

ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN
DATA ANALYSIS UNIT E-23
Elevenmile Herd

GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS
59, 511, 512, 581, 591

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Eleven Mile Elk Management Plan

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DAU E-23 (Eleven Mile Elk Herd) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GMUs: 59, 511, 512, 581 and 591

Land Ownership: 5,023 sq km (47% Private, 22% USFS, 14% Federal, 11% BLM, 6% State)

Posthunt Population: Previous Obj. 1,200 **2011 Estimate 2,800**; **Approved new Obj. 2,700 – 3,300**

Posthunt Sex Ratio (bulls:100 cows): **2011 Observed 17** **2011 Modeled 25** **Expected sex ratio range given historic performance and unlimited Over-The-Counter hunt designation 15-25**

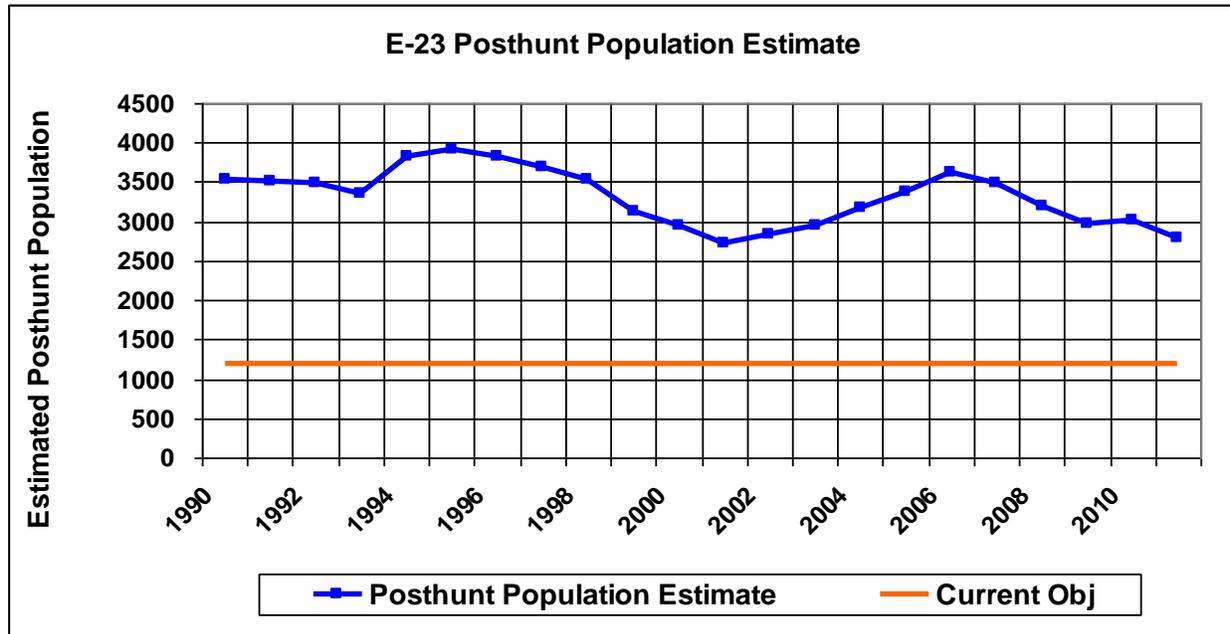


Figure 1. Posthunt population estimate for E-23 since 1990.

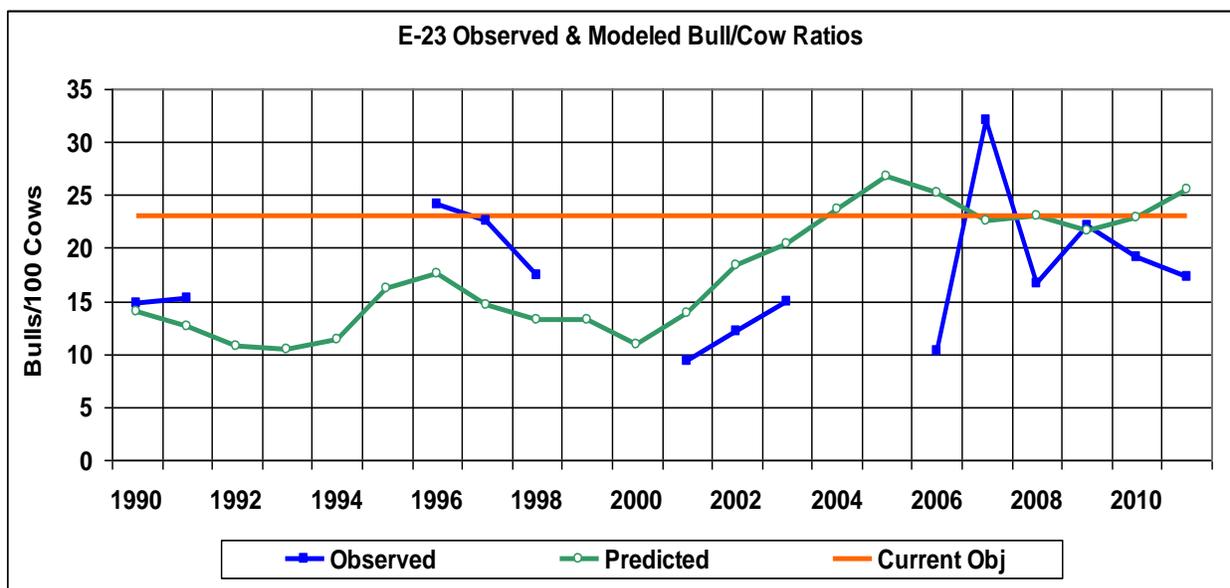


Figure 2. Observed and model-estimated bull:100 cow ratios in E-23 since 1990.

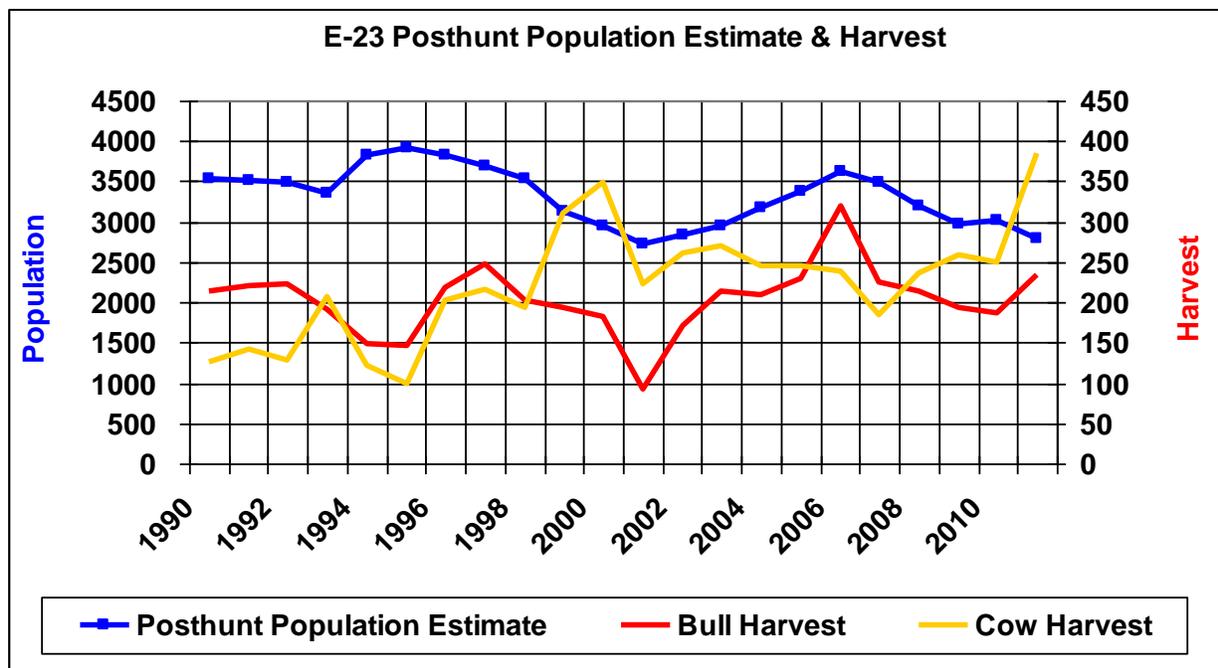


Figure 3. Harvest in E-23 since 1990.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Elk Data Analysis Unit (DAU) E-23 (Eleven Mile Herd) is located west of Colorado Springs and includes Game Management Units (GMUs) 59, 511, 512, 581, and 591. The E-23 herd is managed as an unlimited opportunity over-the-counter (OTC) DAU, with a 4-point antler restriction on bull licenses. Licenses are unlimited during the archery, 2nd rifle, and 3rd rifle seasons, but limited during muzzleloader, 1st rifle, and 4th rifle seasons to allow Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) discretion in managing hunting pressure, bull:cow ratios, and population size.

The previous population objective for the E-23 herd was 1,200 animals, with a bull:cow ratio objective of 23:100. However, recent refinements to population modeling techniques have increased the estimated number of elk existing in the E-23 herd, and thus it is prudent to adjust the population objective accordingly. Recent bull:100 cow ratios have been relatively stable at approximately 20:100 post-hunt, with a relatively stable population trend of approximately 3,000 – 3,500 elk. Current numbers of elk and sex ratios within the DAU seem to be reasonable and CPW recommends a population objective and expected post-hunt sex ratio that is consistent with the current stable population and ratio estimates.

The scoping process for this DAU Plan included an online survey for hunters and landowners and a 30 day online comment period. Hard copies of surveys were provided to those who requested them and nearly 300 hunters and landowners responded to the survey. In July 2011, the Draft Plan was presented to the Arkansas River Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) committee. The Draft Plan was also distributed to County Commissioners, BLM, USFS, Fort Carson and the USAFA for comment. Feedback received from presentations and surveys was generally in support of CPW Preferred Alternatives. Hunters cited “Hunting every year” and “Hunting for meat” as their two top reasons for hunting this DAU. The majority were “Satisfied” or “Somewhat satisfied” with hunt quality in the DAU, though many commented that there were too many private land refuge areas within the DAU and most of the elk tended to occur on private rather than public lands during the hunting seasons. Some hunters commented that the

DAU was too crowded with hunters and/or that there were too many roads and too much motorized access on the public land portions of the DAU. Most hunters wanted the same or more elk, or at least more elk available to public land hunters. Many hunters encouraged landowners to allow hunting on their properties. About half of the landowners said there were too many elk and described game damage from elk as an issue. Potential methods for altering elk distribution, such as habitat treatments or redistribution of hunting pressure, likely should be considered for this DAU, to benefit both hunters and landowners.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Most of the E-23 DAU is comprised of a mixture of private, USFS, BLM, and state ownership, while GMUs 512 and 591 consist of the United States Air Force Academy and Fort Carson military bases. Seasonal and elevational migration paths tend to be short in the E-23 DAU and many elk summer and winter in the same general areas. Much of the private property in the DAU has been subdivided in recent years and population issues primarily revolve around private property game damage issues. Private property conflicts have been largely mitigated through a combination of private land only (PLO) hunting licenses, dispersal hunts allocated to individual property owners experiencing conflicts, and involvement from the Arkansas River Habitat Partnership Program committee. However, increased subdividing and development of private lands in this DAU will continue to be of concern for this herd into the future as available habitat diminishes.

Further, elk and other ungulates are particularly sensitive to increases in motorized road and trail densities and associated disturbance from human recreational activities. The steadily increasing human recreation pressure on public lands in this area, and associated increase in road and trail construction, is concerning for all wildlife in this DAU, including elk. Elk will respond by avoiding areas with high road densities and areas experiencing high levels of human recreation, particularly during hunting seasons. This can lead to indirect loss of available habitat as elk avoid such areas, as well as changes in elk distribution and migration patterns. How land management agencies are able to address these impacts to wildlife when designing travel management plans and considering development proposals will directly influence the future of the E-23 herd and other elk herds throughout Colorado.

Along with human development and recreational impacts, overall habitat quality within the E-23 DAU has a large influence on animal distribution and herd productivity. The historic Hayman Fire burned approximately 138,000 forested acres in 2002, including portions of GMU 511. However, in general, fire suppression in this DAU has led to much of the habitat reaching late-seral growth stages that are not particularly productive for elk. GMU 59, in particular, has the potential to be outstanding elk habitat, but has become heavily overgrown with pinion-juniper, ponderosa, and spruce-fir forests that currently aren't as productive for elk as they would be if treated with fire or thinning projects. Forbes and shrub productivity in this GMU would benefit greatly from some landscape scale habitat treatments. Exurban development throughout parts of the DAU makes large scale treatment difficult, expensive, and challenging. However, big game habitat improvement projects are ongoing on public lands in parts of the DAU, particularly in GMUs 511 and 581. It is important that such projects continue. Similar projects would be beneficial in GMU 59.

E-23 Population Objectives

Current population estimates indicate the E-23 herd is stable and fluctuating between 3,000 – 3,500 animals. Raising the herd objective to within this range (3,000 +/- 10%; 2,700 – 3,300) would allow CPW to maintain the herd at its current population size. Three population alternatives were considered:

1) 2,000 +/- 10% (1,800 – 2,200); 2) 3,000 +/- 10% (2,700 – 3,300); 3) 4,000 +/- 10% (3,600 – 4,400). CPW does not currently advocate for a population increase, as fire suppression has resulted in much of the DAU reaching later-seral habitat stages that aren't necessarily highly productive for elk and limit their biological carrying capacity. Habitat improvement projects would be of great benefit in this DAU, particularly in GMU 59. Without such habitat improvement projects, a large increase to this elk herd could negatively impact available habitat, increase game damage issues on private lands, and increase competition with deer and other ungulates.

Population Objective Alternatives:

(Post-hunt 2011 estimate = 2,800)

- 1) 1,800 – 2,200 (This alternative would be a population decrease to 2,000 \pm 10%)
- 2) ***Preferred Alternative*** - 2,700 – 3,300 (Allows CPW to manage for the currently stable population of 3,000 \pm 10%)
- 3) 3,600 – 4,400 (This alternative would be a population increase to 4,000 \pm 10%). This alternative would potentially increase game damage issues and could potentially negatively impact overlapping mule deer populations)

E-23 Sex Ratio Objectives

The E-23 elk herd is managed for unlimited over-the-counter (OTC) hunt opportunity with a 4-point restriction on bulls. In OTC DAUs, there is a reduced ability to affect bull:cow ratios because the majority of harvest is dependent upon weather and hunter numbers during the 2nd and 3rd rifle seasons, and not controlled by a limited number of licenses. Thus, only the harvest in 1st and 4th rifle seasons and the muzzleloader season can be manipulated. The intent of limiting 1st rifle and the muzzleloader season is to improve hunt quality and hunter distribution, rather than to manipulate bull:cow ratios. Moreover, hunters who do not draw these limited seasons can still purchase OTC licenses in archery and the 2nd and 3rd rifle seasons and contribute to DAU harvest.

Therefore, the expected sex ratio range is more of a descriptive statistic than an objective that licenses are set annually to achieve. If the 3-year average bull:cow ratio is below the minimum threshold of the expected range, then 1st and 4th rifle season bull and either-sex licenses can be reduced to attempt to increase sex ratios. If the 3-year average bull:cow ratio exceeds the upper threshold of the expected range, then license numbers during 1st and 4th rifle seasons may be increased to provide more hunting opportunity.

Expected post-hunt sex ratio range:

(Post-hunt 2011 observed = 17; modeled = 25)

- 1) 15-25 bulls:100 cows (This range is based on modeled estimates of post-hunt bull:100 cow ratios in recent history and expected future ratios given E-23 status as an unlimited, over-the-counter DAU)

This DAU plan was approved by the Colorado Wildlife Commission on July 12, 2012

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) manages wildlife for the use, benefit and enjoyment of the people of the state in accordance with CPW’s Strategic Plan and mandates from the CPW Commission and the Colorado Legislature. Colorado’s wildlife resources require careful and increasingly intensive management to accommodate the many and varied public demands and growing impacts from people. To manage the state’s big game populations, CPW uses a “management by objective” approach (Figure 4). Big game populations are managed to achieve population objective ranges and sex ratio ranges established for data analysis units (DAUs).

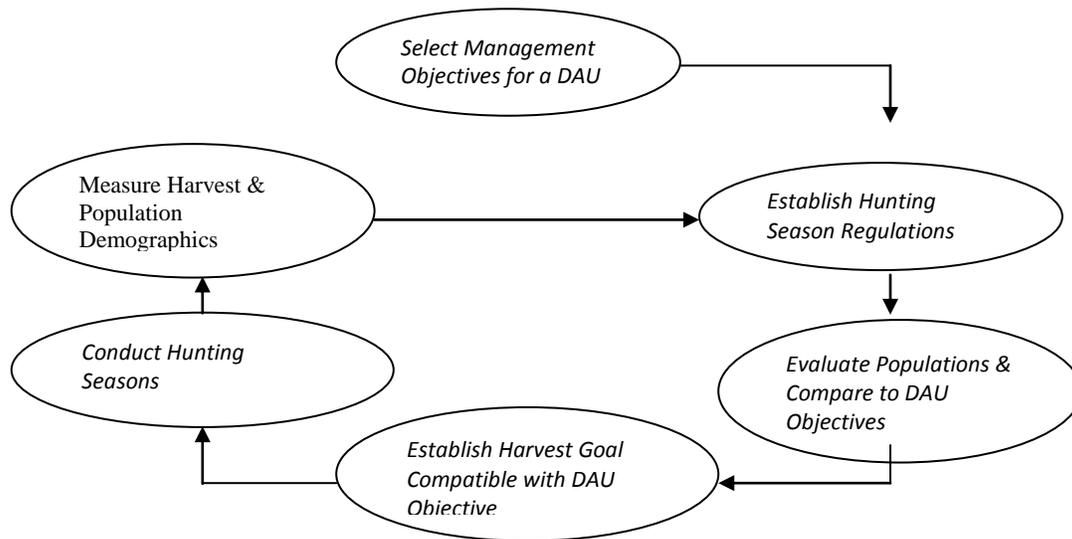


Figure 4. Management by objectives process used by CPW to manage big game populations on a DAU basis.

The purpose of a DAU plan is to provide a system or process which will integrate the plans and intentions of CPW with the concerns and ideas of land management agencies and interested publics in determining how a big game herd in a specific geographic area, DAU, should be managed. In preparing a DAU plan, agency personnel attempt to balance the biological capabilities of the herd and its habitat with the public's demand for wildlife recreational opportunities. Our various publics and constituents, including the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, sports persons, guides and outfitters, private landowners, local chambers of commerce and the general public, are involved in the determination of DAU population and herd composition objectives and related issues. Public input is solicited and collected by way of questionnaires, public meetings and comments to the CPW Commission.

A Data Analysis Unit or DAU is the geographic area that represents the year-around range of a big game herd and delineates the seasonal ranges of a specific herd while keeping interchange with adjacent herds to a minimum. A DAU includes the area where the majority of the animals in a herd are born and raised as well as where they die either as a result of hunter harvest or natural causes. Each DAU usually is composed of several game management units (GMUs), but in some cases only one GMU makes up a DAU.

The primary decisions needed for an individual DAU plan are how many animals should exist in the DAU and what is the desired sex ratio for the population of big game animals e.g., the number of males per 100 females. These numbers are referred to as the DAU population and herd composition objectives, respectively. Secondly, the strategies and techniques needed to reach the population size and herd composition objectives also need to be selected. The selection of population and sex ratio objectives drive important decisions in the big game season setting process, namely, how many animals need to be harvested to maintain or move toward the objectives, and what types of hunting seasons are required to achieve the harvest objective.

Population Dynamics and Managing For Sustained Yield

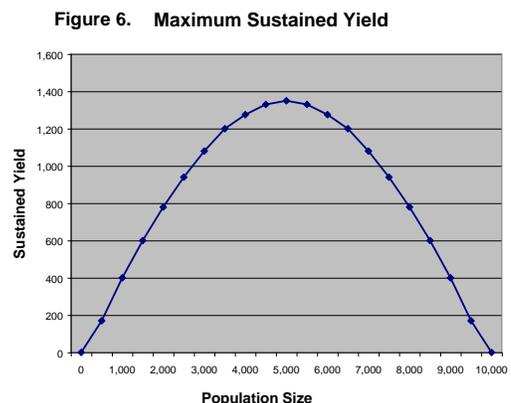
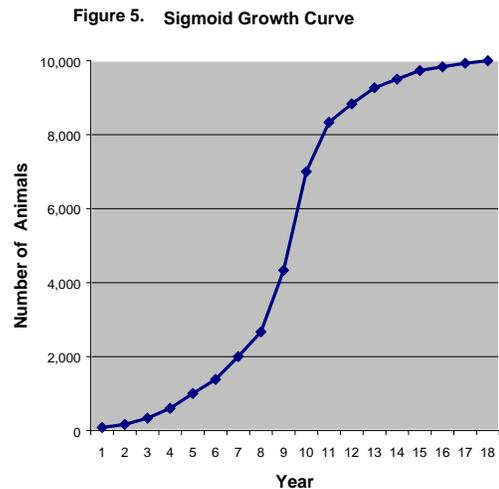
Big game populations grow in a mathematical relationship referred to as the "sigmoid growth curve" or "S" curve (Figure 5). There are three distinct phases to this cycle. The first phase occurs while the population level is still very low and is characterized by a slow growth rate. This occurs because the populations may have too few animals and the loss of even a few of them to predation or accidents can significantly affect the population.

The second phase occurs when the population number is at a moderate level. This phase is characterized by a very high reproductive and survival rate. During this phase, food, cover, water and space are not limiting factors.

Survival rates are

at maximum rates during this phase. The final or third phase occurs when the habitat becomes too crowded or habitat conditions become less favorable. During this phase the quantity and quality of food, water, cover and space become scarce due to the competition with other members of the population. This phase is characterized by a decrease in reproduction and survival. If the population continues to grow, it will eventually reach a point called "K" or the maximum carrying capacity. The level is not static but varies from year to year based upon such factors as the severity of the winter. At this point, the population reaches "equilibrium" with the habitat. The number of births each year approximately equals the number of deaths, therefore, to maintain the population at this level would not allow for any "hunnable surplus." The animals in the population would be in relatively poor condition and when a severe winter or other catastrophic event occurs, a large die-off is inevitable.

In an attempt to manage for healthy big game herds, managers should attempt to hold the populations around the middle of the "sigmoid growth curve or even slightly above this point." Biologists call this "MSY" or "maximum sustained yield." At this level, which is approximately half the maximum population sizes or "K", in this example it would be 5,000 animals, the population should provide the maximum production, survival and available surplus animals for hunter harvest. Also, at this level, range condition should be good to excellent and range trend should be stable. Game damage problems should not be significant and economic return to the local and state



economy should be at the maximum. This population level should produce a "win - win" situation to balance sportsmen and private landowner concerns.

A graph of a hypothetical elk population showing sustained yield (harvest) potential vs. population size is shown (Figure 6). Notice that as the population increases from 0 to 5,000 elk, the harvest also increases. However, when the population reaches 5,000 or "MSY," competition for food, water and cover begin to limit population growth and the harvest potential decreases. Finally, when the population reaches the maximum carrying capacity or "K" (10,000 elk in this example), resources will be scarce the harvest potential will be reduced to zero. Also notice that it is possible to harvest exactly the same number of elk each year with 3,000 or 7,000 elk in the population. This phenomenon occurs since the population of 3,000 elk has a much higher survival and reproductive rate compared to the population of 7,000 elk. However, at the 3,000 elk level, there will be less game damage, low resource utilization, and fewer watchable wildlife opportunities.

Description of Data Analysis Unit E-23

Location

The Eleven Mile elk DAU encompasses an area of 5,023 km² in central Colorado, directly west of Colorado Springs (Figure 7). It includes game management units (GMUs) 59, 511, 512, 581, and 591. The DAU is bounded on the north by US 24 and the Douglas County line, on the east by I-25, on the south by US 50, and on the west by Colo 9 and Park CR 59. The DAU includes parts of El Paso, Fremont, Park, Pueblo, and Teller Counties.

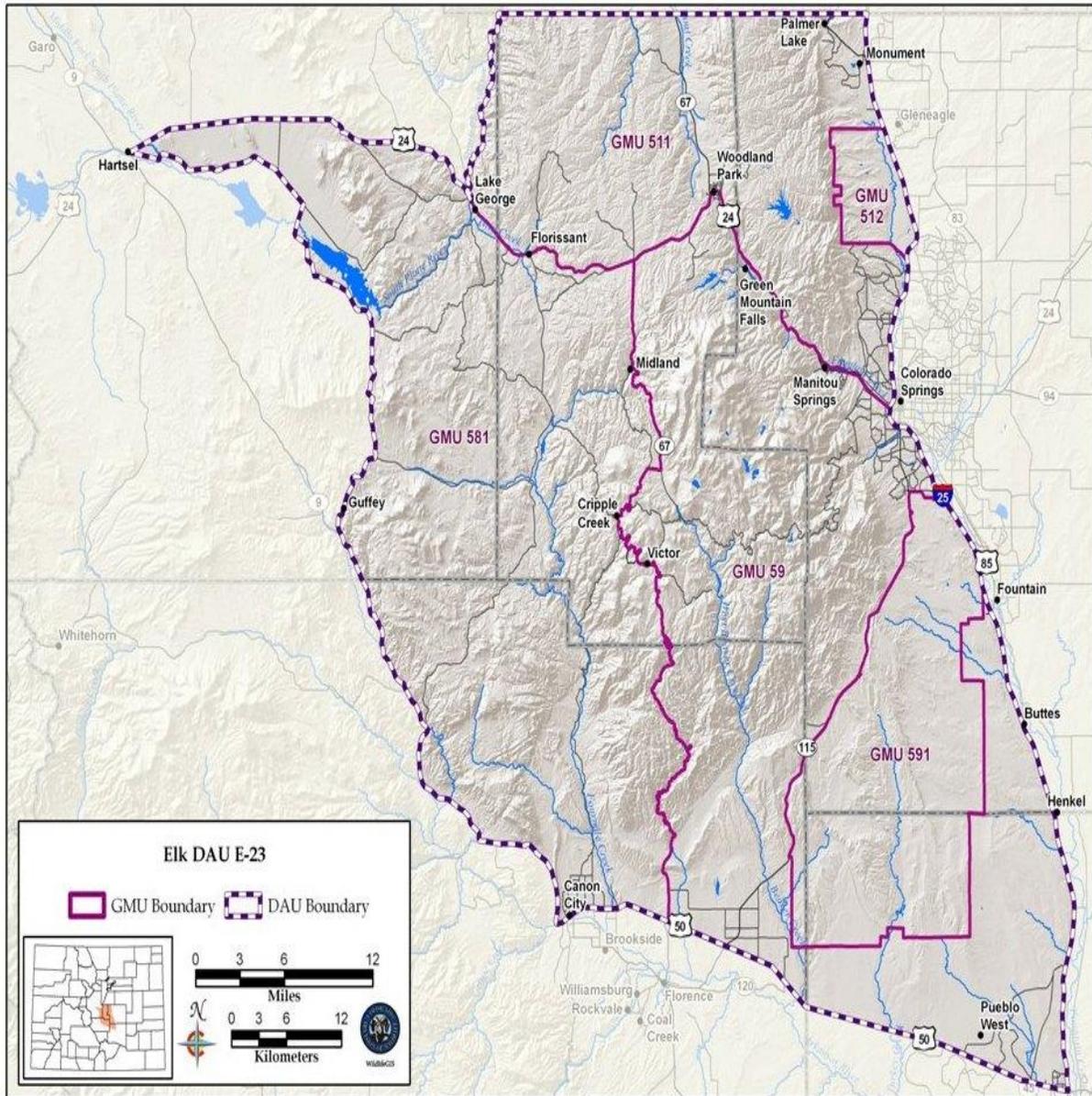


Figure 7. Data Analysis Unit E-23 (Eleven Mile elk herd).

Physiography and Vegetation

The Eleven Mile elk DAU comprises primarily ponderosa, pinon-juniper, and mountain shrub communities west of I-25, west of Colorado Springs. Some aspen and spruce/fir communities occur at the higher elevations in the DAU, with some alpine terrain up in the vicinity of Pikes Peak. Elevations range from 14,110 feet above sea level at the summit of Pikes Peak down to 4,850 feet above sea level at the intersections of I-25 and US 50 near Pueblo. Watersheds in the DAU generally run north to south or west to east and flow into the South Platte and Arkansas River drainages.

Climate

As with all of mountainous Colorado, the climate varies significantly with season, elevation, and aspect. Elevations below 7,500 feet are usually hot and dry in the summer and generally remain snowfree during most of the winter. Elevations between 7,500 feet and 8,500 feet have slightly cooler and wetter summers with persistent snow cover during the winter. South facing slopes normally remain open or have minimal snow cover throughout the winter. Above 8,500 feet elevation is much cooler and wetter during the summers and snow-covered all winter except for windswept ridges above timberline. Annual precipitation varies from 12 inches per year in Pueblo to over 25 inches per year in the higher elevations near Woodland Park. Snowfall accounts for the majority of the precipitation in the DAU with thunderstorms adding significant localized volumes in the summer.

Average daily high temperatures in Woodland Park range from 32 degrees in winter to 70 degrees in summer. Average lows range from 5 degrees in winter to 40 degrees in summer. In Pueblo, daily high temperatures range from 45 degrees in winter to 91 degrees in summer while daily low temperatures average 14 degrees in the winter and 61 degrees in the summer.

Land Status

The Eleven Mile elk DAU encompasses 5,023 km² (Figure 8 and Table 1). Private lands total 2,369 km² which is 47% of the DAU. Some of the higher elevation portions of the DAU are included in the Pike National Forest, managed by the Pikes Peak Ranger District in Colorado Springs. National Forest lands total 1,112 km² and comprise 22% of the DAU. Some of the lower elevation public lands are managed by the Royal Gorge field office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Canon City. BLM lands total 565 km², or 11% of the DAU. Occasional parcels of State Trust Lands, State Parks, and State Wildlife Areas are dispersed throughout the DAU, totaling 278 km² or 5% of the DAU. Game management units 512 and 591, totaling 629 km² or 13% of the DAU, are managed by the Department of Defense.

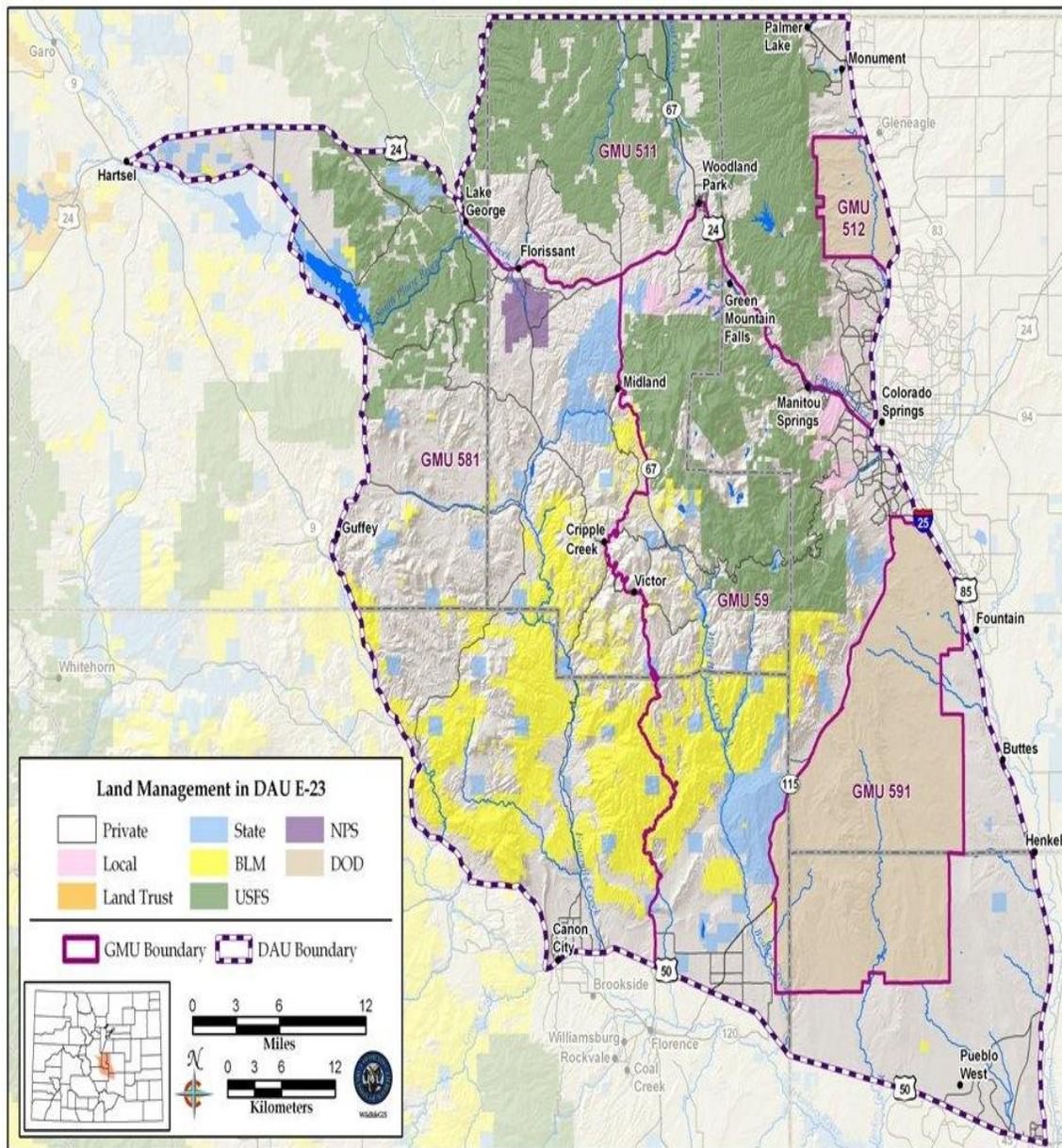


Figure 8. Land Ownership within Data Analysis Unit E-23 (Eleven Mile elk herd).

Table 1. Land ownership within E-23 (square kilometers, percent of GMU).

GMU	Private	% GMU	USFS	% GMU	BLM	% GMU	DOD	% GMU	Colo	% GMU
59	1,017	61%	330	20%	169	10%	0	0%	120	7%
511	350	37%	576	61%	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
512	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	71	100%	0	0%
581	1,001	56%	206	12%	395	22%	0	0%	156	9%
591	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	557	100%	0	0%
Total DAU	2,369	(%DAU)	1,112	(%DAU)	565	(%DAU)	629	(%DAU)	278	(%DAU)
		47%		22%		11%		13%		5%

Land Use

Big game hunters can hunt elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, black bear, and mountain lions within the area encompassed by the E-23 DAU. Waterfowl, small game, and upland hunting opportunities also occur in this area. Good fishing occurs throughout the DAU, provided by abundant streams and reservoirs. Hunters and anglers make substantial contributions to local economies. Hunting contributes over 28 million dollars annually to the local economy with over 8 million dollars from out of state hunters (BBC Research and Consulting 2008)¹. People who take trips to observe and photograph wildlife also buy gas, groceries and other supplies, substantially impacting both destination areas and retailers along travel routes.

The primary land use change in this DAU in recent history has been the subdivision and conversion of historic ranching lands into residential developments. Due to the fact this DAU is nearly 50% private land, and given its proximity to the urban centers of Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and Canon City, development of private lands and associated loss of wildlife habitat and hunting access within this DAU is a continuing challenge to wildlife managers and public lands agencies. Additionally, GMUs 512 and 591 are managed by the Department of Defense for military purposes, providing additional challenges to wildlife managers. Public lands in the DAU experience heavy recreational use of both USFS and BLM lands throughout the year, particularly on and around the Pikes Peak area. Further, much of the public lands have seasonal grazing allotments, primarily for cattle, while private lands are used for hay production and winter pasture. Though some logging occurred in the DAU historically, it has declined to minimal amounts. Mining, primarily near the town of Cripple Creek, has been a significant historic use of public and private lands within this DAU but has also decreased substantially in recent history.

Elk Distribution

Elk are distributed throughout the DAU, though are most abundant in GMUs 59, 511, and 581. Some seasonal migrations occur within the DAU, with many elk using the higher elevation areas near Pikes Peak during the summer and fall months, then dropping to lower elevations during winter and spring (Figure 9 & Table 2). During summer, elk often utilize the aspen and alpine habitats at higher elevations where forage is abundant and temperatures are cooler. During winter, elk can often be found on the south facing slopes within the Phantom Canyon and Beaver Creek drainages in GMU 59 or feeding near the towns of Florissant and Woodland Park. There is also a resident herd of several hundred elk that can often be located in the general vicinity of Cap Rock Ridge in GMU 581. Smaller herds often reside on the Air Force Academy (GMU 512) and Fort Carson (GMU 591).

¹ BBC Research and Consulting. September 2008. The Economic Impacts of Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife Watching in Colorado. Final Report. 22pp.

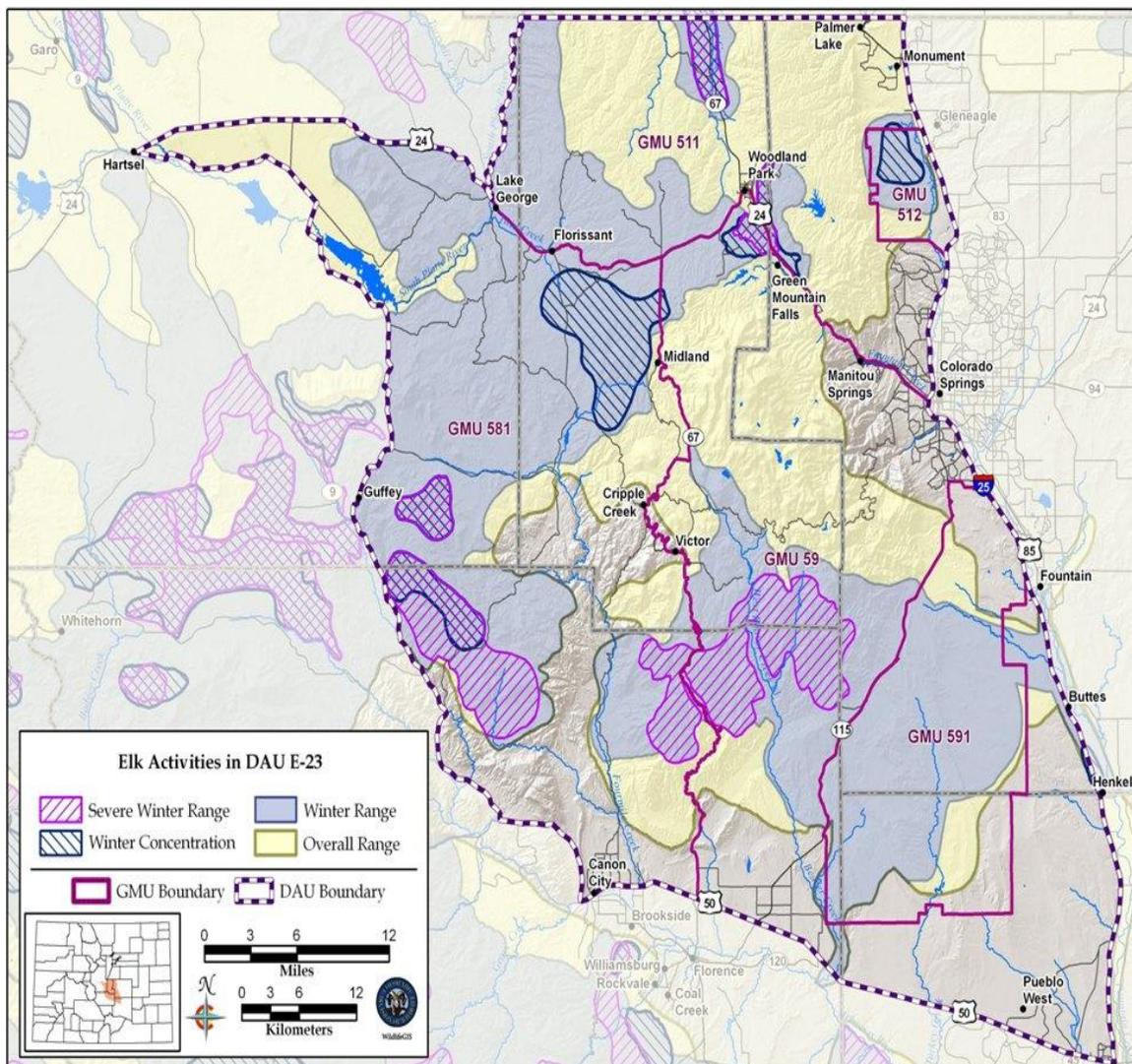


Figure 9. DAU E-23 winter range and overall range.

Table 2. DAU E-23 elk range by GMU.

GMU	Overall Range		Winter Range		Severe Winter Range		Winter Concentration		Total km ²
	km ²	% GMU	km ²	% GMU	km ²	% GMU	km ²	% GMU	
59	999	60%	467	28%	139	8%	16	1%	1,674
511	860	92%	309	33%	29	3%	33	3%	938
512	59	82%	43	60%		0%	16	23%	71
581	1,411	79%	1,030	58%	169	9%	150	8%	1,782
591	424	76%	352	63%		0%		0%	558
Total	3,752	75%	2,201	44%	337	7%	215	4%	5,023

Herd Management History

Management of the E-23 elk herd is conducted in similar fashion as other herds in Colorado, with hunting season regulations and license numbers allocated based on the current estimated post-hunt population and the long term population and sex ratio objectives established by the CPW Commission in this DAU Plan. Those population objectives are considered to be the most reasonable goal for this herd based on the quantity and quality of available habitat for elk, the recreational, economic and political desires of the people of the state, the level of conflict between the elk herd and agricultural producers in the area, and the comments of land management agencies.

The post-season population size (Figure 10) is estimated each winter from a computer model utilizing annual harvest data gathered by CPW, age and sex ratio samples obtained through winter aerial surveys conducted by CPW personnel, estimated survival rates of young and adult animals, and population trend estimates based on all of the above data. Estimating numbers of free ranging elk over a geographic area is a difficult and approximate science. Thus the population objectives considered in this plan are given as ranges to reflect the fact that each year’s population estimate may vary according to changes in hunting and survey conditions, survival rates, and annual weather conditions.

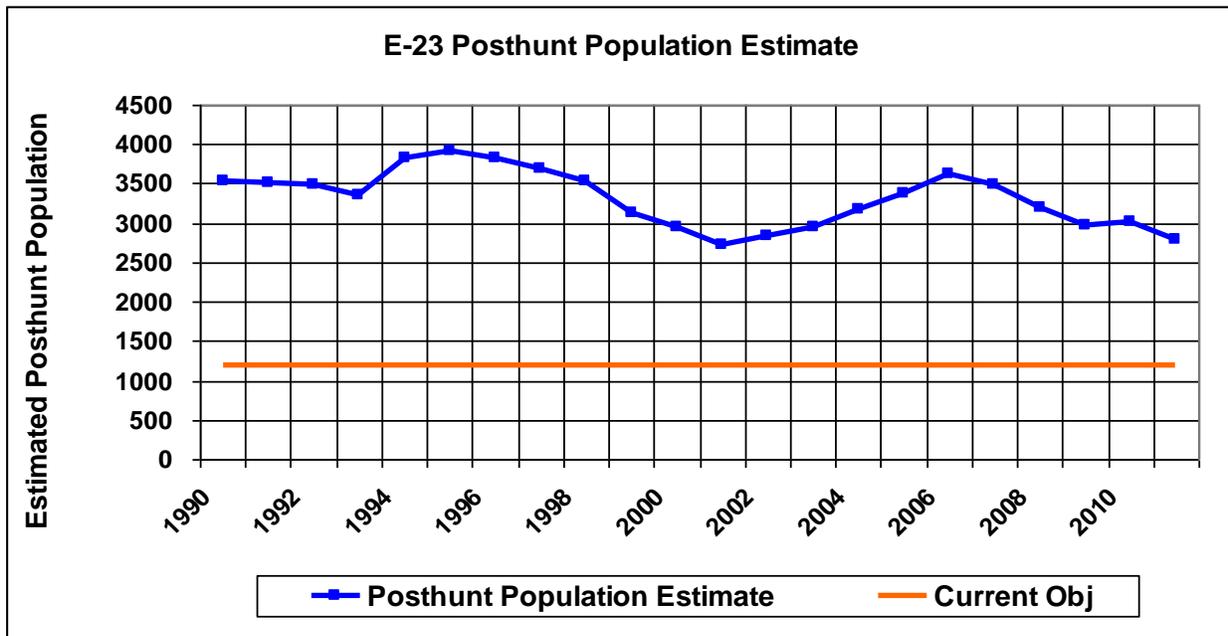


Figure 10. Posthunt population estimate for E-23.

The E-23 elk herd is managed for over-the-counter (OTC) hunting opportunity, meaning hunting licenses are unlimited during the archery and 2nd and 3rd rifle seasons. This type of management allows elk hunters to pursue bull elk within the DAU every year without having to acquire preference points or apply through the limited draw process. Antlerless (cow) licenses, as well as muzzleloader, 1st and 4th rifle season, and late-season licenses are available through the limited drawing process and are used by CPW as a tool to manage herd size and bull:cow ratios, as well as to provide a less-crowded hunting experience during those seasons. Antlerless private-land-only (PLO) and dispersal licenses are allocated to address wildlife conflicts on private lands. Antlerless late-season hunts have been implemented to further manage the size of the E-23 herd. A limited amount of elk and deer hunting occurs on the Air Force Academy (AFA: GMU 512) and Fort Carson (GMU 591). Currently, elk hunting occurs Fort Carson with an OTC bull/either sex license for archery, 2nd and 3rd rifle seasons depending on access granted by the Army.

Cow elk hunting on Fort Carson is limited and is open from September 1 – January 31 to accommodate hunting around troop training. Cow elk hunting on the AFA is used to control the population at a relatively low number to reduce damage and vehicle collisions. Each year, AFA natural resources personnel are given 30 vouchers that are given to hunters as harvested is needed and a hunter is successful in a random draw that is administered by AFA natural resources personnel. Further detail on elk hunting on both Fort Carson and the AFA can be found in *Special-Use Rules* in the CPW Big Game Brochure.

Post Season Herd Composition

Weather and precipitation patterns, habitat availability and condition, predation, and hunting all influence herd health and composition. Herd composition data is acquired through aerial surveys conducted by CPW personnel each winter. Winter calf:cow ratios have averaged 42:100 over the last 5 years and are relatively stable (Figure 11). Observed winter calf:cow ratios in this DAU indicate a healthy herd experiencing good recruitment, and one in which herd size is currently limited more by antlerless harvest than by habitat factors or predation. However, a slightly decreasing trend in calf recruitment could be indicative of a DAU in which much of the habitat is in later-seral stages and perhaps not as productive for elk habitat as in the past. Observed winter bull:cow ratios have averaged 20 bulls:100 cows over the last 5 years (Figure 12). Bull:cow ratios in this DAU have trended upwards somewhat during the last 20 years, when they were often in the teens, which may be at least partially a factor of an increase in refuge areas for elk as private lands become less available to hunters.

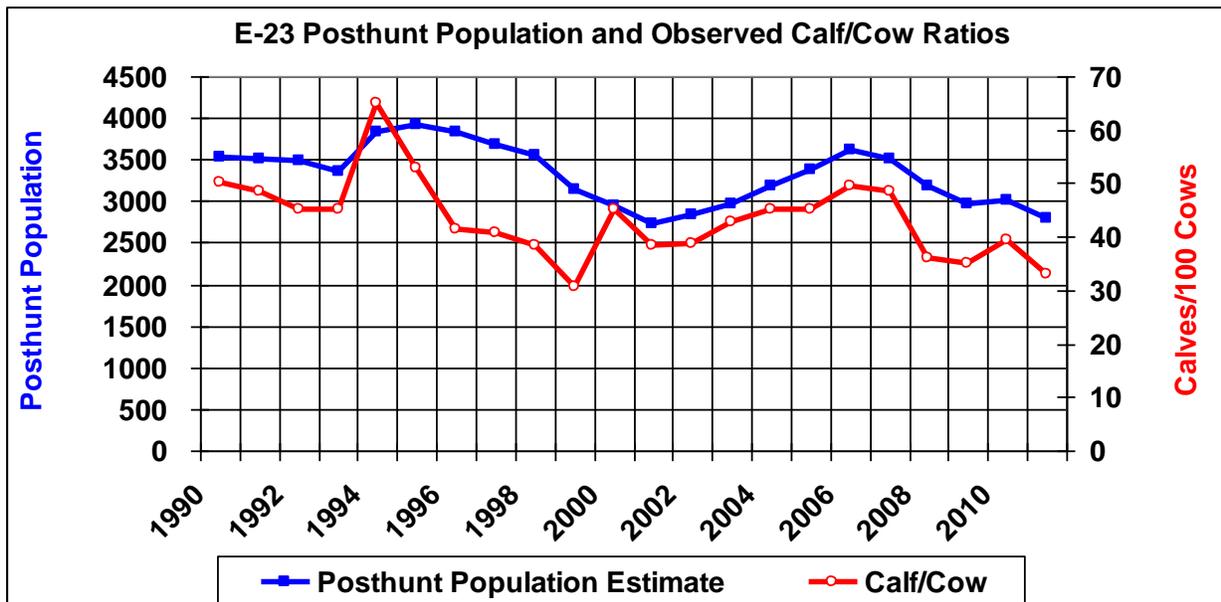


Figure 11. Observed calf:100 cow ratios in E-23 since 1990.

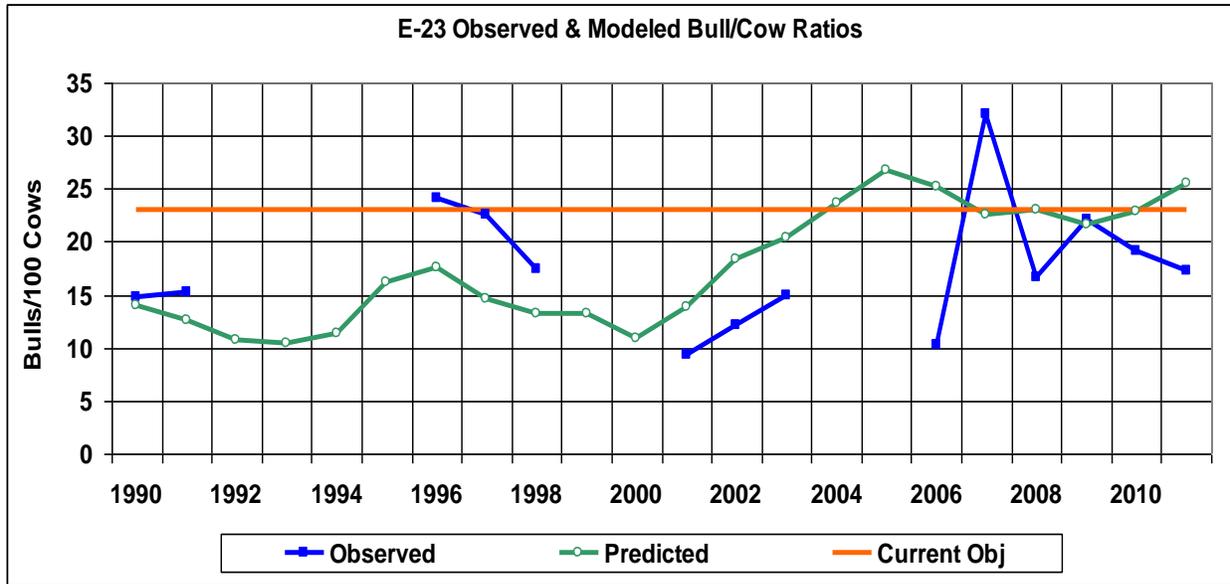


Figure 12. Observed and modeled bull:100 cow ratios in E-23 since 1990.

Harvest

Harvest in E-23, as with most DUAs, has varied through the years, primarily due to license allocation and weather conditions during the hunting seasons. Bull harvest has fluctuated between 100 – 300 animals annually since 1990, averaging 200 animals and maintaining a stable trend. Antlerless harvest has fluctuated between 100 – 350 animals annually during the same time period, averaging 190 animals (Figure 13). Antlerless licenses and harvest were increased somewhat during the last ten years, resulting in a slight herd decline from approximately 3,500 to 3,000 animals.

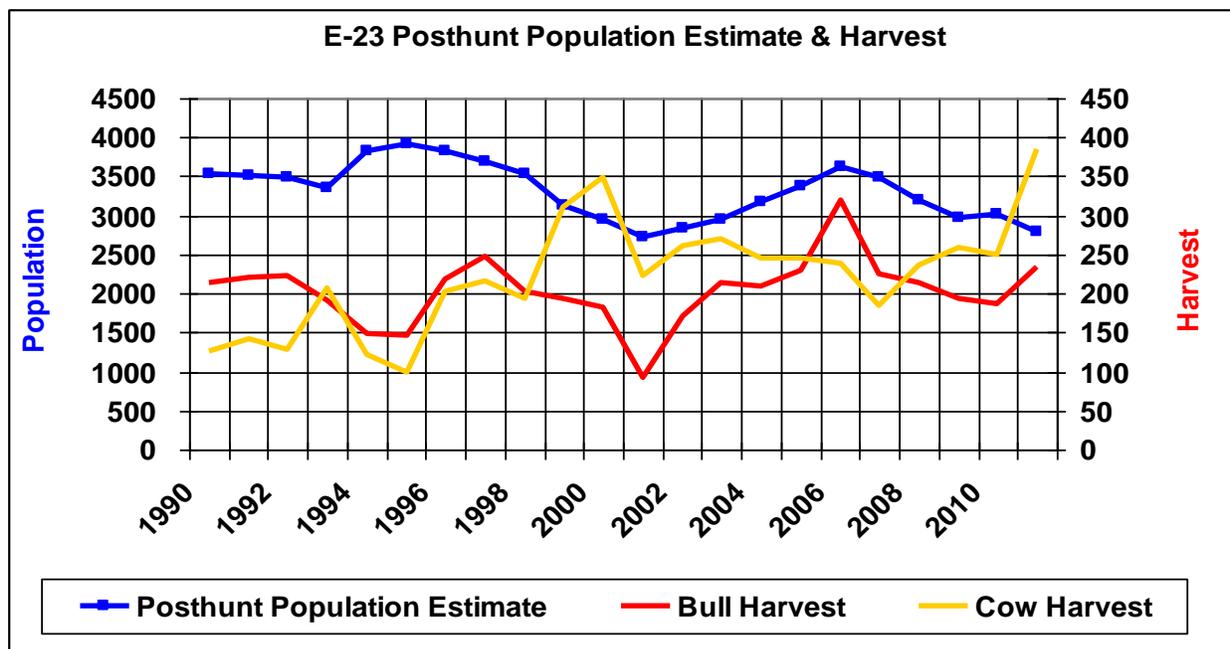


Figure 13. Harvest in E-23 since 1990.

Current Herd Management

The E-23 elk herd has always been managed for unlimited hunting opportunity with over-the-counter (OTC) license allocation and a 4-point restriction on bulls. Historic post-hunt objectives included a post-hunt population size of 1,200 animals with a post-hunt bull:cow ratio of 23:100. However, those objectives were based on an older, now outdated, population model and until now no DAU Plan has ever been written. Current population modeling techniques indicate the E-23 herd holding relatively steady between 3,000 – 3,500 animals, with modeled post hunt bull:cow ratios ranging from 20-25 bulls per 100 cows. Thus, CPW recommends updating the E-23 population and expected post-hunt modeled sex ratios to parallel current herd estimates and bull:cow ratios, while maintaining current hunting opportunity.

The E-23 DAU is managed to balance not only the needs of elk in this area, but also mule and whitetail deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, and local livestock operations. Throughout Colorado, Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) committees are formed with representatives from CPW, USFS, BLM, sportsmen, and local landowners to mitigate conflicts between wildlife, livestock, and private lands. The Arkansas River HPP committee has been instrumental in addressing localized conflicts throughout the E-23 DAU.

Current Management Issues and Concerns

Ecological carrying capacity often is portrayed as static. In reality it is a moving range that varies annually and trends over time. Some of the factors influencing elk population dynamics include habitat quantity and quality, agricultural practices, competition with livestock and other ungulates, climate, precipitation patterns, predation, disease, and female harvest. A combination of variables is influencing this herd but overall habitat quality and female harvest probably are the limiting factors. Wildlife managers are constantly trying to balance ecological carrying capacity with social carrying capacity (the number of animals desired by hunters, the general public, landowners, and land-management agencies).

Extensive exurban development has occurred in the DAU. Increased subdividing and development of private lands in this DAU will continue to be of concern for this herd into the future as available habitat diminishes. Further, elk and other ungulates are particularly sensitive to increases in motorized road and trail densities and associated disturbance from human recreational activities. The steadily increasing human recreation pressure on public lands in this area, and associated increase in road and trail construction, is concerning for all wildlife in this DAU, including elk. Elk will respond by avoiding areas with high road densities and areas experiencing high levels of human recreation, particularly during hunting seasons. This can lead to indirect loss of available habitat as elk avoid such areas, as well as changes in elk distribution and migration patterns. It is important that land management agencies account for these impacts to wildlife when designing travel management plans and considering development proposals.

The historic Hayman Fire burned approximately 138,000 forested acres in 2002, including portions of GMU 511. However, in general, fire suppression in this DAU has led to much of the habitat reaching late-seral growth stages that are not particularly productive for elk. GMU 59, in particular, has the potential to be outstanding elk habitat, but has become heavily overgrown with piñon-juniper, ponderosa, and spruce-fir forests that currently aren't as productive for elk as they would be if treated with fire or thinning projects. Forbes and shrub productivity in this GMU would benefit greatly from some landscape scale habitat treatments. Exurban development throughout parts of the DAU makes large scale treatment difficult, expensive, and challenging. However, big game habitat improvement projects are ongoing on public lands in parts of the DAU, particularly in GMUs 511 and 581. It is important that such projects continue. Similar projects would be beneficial in GMU 59.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD), a naturally-occurring prion disease of North American cervids (species of the “deer” family), is an important wildlife health issue. CWD has been endemic in free-ranging cervid populations in north central Colorado and Southeastern Wyoming since at least the early 1980s, and has been detected in a number of other states and provinces. Surveys continue to show that CWD is relatively well-established and widely distributed in portions of northern and central Colorado; However, CWD has not yet been detected in the E-23 herd. CDOW will continue annual monitoring for CWD and management of the E-23 herd may need to be adjusted if CWD is detected in the future.

Public Involvement

A draft of the DAU Plan was distributed to USFS, BLM, USAFA, Fort Carson, and County Commissioners for review and comment. In addition, the draft Plan was posted on the CPW website for a 30-day public comment period and was presented to the Arkansas River Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) Committee (see Appendix A for comment letter).

In addition to the solicitation for public and agency comment described above, following the 2011 hunting seasons CPW mailed postcards to a randomly selected subset of sportsmen who held elk licenses valid in the E23 DAU in 2011, as well as landowners within the DAU (n=1,885 sportsmen and landowners, Appendices B and C). The postcard provided hunters and landowners with a brief description of the DAU planning process and directed them to a website where they could fill out a survey. Sportsmen and landowners were also instructed to call the Salida Service Center if they wished to receive a paper copy of the survey. A total of 262 (14%) sportsmen and landowners completed the survey.

In the survey hunters were asked to provide background information, hunting and harvest information and their opinions regarding changes to population and sex ratio objectives, while landowners were asked about game damage issues occurring on their property. Hunters listed *Hunting Every Year* and *Hunting For Meat* as their top reasons for hunting the E23 DAU (both were rated by 91% of hunters as either Very Important or Somewhat Important, Figure 14). Hunter satisfaction was fair in the DAU with 51% of respondents rating their satisfaction with hunting in the DAU as Very Satisfied or Somewhat Satisfied, while 34% of respondents were Very Unsatisfied or Somewhat Unsatisfied with their hunting experience in the DAU (Figure 15). Half of the landowners surveyed reported experiencing game damage conflicts on their property (Figure 16). Overall, 82% of respondents favored an increase in the elk herd population objective, while 13% favored the current population objective, and only 3% favored a decrease in the population objective (Figure 17). It is important to remember that number of hunters surveyed (n=250) greatly exceeded the number of landowners surveyed (n=12) and, thus, responses mostly represent the opinions of hunters.

In the written comments, a number of hunters expressed frustration with elk using private lands and the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument as refuge areas from hunters and inability for hunters to access those properties. Many sportsmen suggested that CPW work with private landowners to secure access for hunters, and for private landowners to allow access for hunters if they are experiencing game damage conflicts. Many survey respondents also expressed frustration with the high level of roads and motorized recreation in the DAU and associated negative impacts on elk distribution and hunt quality. The survey text, summary data for all questions and written comments are available in Appendices B and C.

E-23 Elk Management Plan – July 2012

	Very important	Somewhat important	Neither important, nor unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant	I am not sure
Hunting every year	71.3% (149)	19.6% (41)	4.8% (10)	2.4% (5)	1.9% (4)	0.0% (0)
Hunting in an area with few hunters	43.7% (90)	42.2% (87)	7.8% (16)	2.9% (6)	1.9% (4)	1.5% (3)
Getting away from people and motorized roads/trails	40.1% (81)	31.7% (64)	17.3% (35)	6.9% (14)	2.5% (5)	1.5% (3)
High harvest success rates	48.0% (98)	36.3% (74)	12.3% (25)	2.0% (4)	1.0% (2)	0.5% (1)
Potential to harvest mature animals	40.2% (80)	37.2% (74)	14.1% (28)	4.5% (9)	2.5% (5)	1.5% (3)
Hunting for meat	69.2% (146)	21.8% (46)	2.8% (6)	2.8% (6)	1.9% (4)	1.4% (3)
Other	9.3% (5)	5.6% (3)	50.0% (27)	1.9% (1)	11.1% (6)	22.2% (12)

Figure 14. Reasons for hunting in the E-23 DAU, as rated by hunters surveyed following the 2011 hunting seasons.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very satisfied	13.6%	31
Somewhat satisfied	37.3%	85
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	12.3%	28
Somewhat unsatisfied	25.0%	57
Very unsatisfied	9.2%	21
I am not sure.	2.6%	6

Figure 15. Hunter satisfaction in the E-23 DAU, as described by hunters surveyed following the 2011 hunting seasons.

		Response Percent	Response Count
	Yes	40.0%	4
	No	40.0%	4
	I am not sure.	20.0%	2
1	Eat the grass that is intended for the livestock. tear down and damage the fences that help contain the livestock, Kill and destroy the trees by barking the trees during the winter.		
2	overgrazing on summer pasture during winter rest period for pasture. This has lead to stressed summer pasture for summer grazing.		
3	Early crested wheat grass, greens about April 15th and 2 or 3 hundred elk will graze it down before my yearlings come in. Also extensive fence damage.		

Figure 16. Percentage of surveyed landowners within the E-23 DAU who reported experiencing game damage conflicts on their properties, and their comments.

		Response Percent	Response Count
	Increase greatly	40.3%	98
	Increase somewhat	42.0%	102
	Stay the same	13.2%	32
	Decrease somewhat	3.3%	8
	Decrease greatly	0.0%	0
	I am not sure.	1.2%	3

Figure 17. Percentage of surveyed hunters and landowners favoring an increase or a decrease to the E-23 elk population.

E-23 Population Objective

Current population estimates indicate the E-23 herd is stable and fluctuating between 3,000 – 3,500 animals. Raising the herd objective to within this range (3,000 +/- 10%; 2,700 – 3,300) would allow CPW to maintain the herd at its current population size. Three population alternatives were considered: 1) 2,000 +/- 10% (1,800 – 2,200); 2) 3,000 +/- 10% (2,700 – 3,300); 3) 4,000 +/- 10% (3,600 – 4,400). CPW does not currently advocate for a population increase, as fire suppression has resulted in much of the DAU reaching later-seral habitat stages that aren't necessarily highly productive for elk and limit their biological carrying capacity. Habitat improvement projects would be of great benefit in this DAU, particularly in GMU 59. Without such habitat improvement projects, a large increase to this elk herd could negatively impact available habitat, increase game damage issues on private lands, and increase competition with deer and other ungulates.

Population Objective Alternatives:

(Post-hunt 2011 estimate = 2,800)

- 4) 1,800 – 2,200 (This alternative would be a population decrease to 2,000 \pm 10%)
- 5) ***Preferred Alternative*** - 2,700 – 3,300 (Allows CPW to manage for the currently stable population of 3,000 \pm 10%)
- 6) 3,600 – 4,400 (This alternative would be a population increase to 4,000 \pm 10%). This alternative would potentially increase game damage issues and could potentially negatively impact overlapping mule deer populations)

E-23 Sex Ratio Objective

The E-23 elk herd is managed for unlimited over-the-counter (OTC) hunt opportunity with a 4-point restriction on bulls. In OTC DAUs, there is a reduced ability to affect bull:cow ratios because the majority of harvest is dependent upon weather and hunter numbers during the 2nd and 3rd rifle seasons, and not controlled by a limited number of licenses. Thus, only the harvest in 1st and 4th rifle seasons and the muzzleloader season can be manipulated. The intent of limiting 1st rifle and the muzzleloader season is to improve hunt quality and hunter distribution, rather than to manipulate bull:cow ratios. Moreover, hunters who do not draw these limited seasons can still purchase OTC licenses in archery and the 2nd and 3rd rifle seasons and contribute to DAU harvest.

Therefore, the expected sex ratio range is more of a descriptive statistic than an objective that licenses are set annually to achieve. If the 3-year average bull:cow ratio is below the minimum threshold of the expected range, then 1st and 4th rifle season bull and either-sex licenses can be reduced to attempt to increase sex ratios. If the 3-year average bull:cow ratio exceeds the upper threshold of the expected range, then license numbers during 1st and 4th rifle seasons may be increased to provide more hunting opportunity.

Expected post-hunt sex ratio range:

(Post-hunt 2011 observed = 17; modeled = 25)

- 2) 15-25 bulls:100 cows (This range is based on modeled estimates of post-hunt bull:100 cow ratios in recent history and expected future ratios given E-23 status as an unlimited, over-the-counter DAU)

Appendix A: Arkansas River Habitat Partnership Program Comment Letter

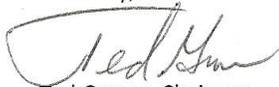
April 24, 2012

Mr. Jamin Grigg
Area 13 Terrestrial Biologist
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Salida Service Center
7405 US Hwy 50
Salida, CO 81201

Mr. Grigg,

Thank you for allowing the Arkansas River Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) Committee to have comment on the E-23 (Elevenmile elk herd) Data Analysis Unit (DAU) Plan. After review of the draft DAU Plan and discussion with Area 13 staff, the Arkansas River HPP Committee would endorse CPW's suggested changes to the herd objectives. These changes would more accurately represent the current number of animals within the DAU and allow for more reasonable management of this herd. Game damage occurring within the DAU is relatively minor and centered around a limited number of agricultural ranches. Our committee continues to work on projects and treatments which attempts to reduce those forage-big game conflicts.

Sincerely,



Ted Grover, Chairman
Arkansas River Habitat Partnership Program

Appendix B: Sportsmen and Landowner Public Survey

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT



ELK MANAGEMENT

Eleven Mile Elk Herd

Data Analysis Unit E-23

(Game Management Units 59, 511, 512, 581, and 591)

The Colorado Division of Wildlife is interested in your opinions about elk management in the Eleven Mile area. This questionnaire is your opportunity to provide input on the management of elk in Game Management Units 59, 511, 512, 581, and 591.

*Colorado Division of Wildlife
Salida Service Center
7405 US Hwy 50
Salida, CO 81201*

October 2011

Dear Colorado Hunter:

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) is interested in your opinions about elk in the Eleven Mile area, including Game Management Units (GMU) 59, 511, 512, 581 and 591. Wildlife managers have begun the process of updating the elk management plan for this area, which will affect future harvest strategies and license setting.

In Colorado, big game populations are managed for a specific geographic area, which we call a Data Analysis Unit (DAU). A DAU generally includes several GMU's. In this case, the Eleven Mile elk DAU includes GMU's 59, 511, 512, 581, and 591. The purpose of the DAU plan is to determine how many elk the DAU should support and guide future management of this elk herd.

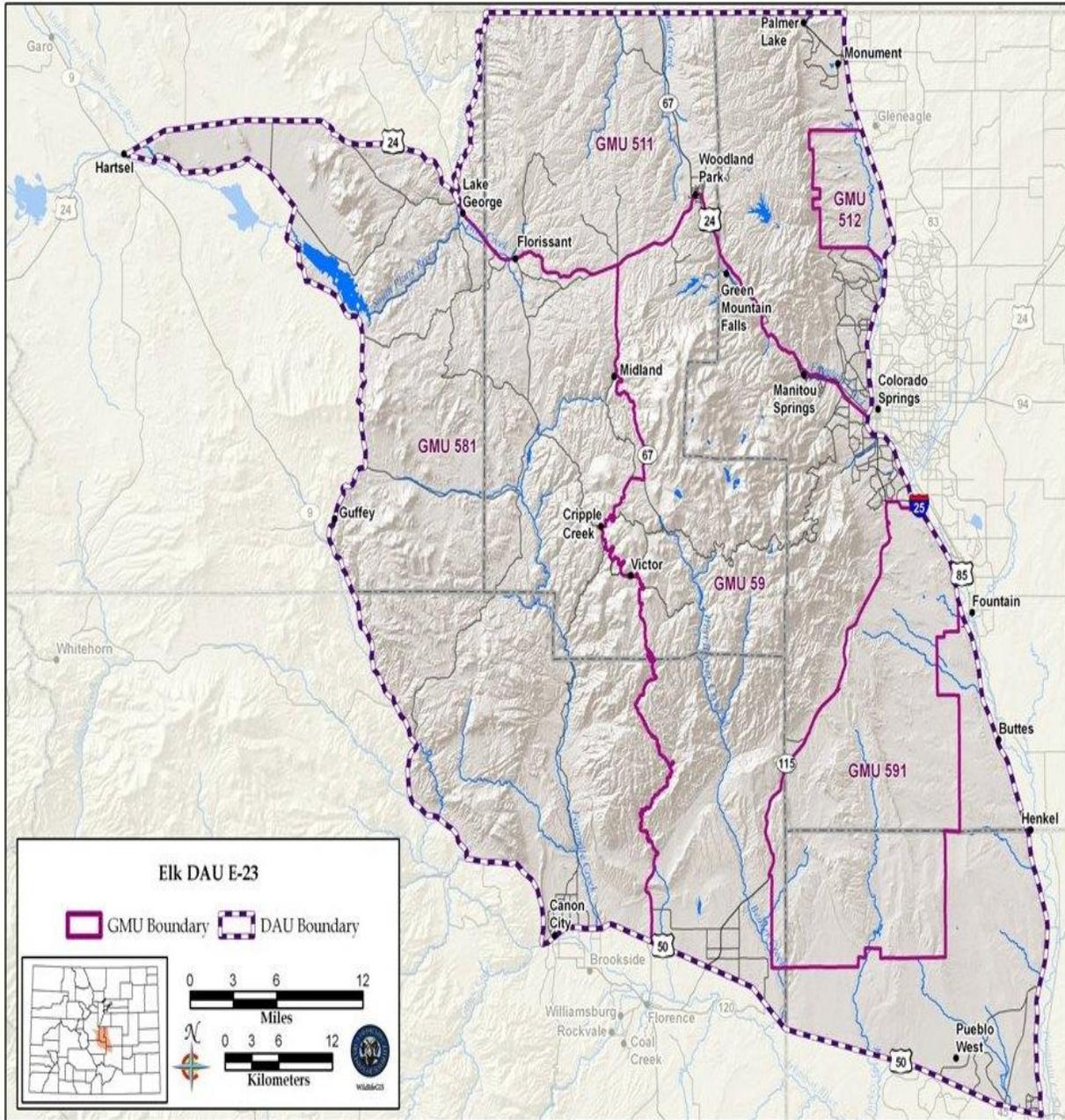
The DAU planning process attempts to balance biological considerations with public preference. An appropriate balance is sought and reflected in the elk herd objective. Annual hunting seasons are then designed with the intent of keeping the population at or near the selected herd objective.

Your input is an important part of the DAU planning process. The information you provide will help develop CDOW's recommendation for elk herd objective in the Eleven Mile area. Our recommendation will then be incorporated into the DAU plan, which will be reviewed, and ultimately approved, by the Colorado Wildlife Commission. Please be assured that your responses will remain confidential. **Surveys must be returned to the CDOW Salida Service Center by November 30, 2011.** For a copy of the entire draft E-23 DAU plan go to the Colorado Division of Wildlife at <http://wildlife.state.co.us/Hunting/BigGame/HerdManagementDAUPlans/>.

First, please examine the map and written description of the areas designated as Data Analysis Unit E-23, Game Management Units 59, 511, 512, 581, and 591, then go to Question 1.

Description of Data Analysis Unit E-23

The Eleven Mile elk DAU encompasses an area of 5,023 km² in central Colorado, directly west of Colorado Springs. It includes game management units (GMUs) 59, 511, 512, 581, and 591. The DAU is bounded on the north by US 24 and the Douglas County line, on the east by I-25, on the south by US 50, and on the west by Colo 9 and Park CR 59. The DAU includes parts of El Paso, Fremont, Park, Pueblo, and Teller Counties.



DAU E-23 Management Plan Public Survey

Name (Optional):

- 1) Which group(s) best represents your interest in elk management in this DAU?
 hunting agricultural commercial (guide/outfitter)
 viewing opportunities/non-consumptive agency personnel (specify) _____
 business owner other (specify) _____

2) **Agriculture Producers** – Have you had problems with game damage in the past five years?

Describe problem: _____

What species were involved _____ Number of animals _____

Was DOW contacted? Yes / No Actions taken by
DOW _____

Is this a continued or growing problem? No/Yes

3) **Hunters**

What is your satisfaction with elk hunting in GMUs 59, 511, 512, 581, 591? Poor Good
Excellent

Circle which GMU you usually hunt: 59 511 512 581 591

What is most important to you? Mark your **TOP TWO** choices.

- hunting every year hunting quality with fewer hunters
- getting away from people and motorized roads/trails
- high harvest success rates potential to harvest mature animals
- hunting for meat other (specify) _____

4) CDOW currently estimates the E-23 herd size at approximately 3,000 elk. Would you like the number of elk in GMUs 59, 511, 512, 581, and 591 to:

- Increase Stay the same Decrease Don't know
- Why?

Please provide any additional comments on the future management of DAU E-23 below:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY. YOUR INPUT WILL HELP THE COLORADO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE MANAGE YOUR WILDLIFE!

Surveys must be returned to the CDOW Salida Service Center by Nov 15, 2011.

TO RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE:

Jamin Grigg
Colorado Division of Wildlife
7405 US Hwy 50
Salida, CO 81201

Appendix C: Public Comments Submitted Regarding Elk Management for the E23 DAU

1	Have the logging and controlled burning suspended during the hunting season.
2	Need a late season over the counter bull for say Late Nov/Dec/Jan
3	When hunting this year I found three elk skeletons, two of which were deffinitely bulls and the other most likely since the head was missing. I also found the skeleton of a buck, which its anters were missing, and another smaller deer which still had traces of sinew and ligaments on them. They were all found in the same location. I did find mountain lion tracks in the area. This was in area 511 all found in John's Gulch.
4	With units 511 and 581 being over the counter units for elk and being in such close proximity of Colorado Springs. There is no control of how many hunters can hunt these units. It would be ideal if 511 and 581 became specified units or units with caps like bear tags. It would greatly benefit hunters and game if there was more control over the amount hunters in these areas.
5	I hunted in the cripple creek area for elk this year and it was my first year. Due to the fact that it was second rifle, it makes it hard to hunt these areas because the elk haven't come down from the high ground yet. In 2010, you combined areas 511 and 591 which gave hunters a wider area to hunt. I would like to see that again.
6	everything was ruined by the forest service burning slash piles. every animal within our regular hunt area and camp area was run off. i was not pleased at all. there seems to be no coordination at all between the forest service and DPW.
7	This is my first year elk hunting in this area and I did not see an elk this year.
8	For unit 59 add a lat winter Dec/Jan hunt. Most of the animals seem to be in the very steep mt ranges. We hunt on foot, and so a late hunt would cause the elk to move towards the low lands.
9	I have noticed during the past couple years of scouting and hunting that the elk are bunching up into large herds of 150+. I feel the herds need to be broken up for several reasons; first, they will not be in as big of risk for losing so many if disease breaks out in the herd. Second, from a farmer/rancher perspective, it is easier on on crops and fences with smaller herds running. Lastly, from a hunters perspective, it is better with large amount of small herds, than one large herd.

10	There are to many outfitters that are setting up.
11	Increased ability to hunt private land using WalkIn areas and access to the Florissant Fossil Beds.
12	The only elk observed during this hunt were on school property?????? National Forest and BLM land access is extremely limited. GMU's 581 and 58 should be "re-united" for more National Forest access, because of the limited hunting areas in GMU 581.
13	I think the elk management has been pretty good in this area. The numbers are there, its just an area that is so close to populations that hunting the elk is very hard. Obviously increasing the numbers would increase the success rate, but I enjoy a good hunt at the same time.
14	need to open more land for public hunting
15	During this years hunt, my family and I saw no fresh sign of elk in the area. This is a first in the past 10 years. There are numerous outfitter groups that have popped up in the area around skagway reservoir is growing every year which is where my family has property and hunts. Also the number of trespassers and potentially poachers in this area has increased as well. I hope between the DOW, property owners, and hunters, we can work to fix these issues.
16	Its a tough place to hunt, most of the land is too low for elk until after hunting season. I found 6 sheds in my unit but nothing attached to a living elk.
17	There are barely any elk in 581, a few individuals but no herds or even pods. Your chances of finding a stragler is minimal at best. My hunting group has never seen less sign in all our years of hunting and I we went everywhere in that unit. There are tons of elk on 39 Mile Mountain but unfortunately that area is cut off from this unit. This is unrelated to the elk but I'm not sure what you game management plan is for deer in the area. Does are so numerous you could pretty much walk into the woods, walk up on one and shoot it in the head with a handgun. However very few mature bucks seem to be in the unit.
18	I drew area 59 as a mistake on my part- typo on the electronic filing. I usually hunt 57 so 59 was a new eperience. I went to talk to Fish and Game in Colorado Springs, the Broad way office and then went down to talk to the folks in Salida. I did not find that any of the folks I spoke to knew any where that there was a specific heard or activity with in 59. I spoke to a lot of nice people. I bought an over the counter Bull left over for 4th season and I have a late hunt cow tag. I have driven the perimeter of area 59 - beautiful rocky timbered country. Mostly old rail road beds- good roads but a lot of private land. Some BLM and a lot of Forest Serice. This last week I saw zero Elk yes 0. I saw a very nice old buck at Skagway reservoir but I have not deer tag. Pretty tough to hunt a new area when the Division of Wild life is a bit skeptical on if there are elk there. I would recomend the drive from Penrose to Victor

E-23 Elk Management Plan – July 2012

19	I hunted 4th season in 581; did a good job of finding where the Elk had been... but never saw a live Elk. "Locals" told me that 581 had been "pushed really hard in the first three seasons"; I'd have to say it showed! I don't really favor restricting access or tags but this area is too inviting to the large population of the Springs area....you might be looking at too much pressure. I did see deer every day though, but not until after 2:pm.
20	* I wish that there was some way for the public to access the public land in GMU 59 from State Highway 115. * There is some excellent hunting for elk on private property in GMU 59 and 581 because most of the habitat on private land is much better. * A lot of the better elk habitat in GMU 59 is overrun with cattle in the summer months. This seems to displace the elk. * Limited hunting in Mueller State park and the Florissant Fossil Beds should be allowed. * Limited hunting should be allowed on the Ray Nixon Power Plant property. * There is a lot of thick forest in GMU 59, perhaps the Forest Service could allow some limited clear cutting to open up areas of the forest to allow more forage to grow. * The DPW should allow the use of electronic game calls to hunt mountain lions in these units to increase the harvest of lions and thereby decrease predation. * Nearly all of the public/private land boundaries are very poorly marked in GMU's 59 and 581. * A lot of public land in GMU's 59 and 581 is landlocked by private property. * The number of tags allotted should not be decreased as harvest rates are very low and probably have little effect on herd numbers. * Install a windmill on the Table Mountain STL to provide water. There seems to good forage/habitat but no water. This might encourage some of the GMU 591 elk to move into this area and stay. *
21	Too much private property for the area compared to available elk
22	N/A
23	I have hunted area 581 for the most part of my hunting experience off of CR90 North of 11 mile Forest road 251 I have never havested an Elk in this area. This year and last year the US forest Service was burning Slash piles. I understand that it has to be done but couldn't it have be done a different time? instead of during Hunting season I enjoy this area even thou mother nature has taken its tole on it. I like it because I can take a time out and go fishing
24	D'not under stand why us land owners cannot draw a private land only cow tag
25	I believe all units should have hunter limits on them. Not sell as many tags as possible, there is no way to keep track of how many are hunting an area. Herd numbers are so low in many areas, some places you are lucky to just see an animal.
26	I would personally like to see the elk herd population increase. I have never killed an elk and have hunted them for the last 5 years.

27	We have had mixed successes, probably more as a result of the warmer weather the past three years previous to 2011. Water was not as abundant, esp last year and very few animals were up high. This year was much better as the weather was cooler and snow was on the ground. The herds seem to be moving through the area as we see them most years on the road by Florissant.
28	It would be nice to have an initiative to make more private land available to hunters in Unit 581. There is so much private land surrounding the public land that all of the elk retreat there during hunting season. This combined with the large number of hunters equals very poor hunting.
29	There is a good amount of private land to work around, which makes it difficult to get on the animals at times. Also when hunting around Sanborn Western Camps, they have children out hiking in the National Forest without orange on and seem to think we should not be there when they are present. As far as I know, that is child endangerment. If I was a parent I would be furious.
30	Too many ATVs, and dirt bikes in 511 during archery season with little regard for others
31	Too many roads, too much off road driving, not enough undisturbed areas for elk!
32	Too many liscense issued for this area for the number of elk!
33	As a hunter on my own property, I appreciate the long hunting season for private land.
34	I think this area gets too much pressure recreationally and with such close proximity to town the numbers of elk are just not there. I believe limiting the numbers of tags in these areas close to home and making people wait for a few years to get a tag could possibly make for a quality hunt locally.
35	Elk love private properties in these areas, making them un-accessable most of the season.
36	The main problem I am finding in area 59 is the Elk have a lot of private property that they know to go to soon as the hunters start moving in don't think I will hunt area 59 anymore. Have much better success rate in area 37. Still had a good time getting out though.
37	My only real gripe is that last year, during the 2010 first rifle season for elk, most of the public land in Unit 59 of Teller County was inaccessible because of the closure of Gold Camp Road. It's open again this year though. I also wish that First Rifle Season would be extended form only a mere five days to nine days like Second and Third Seasons.
38	CDOW seems to have it's game together in these zones. However, there is not enough public access. After the first few days of the season Herds move on to private property and there is no access to them for the GENERAL public.
39	Good area, I enjoy hunting there with my sons and grandchildren. DOW and the local warden have done a good job in their management efforts.

40	Number of elk seen during archery was good, during the 2nd season for cow I did not see any in area 581. The number of ATV's on the back trails need to be limited to certain hours and for game retrieval only.
41	good area, close to home, tough to locate the elk. only saw a few on the 8th day of the hunt.
42	To hunt Ft. Carson is quite difficult due to extremely limited access even for those of us Active Duty Service Members. Would highly recommend Ft. Carson archery elk season and rifle pronghorn be expanded to permit Ft. Carson to have longer seasons. Other states I have been stationed in have significantly longer seasons on the installation (Federal land) due to competing requirements for training which limits the actual available hunting time during already limited seasons (total number of days in a season) for hunters to get afield. Hunting on Ft. Carson is basically only permitted on weekends, and on occasion a Friday or Monday if there is a long or holiday weekend, conversely there are even weekend days where much of the area isn't even open to hunting due to ongoing training, making access VERY limited. Bottom line, archery elk season on Ft. Carson and rifle pronghorn need to be addressed as you may only get 6-8 days to hunt that area during the entire month of the either sex archery season, and 1-2 days afield of a week-long pronghorn season-and many military members only have Ft. Carson as the area to hunt. Thank you. LTC Centineo Commander, Army Field Support Battalion
43	The last two years have been disappointing. We have hardly seen any elk throughout the 581 area and the team (4-6 of us) have taken none. Over the past 5 years, fewer and fewer have been seen by the team. We hope that the herds will grow some so more opportunity presents itself.
44	Did not see any while hunting in 581
45	I have private land that I hunt on and manage the property to enhance the elk herd.
46	I seem that the elk population in the Elevenmile area has diminished over the last few years. I am not sure if this is true, but is simply just my opinion based on my experience as a hunter and land owner. Moreover, it seems like the amount of hunters in this area is also diminishing and might be contributed to the low success rates. Anyway, thanks for your time and work towards making the Elevenmile elk herd population better!!
47	I have a 388 acre ranch in SW Teller County that is covered by a conservation easement. I am also a hunter successfully harvesting a cow elk last year (along with my son also harvesting a cow elk) on my property and unsuccessfully filling my tag for a cow elk this year. I am very interested in learning about this herd and would be glad to meet with you to have you explain to me and others about the movements of the herd, its health, its size, where it calving area is, etc. Please let me know as I could arrange a meeting with others who have similar interests
48	Need more education addressed to non hunters.

49	<p>I am a 36 year resident who has hunted every year and has seen many changes. There needs to be some plan in my assumption for the following three (3) herds. #1 The Fossil Bed/Mueller State Park Herd. Their migration patterns have changed much over the years and a suggestion would be to disrupt the stagnant nature of their residence in the fossil beds and Northern Mueller State Park. A yearly dispersion to break up that herd. #2 the Witcher Mountain / High Park Rd Herd. WOW. This herd is getting huge and beyond healthy management. I personally have seen nearly 1,000 in this area in one day. The Nash family obviously hold the cards here. We have been told that a Doctor who is from Texas is also conserving and nurturing (Feeding / Watering) this herd. We watched them not leave his property for over 2 weeks last year. This herd needs to be dispersed. #3 CC-V Mine Herd. Very inaccessible due to being on mine property. Not sure how to fix that. I would like to commend you for the fire mitigation that has drawn animals into the Blue Mtn, Fish Creek and Wilkerson Pass areas. Very nice to see herds on Public Land. I however grew up hunting on private. I have never had a issue while hunting on private but so many idiot hunters have poached, wounded or trespassed that we have lost all but a couple of areas on private. Also shame on the BLM for selling off so many great areas that we were able to hunt over the years. Also shame on the ranchers and land owners for requiring ridiculous fees to access their land. We are not Texas antler hunters, no we are meat hunters who cannot afford to out price our meat with ridiculous land use fees. I know that because of our (Hunters) past history that private areas will not open up rapidly. It is however your jobs to represent hunters such as myself to private ranchers and land owners so that the responsible person has better opportunities. Please feel free to contact me is you have any other questions. Justin Meador 719-689-9196</p>
50	<p>Potential to increase heard appears to be good. Habitat appears to be good to excellent. Some recreational users have tended to be unfamiliar with hunters and hunt seasons. Would like to see elk and deer in burn area (GMU 511) managed for both quantity and quality of animals. Thanks.</p>
51	<p>I would like to see more access to public land & more of the large land owners open up to hunters. The majority of the herds are protected on The Fossil beds or the large ranches like Sandborn.</p>
52	<p>More chance at late season hunts would be great. The elk dont seem to move in to GMU 581 till late in the season. They are usally never there were we hunt till late november (at the earliest) to mid December, and there are no tags for bulls that late. Thanks</p>
53	<p>More private land cow tags needed from 9/1 to 12/31 due to small parcels of private land limiting the availability of the herds during current short seasons. As a side note, deer licenses should be broken out into individual units instead of the current multiunit blocks.</p>
54	<p>Most of the area in GMU 581 is private and thus very hard to hunt with success. Saw many heards of at least 50 head of elk both cow and bull but all on private land.</p>

55	For the most part I normally hunt in unit 591(Ft Carson). I have hunted this unit for the last 18 years. I have never been happy with the management of the Ft Carson herd. Over the past several years I have seen a steady decline in the number of animals. Several factors are to blame: 1) increased military training, 2) overhunting of cow elk and 3) drought. Factors 1 and 3 are out of our hands but factor 2 should be addressed. The cow population is so low that you normally see more bulls than cows. The population is way out of balance. As far as I am concerned cow hunting should not be allowed. Also, place a 4-pt restriction on the harvest of all bulls. Finally, just prior to hunting season a large population(maybe a hundred animals) leave Ft Carson to enter Colorado Springs Utilities property to find sanctuary. Is their anyway to reach an agreement with the Ray Nixon Power Plant to try and move these animals back onto Ft Carson where they can be hunted. Ft Carson needs to be managed better. Please Help!
56	Too many hunters and very few elk.
57	Much of he hunt unit contains either private or Federal property where hunting is not allowed. Depending on which herd I hunt private land owners refuse to allow hunting. I would like to see land owners be educated on the value of good hunting management versus herd health. I have also seen loss of BLM areas to land swap, which takes away hunting land. I have hunted in 581 for over 35 years and I would say management has been very good.
58	It just sems like there is not alot oelk in this area nor is there alot of access to national forest.
59	The number of elk in unit 59 seems low to me, atleast during second rifle. However the quality of bull elk seems to be there. If you would like specific info or if you think I can help further please let me know. John Cammalleri 303 941 1884 johnjasonc@gmail.com
60	i would like to see access to private property increase to move the elk around. Elk get into areas of private property leased by outfitters and seldom enter public areas or areas of private which can be accessed by permison. The result is the herd is to large for the area and those private land owners who will provide access are constantly harassed. A reward system for land owners who provide access should be considered and elk in other areas pushed around to beakup herds.
61	In the past few years there have been too many hunters in unit 511. It would be nice to not have to compete with the Dirt Bikes during hunting season.
62	I hunted area 581 for eight consecutive days and never saw a single elk,bull or cow. We spoke with other hunters in the same area as well and they said this was the worst year ever very very bad.
63	The elk heard needs to be cared for to keep them from invading the livestock range and damaging the excisting feed and destroying the forage for the livestock. elk hears need to be cared for and managed keeping them from invading the livestock range.

64	first time cow hunter in unt, I did not see any elk, but members of part did overall good experience except for too restrictive on where to camp, etc i dont like camping on a road and that is the way the forest service has everything set up currently,,,,not good..
65	D.O.W. should be willing to break up herds that tend to stay on private lands. Also give more information to hunters requesting it MOST importantly remember that HUNTERS are ultimately paying for their programs and WAGES!
66	The D.O.W. needs to assist in geting the larger herds of elk off of private and federal lands that we, as hunters, are unable to access. If the extremly large herd of elk that take refuge on the Florissant Fossile Beds National Monument were available to hunters in the area we all would be able to fill our freezers and not have to invest so much in store bought beef.
67	The herd seems to be somewhat small and scattered, although this is what makes hunting them even more challenging and that is why they call it hunting. The pressure doesn't seem to be bad at all as most hunters I see travel the roadways and never get out of their truck.
68	Better regulation of recreational atv and dirt bike racing during Big Game seasons, including speeding, right of way, disregard of hunters and camps, riding off designated routes, noise suppression, road damage, additional animal stress/harrasment, and general disrespect of our National Forests. There is a distinct difference between Hunters using atv's and other riders. Elk are changing habits to avoid the mayhem. This is resulting in less animals in areas where they were usually plentiful. I hunted 1st and 2nd seasons for Elk and Deer and noticed more dissatisfied hunters and very few shots heard compared to previous years. A note on deer: Have noticed more and more deer in town than the woods. They are taking refuge in subdivisions where they are being fed. Thank You for including my input.
69	I think you should combine all these GMUs into one super GMU to give hunters a better chance to harvest an animal.
70	Have more either sex tags including 4th season.
71	I strongly recommend the following COA's (Courses of Actions): - No controlled burns in or around the Lake George Area during Elk season - Consider at the DOW level, issuing limited tags for the Fossil Beds - there was approximately 2000 head of Elk during first rifle season - Try and put the Sandborn Ranch in the "Ranching for Wildlife" program - Lastly on a side note: Put a 4-point restriction on deer like you do Elk for all OTC units because large number of juvenile bucks never reach maturity because the are easily harvested as spikes/fork horns
72	I believe that if you are going to be logging in the area stop the logging before hunting season begins. So that there is a chance that the Elk will be around the area. We saw only one elk this year and no herds.
73	I would like to see both the quality and quantity of elk improve. I am both a landowner and hunter.

74	This year the US Forest Department had a controlled burn during 2nd rifle season which moved/spooked the elk. It would be nice to coordinate burns for off-season times.
75	poaching There is a prevailing attitude that trespassing onto private property is OK, or that there has to "always be legal access" to land-locked private property. I think 581 suffers from an all-year-long elk poaching problem. I hear too many shots at night. More important to me than increasing the elk herd within 581 is to hold th population at a balanced point to keep the elk healthy and disease free. Off topic, but I believe that the deer numbers within 581 should be reduced and culled quite a bit.
76	There are lots of elk in the area described. Many of them are hung up on the Fossil Beds for most of the hunting seasons. They need to be encouraged off the Fossil Beds or hunting in some form allowed on the Fossil Beds.
77	Most of the elk we've gotten in years past have been in the Terry-all. This year, we saw elk close-up in 511 4 days before my season, then again in the same area 7 days after my season. That's as close as I've every gotten. My observation: elk are smart.
78	no comment
79	Need to stop the landowner from keeping the herd on thier private property. Not allowing the hunters on public land to have meat for thier families for the past 5 YEARS!
80	I have hunted these areas for many years and the amount of elk for hunters seems very low. I never see large heards other than the Florissant Fossil Beds a no hunting area. I hunt for the meat and think we need more elk. Talking to hunters the sucess rate for filling license is very low.I am not sure what would help to change this but hope they can have more elk to hunt. I see very few during archery or black powder seasons. Rifle seasons need to be longer and not so many. Rifle season has to many hunters compared to archery or black powder. Would be nice to have more private land to hunt on because thats where I see most of the elk if I see any. I do believe all the summer activities have a factor on the elk heards. I do believe if seasons were longer and less of them would be better to manage heards.
81	Much of area 59 is either private or very rough country to hunt making it difficult to get to the animals. More access through private property would help with access to a health of land that is not as rough to hunt.
82	I have hunted this area for the past 20 years, both archery and rifle. I have had years of great sucess and years that were lean. I would like to see a slight increase in the elk herd. However I would not like to see that increase come at the expense of missing out on drawing in that area due to reduce available liscenses. I always like to harvest an animal but being able to walk the mountains in my area is important as well

83	<p>well to start off hello my name is Dave and the first season elk hunt in area 581 was my first big game hunt. to sum it up i was really disappointed, opening day of the hunt there were some activists in the area. they were shooting larger category rifles (30.6, 308, etc.) and playing very loud music over a p.a system to frighten off the animals. the second to last day of our first season hunt i believe it was a wednesday there was a controled burn not ten miles from the road leading to our hunting grounds, all in the area of 581. we did not manage to kill anything to be honest i didnt see any elk. we saw some tracks, droppings and rub marks while scouting and we set up in that area but that evening was the controled burn. i would like to hunt in elevenmile 581 again but in the future i would like the top matters addressed. i would like to know if there is any compensation for this misfortune which was out of our control. you can contact me at 719-641-5186.</p> <p>sincerely dave kieffer</p>
84	<p>Better access for hunting. Much of the public lands are bounded by private property which requires a long detour around private property to access public lands.</p>
85	<p>Ban lead bullets.</p>
86	<p>I am a property owner in GMU 581 and would like to see an increase in the numbers of elk. The habitat in this area could support a larger herd and be good for the watchable wildlife program. The bull to cow ratio is also too low. I am a hunter and it would be good to see a greater hunter success ratio for this herd which is currently below statewide averages for hunter success.</p>
87	<p>Private Land no trespassing prevent elk movements. They seem to have a sactuary. Need help from DNR as to where they are.</p>
88	<p>Within the DAU plan, the Terrestrial biologist mentions that fire suppression has lead to much of the available elk habitat entering a late-seral growth stage which isn't the most productive for elk. Given that most of GMU 59 is heavily overgrown, encompassing pinyon-juniper, ponderosa pine and spruce fir forests, I would like to see further efforts and or measures conducted to reduce the overgrowth, e.g., (logging, controlled burns, mechanical shrub/tree removal), thus maximizing habitat potential for elk. I would also like to see future habitat improvement projects throughout the rest of the DAU, i.e, GMU's 511, and 581. I realize that funding and or financial constraints might be a serious limiting factor for conducting habitat improvement projects within this area. However I'm wondering if funds through other agencies such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and USDA be used in conjunction with GOCO and federal aid from the USFWS to help conduct additional habitat improvement projects within DAU E-23.</p>
89	<p>My experience has been that the elk find a large private ranch that does not allow hunting access and have "camped" out there for the entire season. There are quite a few elk so that isn't the problem. I put "somewhat increase the number of elk" and by that I mean increase the number of huntable elk. Being able to hunt every year is very important to me because drawing a deer tag is not something you are able to do every year.</p>

90	Outfitters moved in about 7-8 yrs ago and begun harvesting the big bulls and in later years any bulls. Prior to that a group of us for 25 yrs had managed hunting on 6000 acres in this area growing the herd to a high number with good management. We took and encouraged other hunters to take only older bulls or cows or deformed animals. We tried to hold to 3-5 cows for every bull taken. Much fewer elk in the area now days and mostly very young males. Not sure this can be reversed since most of the land is private. John Reardon
91	I feel the overall management of the area is well above average, compared to other states I've hunted. This year was the first year, since 2001 that I didn't see any Elk. With the high temperatures (70's, 80'sF), I don't think the elk were moving into the area I was hunting. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!
92	One issue is that when elk season starts it appears that large numbers migrate into the Florissant National Monument which decreases hunting opportunities. This maybe a USFWS issue but it would be nice to offer limited hunting on FNM to keep the elk herd more evenly distributed.
93	There seems to be plenty of elk moving through unit 581 but it is very infrequent that we come upon them during the hunting season. I believe the warm weather over the last several years have kept them at higher Alt during the hunting seasons.
94	One of the unfortunate factors in this area is the Forest Service lack of concern for their impact on hunters and hunting season; controlled burns, logging, etc.
95	I am very favorably impressed by Colorado game management policies but with one exception. I'd like to see some provision made that would allow old guys like me (age 74) a leg up in the muzzleloader draw. I don't have many more years left and I'd like to get in as many black powder hunts as I can while I am still able. How about giving us an extra "age" preference point for the draw or do something else to help our chances. There aren't many of us and it is not likely to much affect your harvest figures.
96	I've been told that the Haymen Burn has been publically promoted as a great hunting area. True or not, the last time I hunted second season I felt there were too many hunters. I switched to muzzleloading and am happier. I live in this area and think the elk herd is doing just fine. The antler restrictions make for some nice bulls.
97	I think it is very important to develop a better system for determining actual harvest numbers of elk. I do not believe your elk counts are very accurate.
98	Too many areas that are unavailable to hunters where the elk congregate after hunter pressure starts. Public lands not adequately identified where adjacent land owners claim ownership and harrass your every move, especially in the High Creek drainage off of County Road 11. There are many elk in these areas and this would be an excellent area if the above mentioned were remedied.
99	GMU 581 is a good area containing both feed and water to support a somewhat larger herd

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100	no over the counter liscen unit 511 and 581
101	Dont want bigger area. Less people.
102	The number of cows should decrease. The number of Quality bulls are getting better and i would like to see that trend continue.
103	After several scouting trips and seeing some fresh and some old sign between Emerald Valley Ranch and E. Beaver Creek I was quite certain I would see something during first rifle. Granted elk are ghosts to some extent and unpredictable but I saw nothing in 5 days. No fresh track, scat, nothing. Searched the area mentioned above, Stove Mountain, Mt. Baldy, Mt. Rosa, Mt. Blanca, and the Craggs. Nothing.
104	I have hunted area 511 for the last two years. Last year I shot a mature bull but it was the only male elk I had seen in the first four days of the season. I saw a group of cow elk every morning and most evenings in the same field but when I was up scouting the previous weekend during the over the counter season, I had seen probably 5 different hunters attempt to hunt this group of elk in a single morning. Two were successful. I guess my main concern with this is how the D.O.W. can have over the counter seasons (unlimited) and still manage the herd accurately and effectively. Especially in areas that are all within two hours of the three biggest cities in Colorado (Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo). I was up deer hunting in unit 51 this last weekend (10/22/11) and saw, no exaggeration, six hunters going after a group of four cow elk in area 511 because it was the start of the second season over the counter. I applied through the draw for fourth season in area 511 but now after learning more about the over the counter tags, do not even see why people bother with the drawing when everyone and their grandma can get a tag for the 2nd and 3rd seasons. Imagine the success rates and size of the animals that people could be harvesting if there wasn't ten hunters in a feild going after the same four elk and not caring whether the elk were born less then a year ago or if the bulls are small four by fours. My email is bpred@comcast.net if I am full of crap please let me know where I am wrong because I do only have a limited knowledge of how the seasons all work. Thanks, Ben.
105	Live in the area and would like to see herds returned to "like it was in the olden days" (30+ years ago) Realize area is filling up w/ human population. Would like to see new development limited to 10- 35 acre minimum lots for housing, would like to see some of the old roads opened up, realize this may be a conflict of interest.
106	It would be great if you could work with the Forest Service and convince them not to BURN during any of the hunting seasons!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
107	No one in my family has ever taken elk in these areas after many years of trying.
108	Seems that we are losing hunting oppoertunities to people who buy their cabins and expect deer/elk to not eat their favorite plants. Tha's part of living in the woods. Don't reduce the herd in order to protect petunias!

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109	I would like to see a longer season or late season for cow permits. The cow harvest should increase.
110	There are so many subdivisions that can't be hunted, including State and National Parks that the elk herds can not be substantially controled.
111	Seems to me to be a pretty low density elk area, so I have been avoiding hunting, despite the convenience of being close to the Front Range
112	Too many hunters
113	In 511 the volume of some of the Off highway vehicles is very noisy and on several occassions I have seen the Elk run scared when these arc have passed while others, with softer volumes, have had no effect. More enforcement of noise levels should be done.
114	I think getting a higher point restriction would help draw more hunters and provide better viewing of elk in the area. I would like to see a 5 point restriction starting next year and go for 3-5 years then bump it up to 6 point or better and keep it there. That would establish the area as a trophy area and you would get more hunters. There will be some grumblng the first year but then I think things would calm down and they will appreciate the better quality hunting experience.
115	Muzzle loading season should be a week later then they are now Mid to late September would be better.
116	Allow only 4pt. or better bulls and increase cow permits ! Keep late seasons and private property licenses.
117	I realize that hunting every year for elk and wanting their numbers to increase is a contradiction, that is best case dreaming. I would rather get a tag every other year for a couple of years to help their numbers increase and thus increase future success rates. Thank you for asking our opinion!
118	Elk are congregating on private land where they do not allow hunting
119	Not enough elk in the eleven mile area to say that there is a huntable heard. Hunted the area for 2 years and had no luck at seeing anything.
120	There are alot of elk in the Florissant Fossil Beds. Any way to disburse them to surrounding Pike National Forest land?
121	closure to some forest service trails would help with the trafic. both hunters and nonehunters. cap on over the counter tags
122	Question #3 is not working correctly. Only one question in each coulumn could be answered or the previous ones in that column would get canceled.
123	Not many elk compared to the amount of hunters there are. Have harvested one bull elk in the last five years. Very publicly known area and very hard to hunt under all of the pressure

124	Not nearly enough animals in the area. I hunted all over GMU 581, both high and low for 5 days, and did not even see an animal. I am an experienced hunter, but this season was pathetic. My worst season ever. Cattle still in the State Trust areas, people harvesting fuel wood with chain saws during the hunting season. I mean really, as a hunter this was worst season I have ever experienced hands down. I doubt that I will ever hunt any of these GMU's again. I can only hunt 1 time each year, constrained by pathetically short rifle seasons for Elk, and this year, my time was sadly wasted, very badly.
125	road hubters at timesare a concern
126	It's just right = the numbers of Elk and hunters. Please don't change anything.
127	There are not enough elk there now for hunting purposes, so anything that can be done to increase the herd would be appreciated. Thanks.
128	I have never hunted in these units in the past and my tag is not good until December. I am unsure of the number of elk in the area. Would be willing to fill this out after my hunt.
129	I'd like to see the areas managed for an increase in animals as so much of the unit area is on private land with limited access
130	Your survey doesn't work all that great as it willonly allow you to select 1 catagory inarea 4 so the others were left blank?
131	I was not able to select the same ratings on the multiselection page; maybe something is wrong with the format? I really enjoy hunting in GMU 581 and look forward to returning; I've hunted this area for over 10 years with great success. thanks for allowing me to take this survey and I hope it helps. Barry P.
132	Would like to see either sex added to the list for handicapped hunters. I personally don't think it is fair that we don't have a choice on this list.
133	I appreciate the efforts taken to properly manage the wildlife of Colorado. We're very blessed.
134	Opening up private land located in GMU 581 to hunting would be extremely beneficial.
135	I hunt private ground, And am very pleased.
136	Mature Elk appear prevalent. Would like to see additional Muzzleloader and Archery tags available.
137	Access to BLM or Public land via private property is making more difficult to hunt.
138	Great success when it comes to cow elk. Would like to see more mature bull elk as bulls over 300 are few and far between.

- 139 I have hunted in 511 for the past 5 years. The large elk herd living right off rampart range road towards the reservoir is becoming a disgusting inbred mess. The main herd has no incentive to leave the large private property, primarily owned by Mr. Armatrout, and therefore is not being scattered. This year we noticed the inbreeding reach a particularly disturbing peak, with the largest bull having a severely deformed rack and many of the younger bulls and spikes showing the same. We witnessed one spike in particular with an antler growing straight down his face so far that it would dig into the ground when he went to feed. Elk managers in the area should do something to scatter this herd. We have observed Mr. Armatrout feeding and watering the herd throughout the season and winter to ensure that they remain on his property and he has been very successful in corralling the herd. I hunted muzzleloader this year and I believe that the only successful kill was actually a poached cow taken just inside his fence. While I am completely against poaching, this act shows the growing frustration of hunters in the area. I was encouraged to think that perhaps that act may have scattered the herd a bit, but they returned to their usual spot within the day. I am not sure what can be done, but I believe putting a stop to the unnatural, unfair, and perhaps illegal feeding practices carried out by Mr. Armatrout would be a good place to start. Many of the hunters up there remark how "smart" the herd is and how they know exactly where to go so that they stay on private property and out of huntable areas. I disagree with this completely. The elk in this area are not smarter, they are just raised by a private landowner so that he can make a healthy \$6500 profit from each hunter that pays to hunt his land. I would be happy to discuss this anytime if it would help the situation up near Rampart Range. Please call Travis Peveto at 719-200-3738 anytime. Thank you
- 140 Tag for 2011 is not valid until December 24, so this survey deadline is a little premature.
- 141 The over the counter gun tags are lowering the elk potential in this area.
- 142 We should be able to hunt on the Florissant Fossil beds as it holds a great number of Elk. Also there needs to be more right of way access to the public areas like Stohl mountain
- 143 Recreational shooting has increased over the years in unit 511 (Mt. Herman Rd. / Rampart Range Rd / Schubarth Road). I have seen an increase in recreational shooters moving higher and deeper into this area occupying many of the roads and trails along these routes. Off road, ATV, Motorcycle recreation has also increased. This activity seems to push Elk to seek refuge in isolated, non-accessible properties. I spoke with a CDOW agent last year (2010) about the seemingly lack of Elk in the area. He said all the elk moved to Farish (AFA recreational area) early and would hold up there all year. You need to work with the USFS to decrease the recreational shooting and off road vehicle, ATV and motorcycle use in this specific area.

144 This is my first year hunting in Colorado and in unit 511. It's a great unit that has a lot of potential when someone leaves the road. This years archery hunt was very difficult as the herds were "quiet" and it seemed the "normal rut" did not happen this year, possibly due to the warm weather we had. If this trend were to continue, it would be nice to see the archery season extend into October, possibly making it a six week season. If it were to be decided that the elk population needs to be smaller, then it would be nice to have an opportunity to purchase an OTC bull elk archery tag, plus a cow elk archery tag, and then have the ability to draw a 1'st season rifle cow tag. If this were to happen, I would be out there trying to do my part to fill each tag.