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# NEWSLETTER *of the* HABITAT COUNCIL

## HABITAT COUNCIL TIDINGS A Message from your co-chairs



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

Do you remember when the big issue was Y2K? The year 2000 was going to upend everything from our clocks to the entire financial system. We all waited for the New Year's ball to drop to see if anything would happen. When it finally got here, it was kind of a letdown. Little did we know what would happen in 2020. Many of us have had personal high points and low points during the year, however, we are happy to say that in some ways 2020 was just another year for RMEF.

Earlier in 2020, we shared the From Our Home to Yours video. We hope this video conveyed a personal message and inspiration to all of you in keeping together. Although we've been frustrated in not connecting in-person, we will again be socializing, visiting and coming together for elk country as we move forward into 2021. RMEF is focusing on this year's Elk Camp to bring all of this to fruition. Elk Camp

is tentatively set to be held in Park City, Utah, July 22-25. Staff is working diligently on creating exclusive and memorable experiences for Habitat Council members during RMEF's premier event. Detailed information will be distributed in the coming months. We'd like to encourage everyone to attend Elk Camp as the second Habitat Council event will not be held this year.

So many of us want to call 2020 a redo. For RMEF, the work that staff have been doing has continued to happen. We conserved or enhanced our *eight millionth acre* this year! Mission continued to be accomplished all over the country. Banquets may have been cancelled, but various auctions took their place. Lands projects continued to happen which opened even more land for public access. Habitat Council support has continued to grow and has helped allow milestones like this to occur. It is quite humbling to see the level of support the Habitat Council continues to provide. It also shows the level of faith we have in our staff and volunteers that have worked so hard to get us through a difficult year.

As difficult as 2020 has been, 2021 may begin as a mystery as we unravel it together. It's comforting to know that whatever the year may bring, RMEF will continue to not only provide, but thrive. All of our Habitat Council family can be thankful we have been fortunate enough and had the means to donate at the levels we have, and that has translated into the ability for RMEF to conserve more land for future generations.

In 10 or 15 years, we may all be wearing T-shirts that say "2020 - We Lived It," and eventually the year will become a blip in history. But what we will never forget is how we are so thankful that RMEF and the Habitat Council have continued to keep the mission rolling and is a shining example of why 2020 did have its bright moments!

## GETTING A GRASP ON 8,000,000 ACRES

Eight million acres. That is how many acres the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation protected or enhanced since its founding in 1984. It is a landmark of sorts and a number so large that it is hard to quantify, but let's try anyway.

If RMEF's protected/enhanced acreage were its own U.S. state, it would be larger than nine other states, ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> overall in size falling between West Virginia and Maryland, and comprise roughly .33 percent of the United States' land mass

Eight million acres is as large as these eight national parks combined: Glacier, Grand Canyon, Great Smoky Mountains, Isle Royale, Joshua Tree, Olympic, Yellowstone and Yosemite.

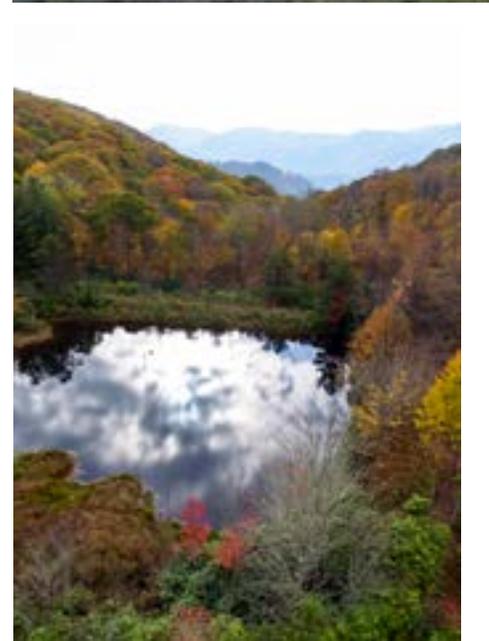
It's been approximately 14,000 days since RMEF's founding on May 14, 1984. That means RMEF and its partners protected or enhanced approximately 600 acres per day every day since then.

"We had no idea the Elk Foundation would ever conserve 8 million acres, let alone in this short a time. For an organization this young, it's remarkable," said RMEF co-founder Charlie Decker.

However you do the math, it is an amazing accomplishment. A real conservation milestone. The thing is measuring accomplishment by acres is merely a metric by which to do so. The real success is in comprehending the on the ground vastness of it all and experiencing that elk country first-hand.

"There's a cool big round number, but you can't really see it or smell it or feel it. It's good to remember that every one of those acres is a real place where you can go walk come spring. You might breathe in that tang of dark forest mixed with salt among big Doug firs and spruces on the Pacific coast, or the spice of sagebrush in the Great Basin, or redbuds in Bloom back east," said Kyle Weaver, RMEF president and CEO. "No matter where you are on any one of those 8 million acres, though, there's a good chance you'll catch a whiff of the unmistakable scent of elk, too. Because every foot of land we've protected or enhanced or opened to public access is elk habitat."

That is the bottom line!



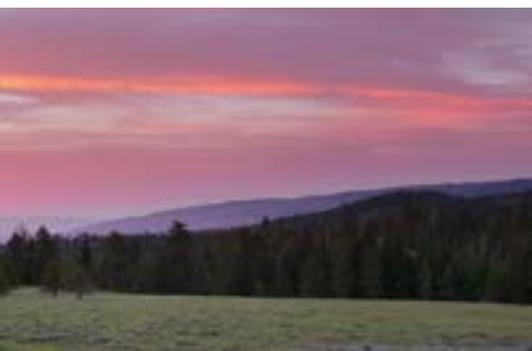
## FROM KYLE WEAVER, PRESIDENT & CEO

American lore recalls Abraham Lincoln to have once said, “Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.” In other words, preparation is key.

At the end of a hunting season we either celebrate our successes or pine over a missed opportunity. If it’s the latter, that’s where preparing for the next season begins, learning from those missed opportunities and developing a different approach. The totality of the small things count as much as the big, like having the right gear, a cleaned and sighted rifle, and of course the proper tags and licenses.

As preparation is key ahead of a successful hunting season, it’s also the most important component to the RMEF’s approach to conservation. This starts with connecting to our members, volunteers and donors, the lifeblood of our organization. Once we understand the parts of our mission that give the most impact and return to our supporters, we are better equipped to design and pursue opportunities that serve their passion. Creating a culture of honesty and fiscal responsibility is imperative to preparing for years like 2020, where RMEF was able to deliver mission as if it was any other year. Lastly, never resting on our laurels by embracing change and seeking innovation, all the while staying true to our history and values.

We are pleased to have accomplished so much in 2020, and ecstatic to have reached a historic 8-million acres protected since our birth in 1984. This was due in no small part because of the passion and support of the Habitat Council – THANK YOU! This past year has been unprecedented by any standard, but RMEF is as healthy as ever because leadership, members, volunteers, key stakeholders and staff have spent the last three decades sharpening our axes.



### ELK BY STATE Elk Population

## NEBRASKA

State	Subspecies	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
NE Elk Population	Rocky Mountain	20	40	80	80	200	360	900	2,000	2,500
NE Elk Hunters	Rocky Mountain	-	-	-	-	38	59	149	272	320
NE Elk Harvested	Rocky Mountain	0	0	0	0	14	24	59	166	189

**Habitat Council Members: 11**  
**RMEF Members: 2,885**





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The Exclusive Newsletter for RMEF Habitat Council Members

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## COMING TOGETHER FOR ELK COUNTRY

2020 may have been a distinctive year we will remember for a lifetime, but one thing that did not change is our passion and commitment to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. In the last issue of the Habitat Council newsletter, Kent and Cyndie Johnson shared what RMEF means to them.

They in turned asked what RMEF means to you. We had some feedback and truly appreciated hearing from you. To continue

this engagement, we want to share the responses we received. We'll give you a hint that most of us think alike as we come together for elk country.

We all made changes to our lives during the past year and even for the future, but what RMEF means to us is the foundation upon which we stand together. The impact we have on the landscape cannot be changed.

## WHAT DOES RMEF MEAN TO YOU?

“Great Conservation for Wildlife Habitat.”  
Steve H. – Indiana

“Conservation in the highest degree with logic and science being the basis for forward motion!”  
Don S. – California

“A clear and STRONG mission to guide and follow, with the bonus of lifelong friend/family relationships with a passion for the MISSION.”  
Jennifer N. – Wisconsin

“An opportunity to invest in conservation which is a statement of my values.”  
Roger P. – Ohio

“Family, Friends and the Great Outdoors!”  
Ray L. – Colorado

“Wildlife on the mountain for my grandkids.”  
Keith W. – Montana

“Wild things and wild places for now and for the future. Good and important values illustrated.”  
Gary W. – South Carolina

“Family, friends and saving nature for the kids.”  
Jimmy G. – Georgia

“The best in conservation, Wild spaces for ever, Great friendships.”  
Lewis S. – New York

“The RMEF has the best fit for my beliefs about conservation. I started hunting over 70 years ago, joined a conservation group in junior high school and spent 35 years as a professional conservationist. Their permanent land protection, habitat enhancement and support of hunting as a form of conservation is what I believe in.”  
Larry B. – Massachusetts

“Shared passion for ongoing protection, restoration, and conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat; reliable source for best hunting practices and resource management; and trusted partner to ensure current and future generation access to expanded public lands.”  
Vanessa G. – Missouri



HUNTING  
CONSERVATION

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