



UDWR Efforts to Aid Private Land Owners

In December 2015, the Utah Wildlife Board approved a new statewide elk plan. Drafted by a committee comprised of DWR, landowners, sportsmen, Farm Bureau, researchers, federal agencies, CWMU's, LOA's, and elected officials, many of the strategies in the plan were developed to alleviate elk damage on private lands and improve the distribution of elk. The statewide plan can be found at: https://wildlife.utah.gov/hunting/biggame/pdf/elk_plan.pdf. Some strategies in the plan include:

Incentives/Harvest

- Provide programs for landowners that will incentivize elk populations on private land such as the CWMU, Landowner Association, and Walk-In Access programs.
- Achieve a proper distribution of elk on private where wanted and public lands.
- Recommend a private-lands-only permit to allow cow elk harvest on private lands where they are not wanted, sold over the counter in units over objective or with impacts to private lands.
- Increase the number of general season cow elk a hunter may annually harvest, still allowing for only one cow elk permit to be obtained through the public draw system.
- Issue antlerless-elk-control permits on units that are over objective, in areas with limited access, units with low population objectives, or where hunter crowding is an issue.
- Investigate an incentive program for landowners not enrolled in the CWMU or LOA programs to qualify for a special drawing for bull elk permits/vouchers based on cow harvest on units exceeding population objective.
- Review and modify eligibility requirements for existing landowner incentive programs (LOA, CWMU, WIA) as needed to increase cow elk harvest and/or improve elk distribution during hunting seasons.

Communication

- Increase communication and understanding between UDWR and stakeholders regarding elk distributions, population estimates, hunt recommendations, and management decisions.
- On units with high amounts of social conflict, create elk committees during unit plan revisions and/or hold open houses to obtain public input.

Depredation

- Address all depredation problems in a timely and efficient manner to increase landowner tolerance of elk populations in accordance with current laws, rules, and policies.
- Use depredation permits and vouchers, public hunters, and/or UDWR removal to harvest resident elk on agricultural lands or where elk are creating conflicts.

Habitat Restoration

- Work with state and federal land management agencies to use livestock as a management tool to enhance crucial elk ranges.
- Work with federal land management agencies to increase forage allocation for livestock and wildlife in allotments with successful WRI projects.
- Increase forage production by annually treating a minimum of 40,000 acres of elk habitat.
- Coordinate with land management agencies, conservation organizations, private landowners, and local leaders through the regional Watershed Restoration Initiative working groups to identify and prioritize elk habitats that are in need of enhancement or restoration.

CWMU Program

- 126 CWMU's statewide.
- 2.26 million acres of which 96.5% is private property.
- Reaching 606 landowners.
- Offering 3,026 private buck and bull permits.

Landowner Associations (LOA)

- 15 LOA's statewide, rule revision 2016 intended to reach more private land owners.
 - Over 700,000 acres enrolled in the program.
 - Offering 200, unit wide, buck and bull permits to private landowners.
- 842 buck deer permits were distributed to private landowners under the following programs.
 - Landowner appreciation permits.
 - A unit wide buck deer tag on general season units to producers that have at least 100 acres of agricultural fields that support deer (35 permits in 2015).
 - Landowner permits
 - One unit wide buck deer tag for every section of private land (640 acres) – 842 permits in 2015.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources understands the value that private land contributes to the wildlife resource in this state. We are committed to work with landowners and find solutions that add value to this public resource. We appreciate all that our ranching and farming community does to maintain healthy landscapes through good agronomic practices and we understand that this stewardship benefits all of the citizens of this state. Continued partnerships, and maintaining or expanding beneficial incentive programs are key to sustaining healthy wildlife populations. The Landowner Incentive Programs provide financial compensation to landowners who have deer and elk on their properties. We are committed to work with ranchers, farmers and other private landowners to find win, win solutions as we act as trustee and guardian of this public resource.

LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION

Black Bear Utah Admin Rule R657-33-23

If a black bear is harassing, chasing, disturbing, harming, attacking or killing livestock, or has committed such an act within the past 72 hours, a livestock owner has the following options:

- The livestock owner, an immediate family member or an employee of the owner on a regular payroll (not someone hired specifically to take bear), may kill the bear. The carcass of the bear must be turned into the Division within 72 hours of harvest and shall remain the property of the state, unless the Division issues a damage permit to the person who killed it.
- The Division may authorize a local hunter to take the offending bear.
- The livestock owner may notify a USDA-Wildlife Service specialist and the specialist may take the bear.

If a bear is causing damage to cultivated crops or there is history of recurring damage to cultivated crops on at least 5 acres of private land that is enrolled in agricultural use and agricultural valuation in accordance with UCA Sections 59-2-502, 59-2-503, and 59-2-504 the Division may:

- Issue control permits to remove a bear causing damage to cultivated crops provided the damage is reported within 72 hours of the occurrence or the crop owner can demonstrate a history of chronic or recurring crop damage due to bears.
- In crop depredation cases, the livestock owner, an immediate family member or an employee of the owner on a regular payroll (not someone hired specifically to take bear), may kill the bear. The carcass of the depredating bear shall remain the property of the state, unless the Division issues a damage permit to the person who killed it.

Cougar Utah Admin Rule R657-10-21

If a cougar is harassing, chasing, disturbing, harming, attacking or killing livestock, or has committed such an act within the past 72 hours, a livestock owner has the following options:

- The livestock owner, an immediate family member or an employee of the owner on a regular payroll (not someone hired specifically to take cougar), may kill the cougar. The carcass of the depredating cougar shall remain the property of the state, unless the Division issues a damage permit to the person who killed it. The cougar carcass must be delivered to a Division office within 72 hours of harvest.
- The Division may authorize a local hunter to take the offending cougar.
- The livestock owner or the Division may notify a USDA-Wildlife Service specialist and the specialist may take the cougar.
- A livestock owner who has experienced chronic depredation in an area, either current or in the recent past (verified through claims), may obtain a control permit to remove a cougar in the area where chronic depredation has occurred. The cougar carcass must be delivered to a Division within 72 hours of harvest.

Compensation for Black Bear, Cougar, Eagle, or Wolf Damage Utah Admin Rule R657-24

- A livestock owner may receive compensation for livestock that are verified to be damaged by black bear, cougar, eagles or wolves. Damage claims are only paid on confirmed losses and only to livestock owners who have paid the required head tax (UCA Section 23-24-1(2)).

THE LIVESTOCK OWNER MUST:

- Make notification of the damage within 4 days of its occurrence.
- Claims and payments are made based on the fiscal year July 1 – June 30.
- Damage and losses must be documented on a Livestock Damage Proof of Loss form with all final signatures turned into the Division by June 1 in order to receive payment.
- Livestock Damage Proof of Loss forms for damage that occurs between May 15 and June 30 must be completely signed and received by June 30.
- All claims are held until the end of the fiscal year, if the total amount of the damage claims exceeds the appropriation of \$180,000, the damage payments will be pro-rated.
- Payments for eagle damage shall not be made until all accepted black bear, cougar and wolf claims have first been made.
- Payments for wolf damage will only be made for damage that occurs in areas of the state where wolves are not under protection of the Endangered Species Act.