

Wildlife Management Division

**E-PLUS
19.30.5 NMAC**

June 21, 2018

New Mexico State Game Commission Meeting

Raton, NM

INTRODUCTION TO E-PLUS

- E-PLUS was developed in 2005 to:
 - Recognize, “Landowners who provide meaningful benefit to elk and accept elk on their properties and all elk hunters who wish to recreate on deeded lands or public lands within New Mexico’s exterior boundaries.”
(19.30.5.2 NMAC)

Propose to Define MEANINGFUL BENEFIT :

- **Guidelines developed by the Department and adopted by the Commission**
- **Properties will be evaluated to ensure they make a Meaningful Benefit according to guidelines**



Propose to Define MEANINGFUL BENEFIT :

Determining “meaningful benefit”

- Biologically founded
- Simple/Consistent
- Defendable
- Captures intent of the rule
- Recordable (create form)



SCORING SYSTEM

Forage: (Including agriculture)

- 0 = No meaningful forage is available or forage is in the form of a lawn or lawn shrubs, gardens, flowers or other ornamental plantings. (Extremely rocky terrain; sandy, bare soils; thick timber with no understory)
- 1 = Marginal forage is available. (Sparse bunchgrasses, scrub habitat, moderately timbered areas with some forage potential)
- 2 = Moderate forage is available. (Open upland grasslands or open savanna-like forest/woodland, dense bunch grass)
- 3 = Substantial forage is available. (Grass meadows, bottomlands and riparian areas)
- Forage Score: _____



SCORING SYSTEM

Water: (Water should be located on a property where it is readily available for use by elk.)

- 0 = No water is available for elk use. (Includes a water hydrant near or attached to a building or utilization of an exposed or manual hose system)
- 1 = Some water is available throughout at least one season by natural sources or by an established system that can be turned on or off.
- 2 = Water is available throughout at least any two seasons on a consistent basis.
- 3 = Permanent, year round water is available.
- Water Score: _____



SCORING SYSTEM

Cover:

- 0 = No meaningful cover is provided on the property. (Or cover is compromised by houses, buildings, driveways and/or other disturbances)
- 1 = Poor cover components are provided on the property. (Thin cover or small areas of cover)
- 2 = Good cover components are provided on the property.
- Cover Score: _____



SCORING SYSTEM

Surrounding Area:

- 0 = Surrounding area is encumbered with human activity, highly developed with houses/buildings and vehicular byways seriously altering or inhibiting elk use and/or travel.
- 1= Surrounding area has low human activity with low numbers of buildings or vehicular byways and having some impact on elk use and travel.
- 2 = Surrounding area is remote and unencumbered by human activity having no impact on elk use and travel.
- Surrounding Area Score: _____



SCORING SYSTEM

Agriculture: (Bonus)

- 0 = No agriculture - Native grasses; unimproved pasture grasses; routinely unharvested or un-grazed with minimal harvest opportunity.
- 1 = Agriculture – Marginally productive, dry/unirrigated type or routinely harvested crop.
- 2 = Agriculture – Productive, maintained (irrigated, cultivated, fertilized, etc.), yearly harvestable crop.
- Agriculture Score: _____

Added Bonus: (For considerations not captured elsewhere.)

- 0 = No special considerations.
- 1 = Special consideration exists.
- Added Bonus Score: _____

(The “Added Bonus” category may also be awarded for a property’s proximity to habitat features nearby [generally within ½ mile] but not actually on the property being evaluated. A combination of considerations may be utilized including increasing an area’s ability to be accessed and hunted.)

Setting Minimum Score

- Habitat Score of 6

- All properties have some habitat components
- Properties provide some meaningful benefit
- Some marginal properties qualify

- Habitat Score of 7

- All properties consistently have most habitat components
- Properties provide significant meaningful benefit
- Very few marginal properties identified

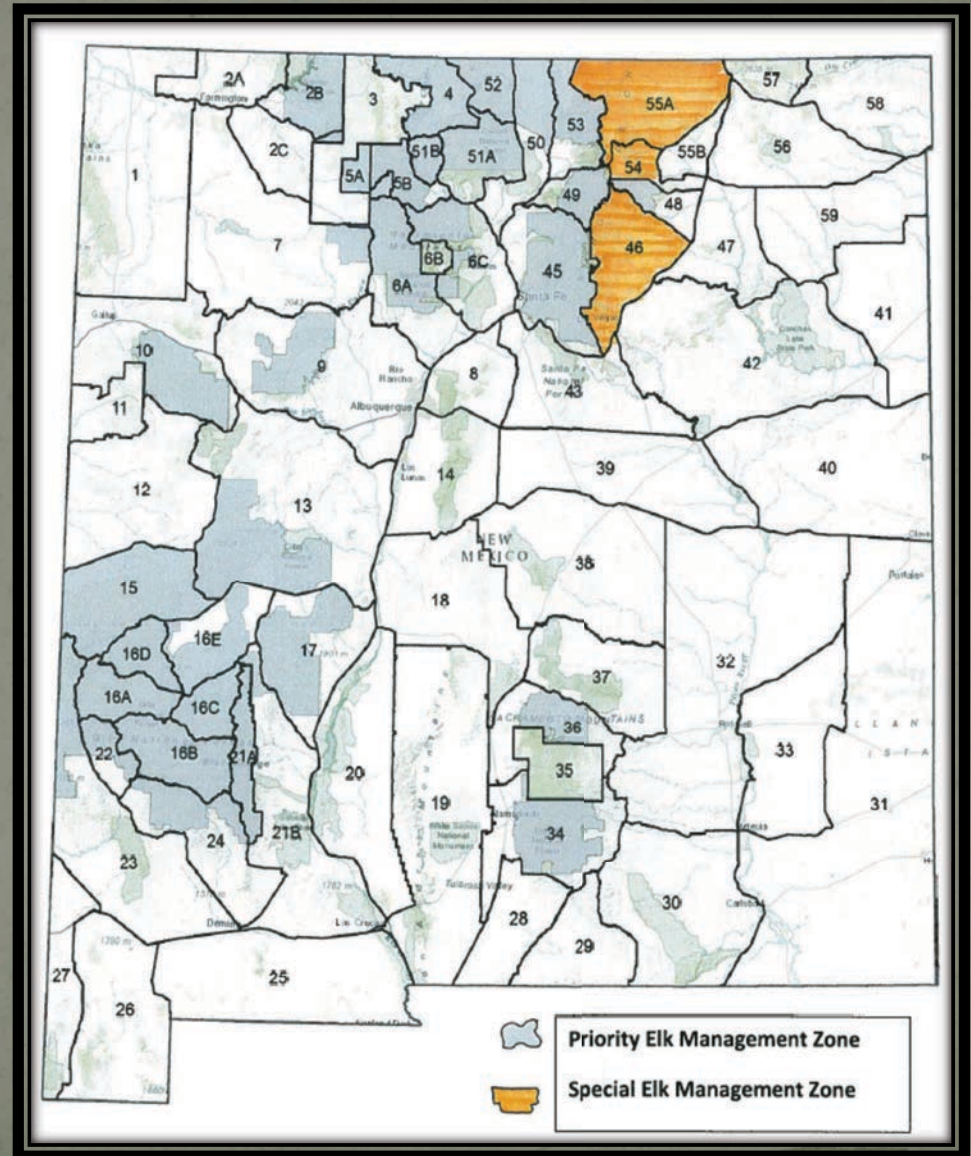
Proposed Elk Management Zones

- **Primary Elk Management Zone:**

- Where license numbers are set by Commission
- Harvest objectives are biologically determined
- Distribution of tags strictly regulated
- **Special Management Zone:**
 - Largely or completely private.
 - Don't fit into the formula based license allocation process
 - Other special management considerations may exist
 - Managed on a Ranch-to-Ranch basis

- **Secondary Elk Management Zone:**

- License numbers not set on private land



ISSUES WITH CURRENT SYSTEM

- More properties competing for a limited resource, with many properties not providing “meaningful benefit”
- Unconverted rate and Bonus allocation is going to larger properties
- SCR category has grown
- Encourages splitting properties
- Long wait for SCR properties to get authorization
- All SCR properties treated the same
- SCR draw history

Proposed Changes for Primary Zone

(Currently defined as “inside COER”)

- Utilize habitat scoring tool to screen properties
- Implement scoring process retroactively
- Allocate Unconverted Rate and Bonus through SCR properties first
- Eliminate draw history system
- Weight SCR draw based on property habitat score
- All acre alterations are subject to re-evaluation

Proposed Changes Secondary Zone

(Currently defined as “outside COER”)

- Make tags available OTC for private land
- Private land tags transferrable with written permission
- All tags either-sex
- Consistent season dates and weapon type across the Secondary Zone
- Exceptions on a case by case basis



Questions?



EXPECTED RESULTS

- Only properties making a benefit to elk will participate
- New enrollments will be reduced
- Existing participation will be reduced
- More permits will be available for remaining properties
- SCR draw will be more fair with shorter waits
- Unconverted Rate will go down
- Better utilization of Bonus
- DGF better able to meet harvest goals