



(800) CALL-ELK :: legacy@rmef.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Professional Bull Riders (PBR)
Finals

November 12-15, 2020
Arlington, Texas

Cowboy Christmas and
Hunter and Outdoor Christmas

December 3-12, 2020
Fort Worth, Texas

For more information, please call
1-800-CALL-ELK.



NEWSLETTER *of the* HABITAT COUNCIL

HABITAT COUNCIL A Message from your co-chairs



Kent & Cyndie Johnson, RMEF
Habitat Council Co-chairs.

RMEF stands for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, but it means so much more to us than a simple acronym. What does RMEF mean to you? There are countless ways to answer this question.

“R” stands for resilient. This organization started with our four founders sitting at a table 36 years ago. Now, RMEF is recognized on a national level as a leading conservation organization. Other conservation groups, state and federal agencies look to RMEF for leadership and guidance. We have continued to complete the mission to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage through many tough times. RMEF has been able to adapt and grow even during a pandemic to advance the mission.

“M” stands for membership. RMEF membership continues to grow and provide funding through big game banquets, state rendezvous gatherings, ladies events, sweepstakes and donations. We have the best volunteers, members and donors in the country! Our members dedicate countless hours to host events and on the

ground volunteer projects. You can look at any picture of an RMEF function and you can see the laughter, joy and camaraderie.

“E” stands for environment. Since our founding in 1984, RMEF conserved nearly one square mile of elk country every day. Volunteers, donors, landowners, state and federal agencies and staff provided amazing ideas to protect and enhance habitat and public access. This creativity is even more critical during the current times.

“F” has always stood for family, which becomes apparent as you attend banquets, Elk Camp and Habitat Council events. You might be meeting someone for the first time at an event, but there is a shared feeling of hope, understanding and commitment. The kindness, caring and fellowship that we share when RMEF family comes together heals and encourages us. We know we can count on those friendships through anything.

Thank you all for being a part of the RMEF Habitat Council family. You are the reason RMEF means so much to us.

ISSUES AND ADVOCACY (LWCF & GAOA)

Being a part of historic legislation in 2020

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy proposed legislation to establish a “Land and Water Conservation Fund” (LWCF), a funding mechanism designed to assist states with the planning, development and acquisition of recreation resources by purchasing new federal lands for recreation. At the time, development was rapidly overtaking many water and land recreational sites so one of LWCF’s major purposes was to reduce the lag time in acquiring land. With vigorous bipartisan support, Congress passed the bill and President Lyndon Johnson signed it into law on September 3, 1964.

Issues and Advocacy continued

LWCF relied on three sources of revenue: proceeds from sales of surplus federal property, motorboat fuel taxes and fees for recreational use of federal lands, but the level of funding fell short of expectations so Congress tapped mineral leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

Initially authorized for a 25-year period, lawmakers extended LWCF for another 25 years, but it expired on September 30, 2015. Temporarily extended another three years, it expired again on September 30, 2018.

President Donald Trump permanently reauthorized LWCF on March 12, 2019, but not at its full funding level up to \$900 million. Yearly appropriations from the OCS only ranged from \$149 million to \$573 million. Fully funding LWCF would comprise only 11.5 percent of all oil and gas revenues.

Everything changed in 2020 and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation played an intimate role in the process. In March, Senators Steve Daines (MT) and Cory Gardner (CO) secured a meeting with President Trump and several staffers in Washington D.C. Daines then reached out to RMEF to acquire high-quality maps, photos and other details about RMEF's Falls Creek project, which permanently protected 442 acres of wildlife and riparian habitat along Montana's Rocky Mountain Front and greatly improved access to 27,000 acres of

public land beyond. During their meeting, Daines shared project details with the president including how \$250,000 in LWCF funds helped close the transaction. The president then stated that "sealed the deal" for him and he called on Congress to send him a bill to provide permanent, dedicated funding to LWCF.

On August 4, 2020, President Trump signed the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) into law. Marking one of the most significant nationwide conservation milestones in a century, LWCF is now fully and permanently funded. This landmark conservation legislation finally fully and permanently funds LWCF to the tune of \$900 million a year to invest in conservation and recreation opportunities across the country. Additionally, it will use revenues from energy development to provide up to \$1.9 billion a year for five years to provide needed maintenance for critical facilities and infrastructure in our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, recreation areas and Native American schools.

"Bold acts and brave consistency are what got us here," said Jennifer Doherty, RMEF director of lands. "RMEF salutes the collective conservation community, our elected officials and the public."

"This program is absolutely crucial for elk, other wildlife and hunting access," said Blake Henning, RMEF chief conservation

officer. "LWCF further improves public access to public lands by directing federal agencies to open lands for hunting, fishing and recreational shooting unless specifically closed."

For RMEF alone, LWCF so far provided millions of dollars to help permanently protect more than 162,000 acres of America's most important elk habitat and open public access to more than double that acreage across 12 states.

In celebration, Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt designated every upcoming August 4th as "Great American Outdoors Day," There will be no entrance fees at any National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands.

The Great American Outdoors Act is an historic legislation we are honored to be a part of and utilize. Its impact will benefit conservation for generations to come.

Sources and Direct Content from:

1. RMEF News Releases
2. [nps.gov/subjects/lwcf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf)
3. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/legal/great-american-outdoors-act.htm>
4. <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/08-04-20-national-parks-provide-free-entrance-to-celebrate-passage-of-the-great-american-outdoors-act.htm>



Falls Creek, Montana

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Anderson Smith, Director of Development



Just about the only thing that has remained the same this year is the progress of time. Although it hardly seems real, time and seasons did move along this year in equal

measure, bringing us into this month of the harvest moon and hunter's moon, the latter being a blue moon, and of course, happening on Halloween. Strange times.

As unusual as this year has been, many of life's best things have remained the same. Morel mushrooms showed up

in spring, and the huckleberries peaked in August right around the weeks that bull elk started to losing their velvet.

Another thing that has stayed the same is our mission. Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation staff, supporters and our many partners continued on the path of protecting our wild-places, improving habitat and maintaining our traditions as hunters and outdoor enthusiasts. It is through this work that we are all helping to ensure the best things in life do remain the same. RMEF is always eyeing opportunities to make things better, such as more access, enhanced habitat and building a stronger community of hunters and conservationists.

During this time of giving at year-end, I ask you to consider making a gift to support our mission and empower

us to address new opportunities as they surface. I'd also like to thank you for everything you've done already to get us to where we are at now. To me, that is what the Habitat Council is all about, celebrating what we've done and continue to do, together, making elk country better.

As you do plan your support of RMEF in 2020 and beyond, please let me know if I can be of any service, especially around different ways to donate through such as stocks, IRAs or donor advised funds.

Thank you again, and I look forward to meeting everyone at a future Habitat Council event in hopefully less-strange times.

Anderson Smith
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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

California's Three Subspecies of Elk

California, like no other state, supports three subspecies of elk. Tule elk, the smallest of them all, are endemic to California (found nowhere else) and the most specialized elk in North America, given that they live in open country under semi-desert conditions. Roosevelt elk, the largest in body size (but not antler size), weigh in at 700-1,200 pounds (for bulls) and is the fifth largest land mammal in North America (behind bison, moose, polar bear and Kodiak bear). Roosevelts

inhabit the rugged temperate rainforests of the coastal Pacific Northwest. Rocky Mountain elk, with the largest antlers of all subspecies, occur through the Rocky Mountain West along with other various locations where elk restoration has occurred.

At one point, approximately 42 percent (42.7 million acres) of California's land supported elk. While a reliable population estimate prior to European settlement is unavailable, some considered 500,000 elk a reasonable estimate. Unfortunately, throughout the 1800s, the decline in California elk generally followed that of other states and by 1872, only a few tule elk remained in the San Joaquin Valley.



A conservation-minded rancher, named Henry Miller had the foresight to protect this last isolated group discovered on his ranch in 1874. All of the tule elk currently residing in 22 California herds were derived from this small remnant herd. Efforts during the early 1900s to translocate elk in California were sporadic and generally met with limited success. By 1970, elk in California occupied less than 10 percent of their historic range. Subsequent to various state and federal legislation, more than 1,250 elk have been captured and moved to reestablish and augment herds across California. With the financial support of hunter tag fees, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson Act),

the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, conservation organizations and hunters were able to restore elk to the landscape across California.

Through the conservation of suitable, connected habitats and active management including translocation, elk populations have rebounded and are now extending their range into previously occupied areas and beyond. Elk population growth since 1970 has been significant and California now supports

approximately 5,700 Roosevelt elk, 1,500 Rocky Mountain elk and 5,700 tule elk.

Hunting remains a primary tool available to help manage elk populations in California. Elk hunt tags are in high demand with generally more than 30,000 applicants for the general draw elk tags (282 tags available in 2020). Recreational hunting opportunities for elk produce revenue that directly supports the management of not only elk, but conservation of diverse habitats across the landscape that benefit multiple species.

Karie Decker
Director of Habitat Stewardship



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The Exclusive Newsletter for RMEF Habitat Council Members

NEWSLETTER *of the* HABITAT COUNCIL



ELK BY STATE Elk Population

CALIFORNIA

State	Subspecies	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Elk Population	Rocky Mountain	1,000	1,150	1,500	1,000	1,250	1,000-1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Elk Population	Roosevelt	2,500	2,500	2,500	3,500	4,000	4,000	7,500	7,500	5,500
Elk Population	Tule	600	875	1,470	2,500	2,900	3,500	3,800	3,900	5,100
Elk Hunters	Rocky Mountain	-	-	-	16	15	12	26	32	51
Elk Hunters	Roosevelt	50	0	100	20	35	128	138	147	191
Elk Hunters	Tule	0	0	0	95	110	258	296	174	366
Elk Harvested	Rocky Mountain	0	0	0	5	8	10	12	13	29
Elk Harvested	Roosevelt	26	-	49	2	20	68	83	74	128
Elk Harvested	Tule	0	0	0	85	80	199	213	137	270

Habitat Council Members: 79

RMEF Members: 12,956

