

EPLUS CLAIMS VS FACTS



NMWF/BHA Claim: It's not fair that landowners receive over 13,000 elk authorizations.

FACT: 50% of New Mexico's elk habitat is on located private land. It is reasonable that roughly half of elk authorizations are for private land given that roughly half of the habitat is located on private land. Private landowners provide vital habitat, cover, and water resources to elk and all of NM's wildlife.



NMWF/BHA Claim: New Mexico is the only state that allows landowners to sell authorizations.

FACT: This statement is false. Landowner hunting permits are a common tool used to achieve state wildlife conservation objective in the Western US. There are 13 states that offer landowner authorizations and seven of those state offer transferable (i.e. sellable) authorizations (CA, CO, OR, NV, NM WA, & UT).

NMWF/BHA Claim: ALL elk authorizations should be Ranch Only

FACT: 80% of private land elk authorizations are considered Ranch Only. That means they can only be utilized on the deeded acreage associated with the authorization. Roughly 20% of authorizations are considered Unit Wide. If a landowner wishes their authorizations to have Unit Wide availability, they must agree to open the private land associated with the authorization to ALL public land elk hunters. New Mexico's Unit Wide authorizations provide public hunters with an additional half million huntable acres.

NMWF/BHA Claim: There are no reasons a landowner should receive Unit Wide tags.

FACT: There are several legitimate reasons that a landowner might choose for their authorizations to be Unit Wide. One of those reasons would be if the landowner has a substantial amount of "checkerboard" public land within their ranch. Unit Wide permits are the only way for private land hunters to legally access public land inholdings.

NMWF/BHA Claim: Transferable hunting permits are contrary to the North American Model

FACT: Also, a false statement. But don't just take our word for it; here and an excerpt from a recent study conducted by the Property and Environment Research Center.

"Transferable hunting permits fit neatly into the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation from a regulatory, public management, and common-practice perspective. From a regulatory perspective, state agencies authorize and manage landowner permits just as they do all hunting permits. Whether awarded to a landowner or any other hunter, each hunting permit, commonly called a "tag," authorizes the holder to harvest one animal of a specific game species according to rules set by the state agency, which include when and where the permit is valid, what weapons can be used, and other regulations specific to the animal, such as sex or antler restrictions. Landowners, like all hunters, must also own an up-to-date license to hunt purchased from their state to receive permits, regardless of whether they intend to use or sell the permits."

NMWF/BHA Claim: Allowing landowners to sell elk authorizations on the open market is a privatization of a public resource.

FACT: Elk authorizations are not a guaranteed harvest of an elk. Authorizations are simply the opportunity to participate in a fair chase elk hunt on private property. The state's wildlife is considered a public resource. When a landowner sells their elk authorizations, they are merely selling access to their private property they are not selling the public resource.



NMWF/BHA Claim: New Mexico resident hunters are priced out of the private tag market.

FACT: EPLUS authorizations are equal opportunity. That means they can be given or sold to a resident or non-resident hunter. The assertion that New Mexicans are too poor to participate in EPLUS is inaccurate and offensive. NM resident hunters utilize landowner elk authorizations every year. Approximately 40% of EPLUS authorizations go to NM resident hunters. EPLUS tags are also offered by landowners at a wide range of prices and many of them are simply donated, including to support youth, veterans and other causes.

NMWF/BHA Claim: NM should move to a trespass fee system.

FACT: The EPLUS system is mutually beneficial to all stakeholders (landowners, hunters, & the state wildlife management agency). A straight trespass fee system only benefits large landowners and outfitters.

- The EPLUS system was established 40 years ago to assist the NMDGF in compensating private landowners for wildlife damages. The idea was to create a system where the open market would reward and incentivize private land wildlife conservation without reducing the overall agency budget. The system has evolved over decades into the very efficient program that exists today. EPLUS has substantially reduced the NMDGF need to reimburse landowners for wildlife depredation/damages and has grown into a program that recognizes the important benefits that private lands make to healthy elk populations.
- The EPLUS program has given elk value. Without EPLUS elk are pests that compete for resources with other income producing assets (such as cattle or crops). EPLUS encourages and incentivizes landowners to work together with the NMDGF to manage elk populations.
- EPLUS elk authorizations are traceable, and landowners are required to pay NM gross receipts taxes on each authorization. Because authorizations can be traced, NM Taxation and Revenue department can ensure that a portion of the revenue generated by hunting on private land goes back to the local tax base. A trespass fee system would be nearly impossible to trace.
- Without EPLUS it is assumed that more elk permits will be distributed through the public land draw. This will increase the number of hunters on the public land, reduce overall hunter satisfaction, and will simply push more elk onto the private land (exacerbating landowner elk conflict).