aug 2025:** Internal review of every strategy in the **FMAP Assessment Checklist** to determine how they could or should apply to the Jackson elk herd, and the feedgrounds within.
- **Aug-Dec 2025:** Condense the 26-page table of actions into **Tier I and Tier II summary tables** to prioritize, estimate costs, and track status updates.
- **Dec 2025:** Begin outreach to affected stakeholders.
- **Feb 2026:** Create the **Jackson FMAP Summary and Actions**, for easier reference and interpretation.

Feedback from affected stakeholder conversations and public workshop will be incorporated, as appropriate. The FMAP will remain open to future revisions as conditions change and/or opportunities arise.

Jackson FMAP Summary and Actions

<p>Feedground(s): Fish Creek, Patrol Cabin, National Elk Refuge (NER; managed by USFWS)</p>	<p>Herd Unit: Jackson Hunt Areas 70-72, 75, 77-83</p>	<p>Meeting date(s): 10/23/2024, 1/7/2025, 4/29/2025, 6/26/2025, 8/1/2025, 8/26/2025</p>
<p>Department Participants: Brad Hovinga (Sup), Benjamin Wise (Dz Bio), Dave Hyde (FG Mngr), Aly Courtemanch (Bio), Derek Lemon (H&A), Kyle Lash (GW), Jon Stephens (GW), Lillian Casey (OM), Raegin Ross (I&E), Cheyenne Stewart (Coord)</p>		
<p>Identify Potentially Impacted Stakeholders: Agricultural property owners/managers in the Gros Ventre, Spring Gulch, Buffalo Valley Federal Land Managers: GTNP, BTNF, NER, YNP, Jackson Hole Cooperative Elk Studies Group Jackson Hole Outfitters and Guides Association Local Governments: Teton Conservation District, Teton County, Town of Jackson Participants from CWD and Feedground Management Plan collaborative processes General hunting public, general landowners, hunting and conservation NGO's, public</p>		

Major current issues in the Jackson Elk Herd include pending decisions on the USFS permit renewal for the Fish Creek Feedground, on-going NER draft Bison Elk Management Plan revision, multiple migratory herd segments with different ecological, sociological and management values, and biological concern that any CWD mortalities in the important migratory herd segments will be additive mortality for those groups of elk.



Actions are generally listed in the order in which they first appear in the Assessment Checklist. Tier I actions are items to pursue now and Tier II actions are dependent on progress or completion of other actions first.

Tier I Actions:

- Review the **herd unit objective** after FMAP-approval and initiation of the new radio-collaring effort. Consider options for different management strategies to apply to different migratory-segments. For example, reducing the overall objective to a level determined by a reduction in short and some medium distance migrants, without reducing Teton Wilderness, Yellowstone National Park, and Gros Ventre summering elk.
- Conduct a **radio-collaring effort** to assess the status and trends of different migratory segments of the herd. This will also inform harvest strategies on the National Elk Refuge (NER) and a future herd unit objective review.
- Remove **feedground quotas** from Commission Policy; they are not needed or used for the Jackson herd.
- Use collar-data to inform **harvest strategies** on the NER and Grand Teton National Park. Focus harvest on short and medium distance migrant elk. These herd segments are growing and have higher incidents of conflict. Avoid cow/calf harvest on long-distant migrant and Gros Ventre elk to support long-term viability of these ecologically and culturally important herd segments. Harvest strategies could include later seasons and shifting from the Any Unused License structure toward hunt area-specific licenses on the NER.
- Work with Bridger-Teton National Forest on opportunities within the current **winter human presence closures** to affect Gros Ventre elk distribution, with the goal of encouraging Gros Ventre elk to winter in the Gros Ventre, as opposed to moving down onto the NER.
- Use **Fish Creek feedground** more deliberately to spread elk out (e.g., increase the feeding area to implement low-density feeding) between the two Gros Ventre feedgrounds. Prepare for the 2028 Fish Creek feedground permit re-authorization decision while adhering to state statute.
- Assess the Department regulation **definition of damages**, to clarify the Department's responsibilities as they relate to non-traditional agricultural operations.
- Develop a **Living in Elk Country brochure** for non-traditional agricultural landowners, to set an expectation that elk may occupy private lands in Teton County, and to provide strategies to prevent conflicts.
- Clarify how and when to **begin and end feeding** at Patrol Cabin. Stop throwing hay early at Patrol Cabin to 'hold elk'; it has not proven effective.
- Analyze the **Gros Ventre elk wintering patterns** as they relate to feeding, weather, human presence, wolf metrics, or other factors. Try to understand why and when elk leave the Gros Ventre to winter on the NER.
- Conduct **feedground on-sites** to ensure low density feeding is conducted to the extent possible, given the terrain, vegetation, daily weather conditions, and equipment.
- Continue **weed management** efforts in the region, with emphasis on elk winter range.
- Explore options to **convert vegetation on Patrol Cabin** to more palatable forage and irrigate it if necessary.
- Continue to share **Elk Occupancy Agreement** information with producers and secure Department funding to support those agreements.
- Implement the completed **Carcass Management Plan** on all Department feedgrounds, including targeted removal of elk that are symptomatic of disease, including necrobacillosis (e.g., hoof rot), CWD, mange, or other diseases. This is consistent with standard Department procedure.
- **Report** feedground information, including CWD and other mortalities, for all feedgrounds annually in the applicable herd unit Job Completion Report (JCR).
- Finish and report on the summer 2025 pilot study to **test feedground soil** for CWD presence and density.
- Explore funding opportunities to repair and update the **NER fence** to reduce elk-vehicle collisions and risk of elk conflict on private lands. Continue to collaborate with the Wyoming Department of Transportation and Teton County on strategies to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.

- Assess the need to update the **Emergency Feeding Guidance Commission Policy** with best practices.
- Learn concerns and needs of **affected stakeholders**, now and over time. Learn needs and opportunities for **agricultural operations** to prevent, reduce or eliminate damage, including options for high fencing.
- Explore opportunities to learn **better ways to communicate** what we learn with the public. Maintain and update the feedground page of the Department website.
- Explore **personnel structures** that could improve FMAP implementation, including budget processing, reviewing contract feeder contracts, and having annual feedground debrief meetings.
- Compare elk **winter range density and distribution** between feedground and unfed populations in Wyoming.

Tier II Actions:

- Per landowner interest, use a Master Hunter Program or Hunter Management Assistance Program (HMAP) to increase landowner interest and support to accept elk hunters on their property. A HMAP could also be used to micro-manage harvest on the NER to target or avoid harvest on certain herd segments.
- If the short-distance migrant elk segment continues to grow and all the harvest strategies discussed are not effective in curbing or reducing that herd segment, explore fertility control and agency removals as options to manage short distance migrant elk; until levels reach a point where harvest alone can maintain the desired numbers.
- Drones have proven effective for annual count/classifications and safely/calmly hazing elk out of damage situations. Purchase a drone, when possible, while adhering to Department and Federal purchasing requirements.
- The elk trap at Fish Creek uses an outdated design and is becoming dilapidated. Elk are not reliably using Fish Creek to ensure successful trapping, and the 2028 Fish Creek permitting decision could affect our ability to use the trap. Requesting a new trap be erected at Patrol Cabin ensures continued brucellosis surveillance. Without a new trap, whether due to trap degradation or lack of permit renewal, alternative methods for brucellosis monitoring needs to be explored, such as hunter harvest, mandatory sampling, and single-animal aerial or ground captures. These methods would need increased personnel capacity and funding to implement.
- Explore trap substrate amendments for CWD prion binding potential to mitigate the risk of CWD transmission from trapping operations. More needs to be understood about the relationship between substrate and CWD transmission.
- If we are effective at implementing the Tier I Actions, a reduction in feedground operations and reduced reliance of elk on feed will happen organically.
- Explore options to feed elk on private lands in the Gros Ventre in accordance with state statute 23-1-305 to expand feeding area for Low Density feeding if Fish Creek is no longer permitted. Only if necessary to address damage or improve low density feeding, and based on information learned from the Gros Ventre elk wintering patterns analysis.
- Explore heavy equipment acquisition needs to improve current feedground operations beyond what is possible with current equipment. On-sites will help determine the specific constraints to implement Low Density feeding, given current conditions, personnel, equipment, and resources. If heavy equipment is pursued for the Gros Ventre, it will have to be prioritized amongst other FMAP needs in the Jackson and other elk herds.
- Explore possibility for increased Elk Management Stamp cost. Getting clarity on the funding needs and priorities across all feedground herd FMAPs, would likely be needed to gain support for a fee increase.
- Support increased and diversified compensation for outfitters, if their concerns are direct cost impacts to their business model.

Prioritized Actions List (Summary Tables)

Letters denote the order the Action appears in the document. Actions are not prioritized within Tier I or Tier II. Generally, Tier I actions are items to pursue now and Tier II actions are dependent on progress or completion of other actions first.

TIER I				
Action	Cost	Lead (Team)	Strategy 1st Referenced	Status
(A) Herd Unit Objective Review	-	Bio (Coord/Dz Bio/GWs/I&E/Sup)	Herd Objectives	Initiate post-FMAP approval
(B) Collaring Effort & Story Map	\$1.5mil over 4 years (majority outside funding)	Bio (Coord/Dz Bio/GWs/I&E)	Herd Objectives	Deploy collars winter 2025/6. Storymap developed for information sharing.
(C) Remove Feedground Quotas from Gros Ventre feedgrounds and put into herd objective	-	Coord	Commission Policy Feedground Quotas	Remove now, do with herd objective review, or wait for all FMAPs to be done.
(D) Later Hunting Seasons, Limited Quota Licenses, and Target Short and Medium Distance Migrants on NER	-	Bio/GWs/Dz Bio	Hunting Seasons	Initiated with Type 6 licenses for 2025 season.
(G) Winter Human Presence Closures	-	Coord/Sup	Access	Internal meeting 6/4/2025. BTNF conversations during stakeholder outreach
(L) Prepare for Fish Creek permit re-authorization in 2028	Unknown	Jackson EHU wildlife managers and H&A	Operate Feedgrounds	
(M) Define Damages	-	GWs/Sup	Cattle Commingling Conflict Mitigation	New draft Regulation language in internal review
(N) Develop Living in Elk Country Brochure	Unknown; printing only	I&E	Cattle Commingling Conflict Mitigation	Draft in review. Expect winter/spring 2026 completion
(O) Feeding Start and End Dates	-	FG Mgr/Dz Bio/Sup/Coord (Bio/N GW)	Reduce Feeding Season Length	Implement 2025/6
(P) Gros Ventre Elk Wintering Patterns	-	Large Carnivore Section (Jackson EHU wildlife managers)	Reduce Feeding Season Length	Analysis initiated, work on over winter 2025/6
(Q) Use Fish Creek More Prescriptively	-	FG Mgr/Dz Bio (Bio /NGW/Sup/Coord)	Low-Density Feeding	Initiate in winter 2025/6 or 2026/7

(S) Low Density Feeding	- TBD	FG Mgr/Dz Bio/Sup/Coord/Bio	Low-Density Feeding	Early- winter 2025/6 feeding season on-sites
(T) Weed Management	Unknown	H&A/WildDiv	Habitat Enhancements	On-going
(U) Habitat Manipulation on Patrol Cabin	Unknown	FG Mgr/Dz Bio	Habitat Enhancements	Explore options to convert vegetation to more palatable forage and irrigate
(V) High Fence or other solutions for private lands to Reduce/Eliminate Damage in Gros Ventre	Unknown	North GW/Bio	Fencing	Start with (AF) Learn Needs
(W) Increase Elk Occupancy Agreements with interested landowners	Unknown	Jackson EHU wildlife managers	Increase Winter Range	Secured some Commission funding. Discussing with operators/landowners
(X) Carcass Management Plan	-	Jackson EHU wildlife managers/Vet	Carcass Removal	Done. Applies to all feedgrounds
(Y) Record All Feedground Mortalities	-	Jackson EHU wildlife managers	Feedground Mortalities	Initiated 2024/25. On-going
(Z) Collect and Test Soil Samples	\$300 for collection supplies	Dz Bio	Environmental Testing	Pilot testing summer 2025
(AA) NER Fence Update	~\$3million Could offset with WGFD labor	Coord	Fencing	
(AB) Targeted Removal	-	All		Initiated Winter 2024/25
(AC) Emergency Feeding Guidance and assess need to update Commission Policy	-	Dz Bio/Wildlife Admin/Statewide Sups	Emergency Feeding Guidance	Per guidance from WGFD leadership
(AF) Learn Needs of Affected Stakeholders	-	GWs/Bio	Engage	Dec 2025/Jan 2026 and will be on-going
(AI) Include Feedground Information in the JCR	-	Bio/Dz Bio	Feedground Management	Initiated 2025 JCR. On-going
(AJ) Develop Tools to Translate Technical Science	None	WMC/Comms/Bios	Human Dimensions	Drafted project proposal and recruited UW collaborator
(AK) Personnel Structure Changes Could Improve FMAP Implementation	-	Coords/Sups/Wild Admin	Personnel	General discussions initiated
(AL) Review Feeder Contracts	-	Fg Mgr/Dz Bio/Sup	Personnel	
(AM) Annual Feedground Meetings	-	All	Internal Comms	Initiated post-2024/5 and pre-2025/6 meetings

(AN) Keep Feedground Page of Website Updated	-	I&E	External Communications	Updated Winter 2025
(AO) Elk Winter Behavior Comparison	-	Dz Bio/SRA	Priorities	Initiated, expect spring 2026 completion

TIER II				
Action	Cost	Lead	Section 1st Referenced	Status
(E) Master Hunter Program or HMAP	\$0 if done with regional staff. AWEC needed if scaled up.	GWs on private. Bios/GWs on NER	Hunting Seasons	As appropriate and supported
(F) Fertility Control and Agency Removal	Unknown	Jackson EHU wildlife managers	Auxiliary Management	Requires a combination of other actions first
(H) Purchase Drone	Unknown	Coord	Monitoring	Per Department purchasing guidelines
(I) New trap for Patrol Cabin	\$300,000	Dz Bio/Coord	Surveillance	Need to compare priorities
(J) Trap Substrate Amendments	Unknown	Vet/Dz Bio	Surveillance	As we learn more about efficacy
(K) Reduce Feedground Operations	Reduces costs	Jackson EHU wildlife managers	Operate Feedgrounds	Requires a combination of other actions first
(R) Feed elk on Private Lands in Gros Ventre			Low-Density Feeding	Requires a combination of other actions first
(AD) Reduce Elk Reliance on Feed	-	All	Combine Management Strategies	Requires a combination of other actions first
(AE) Heavy Equipment Acquisition	Unknown	All	Heavy Equipment Acquisition	Requires a combination of other actions first. Prioritization needed.
(AG) Elk Special Management Stamp	-	Coord/Sup/Wildlife Admin	Non-Traditional Sources	Get clarity on how the money would be spent first. Prioritize within FMAP and across Herds
(AH) Support for Increased/Diverse Compensation for Outfitters	-		Non-Traditional Sources	Requires a combination of other actions first

FMAP Assessment Checklist (Comprehensive Table)

This table was developed using the Feedground Management Plan’s template in Appendix 1 and provides more detail to support the actions summarized in the Prioritized Actions List tables above.

Strategy	Assessment	Implementation Plan
<i>Elk Population Management</i>		
Herd Objectives	<p>Long history of collaring elk in Jackson Elk Herd; can use to inform new collaring effort designed to guide current management. Four different summering sub-herds within Jackson Elk Herd - South Grand Teton National Park (GTNP)/Snake River bottom, North GTNP, Teton Wilderness/Yellowstone, Gros Ventre.</p> <p>Teton Wilderness/Yellowstone, Gros Ventre segments have outsized importance/value to hunters and outfitters for their intact long-distance migrations. GTNP, Teton Wilderness/Yellowstone, Gros Ventre have outsized ecological value as prey base for wolves and grizzly bears. Elk, wolves, and grizzly bears are all vital to the tourism economy of this region.</p> <p>Herd unit bull ratios are chronically above recreation management strategy (5-yr ave = 39). Relatively high bull harvest occurs in TW/YNP and GV herd segments, but very little in HA 78 and GTNP. A reduced objective with a Special Management strategy (currently Recreation) could be an option. Reducing Area 78 elk will also reduce overall bull ratios. Reducing the objective will require public support and significant initial and continued outreach to key stakeholders, including a large-scale research and monitoring effort with frequent information-sharing.</p> <p>Option- limited quota on Teton Wilderness / Gros Ventre bull hunts to ensure outfitters have clients. Assess if 16% of Limited Quota allotment would be enough.</p> <p>In the absence of feeding, native winter range cannot fully support current 11,000 elk objective during average and severe winters. Based on historical data, given average winter conditions, Gros Ventre can winter 3,000-3,500 elk on native winter range, however it is unknown to what extent wolf densities affect this. USGS reports and other previous work suggest that the NER can winter approximately 5,000 elk without feeding, given average winter conditions and summer irrigation.</p>	<p>(A) HERD UNIT OBJECTIVE REVIEW Reduce overall herd objective from 11,000 to a level determined by the reduction in short and some medium distance migrants (Area 78/South GTNP and some North GTNP) and not reducing Teton Wilderness/YNP/Gros Ventre elk. Paired with (B) Collaring Effort to guide adaptive hunting management. Explore changing the management strategy, as appropriate. Bring proposal to the public following standard herd objective change process.</p> <p>(B) COLLARING EFFORT Large scale collaring effort to better understand distribution and numbers of summering sub-herds. Work with SRA Unit to determine statistically-valid sample size to predict proportion of herd contribution from each summer sub-herd segment. Coordinate and collaborate closely with NER, GTNP, and other members of JH Cooperative Elk Studies Group. Use collar data during hunting seasons to design season structures and direct hunters to harvest Short Distance and Medium Distance Migrant elk and avoid harvest of Teton Wilderness /YNP/Gros Ventre elk. Would inform current harvest management and implementation of herd unit management objective change, if approved. Develop accompanying STORY MAP on WGFD website to explain Jackson elk herd and study purpose, design, objectives. Share results frequently with key stakeholders and the public. Consider using the project to re-estimate the over-winter carrying capacity of elk on native range.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Commission Policy Feedground Quotas</p>	<p>Policy is outdated. Quotas are not needed and not currently used for management of Gros Ventre elk. Mostly used for estimating hay needs. Want to manage elk on Gros Ventre feedgrounds via redistribution of elk from NER to GV and increase use of native winter range, not via quotas (e.g., numbers). Don't want decisions for Jackson Herd Unit quotas to set a precedence for the use of quotas in other herds or feedgrounds.</p>	<p>(C) REMOVE FEEDGROUND QUOTAS FROM GROS VENTRE FEEDGROUNDS Update Commission Policy to remove feedground quotas from Gros Ventre feedgrounds. Use 3-5 year average number of elk fed for hay budgeting.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Hunting Seasons</p>	<p>Under current herd unit objective- work to shift harvest to more short and medium-distance migrants, and less long distance / Gros Ventre elk (especially cows). Migratory segments are less productive and have high ecological and social value. The short distance herd segment is growing and has high potential for conflict.</p> <p>Revisit if herd objective changes. Use same strategy to target short and medium-distance migrants, but at larger scale.</p> <p>Short distance migrant elk are usually the last sub-herd to arrive on the NER.</p> <p>Hunt Area 77 has very high error in hunter harvest survey because uses unused licenses instead of HA-specific licenses. Error corroborated by mis-match in harvest statistics and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples collected (mandatory CWD submission on NER).</p> <p>Area 78 harvest is at saturation based on landowner tolerance/available lands. Have explored Hunter Management Assistance Program (HMAP) options with larger HA 78 landowners but they are not interested. Have explored/encouraged methods for elk hunting in HOAs and smaller parcels, with limited success due to diversity of opinions about hunting. Can continue trying. Sentiments may change in the future if more elk are on private lands in winter.</p> <p>Maintain hunting seasons in all areas that contribute to elk numbers on the NER, including working closely with Grand Teton National Park.</p>	<p>See (B) COLLARING EFFORT under Elk Population Management - Herd Objectives</p> <p>(D) LATER HUNTING SEASONS, LIMITED QUOTA LICENSES, AND TARGET SHORT AND MEDIUM DISTANCE MIGRANTS ON NER Coordinate closely with NER to develop later hunting seasons on NER that target short and medium-distance migrant elk but protect other segments. Move away from Any Unused License structure on NER and toward Hunt Area 77-specific license structure. Consider options to adaptively micro-manage hunting within the NER to better target short and medium-distance elk in response to elk movement during the hunting season due to hunting pressure.</p> <p>(E) MASTER HUNTER PROGRAM OR HMAP Consider Master Hunter Program, HMAP, or special groups such as veterans/youth/etc. on NER / Private land in HA 78 to direct harvest to the correct elk. Continue to engage with landowners to find ways to increase harvest on private lands in Area 78.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Auxiliary Management</p>	<p>Short distance migrant elk (e.g., Snake River bottom elk) have high productivity, greatest potential for private lands and agricultural damage, difficult hunting access, and compete with Gros Ventre / Teton Wilderness elk for winter range on the NER. Traditional harvest methods may not be sufficient to reduce their numbers, if a herd unit objective change is approved.</p> <p>Fertility control of short distance migrants in addition to harvest could help reduce herd growth initially, until the sub-herd is small enough that it can be managed via harvest alone.</p> <p>Currently, landowner hunting tolerance is at capacity for traditional hunting methods, and have not expressed interest in Chapter 34 hunting opportunities.</p> <p>Consider other alternative control methods in addition to fertility control (agency removal of cows and meat donation).</p> <p>If chronic damage is occurring (in HA 78, GV, other locations) consider more aggressive removal of the specific group of elk, as long as it is relatively small and would not affect the overall herd objective (i.e. < 50). This may require agency removal in order to be efficient and effective (with meat donation).</p>	<p>(F) Explore FERTILITY CONTROL AND AGENCY REMOVAL to manage short distance migrant elk.</p> <p>Depending on other actions, such as harvest management and herd objective review, alternative forms of take are a viable tool when harvest alone is insufficient to reaching management goals.</p> <p>Using GonaCon (or other fertility controls if developed) concurrently with harvest would aid in suppressing the short distance migrant sub-herd. More aggressive removal of conflict elk on private lands that are causing chronic damage could be considered, especially if numbers are relatively small and would not affect overall herd objective (i.e. < 50). Either Chapter 56 permits to individuals or agency removal, with CWD testing and meat donation.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Access</p>	<p>United States Forest Service (USFS) winter human presence closures limit hunter access for late season elk hunting and trophy game hunting (e.g., wolf hunting), and reduce human activity which could redistribute elk across Gros Ventre native winter ranges. Shifting to later winter closure dates could encourage elk to stay in the Gros Ventre.</p>	<p>(G) Work with USFS on WINTER HUMAN PRESENCE CLOSURES. Work with USFS to move back the closure dates or allow license-holder permission for access, or other potential options that may positively affect elk distributions with the least negative impacts on other wintering wildlife.</p>

<p>Migration</p>	<p>Summer sub-herds use various winter ranges and individual elk often switch winter ranges year to year. Main winter ranges are Gros Ventre, NER, HA 80, and to a lesser extent Buffalo Valley. Winter range outside of the herd unit includes Dubois, Meeteetsee/Cody, South Park Feedground, and Upper Green River. In recent decades, the Department has documented an increase in the proportion of the herd using feedgrounds and fewer elk on NWR. Conversely, Jackson elk have strong fidelity to summer/fall ranges.</p> <p>Need to better understand short-distance and medium distance migrant herd segment in order to reduce cow harvest on long distance migrant and GV herd segments.</p> <p>Important to coordinate with GTNP on their management goals, given the Bison and Elk Management Plan (BEMP) has expired. GTNP has indicated they will continue to operate under current BEMP, but are open to changes to address changing conditions, including objectives and management.</p> <p>Explore ways to encourage more elk to winter in the GV. Analyze causes of massive elk departures from GV in the winter. Wolves are suspected to be a contributing factor, but need more specifics about wolf numbers/pack size/elk to wolf ratio/seasonality/potential time lag contributing and how much weather or other factors are contributing. Re-examine wolf hunting management (hunt area boundaries, quotas, etc.) as we learn more.</p>	<p>See (B) COLLARING EFFORT under Elk Population Management - Herd Objectives</p> <p>See (AF) LEARN NEEDS OF AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS under Engage. Coordinate with GTNP on this FMAP, possible Jackson EHU population objective change, possible future changes to NER feeding, and explore their flexibility to adapt elk management and Elk Reduction Program goals based on changing conditions and management needs.</p> <p>See (P) GROS VENTRE ELK WINTERING PATTERNS under Reduce Feeding Season Length. Analyze specific causes of mass departures of elk from the GV during some winters and look for ways to change management to encourage more elk to winter in the GV.</p>
<p>Monitoring</p>	<p>Need to better understand short-distance migrant herd segment. Need to understand numbers (% contribution to herd) and behavior to target reduction efforts.</p> <p>If elk reduce reliance on feedgrounds, we will need to re-think how we conduct annual count/classifications. Drones have been shown in the Pinedale Region to be effective for this purpose. Drone purchasing and use is currently limited by policies related to parts being manufactured in China.</p>	<p>See (B) COLLARING EFFORT under Elk Population Management - Herd Objectives</p> <p>(H) PURCHASE DRONE if/when possible per Department purchasing requirements.</p>

<i>Disease Management- Brucellosis</i>		
Surveillance	<p>Need to obtain a statistically significant sample size for herd unit brucellosis seroprevalence every other year.</p> <p>Current infrastructure: old trap at Fish Creek and a mobile trap at NER. Elk are not reliably at Fish Creek for trapping.</p> <p>If trapping is no longer an option in the future, need alternative methods for brucellosis sampling. Examples include hunter harvest, mandatory sampling, and captures. Would need increased personnel capacity.</p>	<p>(I) NEW TRAP FOR PATROL CABIN. Request new trap for continued surveillance at Patrol Cabin. Needs to be assessed against other fiscal priorities.</p> <p>(J) Explore TRAP SUBSTRATE AMENDMENTS for CWD prion binding potential. Mitigate risk of CWD transmission from trapping operations.</p>
Operate Feedgrounds	<p>This FMAP outlines multiple changes that can make progress toward the Plan goals while still operating feedgrounds. Feedgrounds keep cattle/elk separation, can be an effective tool to limit interspecies transmission.</p> <p>The USFS permit for the Fish Creek feedground is due for re-authorization in 2028. Contingency planning is outlined in state statute. Funding may be needed to remove Fish Creek feeding infrastructure.</p>	<p>(K) Continue to discuss options to REDUCE FEEDGROUND OPERATIONS (e.g., start/end dates, amount of hay provided) in the future, as conditions change and warrant.</p> <p>(L) PREPARE FOR FISH CREEK PERMIT RE-AUTHORIZATION in 2028, prepare to have only Patrol Cabin after 2028. Follow contingency plans outlined in state statute.</p>
Cattle Commingling Conflict Mitigation	<p>Non-commercial horse conflict is increasing, causing concerned landowners and added workloads for game wardens. Game wardens responding to calls, but these operations do not qualify for damage, as defined by Department Regulation. However, the definition could use increased clarity to ensure consistent application across Wyoming.</p> <p>Both cattle and horses are a concern.</p> <p>APHIS compliance for Brucellosis surveillance is mandatory.</p> <p>Drones have been used successfully in Pinedale Region to haze and redistribute elk away from conflict situations.</p>	<p>(M) DEFINE DAMAGES Clarify how damage regulations do or do not apply to horse operations. Propose new language for damage definition in regulation to increase clarity statewide.</p> <p>(N) DEVELOP LIVING IN ELK COUNTRY BROCHURE Develop a Living in Elk Country brochure to provide landowners best practices to deal with elk on private lands in winter. Approach NER, Teton County, Non-Governmental Organizations, Teton Conservation District, Wildlife for Tomorrow, Worth the Watching. Explore options for temporary horse boarding and protection of hay stacks for horse/elk conflict prevention.</p> <p>See (H) PURCHASE DRONE under Elk Population Management – Monitoring.</p>

<p>Reduce Feeding Season Length</p>	<p>Conflict potential in the Gros Ventre is currently high, given private lands winter feeding operations for cattle (one landowner) and horses (two landowners). If damage in the Gros Ventre was addressed/managed, the Gros Ventre feeding season length could be substantially reduced.</p> <p>Start dates: feeding usually initiated to ‘hold’ elk in the Gros Ventre so they don’t migrate down and out of the drainage. This does not appear to be effective for holding elk and does not prevent damage on private operations, but does increase disease risk. Movements seem more tied to weather and potentially a threshold of wolf numbers.</p> <p>Explore the hypothesis that increasing human disturbance with a later USFS winter human presence closure date could help ‘hold’ elk in the Gros Ventre.</p> <p>Main drivers of Gros Ventre elk winter movements have not been assessed. Assess relative impacts of wolf densities (e.g., >7 wolves/1000 elk affects elk distribution), weather, human presence, and feeding.</p> <p>End dates: currently feed until elk leave the feedground. Could use “openness” of adjacent land for end dates.</p>	<p>See (G) WINTER HUMAN PRESENCE CLOSURES under Elk Population Management – Access.</p> <p>(O) FEEDING START AND END DATES Stop throwing hay at Patrol Cabin to ‘hold’ elk; has proven ineffective. When NER season ends, evaluate if Gros Ventre feeding can end, based on snow “openness”.</p> <p>(P) Investigate GROS VENTRE ELK WINTERING PATTERNS. Use a data driven approach to understand why elk sometimes winter in the Gros Ventre, move down then back up drainage, or leave the Gros Ventre all together for the winter. Explore variables such as feeding, weather, human presence, wolf metrics, etc. Use this information to inform feeding start dates or other management options within the Department’s decision-making.</p>
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<p>Low-Density Feeding</p>	<p>Using both Patrol Cabin and Fish Creek effectively doubles the feedground area. Does not account for after 2028, if USFS no longer permits feeding at Fish Creek.</p> <p>Low Density feeding density is ~20ac/1,000elk (1 elk / 828ft² / day). Max Low Density feeding at Fish Creek is 2,000 elk and 1,500 elk at Patrol Cabin.</p> <p>Mixed opinions internally on ability to move elk between Fish Creek and Patrol Cabin via feeding. Concern that if we short hay at Patrol Cabin and feed at Fish Creek, elk will move down drainage instead of up drainage back to Fish Creek; especially if there has been recent wolf presence. Depending on the number of elk, there is enough hay at Fish Creek to feed for ~30-45 days.</p> <p>Experiment with starting feeding at Fish Creek instead of Patrol Cabin and/or encouraging elk to move from Patrol Cabin to Fish Creek. Have contingency plans ready to mitigate risk of increased damage or elk moving to the NER (e.g., helicopter to push elk when in area for annual counts/classifications or capture, work with USFS for permission to bait elk up drainage along the snowmobile trail, bait elk to Fish Creek along the river bottom, etc).</p> <p>Mixed understanding internally about the abilities and limitations to low density feeding given current equipment and capacity. Requires structured opportunities to increase understanding and provide consistent direction, such as on-site visits.</p>	<p>(Q) USE FISH CREEK MORE PRESCRIPTIVELY Actively work to use Fish Creek more prescriptively (e.g. start feeding at Fish Creek instead of Patrol Cabin and/or use feed to move elk between Patrol Cabin and Fish Creek feedgrounds) to feed out older hay and increase total Gros Ventre feeding area.</p> <p>(R) Explore options to FEED ELK ON PRIVATE LANDS IN GROS VENTRE in accordance with state statute 23-1-305 to expand feeding area for Low Density feeding if Fish Creek is no longer permitted. Only if necessary for damage, low density feeding, and based on information learned from (P) Gros Ventre elk wintering patterns analysis.</p> <p>See (AE) HEAVY EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION under Feedground Alterations – Heavy Equipment Acquisition. Additional equipment and or personnel may be needed to fully implement Low Density feeding effectively. Further assessment needed.</p> <p>(S) LOW DENSITY FEEDING <u>Early winter 2025:</u> Implement and monitor Low Density feeding to fullest extent possible given current equipment/capacity. - Pre-season or early-season feedground on-site visits with FG Mngr/Dz Bio/Coord/Sup to understand and have clear/consistent direction on implementation. Identify limitations and how to address them (e.g., assessment of pay for feeders and number of feeders, personnel structural and/or budget management changes, pursuing outside funding if needed, assessing equipment needs (e.g., tractor vs. horses), etc.) - Use tablet or GPS unit for monitoring daily feeding patterns (purchase if necessary).</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Habitat Enhancements</p>	<p>Historic treatments have occurred with the goal of increasing native winter range.</p> <p>Weed encroachment is an increasing concern and comprehensive weed mapping is needed.</p> <p>The 2024 Pack Trail Fire will have an impact on elk habitat. Those impacts will be unknown until more post-fire assessments occur.</p> <p>Work with Teton County Weed and Pest, USFS, Teton Conservation District, and the Teton County Weed Management Working group is on-going.</p>	<p>(T) WEED MANAGEMENT is a HIGH PRIORITY. Options to explore: 1) Can Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) partner with Teton County Weed and Pest (TCWP) to better understand limitations and increase capacity to increase treatments on Wildlife Habitat Management Area properties 2) Work with TCWP and federal land managers on prioritizing treatments in the Gros Ventre 3) WGFD Weed management position(s) (e.g., regional seasonal AWECs, statewide weed crew), soft funding for projects, use Habitat & Access seasonal technicians in early season for weeds management.</p> <p>(U) HABITAT MANIPULATION ON PATROL CABIN WHMA could increase the feeding area by removing willow near the Gros Ventre River. Assess current restrictions on LD feeding first. Coordinate with AHAB and H&A prior to taking any action. Evaluate negative impacts to riparian habitats and impacts to delineated wetland areas. Explore the option of establishing palatable forage with corresponding irrigation (see Irrigation).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Fencing</p>	<p>Fencing can be effective to exclude elk from cattle operations in high conflict areas. Elk fencing exemptions are defined under Teton County Land Development Regulation Article 5.1.2.</p>	<p>(V) HIGH FENCE TO REDUCE/ELIMINATE DAMAGE IN GROS VENTRE</p> <p>High fence feeding areas for agricultural producers. Assess high fence for horse feeding in Gros Ventre; may need to be expanded. Identify other potential opportunities and costs, with a focus on the purpose of reducing reliance of elk on supplemental feed.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Feedground Relocation</p>		<p>See Explore (R) FEED ELK ON PRIVATE LANDS IN THE GROS VENTRE under Disease Management-Brucellosis - Low-Density Feeding.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Increase Winter Range</p>	<p>There are limited livestock grazing allotments in the Jackson Elk Herd.</p> <p>A GIS exercise to identify high value elk native winter range areas that are not under easement or elk occupancy agreements and are at risk of development would help target priority areas to initiate conversations.</p> <p>Department support is important for the continuation and expansion of Elk Occupancy Agreements</p>	<p>(W) INCREASE ELK OCCUPANCY AGREEMENTS with interested landowners. Support current agreements with regional WGF Commission budgets; establish contract with Greater Yellowstone Coalition to supplement funding for agreements. Consider agreements to leave standing forage (to increase elk forage in early winter, late winter, and mild winters), in addition to or separate from occupancy agreements.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Elk Population Management</p>	<p>See Elk Population Management section.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Test and Slaughter</p>	<p>Has been tried in other herd units. Not a stand-alone method. Not pursued at this time (reference BMAPs and Feedground Plan). For Brucellosis management, best if implemented prior to other management actions to reduce seroprevalence first. Could become more viable option to explore with CWD if accuracy and speed of live-testing improves.</p>	<p>Consider implementing TEST AND SLAUGHTER prior to any major changes in feedground operations (e.g., if NER stops feeding elk, if Fish Creek feedground permit is not approved, if feeding is reduced in Gros Ventre).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Vaccination</p>	<p>Potential in the future, no viable vaccination available at this point.</p>	<p>Continue to provide assistance as RESEARCH opportunities arise.</p>

Carcass Removal	See “Carcass Management Plan”	<p>(X) Develop CARCASS MANAGEMENT PLAN for all feedgrounds. Identify carcass staging area for all feedgrounds. Coordinate with feeders for implementation.</p> <p>Continue to COLLECT ABORTED FETUSES on feedgrounds. Provide annual reminders for feeders on aborted fetus removal protocols.</p> <p>Continue PREDATOR PROTECTIONS ON FEEDGROUNDS Continued predator protections on feedgrounds during feeding season (to allow for predator carcass/fetus removal).</p>
<i>Disease Surveillance- Chronic Wasting Disease</i>		
Statewide CWD Surveillance Plan	In place; all Jackson region elk herds are high priority herds every year. NER and GTNP have mandatory CWD harvest sampling.	Continue CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE SURVEILLANCE
Monitoring	As anti-mortem (e.g., ear punches, feces) and noninvasive (e.g., soil sampling) CWD diagnostics become better validated and available, new options will become viable. Examples include test and slaughter for CWD, live CWD sampling during capture, and soil sampling.	Continue RESEARCH to provide assistance as opportunities arise to validate anti-mortem and noninvasive sampling methods. Incorporate new methods into monitoring as they become available.
Scale	Sampling efforts (especially on the NER) are sufficient at this time to achieve prevalence estimate. Might change if harvest levels, particularly on the NER, decrease.	Continue CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE SURVEILLANCE
Mandatory Sampling	Would need to have a strong justification to require mandatory hunter harvest sampling (i.e. research, management changes, high CWD prevalence, no other options). GTNP and NER currently require mandatory sampling for harvested animals.	Continue CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

<p>Feedground Mortalities</p>	<p>The Statewide CWD plan dictates that we collect and sample all mortalities on feedgrounds. To date, protocols have not been established to implement this requirement.</p>	<p>See CARCASS MANAGEMENT PLAN</p> <p>(Y) RECORD ALL FEEDGROUND MORTALITIES and annually report in Jackson Elk Herd Unit Job Completion Report. Explore best option to collate date. Current is a shared google spreadsheet, final data could be housed in the brucellosis database. Explore more permanent solutions, such as checkstation, WOS2, etc.</p>
<p>Environmental Testing</p>	<p>NER is currently collecting and banking environmental samples for future testing. Rt-QuIC methods are still being validated for non-typical sample types, such as soil. USGS having recent success in comparing prion loading in soil.</p>	<p>(Z) Explore options to COLLECT AND TEST SOIL SAMPLES for CWD prions in coordination with Vet Services. Determine methods and sampling regime, and costs.</p>
<p><i>Disease Management- Chronic Wasting Disease</i></p>		
<p>Elk Population Management</p>	<p>Options from Feedground Plan Section 3.5.2.2: 1) Status Quo 2) Low Density Feedground Quota 3) Elk Density Reductions 4) Native Winter Range Objectives</p> <p>From Feedground Plan Section 3.5.2.2 Table 6: STAGE = Prevention <i>Animal-to-Animal Prevention</i></p>	<p>OPTION 1: Status Quo under current Herd Unit Objective.</p> <p>See (A) HERD UNIT OBJECTIVE REVIEW Following the objective review process, could be managing closer to winter Elk Density Reductions and Native Winter Range Objectives, given mild/average winter conditions.</p>
<p>Feedground Alterations</p>	<p>No known methods to reduce prion loading on feedgrounds.</p>	<p>See (R) LOW DENSITY FEEDING under Disease Management-Brucellosis - Low Density Feeding to reduce animal-to-animal CWD transmission.</p>
<p>Habitat Accessibility</p>	<p>Public land grazing is extremely limited in the Gros Ventre due to Grizzly Bear management.</p>	<p>See (G) WINTER HUMAN PRESENCE CLOSURES under Elk Population Management - Access</p> <p>See (W) INCREASE ELK OCCUPANCY AGREEMENTS under Increase Winter Range</p>

<p>Elk Populations Management</p>		<p>See “Elk Population Management” section</p>
<p>Carcass Removal</p>		<p>See CARCASS MANAGEMENT PLAN</p>
<p>Substrate Conversion</p>	<p>Feedgrounds in the Jackson Elk Herd are located in riparian areas. Substrate conversion or feedground relocation may need to be pursued as CWD prion contamination increases to reduce prion exposure on feedlines</p>	<p>No action at this time</p>
<p>Fencing</p>	<p>Fencing is used in areas of the Jackson Elk Herd, such as on the NER, to limit elk movements into areas of conflict (i.e. town, highways). More extensive use of fencing may be needed for elk management depending on changes in feedground availability/use.</p> <p>Teton County developed 30% design plans for updating the NER boundary fence as part of a N89 crossing project from the Teton County Wildlife Crossings Master Plan. The current right-of-way fencing requires repair and maintenance beyond the NER’s maintenance budget. It is becoming dilapidated with outdated designs which increases the risk of elk-vehicle collisions on N89.</p>	<p>(AA) Continue to pursue the NER FENCE UPDATE. Work with Teton County, NER, WYDOT, and WGFD to fund the NER fence update.</p> <p>See (V) HIGH FENCE TO REDUCE/ELIMINATE DAMAGE IN GROS VENTRE in Fencing section under Disease Management – Brucellosis.</p>
<p>Hay Acquisition</p>	<p>Continue to work to source hay from non- CWD endemic areas, which will become increasingly difficult as CWD progresses throughout western Wyoming. Having difficulty finding weed-free hay in adequate quantities and types (bale sizes/shapes and grass versus alfalfa) to meet our needs as is.</p>	<p>No action at this time</p>
<p>Manure</p>	<p>Continue to work to fully implement Low Density feeding practices during the feeding season duration to limit exposure to manure on feeding areas.</p>	<p>See FEED ELK ON PRIVATE LANDS IN GROS VENTRE under Disease Management-Brucellosis - Low-Density Feeding.</p>
<p>Research</p>		<p>Continue to collaborate with RESEARCH into CWD transmission, testing and treatments.</p>

<i>Disease Management- Necrobacillosis</i>		
Surveillance	Currently we monitor for this disease via calf mortality/morbidity surveys at the tail-end of the feeding season.	See CARCASS MANAGEMENT PLAN Improve communication ability with feeders (appropriate satellite communication device for updates/communication). See (Y) RECORD ALL FEEDGROUND MORTALITIES under Disease Surveillance-CWD – Feedground Mortalities.
Hay Type	Necrobacillosis has not been a major or consistent issue in the Gros Ventre and alfalfa is easier to obtain than grass hay, so continued status quo on hay type (predominantly alfalfa).	No change at this time.
Reduced Feeding Length	This is driven by elk behavior/winter conditions. Refer to Brucellosis section.	See (O) FEEDING START AND END DATES under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Reduce Feeding Season Length. Could better monitor conditions and elk behavior to allow earlier end dates on feedgrounds, especially when Necrobacillosis outbreaks occur. Consider aligning with NER end dates.
Reduce Elk Densities	See Low Density feeding section	
Feedground Drainage	Both feedgrounds are established on sub-irrigated meadows and drainage is limited	
Manure Management	Limited manure management occurs on the Jackson Elk Herd feedgrounds. Low density feeding can assist with manure management, by focusing on feeding on clean snow as opposed to contaminated ground. Major changes are not practical or feasible in current locations. See Low Density feeding	Can manage manure with (S) LOW DENSITY FEEDING via feeding on clean snow, work to spread elk out, and try to keep elk from congregating in dirty areas. If planning to keep current elk numbers, work to secure larger feeding areas. Increase coordination between feedground manager and disease biologist for implementation.

Feedground Cleanliness	See Low Density feeding	
Moving Feeding Area	See Low Density feeding	
Targeted removal	Elk that currently exhibit severe outward signs of Necrobacillosis are euthanized and removed from feedgrounds, see Surveillance section above.	(AB) TARGETED REMOVAL via better monitoring of elk condition and working with feeders to alert personnel when elk begin appearing to be sick. See the (X) CARCASS MANAGEMENT PLAN .
Carcass removal	Currently feeders are asked to document mortalities on feedgrounds.	See CARCASS MANAGEMENT PLAN
<i>Disease Management- Psoroptic Mange</i>		
Surveillance	Widespread on NER. Monitored in Gros Ventre but not explicitly documented for detection or prevalence. Euthanize infected animals when appropriate. Density dependent disease management.	See (AB) TARGETED REMOVAL under Disease Management-Necrobacillosis – Targeted Removal See Necrobacillosis section
Reduce Elk Densities	Further implementation of Low Density feeding may help reduce overall densities on feedlines and reduce transmission potential.	See (S) LOW DENSITY FEEDING under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Low Density Feeding.
<i>Disease Management- Tuberculosis</i>		
Increased Surveillance	Last monitoring effort in late 2000’s, under the direction of USDA/APHIS. Future monitoring will most likely occur in the same manner.	NA
Targeted Removal	Targeted removal may be part of a future surveillance plan if needed.	NA

Document ation	Document efforts to survey for Tuberculosis in populations when directed.	NA
Reduce Elk Densities	May be directed to utilize this tool on feedgrounds if Tuberculosis is detected in elk in Wyoming.	NA
Public Outreach	A substantial public information and education effort will be needed if Tuberculosis is detected and if any efforts are undertaken to reduce densities due to presence of the disease.	NA
<i>Habitat Enhancements</i>		
Prescribed Fire	Several planned projects in the Jackson Elk Herd. Implementation is restricted by USFS capacity, Wilderness, burn windows, and WGFD capacity without a THAB position. Significant aspen improvement projects were completed in the 2000s on the Gros Ventre and Buffalo Valley winter ranges.	Continue to work with USFS to IMPLEMENT HABITAT PROJECTS where applicable and as WGFD staff capacity allows.
Mechanical Treatment	Mechanical treatments could be used to increase available feeding area on Patrol Cabin Feedground through removing willows. Need to assess consequences and coordinate with Aquatic Habitat Biologist. Could also be used to stimulate aspen/shrub communities in USFS seasonal transition zones. However historic habitat enhancement projects in the Gros Ventre have not resulted in changes in elk feeding.	See (U) HABITAT MANIPULATION ON PATROL CABIN under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Habitat Enhancements.
Herbicide Treatment	See Habitat Enhancements section in Brucellosis section	No action at this time
Irrigation	Extensive irrigation program on NER to increase forage for wintering elk. Increasing forage on the NER results in a reduced feeding season length on the NER. Patrol cabin has an irrigation ditch, however the current vegetation is unpalatable for elk. Part of the feedground is delineated as wetland. Could explore options to convert feedground vegetation to palatable forage and irrigate to increase early and late forage.	See (U) HABITAT MANIPULATION ON PATROL CABIN under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Habitat Enhancements. Engage on the NER BEMP to ensure the irrigation program continues.

Reseeding		No action at this time
Wildfire	Several wildfires have improved elk winter and transitional ranges in the Gros Ventre in the past two decades. The Fish Creek/Pack Trail fire of 2024 burned almost 90,000 acres in the upper Gros Ventre and came within 2 miles of the Fish Creek Feedground.	See (T) WEED MANAGEMENT under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Habitat Enhancements. Work with USFS and TCWP to monitor and treat weeds following the Fish Creek/Pack Trail Fire of 2024.
<i>Habitat Accessibility</i>		
Purchase or Lease	Unclear what land purchases or leases would help accomplish Feedground Plan goals.	NA
Elk Occupancy	Two elk occupancy agreements in the Jackson elk herd are currently being executed. They are managed by Greater Yellowstone Coalition (GYC). Additional opportunities may exist in the Gros Ventre and other winter ranges.	See (W) INCREASE ELK OCCUPANCY AGREEMENTS in Disease Management – Brucellosis, Increase Winter Range. Understand what the needs of landowners are.
Conservation Easements	Many properties are already under easements. A GIS exercise would help identify high value elk winter range areas that aren't under easement and are poised for development.	See (W) INCREASE ELK OCCUPANCY AGREEMENTS in Disease Management – Brucellosis, Increase Winter Range. A GIS exercise will help identify priority areas.
Winter Closures	Delay closure start dates in a targeted manner to help reduce wolf densities via harvest and shift elk distributions to Gros Ventre native winter ranges.	See (G) WINTER HUMAN PRESENCE CLOSURES under Elk Population Management – Access.
Funding	GYC fundraises to maintain existing elk occupancy agreements. Alternative funding mechanisms are needed to ensure program longevity. GYC has expressed interest in handing off the program to the state of Wyoming.	See (W) INCREASE ELK OCCUPANCY AGREEMENTS under Habitat Accessibility – Elk Occupancy. Explore more secure, long-term funding mechanisms, such as WGFD Commission, current Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, or other.
Public Engagement	Through stakeholder outreach.	

<p>Engagement with Elected Officials</p>	<p>Through stakeholder outreach.</p>	
<p><i>Emergency Feeding</i></p>		
<p>Debrief</p>	<p>Elk have been fed by the landowners in Buffalo Valley for many years. In some years, there was risk of comingling between elk and cattle, which prompted the Department to provide hay to a landowner to emergency feed elk to keep them away from cattle. However, other years, landowners fed elk regardless of comingling risk. The Department has stopped providing hay but the landowners have continued feeding.</p>	<p>See Commission policy 7D Supplemental Feeding of Elk – Wild Bison.</p> <p>If WGFD emergency feeding occurs, debrief at completion of season to find ways to prevent emergency feeding in future years. Do not want to unintentionally create new feedgrounds out of emergency feeding situations.</p>
<p>Emergency Feeding Guidance</p>	<p>The implementation of large scale elk feeding operations in the Sheridan (2024-25) and Green River (winter 2022-23, ongoing) Regions may dictate the need for further Department guidance. This includes clearer direction on how emergency feeding is conducted (e.g., Low Density feeding, pounds hay/elk), information on potential impacts of emergency feeding (e.g., disease spread), and methods to reduce the potential need for future emergency feeding (e.g., harvest, CH. 56 removals, fencing, elk occupancy agreements, etc).</p> <p>If the NER stops feeding at some point in the future, we anticipate the need for emergency feeding in severe winters, particularly on or adjacent to private lands in the West Bank area of Jackson.</p>	<p>(AC) Provide EMERGENCY FEEDING GUIDANCE, consultation and assistance to other Department Regions and Wildlife Administration as needed for direction on best practices when emergency feeding is necessary and to prevent future necessity. Continue to engage with NER on the BEMP revision; try to anticipate and plan for scenarios of severe winters and NER not feeding in order to adhere to WGFD sideboards. Assess if there is a need to update the Commission policy 7D Supplemental Feeding of Elk – Wild Bison.</p>
<p>Access</p>	<p>Have been working to increase hunting access to populations that are causing damage/conflict to reduce need for emergency feeding.</p>	<p>Continue current efforts.</p>
<p>Auxiliary Management</p>	<p>Could be used in conjunction with increased access to reduce need for emergency feeding.</p>	<p>Continue current efforts.</p>

<p>Herd Unit Objectives</p>	<p>Emergency feeding can be secondary to lethal removal/harvest, especially if population is above or within objective.</p>	
<p>Hunting Seasons</p>	<p>Has been addressed in other sections.</p>	<p>If emergency feeding occurs in the Herd Unit, seasons should be adjusted to help reduce need to emergency feed in the future.</p>
<p><i>Feedground Phase-outs</i></p>		
<p>Combine Management Strategies</p>	<p>In the Gros Ventre, phase-out could be combined with Test and Slaughter, high fencing private land agricultural feeding operations in the Gros Ventre, later USFS human presence closure dates, and others.</p> <p>If the NER stops feeding at some point in the future, maintaining/updating the NER fence will become even more important to prevent damage to private lands and wildlife vehicle collisions.</p>	<p>Increase efforts to create the conditions that would make (AD) REDUCING ELK RELIANCE ON FEED possible while maintaining the sideboards. Must be done in accordance with state statute 23-1-305.</p>
<p>Outreach and Coordination</p>	<p>Agricultural producers in the Gros Ventre will need to have all of their potential damage be addressed first.</p>	<p>See (AF) LEARN NEEDS OF AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS under Agricultural Producers and Landowners - Engage.</p>
<p>Monitoring</p>	<p>Current collars deployed in Gros Ventre have a 5 year lifespan, and additional collars can be deployed in the future if funding is available. Trail cameras are also a possibility in some areas of the Gros Ventre to monitor elk leaving the Gros Ventre.</p>	
<p>Elk Redistribution</p>	<p>If down drainage damage concerns are mitigated, Gros Ventre elk feeding is only necessary in extreme winters</p>	<p>See (L) PREPARE FOR FISH CREEK PERMIT RE-AUTHORIZATION under Monitor elk redistribution with Fish Creek decommissioned (2028).</p>

<i>Feedground Alterations</i>		
Feeding Area Expansion	Riparian habitat conversion could increase size of feeding area at Patrol Cabin.	See (U) HABITAT MANIPULATION AT PATROL CABIN under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Habitat Enhancements. Coordinate with Fish Division to understand potential negative impacts. Work with Habitat & Access to increase size of feeding area at Patrol Cabin.
Move Feeding Areas	Utilize both feedgrounds in the Gros Ventre while Fish Creek is permitted.	See (Q) USE FISH CREEK MORE PRESCRIPTIVELY and (R) FEED ELK ON PRIVATE LANDS IN GROS VENTRE under Low-Density Feeding
Additional Feedgrounds	If NER stops feeding at some point in the future, may need to explore options in West Bank and Buffalo Valley, particularly in harsh winters and to mitigate/prevent damage.	See (AC) EMERGENCY FEEDING GUIDANCE under Emergency Feeding - Emergency Feeding Guidelines.
Feedground Relocation	If Fish Creek feedground permit is not renewed, could establish new feedground on private lands in Gros Ventre, in accordance with state statute 23-1-305.	See (R) FEED ELK ON PRIVATE LANDS IN GROS VENTRE under Low-Density Feeding.
Non-Annual Feeding	If damage situations are addressed down drainage of Patrol Cabin in the Gros Ventre, this may become a more feasible option.	See (V) HIGH FENCE TO REDUCE/ELIMINATE DAMAGE IN GROS VENTRE under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Fencing.

<p style="text-align: center;">Heavy Equipment Acquisition</p>	<p>Heavy equipment may be needed to help implement Low Density feeding. Ensure that on feedgrounds where heavy equipment is being utilized, feedground manager and Regional Habitat and Access personnel are communicating about condition/maintenance needs, as well as keeping up on routine maintenance.</p> <p>Purchasing equipment will have to be weighed against other Jackson Feedground Management Action Plan priorities as well as other Herd Unit Feedground Management Action Plan priorities.</p>	<p>(AE) Explore HEAVY EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION needs to improve current feedground operations beyond what is possible with current equipment. Regional Supervisor, Feedground Manager, Disease Biologist, and Feeder hold on-sites on the Gros Ventre feedgrounds to determine the specific constraints to implementing Low Density feeding, given current conditions, personnel, equipment, and resources. If Heavy Equipment is pursued in the Gros Ventre, outline all needs and associated costs. Will need to prioritize between Jackson EHU and others in terms of heavy equipment needs.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Hay Acquisition</p>	<p>If transitioning to Heavy Equipment in the Gros Ventre, must stock both large bales (daily feeding) and small bales (in case of emergency/equipment issues).</p>	<p>None at this time.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Carcass Disposal</p>	<p>See “Carcass Management Plan”</p>	<p>See CARCASS MANAGEMENT PLAN</p>
<p><i>Agricultural Producers and Landowners</i></p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Engage</p>	<p>Currently working with all large landowners to address damage. Plan Sideboard: minimize elk damage to private property, disease transmission to livestock, and negative economic impacts to livestock producers. Need to better understand how the Plan Sideboard relates to their specific and unique operations and needs. Learn more about current and future concerns, as they relate to their operations.</p> <p>Need to begin working with small acreage landowners in the future as elk mgmt. changes in the EHU (i.e. NER feeding).</p>	<p>(AF) LEARN NEEDS OF AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS by meeting with landowners and operators as part of this FMAP process.</p> <p>See (N) DEVELOP LIVING IN ELK COUNTRY BROCHURE under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Cattle Commingling Conflict Mitigation.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Cattle</p>	<p>Several operations are engaged in Elk Occupancy Agreements. There may be more opportunities, given landowner interest.</p>	<p>See (W) INCREASE ELK OCCUPANCY AGREEMENTS under Habitat Accessibility – Elk Occupancy. Continue to engage with landowners to find further opportunities.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Fencing</p>	<p>Utilize fencing to exclude elk from cattle operations in high conflict areas.</p>	<p>See (V) HIGH FENCING TO REDUCE /ELIMINATE DAMAGE IN GROS VENTRE under Disease Management-Brucellosis – Fencing. Expand current high fence enclosure at Red Rock Ranch.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Conflict-Reduction Management Actions</p>	<p>Work with landowners with horse operations in the Gros Ventre (Red Rock and Red Hills) to find solutions.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Strategic Grazing Rotations</p>	<p>No major applicability in Jackson Herd.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Elk Occupancy</p>	<p>Currently utilizing this option with several producers in the Elk Herd Unit.</p>	<p>See (W) INCREASE ELK OCCUPANCY AGREEMENTS and funding mechanisms under Habitat Accessibility – Funding.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Brucellosis Compensation</p>	<p>Property and Environment Research Center (PERC) has begun pilot programs and is interested in expanding into this area. May become more relevant in Jackson, in the event of management changes on the NER. Would need to ensure livestock operations continue to implement all preventative management measures (e.g., would not want this program to dis-incentivize preventative management).</p>	<p>Continue conversations with PERC and agricultural operators.</p>
<p><i>Public Land Management</i></p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Planning Processes</p>	<p>Current public lands planning processes include the BTNF Plan revision, NER BEMP, and BTNF NEPA review of Forest Park and Dell Creek Feedground permits. All other BTNF -permitted feedgrounds are up for renewal in 2028, which may require more NEPA.</p>	<p>Continue to ENGAGE IN PLANNING PROCESS WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS. Continue to engage on Bridger-Teton Forest Plan Revision and National Elk Refuge Bison Elk Management EIS as they relate to elk management.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Winter Closures</p>	<p>December 1 human presence closures are extremely important for protecting wintering wildlife. However, the early-winter date also impedes the ability to meet trophy game quotas (including wolves) and limits access for late season elk hunting, which may help re-distribute elk onto native winter ranges instead of the NER or private lands. Maintaining the winter range closure is important, but moving to a later closure date could help redistribute Gros Ventre elk in a meaningful way to improve elk management.</p>	<p>See (G) WINTER HUMAN PRESENCE CLOSURE DATES under Elk Population Management – Access.</p> <p>Work with Bridger Teton National Forest (BTNF) to adjust December access in the Gros Ventre. Options include a later closure date (e.g., 12/30), differentiate motorized vs non-motorized access, provide access permission for hunting-license holders, and others. Work with Large Carnivore Section and regional staff to predict and monitor potential unintended consequences (e.g., leverage collared big horn sheep, moose, and elk data).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Migration</p>	<p>Continue to work on identification of Jackson Elk Herd migration/movements.</p>	<p>See (B) COLLARING EFFORT under Elk Population Management - Herd Objectives.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Special Use Authorizations and Interagency Agreements</p>		<p>Continue to ENGAGE IN PLANNING PROCESS WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS.</p>
<p><i>Funding</i></p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Needs</p>	<p>Needs for the Jackson herd have been identified and generally prioritized within this FMAP. Need to review and update as conditions change.</p> <p>Federal funding sources for Brucellosis and CWD surveillance are at risk.</p> <p>Hunter carcass disposal is challenging because of costs at Teton County Transfer Station and limited hours. WGFD Jackson has paid for dumping fees, but no longer has budget capacity to do so.</p>	<p>See Prioritized Actions List. Update annually, if needed.</p> <p>Prioritize between different Herd Unit Feedground Management Action Plans as they are completed</p> <p>Continue to develop strategies to increase hunter compliance with carcass disposal regulations.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Traditional Sources</p>	<p>M&O money, Elk Special Management stamp, Wyldlife Fund, grants, donations, in-kind labor.</p>	<p>Discuss opportunities with Wildlife Administration, and pursue funds that are supported. Continue to clarify priorities and the most appropriate matches between needs and funding sources.</p> <p>(AG) Explore possibility for increased ELK SPECIAL MANAGEMENT STAMP.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Traditional Sources</p>	<p>Potential to use current Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs (NRCS) for elk occupancy. Set up meeting between NRCS and GYC to establish contact between them. Could be potential there for GYC to pursue.</p> <p>Future availability of federal funding for NRCS, Brucellosis, CWD, and others is uncertain.</p> <p>BTNF has implemented a program over the last two years for certain outfitters to clear trail for compensation, via contractual set-offs.</p>	<p>(AH) SUPPORT FOR INCREASED/ DIVERSE COMPENSATION FOR OUTFITTERS. Unclear if there is a need here, since it is already occurring.</p> <p>Funding for collaring study includes diverse sources, including RMEF, WYOGA, WWNRT, Knoblock, Wyldlife for Tomorrow, and TCD.</p>
<p><i>Coordination, Collaboration, and Communication</i></p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Season Setting</p>	<p>Season setting is one mechanism by which feedground management occurs.</p>	<p>Encourage stakeholders interested in feedground management to participate in the season setting process.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Herd Objective Reviews</p>	<p>Consider FMAP recommendations when reviewing Herd Objectives. Herd objective reviews occur every 5 years, but can be conducted sooner if an opportunity or need arises.</p> <p>Herd Objective Reviews are one mechanism by which feedground management occurs.</p>	<p>Integrate Feedground Management Action Plan into the Herd Unit Objective review.</p> <p>Encourage stakeholders interested in feedground management to participate in the Herd Objective Review process.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Feedground Management</p>	<p>Transparency is needed for emerging issues via press releases as well as over time via annual reports.</p> <p>The herd unit Job Completion Report (JCR) should include all relevant herd unit data for the biological year to comply with the Feedground Plan and to make feedground management information accessible to the public, it should be included in the JCRs.</p>	<p>(AI) INCLUDE FEEDGROUND INFORMATION IN THE JCR for all herds with feedgrounds: FMAP progress, mortality recoveries on feedgrounds, brucellosis prevalence, CWD detections on feedgrounds, and other relevant data or information.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">CWD Status</p>	<p>Feedground Management Plan: “notify the public when the herd changes CWD scenario/status”</p> <p>Carcass disposal to adhere to WGFDD regulations surrounding CWD has been a challenge in Teton County since the transfer station charges a fee and is not open 24-hours. The Department has used regional budgets to pay for hunter-harvested carcass disposal in the last two years. Given budget restraints, the Department may not be able to continue to provide that service.</p>	<p>Continue to follow the Feedground Management Plan direction: “notify the public when the herd changes CWD scenario/status”</p> <p>Outreach to local hunters when the Department is or is not able to pay for carcass disposal at the Teton County Transfer Station.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">FMAPs</p>	<p>Actively communicate with and engage the public, stakeholders, and landowners in the FMAP process.</p>	<p>Continue to follow the Plan direction.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Management Strategies</p>	<p>Continue to provide educational information regarding current and new management strategies, where they can be implemented, and how they are expected to benefit elk management.</p>	<p>None at this time</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Human Dimensions</p>	<p>Consider conducting a human dimensions and public attitude survey to guide management decisions regarding CWD population management options. Investigate methods to better communicate technical information to the public.</p>	<p>(AJ) Work with Human Dimensions experts to DEVELOP TOOLS TO TRANSLATE TECHNICAL SCIENCE to the public. Work to improve Department communication of priority findings from this FMAP.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Personnel</p>	<p>Personnel teamwork and accountability are essential to ensure this plan is fully implemented. The Brucellosis-Feedground-Habitat (BFH) Program was dissolved, with positions absorbed into the Jackson and Pinedale regions in 2018. Now is an appropriate time to assess how the current personnel structure (duties, positions, organizational structure, budget authorities, etc) affects feedground management and FMAP implementation.</p> <p>Feeder contracts need to reflect the work required as well as be adhered to.</p>	<p>(AK) Assess how PERSONNEL STRUCTURE CHANGES COULD IMPROVE FMAP IMPLEMENTATION. Would need to consider alignment with Pinedale Region.</p> <p>(AL) REVIEW FEEDER CONTRACTS to ensure they include FMAP implementation and are adhered to.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Internal Communications</p>	<p>The Feedground Management Action Plan team, regional personnel, feeders, and Wildlife Admin need to stay in close, regular communication. Some formal/standard meeting dates may be required in order to ensure communication is occurring to minimum standards. Improve internal communication/coordination related to feedgrounds, working with feeders, and ensuring we have a congruent message about feedground operations and implementing Feedground Management Action Plan actions.</p>	<p>(AM) ANNUAL FEEDGROUND MEETINGS. Annual pre-feeding coordination meetings (Dec 1-15) with Feedground Management Action Plan team and feeders. Individualized training/briefings with feeders on-site by Feedground Manager and Disease Bio at the beginning of each feeding season. Annual post-feeding debriefs with Feedground Management Action Plan team. Feedground Manager post-feeding debrief with each feeder. As issues arise, coordinate between entire Feedground Management Action Plan team and Wildlife Admin, as needed, to address the issue(s).</p> <p>See on-sites under (S) LOW DENSITY FEEDING.</p> <p>See (AK) PERSONNEL STRUCTURE CHANGES COULD IMPROVE FMAP IMPLEMENTATION</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">External Communications</p>	<p>There is a constant need to communicate externally via multiple avenues and about different topics.</p>	<p>(AN) KEEP FEEDGROUND PAGE OF WEBSITE UPDATED, including the Jackson Feedground Management Action Plan, once completed. Use press releases and Feedground Collaborative Stakeholder emails as information sharing tools.</p> <p>See (B) COLLARING EFFORT AND STORY MAP in Herd Objectives.</p> <p>See (AI) INCLUDE FEEDGROUND INFORMATION IN THE JCR</p> <p>See (N) DEVELOP LIVING IN ELK COUNTRY BROCHURE</p> <p>See (AJ) DEVELOP TOOLS TO TRANSLATE TECHNICAL SCIENCE</p> <p>Continue to “notify the public when the herd changes CWD scenario/status”</p>

<i>Research</i>		
Research	Research is prioritized by region-identified needs, funding availability, and the body of science (e.g. technological ability to test different substrates for CWD).	
Funding	Many sources for funding, depending on what the research question is. Lots on interest in CWD and the effects that it has on cervid populations.	Continue to pursue internal and external funding for projects related to the Jackson Elk Herd, feeding, disease and movements.
Engagement		Continue to work with researchers (both internal and external) to identify and develop research questions as needed.
Priorities	<p>Current priorities for the Jackson Elk Herd:</p> <p>See Collaring Effort</p> <p>See Gros Ventre Elk Wintering Patterns</p> <p>See Collect and Test Soil Samples</p> <p>See Develop Tools to Translate Technical Science</p> <p>An unresolved question is how winter distribution, crowding, and movement compares between feedground elk and non-feedground ‘mega-herd’ elk elsewhere in WY. Having a better understanding of this may help predict how CWD will present itself in feedground elk herds as compared to non-feedground elk herds.</p>	<p>See (B) COLLARING EFFORT under Elk Population Management - Herd Objectives.</p> <p>See (P) GROS VENTRE ELK WINTERING PATTERNS under Reduce Feeding Season Length.</p> <p>See (Z) COLLECT AND TEST SOIL SAMPLES under Environmental Testing.</p> <p>See (AJ) DEVELOP TOOLS TO TRANSLATE TECHNICAL SCIENCE</p> <p>(AO) ELK WINTER BEHAVIOR COMPARISON between feedground elk and unfed ‘mega-herd(s)’ in Laramie/Casper Regions. Work with SRA unit and other regions to determine how to conduct the analysis and request assistance from SRA unit to complete it. Another alternative is to pair this question with collecting and testing soil samples if there is funding and support for a graduate student.</p>

<i>Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reductions</i>		
Wildlife Crossings	<p>Teton County has led an effort to develop a wildlife crossings project on N. Hwy 89 from Jackson to the GTNP boundary. This section has an existing fence on the NER side, and properly designed crossing structures may help facilitate winter wildlife management while decreasing highway mortality. Design plans include gates that allow one-way movement onto the refuge during the winter, while preventing elk movement off the refuge to protect private lands. Design plans also include updates to the existing NER fence that could be implemented separately. The Teton County wildlife crossing projects are not in the Top 5 priority list for WGFD.</p> <p>Sections of the NER fence are in need of repairs, updates, or replacement. The fence needs to be maintained to meet management goals and prevent wildlife collisions.</p>	<p>See (AA) NER FENCE UPDATE under Fencing. Work with Teton County, NER and others on NER fence maintenance.</p>
Education and Outreach		<p>Continue working with local partners (Non-Governmental Organizations, Wyoming Department of Transportation, etc) to develop effective outreach efforts to deduce highway mortality.</p>
Chapter 21	<p>Lethal removal of wolves for displacing elk is an option if the situation warrants and meets the requirements in Chapter 21.</p>	

Glossary:

BEMP: Bison and Elk Management Plan
 BTNF: Bridger Teton National Forest
 CWD: Chronic Wasting Disease
 EHU: Elk Herd Unit
 FMAP: Feedground Management Action Plan
 GTNP: Grand Teton National Park
 GV: Gros Ventre
 HMAP: Master Hunter Program
 JEH: Jackson Elk Herd (EH101)
 LD: Low Density
 LDM: Long Distance Migrants
 LQ: Limited Quota
 NER: National Elk Refuge
 NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

SDM: Short Distance Migrants
 SRA: Science, Research and Analytical Support Unit
 TCD: Teton Conservation District
 TCWP: Teton County Weed and Pest
 TW: Teton Wilderness
 USFS: United States Forest Service
 WGFD: Wyoming Game and Fish Department
 WHMA: Wildlife Habitat Management Area
 WOS: Wildlife Observation System
 WYDOT: Wyoming Department of Transportation
 PC: Patrol Cabin
 FC: Fish Creek