

Appendix 1. Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Elk in Northern California: Costs, Benefits, and Perceptions

Format and Process – This will be a semi-structured interview 30 min to 1 hour. Based on the interviewee’s responses, there may be some topical diversions from the guide. However, the larger themes and objectives of the interview will remain the same.

Recording - The interview will be recorded for future transcription (if participants consent) and some notes will be taken during the interviews. The recorded interviews will be secured according to the confidentiality and data security procedures outlined in section 13 of this IRB protocol.

Research Question – The objective of this research is to understand and describe the conflicts and benefits that elk bring to land owners and other stakeholders in northern California.

- 1) What are the economic implications of elk-induced infrastructural damage and competition with livestock for forage on rangeland? What are the other costs and benefits of elk (monetary or non-monetary)?
- 2) Does elk hunting provide significant revenue to landowners?

The rationale for engaging in this line of research is that it will help land owners, policy makers, wildlife managers, and the general public to better understand elk-human interactions and find solutions to elk-related problems.

Personnel and Property Characteristics

Are you an:

Owner/Operator?

Lessee?

What are the Main Activities on your ranch and percentage of income from each? Average over past 5 years.

Livestock production

Fee hunting

Crop/hay production

Timber production

Investment property – Capital Gains

Other, such as:

Mineral leases

Cell tower leases

Firewood sale

Bird watching

Horse training

Bed and Breakfast

Events - weddings, etc.

What land area of the property is engaged in each productive activity (percent or absolute values)?

Presence of Elk

Do you have elk on your property? If yes,

Season	# of elk on property	average # of days per season elk spend on property (# of days out of 90)
Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)		
Spring (Mar, Apr, May)		
Summer (Jun, Jul, Aug)		
Fall (Sept, Oct, Nov)		

Is elk activity focused in any particular area of the property, or dispersed widely across the majority of the property? If it is focused on one area, where on the property is it focused, and what are the habitat attributes of that area?

Livestock Factors

What is the stocking rate of livestock?

Do elk occupy the same areas as livestock?

Has the presence of elk negatively affected livestock herd health? If yes, how?

Elk-Induced Economic Losses

Do elk interfere with your operation?

Do elk cause economic losses to your operation? If so, how? Can you estimate the cost of elk-induced economic losses?

Do elk on your property consume forage that is intended for livestock? Can you quantify how much time you think elk spend foraging on your property? Given a mature elk is .6 AUMs, can you estimate the number of AUMs consumed by elk?

Do elk cause damage to infrastructure?

Are there any other ways in which elk interfere with your operation?

Damage to crops?

Other?

Mitigation Practices

Do you engage in practices designed to deter or mitigate elk damage? If so, what?

Elk Hunting and Management

Do you derive benefits from elk hunting on your land?

Are you able to get sufficient elk tags for hunting on your property?

Do you have a fee hunting operation: why or why not?

If you don't have fee hunting

Prefer to keep hunting and/or recreation on ranch for family and friends

Don't like the idea of hunting

Don't want hunters on the ranch

Too much risk of an injury, accident, or lawsuit

Loss of privacy

Don't want to deal with the hassle

Ranch not big enough for fee hunting

Not enough wildlife numbers or species

Income won't offset costs

Don't need added income

Difficulty getting hunters

Other

If you do have fee hunting

Increased income?

It's what the land is meant for

Hunters help maintain aspects of the property, infrastructure maintenance etc.

Prevent hunters from asking for free hunts

Trespass control

Offset forage loss or property damage made by wildlife

Public relations benefits

Are you involved in a cooperative agreement with neighbors to manage elk or other wildlife?

Do you do predator control?

Harvest

Do you track the harvests of elk on the ranch?

If so,

Quantity harvested

Do you track the characteristics of harvested elk?

B&C score?

Antler characteristics?

Weight

Age

Do you have sex ratio goals in place? If so, do tag allocations limit your acquisition of these goals?

Do you have age structure goals in place?

If not,

Do you have harvest guidelines/rules? If yes,

How do you set harvest guidelines/rules?

Allow hunters to set rules

Use experience and knowledge of area to set harvest

Use population counts to estimate population and set harvest

Proportion of total elk population harvested *over previous 5 and 10 years?*

Hunting Enterprise Characteristics (if they have one)

Lease Type: circle all that apply.

Day/ Multi-day

Season

year-round

multi-year

Do you use an outfitter to manage your hunting?

Do you offer hunting based on:

Single Species

Multiple species

Direct payment for animal harvested

Do you have a corporate entity or a group of private individuals leasing the hunting rights?

Corporate

Private individuals

Other

Number of paying hunters?

Number of hunters allowed to hunt for free? Including yourself, family and friends.

Other Elk Benefits and Costs

Are there non-monetary benefits to having elk on your land? Intrinsic value?

Other value?

Are elk a net benefit, net liability, or neutral for your property?

A. Benefit

B. Liability

C. Neutral

Are there circumstances where you could see elk becoming a net benefit due to changes in policies? If so what would they be?

Personal Background

Ranch is only source of income / Have outside job

How long has property been in family?

How long have you managed the property?