

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION

Ensuring the future of elk, other wildlife,
their habitat and our hunting heritage.



PHOTO: GENE PUTNEY-PUTNEY NATURE IMAGES

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MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO

Eight million reasons to give thanks.

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LAND CONSERVATION & ACCESS

Land conservation and access go hand-in-hand. The protection of pristine habitat, migration corridors and pathways to recreation is at the core of our mission.

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Restoring and improving habitat for elk and other wildlife provides more resources for animals to thrive and survive.

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HUNTING HERITAGE

Hunters often embrace and revere conservation. Advancing our hunting traditions helps ensure the next generation of stewards.

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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

A fluid approach to conservation is apt for an ever-changing world, but only with work, strategy and advocacy based on sound science.

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FINANCIALS

Eight Million Reasons to Give Thanks

RMEF MEMBERS, SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS ARE a family, and in tough times we band together and rise to every challenge. I’d like to say thank you to each member of our RMEF family for sticking with us in 2020. Thank you for believing in the mission of conserving elk, other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage.

Because of all of you, our mission is thriving, and the RMEF’s position of health and strength is true. In fact, we just crossed the 8-million-acre threshold in the unlikelyst of years—2020, by helping to secure a 2,892-acre easement in the Pine Ridge region of Nebraska. RMEF has worked with a suite of dedicated partners and landowners to help protect, conserve and open access on nearly 10,000 acres in the Pine Ridge.

This northwest panhandle landscape of Nebraska is a far-cry from the flat, corn and soybean country to the east. Rising 1,000 feet above the plains and stretching 85 miles, Pine Ridge holds time-chiseled sandstone, canyons and limestone buttes, and conjures images of the Black Hills just 50 miles north. It’s here that the White River springs into being and carves its way through the nearby Badlands on a 580-mile journey to the Missouri. Best of all, it’s home to bighorns, mule deer, mountain lions and some of the state’s finest elk country.

Since 1984, projects like those in the Pine Ridge add up to more habitat for elk and more access for everyone.

RMEF’s lifeblood is our supporters, 231,168 members strong. Thanks to all who make our work possible.

In 2020, in the face of challenges and uncertainty, RMEF not only reached our 8-million mark, but we completed 27 land protection projects in 12 different states. We collaborated with partners to dole out millions of dollars in grants for elk-related research, forest thinning, prescribed burns, invasive weed treatments, the establishment of wildlife water sources and other habitat enhancement and hunting heritage projects.

It’s the support of our dedicated family of stakeholders that propelled us to the 8-million-acre milestone, and it will be that family that gets us to the next 8 million.

Thank you!
Sincerely,



R. Kyle Weaver
R. Kyle Weaver
President & Chief Executive Officer





8 MILLION ACRES

IN LIFETIME MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT

Almost one square mile per day protected or enhanced, every day since RMEF’s founding in 1984.



PHOTO: © DAVE WELLING



RMEF hit its eight millionth acre with the 2,892-acre Kreman Ranch conservation easement (above) in the heart of northwest Nebraska elk country.

Gennette Creek Walled Lake Burnt Fork Vesey Ranch

Grand Canyon of the Black Hills Swift Garrity Mountain

Eel River Peninsula Taos Plateau Raymond Mountain
*multiple projects

Middle Cottonwood Creek Hadley Park Mount Haggin

Pajarita Flats Turkey Track Pilot Hill Dorsy Lake

Troublesome Creek Millbrook Bear Creek

Little Laramie Valley Aspen Valley Two Rivers

Southern Elkhorn Mountains Kreman Ranch

27 PROJECTS
COMPLETED
IN 12 STATES
IN 2020



IN THE FACE OF 2020’S CHALLENGES, THE RMEF’S approach to land protection and access never faltered, in fact, the organization accomplished more land protection work in a lean year than some of our most financially successful years. In 2020, the RMEF completed 27 projects in 12 states, protecting 40,116 acres and ultimately surpassing a lifetime milestone of 8-million acres protected and improved. This was done in partnership and with an earnest effort to serve those who support us.

The RMEF’s approach to conserving and stewarding elk country is and always will be, reliant on partnerships, whether they be members, donors, landowners, volunteers, policymakers or public agencies. In addition to the people, we also bring credible science, financial resources, creativity and persistence which has allowed us to strive for more and more mission work every year.

A special thanks to each individual who supports what we do. So many people come to conservation at a time in their life where their intellect, their emotion and their ethics line-up to connect a passion for recreation to the wildlife. It’s hardly through guilt to conserve and protect, but rather a gesture of pure optimism. We share that optimism.

“As a manager of a large industrial tree farm and a hunter in Montana, I have watched access and acres diminished everywhere. We are honored to support RMEF for this important mission of protecting wildlands and giving us access to them.”

Karen & Grant Munro, Port Angeles, WA



PHOTOS: TONI KAHNKE



A Grand Accomplishment in the Black Hills

SIMPLY PUT, THERE IS NOWHERE ANYWHERE LIKE THIS PLACE. THE Grand Canyon of the Black Hills is a picturesque landscape with limestone cliffs, caves, ledges, a natural bridge and nearly 17 miles of streams as well as springs, marshes, wetlands and riparian habitat. A hunter’s paradise, it marks the biological crossroads where the hardwoods of the East, conifers of the Rockies, boreal forest of the North and the mixed-grass prairie of the Great Plains morph together in a landscape scale fashion.

Thanks to a 2020 total team effort by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, a landowner and other partners, this 10-mile stretch of vital winter range for elk, mule and whitetail deer, and other wildlife in northeast Wyoming is permanently protected and opened to public access for all to hunt, fish and enjoy.

“This is absolutely amazing country,” said Kyle Weaver, RMEF president and CEO, “We express our recognition and appreciation to a willing landowner and the multiple agency and private partners involved in the conservation of this incredible landscape.”

“It is gratifying to know that future generations will be able to enjoy the pristine beauty of this magnificent canyon. I’m thankful for the effort by all parties to make this happen and it’s a legacy that everyone should be proud of,” said Mike Frey, former landowner.

The acquisition knit together a continuous protected landscape extending 43 miles across Wyoming and South Dakota, including the adjacent Black Hills National Forest. The Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments (OSLI) assumed ownership and management under the terms of the National Forest Legacy Program.

“This acquisition presented a unique opportunity to partner with the U.S. Forest Service to provide the citizens of Wyoming and the Trust Beneficiaries with a property that increases both access and revenue generation,” said Jessica Murkin, OSLI real estate analyst. “We are grateful for the opportunity and pleased to have assisted in the successful completion of the project.”

“We are glad that we were able to work with the U.S. Forest Service, RMEF and our other partners to secure the Forest Legacy grant that helped make this acquisition possible,” said Bill Crapser, Wyoming state forester. “Not only will it be a great asset for recreation but will ensure the traditional uses of forest management and grazing remain priorities for the property.”

RMEF and key partners including Wyoming State Forestry, Wyoming Game and Fish Department and The Nature Conservancy poured time and money into crafting an application for a Forest Legacy grant under the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but struck out two years in a row. The third time was the charm, netting \$6 million. OSLI contributed another \$4 million, Frey made a substantial donation, and Bass Pro Shops & Cabela’s Outdoor Fund, Wyoming Governor’s Big Game License Coalition, National Wild Turkey Federation and RMEF’s Torstenson Family Endowment rounded it out.

“This really is a story of the power of partnerships and persistence,” says Leah Burgess, RMEF’s Wyoming lands program manager. “And a dedicated landowner who stayed the course.”

“I appreciate the diligent efforts of RMEF to develop and maintain high quality relationships with private landowners, and with state and federal agencies. These relationships have opened access to both public and private lands that will ensure countless opportunities for future generations.”

Doug Rowell, Southbury, CT

Michigan’s ‘Big Wild’ Gets Bigger, More Accessible Too

BIGGER ISN’T ALWAYS BETTER. THAT IS, UNLESS YOU’RE talking about permanently protecting an even larger chunk of prime wildlife habitat and opening public access to it.

Michigan’s Pigeon River Country State Forest is the largest continuous block of undeveloped land in the Lower Peninsula. Locals call it “The Big Wild.” This 108,000-acre expanse is also the geographic center of the state’s elk range and it grew by 717 acres in 2020.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation provided \$75,000 and a good bit of legwork to assist the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and local land trust Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC) with the acquisition of the 597-acre Walled Lake property and the 120-acre Dorsy Lake inholding. Both tracts are now permanently part of the state forest and open for everyone to use and enjoy.

“This spectacular place adds a gem to the crown of Michigan’s public lands,” said Debbie Begalle, DNR forest resources division chief. “The land is open for hiking, hunting, fishing, elk viewing, skiing, snowshoeing, bird watching, mushroom hunting and berry picking, to name just a few activities.”

“This area is full of wildlife,” said Kerry Wieber, DNR forest land administrator. “It offers opportunities for hunters to pursue game species such as elk, white-tailed deer, black bear and ruffed grouse, as well as opportunities for wildlife watchers to catch a glimpse of non-game species such as red-shouldered hawk, loons and pine marten.”

While wildlife abounds in many forms, The Big Wild is also home to three world-class, blue ribbon trout streams – the Sturgeon, Pigeon and Black Rivers. Fishing for big bluegills in Walled Lake isn’t bad either. But for RMEF, completing the project meant maintaining quality habitat for elk coupled with an increase in quality wildlife management and public access.

Crossing the finish line, however, took a little bit of last-minute hustling. In 2018, RMEF’s longtime local conservation partner, the LTC, purchased and held the property until funding was available for it to become state land. The DNR previously earmarked \$120,000 in funding to acquire the property, but then the land appraisal came back higher than expected. The DNR reached out to RMEF to see if it could help, which prompted a \$75,000 contribution from RMEF’s Torstenson Family Endowment in late 2019.

“We were scrambling to find that \$75,000, and would likely not own the property yet if RMEF had not made that contribution,” said Wieber. “They were instrumental.”

“It’s a beautiful property. We’re proud of the partnerships it took to make that happen, proud to be able to do that for the hunters and anglers, and for our RMEF members in Michigan,” said Steven Dobey, RMEF conservation program manager for the eastern U.S. “We love to help state partners with acquisitions, but when it expands existing public lands, that’s a slam dunk.”

40,116 ACRES
PERMANENTLY
PROTECTED
IN 2020



ABOVE PHOTO: COURTESY OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



ABOVE PHOTO: COURTESY OF PATRICK MCINTYRE



BELOW PHOTO: COURTESY OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The 600-acre Elk Forest tract hosts a mile of the Black River as well as Walled Lake (above). It’s now integrated into more than 100,000 acres of prime habitat—public and protected—in the heart of Michigan’s elk country.



PHOTO: MANUELA DURSON/SHUTTERSTOCK

Oregon Habitat Project a Win-Win-Win

CALL IT A *THREE BIRDS WITH ONE STONE* KIND OF victory in the Pacific Northwest. And with two clear-cut winners – elk and hunters.

First, back in 2019 the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation provided \$75,000 in funding to Coos County, Oregon, to help purchase and manage 600 acres of elk habitat in the southwest part of the state. The subsequent transaction transformed what was a chunk of private land into public land, opening access to wildlife habitat in a part of the country where hunting and other recreational activity has become more and more “pay to play.”

Second, that acreage is now part of the 15,000-acre Coos County Forest, an active, working forest that utilizes timber

sales, planting, thinning, vegetation treatments and other active management tools to both generate revenue for the county and to improve habitat. And that’s good news for elk, deer, mountain lions, black bears and other wildlife that live there.

Third, is a gift for wildlife that keeps on giving. RMEF volunteers wasted no time pulling on their boots, rolling up their sleeves and hitting the ground to spruce up elk country. In August 2020, approximately two dozen volunteers including three children arrived in the Coos County Forest for the first of three work weekends over three months.

“People came from all over the state with many traveling six-plus hours to get there,” said Mark Allard, RMEF volunteer who coordinates volunteer projects in western Oregon. “The project focused on removing old wire fences as well as building a better place to be ‘wildlife friendly.’”

As they worked side by side, volunteers witnessed an inspiring sight. A young lady’s crew of pack mules came out of the forest carrying out an elk she shot with a youth tag. Of course, they sent her on her way with many smiles, high fives and a new Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation hat.

Subsequent volunteer outings produced more wildlife-friendly fencing that allows calves to duck under and older elk to jump over. Crews also removed old barbed-wire fencing, mowed down underbrush, removed invasive plants and carried out other habitat enhancement work while enjoying meals and a campsite together.

“This is a great property and is being made better with these efforts. It will be an ongoing project opportunity for years to come,” added.



Active Forest Management Opens Door to Inaugural Missouri Elk Hunt

“I’M REALLY HAPPY TO REPRESENT WHAT I BELIEVE to be one of the most important hunts of my life. This program is an example of one of the best things to happen for the people of Missouri in years, and I’m nearly 80 years old,” said Bill Clark of Van Buren.

Clark filled out one of 19,215 permit applications submitted for Missouri’s first-ever managed elk hunt in 2020 because he supports elk restoration and management efforts, and wanted to help the herd by tagging a bull. And he was not alone. Clark and the other four hunters who drew elk tags successfully notched them during the December firearm portion of the season.

“What an exciting gift right before the holidays to see all five hunters harvest elk in this first inaugural elk season in Missouri,” said Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) director. “This success also showcases the hard work and collaboration of our Commission, staff, partners, landowners and citizens.”

It took several years of MDC planning to prepare for and carry out the elk hunt. However, looking at the bigger picture, it took more than a decade of successful land and wildlife management to grow elk numbers. In 2011, RMEF provided funding and volunteer manpower to help

successfully restore elk to their historic Missouri range. Since then, RMEF and its partners completed a dozen conservation projects that enhanced more than 11,000 acres of wildlife habitat.

One such project took place over the last several years in the Current River watershed on the The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) 5,645-acre Chilton Creek Preserve. This vital habitat near Van Buren lies between the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and Peck Ranch, a 36,000-acre conservation area where elk first hit the ground in 2011. To put it simply, Chilton Creek lies in the heart of Missouri’s elk restoration zone.

RMEF and TNC combined funding to restore 160 acres of elk habitat and improve an additional 1,360 acres of habitat by utilizing a variety of habitat enhancement tools such as forest thinning and prescribed burns, invasive weed treatment and reseeding. Crews removed woody species from the forest floor that block sunlight and choke out native vegetation and treated roadsides and trails to help prevent the spread of invasive species within this highly visited area. The result is a more diverse ecosystem with quality grasses and forbs that provide forage for elk and other wildlife.

MDC will offer five permits for its second elk hunt to be held later this year.



BELOW PHOTO: COURTESY OF MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION





Mentoring a Brighter Future for First-Time Hunters

“JASON KEPT BUGLING AND COW CALLING TO BRING the bull closer and raked a stick against a tree. The next thing I know, the bull was walking out of the trees towards us, he stopped next to a pine tree.”

Moments later, 15-year-old Sage shot her first elk, a nice 6x6 bull. Her tale is similar to those of many other first-time hunters who partnered with the First Hunt Foundation (FHF), a volunteer-only organization dedicated to keeping America’s hunting heritage alive by providing mentor-based hunting experiences.

“There are thousands of youth and other interested people who would love to learn hunting skills, but literally have no opportunity,” said Rick Brazell, FHF president and founder. “They have no support group, no family members or friends that can help them have that first hunting experience. That’s where FHF comes in.”

FHF focuses on finding individuals who have a desire to learn hunting skills and then matches him or her with a mentor who helps and trains participants to learn how to hunt. All mentors are required to pass a background check and follow a code of conduct

while mentees are never required to contribute funds toward their field experiences.

Based in Kamiah, Idaho, but currently established in 28 states, the organization’s goal is to establish chapters in all 50 states. And it is well on its way thanks, in part, to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

RMEF recognized FHF’s worthy efforts and first provided grant funding in 2015. Since then, RMEF’s commitment grew and contributed to FHF’s continuing expansion both geographically and in positive impact. In 2019 alone, FHF mentors donated a total of 4,018 days mentoring youth and new hunters in the field and working behind the scenes to make it all possible. In 2020, RMEF kept the ball rolling by contributing \$30,000 to the program and by donating 1,500 knives for participants.

As of today, FHF has 482 background-checked mentors across much of the United States who provide participants with education, knowledge, hands-on training and real-life experience.

And that’s good news for first-time hunters of all ages. Just ask Sage.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF FIRST HUNT FOUNDATION



A FIRST HUNT IS AS BURNED IN THE MEMORY OF A novice hunter as it is for those who witness their joy and determination. The pursuit is something that grows over the years and lives within during the quiet moments of the seasons between. This passion is a new connection to the natural world and the animal, a personification of hopes, values and instincts. Decades later, the first-time excitement is still present in us, but now is accompanied with the desire and responsibility to retain what made it possible in the first place. Conservation can be traced back to that first hunt, and at RMEF, we recognize the importance in making that opportunity accessible to all who are interested, knowing fully well that it comes full circle.

There are obvious obstructions that RMEF is dedicated to knocking down – access, shrinking and degraded habitat and a push in the right direction. That is where the Hunting Heritage program comes into play and why it’s an important pillar of the organization’s mission.

RMEF’s Hunting Heritage efforts signify a firm commitment to both understanding and promoting the crucial link between hunting and conservation. RMEF does so by allocating funding, and often volunteer support, for hunter mentoring opportunities, youth outdoor camps, seminars and conservation education programs, organizations that promote safe and competitive archery and firearm opportunities in a team setting, and scholarships for future wildlife management professionals.

Promoting hunting heritage helps maintain our traditional outdoor lifestyle while also helping to ensure the next generation of stewards.

155 HUNTING
HERITAGE
PROJECTS IN 2020

“Thank you to the RMEF for providing the opportunity for all of us to work together to conserve and enhance the wild and natural places we love. We each have an important role while the cumulative result from everyone’s combined efforts is widely enjoyed today with immeasurable value in the years ahead.”

Harmon Jones, Tennessee

Research Sets Table for Possibility of Future North Carolina Elk Hunt

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, BLACK BEARS WERE TAKING A heavy toll on newborn elk calves in the Appalachians in the early 2000’s. But to what extent?

To give elk a fighting chance, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) launched an innovative predator relocation effort from 2006 to 2008, removing bears from calving areas during the spring. Subsequent follow-up showed that helped calf recruitment, even when the bear relocation program ceased.

Still, as the years rolled by, NCWRC had more questions than answers. Specifically, how many elk are there? Where do they move about? How do they use habitat? What are the main mortality factors? After taking preliminary steps in 2019 for a possible future elk hunt, how could the state wildlife agency best answer these questions?

No stranger to the region, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation stepped up to offer assistance. Dating back to 1995, RMEF and its partners completed 115 conservation and hunting heritage projects in North Carolina including providing pivotal funding for the successful 2001 restoration of elk to their historic range.

RMEF allocated funding support to outfit elk with GPS collars as part of a collaborative effort with Great Smoky Mountains National Park, NCWRC and the University of Tennessee to measure population abundance, recruitment, survival and growth. Researchers knew aerial surveys used in the western U.S. would not work in the heavily wooded areas of western North Carolina. Thermal imaging was also out because of thick forest canopy, a lack of consistent snow and other factors. They needed statistically sound yet cost effective methods so they employed “explicit

capture-mark-recapture methods based on fecal DNA.” You got it, elk pellets. Researchers previously successfully used this tactic on whitetail deer, coyotes and even chimpanzees.

The DNA profiles created by gathering pellets in various locations identify individual animals which are used as “marks” for estimating abundance size and density, survival, sex ratios and other population parameters.

The bottom line is the knowledge gained through this research will help biologists and game managers identify where and how to best focus their efforts to improve and protect elk habitat. And better habitat translates into more and stronger elk, and a greater probability for implementation of a future elk hunt. RMEF funding will assist this project into 2021 as well.

Additionally, RMEF supplied 2020 funding for two similar, concurrent North Carolina studies. One uses GPS collars to monitor elk movement and mortality associated with vehicle collisions in the Great Smoky Mountains and the other utilizes automated camera trapping devices across the Blue Ridge Parkway, which bisects the Cherokee Qualla boundary.

\$5.6 MILLION
TOWARD
ELK RESEARCH
IN 2020



RMEF-supported research helps scientists get a better handle on the population dynamics and habitat use of wild, free-ranging elk in the Great Smoky Mountains. It will also assist wildlife managers set guidelines for a potential future elk hunt.

Doing More Mission with Less

SOMETIMES THE NUMBERS JUST DON'T ADD up but in this case they do thanks to hard work, even when much of the world was in a downward financial spiral.

2020 was a challenging year on many fronts for a multitude of reasons. RMEF relies heavily on its dedicated volunteers to generate funds for our mission by hosting annual banquets, membership drives and other events. However, health and safety-related circumstances triggered the cancellation of a majority of our fundraising banquets. So how is it possible that more meaningful mission work can take place when an established, successful fundraising arm is seemingly greatly lessened?

Willing to face a challenge head-on, volunteers, RMEF staffers, members and the RMEF Board of Directors regrouped and plowed forward. Despite lockdowns, gathering restrictions and social distancing requirements, volunteers found creative, new and innovative ways to reach out to members who opened their wallets and pocketbooks. RMEF staff provided support and guidance, as needed, while also closely monitoring all activity including a reduction of expenses.

As a result, combining those efforts with program service revenue and revenue generated through donations, memberships, return on RMEF investments, including the Torstenson Family Endowment and other avenues, RMEF put more than \$44.18 million dollars to work in 2020, marking an increase of \$136,000 in programmatic funds over 2019. Of course, none of this would be possible without the support of our members, volunteers, donors, sponsors and others.

2020 mission accomplishment highlights include 27 land and conservation projects in 12 states, 199 habitat stewardship projects across elk country that committed an additional \$3.4 million toward future projects, 155 hunting heritage and conservation outreach projects and 10 national programs/ sponsorship, nearly \$1 million for 33 research projects across 15 states and two national studies that leveraged \$4.9 million in partner dollars, and significant outreach and education about elk, hunting, conservation and advocacy efforts.

Years of fiscal discipline and a commitment to good financial stewardship put RMEF in a unique position to deliver more mission in a year when many other nonprofits were forced to pull back. To put it simply, RMEF continued its strong track record of fiscal strength, transparency and stability while making a substantial impact on elk, elk country and our hunting heritage. For a more detailed review of our finances, view RMEF’s audited 2020 financial statements at www.rmef.org/resources/rmef-financials.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (in thousands)	2020	% of Total
<i>Support and Revenue</i>		
Program service revenue (a)	\$ 22,327	31.23%
Donations (b)	14,244	19.92%
Return on investments	11,208	15.68%
Membership dues	10,682	14.94%
Special Events, net of event expense	9,643	13.49%
Advertising/sponsorships, retail and other revenue	3,387	4.74%
Total Support and Revenue	71,491	100.00%
<i>Expenses</i>		
Program services	44,184	71.38%
Fundraising	13,707	22.14%
Administration	4,007	6.47%
Total Expenses	61,898	100.00%

Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$ 9,593
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (in thousands)	2020
<i>Assets</i>	
Current assets	\$ 21,067
Investments (board designated)	13,862
Investments (donor endowments and other restricted)	66,376
Property and equipment, net of depreciation	10,767
Land held for program accomplishment (c)	2,097
Other assets	904
Total Assets	\$ 115,073
<i>Liabilities</i>	
Current liabilities	\$ 7,455
Planned gift liabilities, net of current portion	1,244
Total Liabilities	\$ 8,699
<i>Net Assets</i>	
With donor restrictions	\$ 55,543
Without donor restrictions	50,831
Total Net Assets	\$ 106,374
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 115,073

(a) Composed of grants, contract revenue and conveyances of permanently protected land
(b) Includes cash contributions and donated conservation easements
(c) Balance consists of land holdings awaiting conveyance to public entity for permanent habitat protection and public access

Audited financial statements for RMEF can be seen at www.rmef.org/resources/rmef-financials.

2020 RMEF Board of Directors

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“We have been so pleased and fortunate to work with the RMEF to help ensure a place nearby our home for elk to calve and nurture their young, while at the same time protecting a critical migration corridor for elk and other wildlife. We enjoy being Life Members and long-time supporters of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation!”

Kathy & Paul Logan, Mesilla, NM



Partnerships and Perseverance

AS CHAIR OF RMEF’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS, I’VE NEVER been as proud to count myself a member of this organization as I am today. Rarely, if ever, have we experienced a year where lives changed as drastically as they did in 2020. But through all the uncertainty, you—RMEF’s members, volunteers and partners—never lost sight of the future of elk and elk country.

RMEF’s mission cannot happen in a vacuum, taking many steady and trusted partnerships to persevere, especially in a year defined by isolation and aloneness. Without our members and volunteers, we wouldn’t have a mission and a means to work towards achieving it. And without these strong partnerships, we wouldn’t have been able to continue to deliver on our mission in times either fat or lean. Despite the many challenges of this past year, RMEF and its partners protected over 40,000 acres, while opening, or improving access to over 60,000 acres.

For example, without the Bureau of Land Management and the Hancock Natural Resource Group, and without support from the Benewah County Commissioners, RMEF wouldn’t have been able to help acquire a 633-acre inholding known as the Reeds Ridge parcel 30 miles southeast of Coeur d’Alene. This acquisition secured public access to the parcel as well as approximately 3,600 acres of adjacent, BLM-managed lands that previously lacked formal access.

Seeing partnerships like these in action makes it even more of an honor to serve this organization in my new capacity. I strongly believe in RMEF’s mission and look forward to continuing alongside my fellow board members in working to chase the future that we and our partners envision—a future filled with wild places with all its riches, teeming with elk and other wildlife.



Fred Lekse

Fred Lekse
2020 Chair, RMEF Board of Directors



RMEF

Ensuring the future of elk, other wildlife,
their habitat and our hunting heritage.

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