



ELK – PRIVATE LANDS USE SYSTEM (E-PLUS)



INFORMATION FOR E-PLUS LANDOWNERS

For detailed info, please see Private Land Elk License Allocation 19.30.5 NMAC

As of 7-25-08

Under the Private Land Elk License Allocation rule 19.30.5 NMAC, effective October 17, 2005, the objective of the Elk - Private Lands Use System (E-PLUS) is to establish an equitable and flexible system that recognizes the contributions of private lands and landowners to the management of elk and their habitats, while providing for economic benefit and an appropriate, biologically sound, and effective harvest through sport hunting.

Qualified landowners who sign elk agreements with the department each year are issued elk landowner authorizations for the upcoming season and can barter, sell or trade them. When a ranch property changes ownership, the new owner is required to re-apply by the February 1 deadline if they wish to participate in E-PLUS.

This detailed information is for properties that are within the Core Occupied Elk Range (COER) of each Game Management Unit (GMU). The COER boundary is designated within each GMU as containing the majority of routine and substantial elk use, and is the area that elk management goals and subsequent harvest objectives are based on. COER boundaries are available on our web site at www.wildlife.state.nm.us on the Hunting Page under Maps. As the elk herds expand and contract, COER boundaries will be adjusted on a two-year cycle to correspond with the Big Game Rule.

For properties that are located outside the COER boundaries, please contact your Area Game Manager directly (Albuquerque, Raton, Las Cruces or Roswell, depending upon the GMU) to see if the property qualifies for ranch only Outside the COER hunting opportunities. Only properties with elk use are eligible. Outside the COER negotiations are done on a case-by-case basis with no deadline to apply by, but you need to allow time for the negotiations and resulting agreement to be finalized. Negotiations and agreements are updated on an annual basis.

Authorized Ranch Contact is the landowner or person assigned, by notarized statement, by the owner(s) or a company officer, to act as the liaison between the property and the Department and is responsible for reporting ranch changes, signing all agreements, handling appeal matters and receiving authorizations. Even though the ranch contact may be representing the property, please remember that the authorizations are issued on behalf of the property landowner(s). Please make sure that any agreement between ranch contact and owner is clearly understood.

Combining Neighboring Properties into One Signup: The Department encourages landowners to cooperate and combine properties to the extent possible on a willing basis to help qualify for the most beneficial or useful issuance of authorizations. If combining properties, the ranch contact must ensure they are fully authorized to act on behalf of all property owners involved. Combining properties can be an effective way to avoid being classified as a Small Contributing Ranch.

FOR "NEW TO E-PLUS" LANDOWNERS – Inside the COER – 19.30.5.8 A and B

HOW TO APPLY: *(Deadline: postmarked or hand-delivered no later than Feb 1 to the Santa Fe Office)*

- ▶ Complete the upcoming season's Initial Elk Application / Initial Agreement (available on the website or by calling for an application to be mailed). The landowner **AND** the authorized ranch contact (if different than the landowner) must sign the Initial Application / Initial Agreement to ensure all parties are aware of the signup and legal responsibilities involved.

- After the property has been approved for participation, the authorized ranch contact will then become the liaison between the property and the department.
- ▶ If the property was previously enrolled in E-PLUS, check the Change to Existing Ranch box and indicate the previous owner(s) and the ranch ID number (if known).
- ▶ The Initial E-PLUS Agreement will only become valid once the property has been evaluated and determined to meet the minimum requirements for participation. Choose the ranch option on page 3 and sign/date the agreement on page 5.
- ▶ Submit the application packet to the Santa Fe Office by the deadline (address is indicated on the Initial Application).
- ▶ The documentation listed on page 2 of the application is required. Applications submitted without the required documentation or received after the deadline will not be processed.

FOR LANDOWNERS ALREADY PARTICIPATING IN E-PLUS – 19.30.5.8 A and B

In order to ensure fair and equitable allocation of the limited number of private land elk authorizations available in each GMU, it is essential that the Department know exactly how many acres are being claimed for each signup for the upcoming season **BEFORE** allocations are determined for the upcoming season. Existing ranches in E-PLUS will automatically receive a Landowner Agreement for Elk in early December and any ranch changes can be indicated directly on the agreement as appropriate.

By returning the signed agreement by the February 1 deadline each year, the authorized ranch contact ensures that the department has the correct ranch information, including the correct number of acres that they are authorized to represent, and the department knows that the ranch wishes to be active for the upcoming season.

Periodically a participating property may decide not to participate in E-PLUS for the upcoming season due to a variety of reasons (drought and/or fire concerns, family matters, etc). Properties will automatically receive an agreement to participate each year in early December, but after two years of non-activation of an agreement, the property will be removed from E-PLUS. If they wish to participate again, they must re-apply and submit an Initial Application / Initial Agreement and required documents by the February 1 deadline.

On the yearly agreement, the authorized ranch contact must:

- ▶ Ensure that they have the authority to act on behalf of the landowner(s)
- ▶ Ensure that the ranch information is current and up-to-date:
 - If adding acreage:
 - Indicate additional acreage on agreement
 - Attach a new ranch boundary map
 - Attach a copy of the deed and legal description of the new acreage being added.
 - If the property belongs to another landowner, a notarized statement from the landowner(s) authorizing the ranch contact to represent their property must be included.
 - If reducing acreage,
 - Indicate reduction of acreage on agreement
 - Attach a new ranch boundary map
 - If available, include a legal description of the property that has been removed from this signup.
- ▶ Ensure that the department has an up-to-date ranch boundary map on file for the signup.
- ▶ Ensure that the agreement (and required attachments if applicable) is hand-delivered or postmarked no later than February 1.

Changing the Authorized Ranch Contact: The landowner(s) may change the contact person at any time. Please submit notarized statements from all landowner(s) involved agreeing to the assignment of the new contact. If the agreement has been received by a landowner who wishes to assign someone else to be the ranch contact, please indicate the new ranch contact's name, address, phone numbers on the agreement, attach the required notarized statement(s) and have the new contact sign the agreement.

If the ranch or property has been sold: Indicate this on the unsigned agreement and return it. We will then inactivate your signup and await the new owner's Initial Application/Initial Agreement if they wish to participate in E-PLUS. New owners have until February 1 to submit their application packet to the Santa Fe office.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS:

A new signup will be evaluated to make sure it meets the minimum requirements for participation and is within the Core Occupied Elk Range (see website for maps showing the COERs). Properties outside the COER that have elk habitat and elk use may be eligible for ranch only elk hunting opportunities – contact your Area Game Manager for details on how to qualify.

Minimum requirements – 19.30.5.8A

- ▶ Must be within the COER;
- ▶ Must provide meaningful benefit to elk;
- ▶ Elk must be accepted on property -- filing an elk depredation complaint will automatically remove the property from E-PLUS;
- ▶ Landowner or lessee must agree that participation is voluntary;
- ▶ Property must meet the minimum requirements on an annual basis.

Signups not accepted:

- ▶ Private lands within villages, towns or subdivisions that prohibit hunting or discharge of firearms unless combined with qualified property outside these restricted boundaries;
- ▶ Properties where hunting is considered unsafe.

Subdivisions that prohibit hunting or considered unsafe to hunt may be eligible to sign up as unit-wide if:

- ▶ the majority of homeowners wish to participate, are willing to combine into one signup under the Homeowners Association and an application packet has been submitted by the February 1 deadline;
- ▶ the property is evaluated and determined to provide meaningful benefit to elk; and
- ▶ the homeowner's association is willing to sign a special agreement indicating they will be issued unit-wide authorization(s) as appropriate but the subdivision properties will be closed to hunting.

If a property qualifies for participation, an Elk Contribution Rating (ECR) will be assigned:

- ▶ 1.0 Occasional elk use
- ▶ 1.25 Frequent elk use
- ▶ 1.5 Continuous elk presence

Properties that **do not** qualify:

Notification will be mailed to ranch contact if the property does not qualify for participation in E-PLUS. Non-qualifying landowners have until April 1 to submit an appeal BUT must provide documentation substantiating elk use on the property. The department may need to take up to twelve months to reevaluate the property for the appropriate elk use.

ELK ALLOCATIONS – 19.30.5.9, 19.30.5.10, 19.30.5.11, 19.30.5.12

Allocations for participating ranches (new signups and existing properties) will be determined in March/April of each year. An Authorization Account Statement listing the authorization hunt information will be mailed to the assigned ranch contact in April.

There are 2 types of qualifying E-PLUS signups within the COER:

1. **Base property** – signups that receive allocations based on their weighted COER acreage
2. **Small Contributing Ranch (SCR)** – qualifying properties that are not large enough to receive an allocation based solely on their weighted COER acreage.

Whether a signup is considered a base property or SCR will be determined on an annual basis as the allocations are run each March. Properties whose weighted acres fall right at the line between qualifying as a base property or becoming an SCR may find themselves a base property one year and SCR the next. This will depend upon the number of private land elk authorizations available for the upcoming season in the unit.

There are 3 types of authorizations:

1. **Base Authorizations**– authorizations resulting from the number of private acres x the ECR assigned.
2. **Bonus Authorizations** – extra authorizations that *may* be available because other private lands in the COER did not enroll in the program and claim their authorizations, or extra authorizations that are the result of the average number of authorizations that were issued, but not used, over the previous 2 years.
3. **Incentive Authorizations** – extra authorizations that are awarded to a ranch to recognize and encourage management practices that significantly benefit elk.

Please Note: The number of authorizations that a property qualifies for can change from season to season, depending upon the elk management plan for that unit, hunter harvest results and the number of elk needing to be harvested.

Allocations are based upon one of the following (depending upon the property's circumstances and location):

- The formula in 19.30.5.9 Determination and Distribution of Private Land Authorizations and Public Land Licenses
- 19.30.5.10 Private Land Only Units (46, 47, 54, 55A, 56A, 57 and 58)
- 19.30.5.11 Lands Outside the Core Occupied Elk Range
- 19.30.5.12 Special Management Properties

SMALL CONTRIBUTING RANCHES (SCRs) – see 19.30.5.9 E(7)

SCRs are properties that contribute meaningful benefit to elk but do not qualify for an authorization based upon the number of authorizations available in the GMU and the number of acres in that signup.

Except in the ranch only GMUs of 4 and 5A, SCR's have the ability to choose either the Ranch Only or Unit-Wide option on their yearly annual agreement.

To determine how many of each bag limit is available in each GMU for the SCR draw:

- ▶ All SCR acreage is added up as one big ranch and run through the formula (pursuant to 19.30.5.9). The resultant number will be the SCR's share of authorizations in that GMU and will be reserved for the drawing.

- ▶ Due to the small number of SCR authorizations thus available and the large amount of SCRs signed up in some GMUs, additional authorizations may be available from the GMU's bonus pool (authorizations allocated to the unenrolled private land within the GMU and/or two-year average of issued authorizations not converted to a license) and added to the SCR draw as **BONUS** authorizations.

SCRs are not guaranteed an authorization every year. The GMU, Quadrant and Statewide Draws have been created in order to maximize an SCR's opportunity to receive an authorization.

How the SCR Draw is Conducted:

SCRs who have submitted their signed agreements will be eligible to draw for one authorization. The list of successful SCRs will be posted on the web site in mid-March under the Private Land Section of the Hunting Page.

▶ GMU Draw

- All eligible SCRs will be randomized and entered into a draw for one authorization in their GMU.
- Beginning with the first randomized SCR on the list, available authorizations will be issued until either authorizations or SCRs run out.
 - Successful SCRs in their GMU will be ineligible in following seasons to draw the same bag limit again until all SCRs in that unit have successfully drawn their first one.
 - SCR authorizations successfully drawn in the GMU Draw will be issued as unit wide unless the ranch only option has been chosen on the agreement.

▶ Quadrant Draw –

- Unsuccessful SCRs in the GMU draw will be automatically entered into a draw for an authorization in a unit located in their Quadrant (NW, SW, SE or NE units).
 - NW – GMUs 2 *through* 10
 - SW – GMUs 13 *through* 23
 - SE – GMUs 34 *and* 36
 - NE – GMUs 44/45, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, *and* 53
- SCRs and bag limits will be randomized.

▶ Statewide Draw

- Unsuccessful SCRs in the Quadrant draw will then be automatically entered into the Statewide draw.
- SCRs and bag limits will be randomized.

Please note:

- ▶ If an SCR is successful in the Quadrant or Statewide draw:
 - The authorization will be issued as unit wide, since the hunt will occur in a unit-wide GMU and the hunter will be hunting on public lands or unit-wide ranches in that unit.
 - If a ranch has chosen to be Ranch Only, the ranch will remain as ranch only in their unit and listed as Ranch Only on the E-PLUS Landowner List.
- ▶ The Quadrant and Statewide draws do not include any authorizations from GMUs 4 or 5A because they are ranch only units with no unit-wide hunting opportunity.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT PROPERTIES (SMPs) – see 19.30.5.12

To be considered an SMP, properties that are being actively managed for wildlife may submit an Elk Conservation & Management Plan to the department for evaluation and approval. Allocations will be based upon management goals, subsequent harvest objectives, estimated elk population and herd structure.

The Elk Conversation & Management Plan must be reviewed annually and updated prior to March 31 of each year.

In addition to the standard E-PLUS Landowner Agreement, qualified SMPs will be required to sign an annual SMP agreement with the department.

Authorizations issued to SMPs will be ranch only. SMP authorizations in GMUs 4 and 5A are ranch only and are **NOT** transferable to other private properties in that unit.

RIGHT TO APPEAL – see 19.30.5.13

To ensure that a property has been properly evaluated by the department, landowners have the right to appeal the following:

- ▶ Number of acreage determined to be Core Occupied Elk Range
- ▶ Elk contribution rating assigned to the property
- ▶ A decision by the department that the property does not meet the minimum requirements to participate.

In all cases of appeal, the landowner is responsible for providing appropriate evidence to substantiate the claim. Once this documentation is submitted, the department has to up to 12 months to properly consider the appeal. Until the appeal is finalized, the ranch evaluation will remain as previously determined by the department.

AUTHORIZATIONS ISSUED TO QUALIFYING SIGNUPS:

Once allocations have been determined for qualifying signups in each GMU, Authorization Account Statements will be created and mailed to the authorized ranch contact in April of each year.

It is the responsibility of the landowner to provide each hunter with the correct authorization information. It is the responsibility of the hunter to know the appropriate hunting requirements as outlined in the 2008-09 Big Game Rules and Info Booklet.

LANDOWNER: Provide the following information to the hunter *(this info is listed on the Authorization Account Statement)*

- Unit and Ranch ID Number
 - Personal Identification Number (PIN)
 - Authorization Number
 - Hunt Info:
 - ♦ Bag Limit
 - ♦ Hunt Unit – *unit where hunt will occur (i.e., Small Contributing Ranches may have drawn an authorization in another unit)*
 - ♦ Hunt Code
 - ♦ Season Date
 - ♦ Fee Type: Standard or Quality
 - ♦ Ranch Status – Unit Wide or Ranch Only
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HUNTER: Obtain the appropriate authorization information from the landowner. Using this information, licenses can be purchased either in person or by mail. There is no deadline to apply for a private land elk license.

By Mail:

- Complete the PLUS License Request Form, using the authorization information from the landowner. (Form is available at www.wildlife.state.nm.us under Apps & Permits or can be obtained at any Game & Fish office.)

- To avoid delays, allow at least 14 days prior to the hunt or use an overnight delivery service.
- Payment can be made by check or money order, payable to NM Dept of Game and Fish.
- Mail to:

Santa Fe Office – Mailing Address

Special Hunts Office
 NM Dept of Game and Fish
 POB 25125
 Santa Fe NM 87504

Santa Fe Office – Street Address*

Special Hunts Office
 NM Dept of Game and Fish
 One Wildlife Way
 Santa Fe NM 87507

*street address to be used for overnight delivery services

In Person:

- Hunter brings in the authorization information obtained from the landowner to any NM Dept of Game and Fish office. Office hours are Monday – Friday, 8am to 5pm.
- Payment can be by cash, credit card, personal check or money order.
- Make check or money order payable to NM Dept of Game and Fish.

Santa Fe – Special Hunts Office

One Wildlife Way
 Santa Fe NM
 (505) 476-8164

NW Area Office

3841 Midway Place NE
 Albuquerque NM
 (505) 222-4700

NE Area Office

215 York Canyon Rd
 Raton NM
 (575) 445-2311

SW Area Office

2715 Northrise Dr
 Las Cruces NM
 (575) 532-2100

SE Area Office

1912 West Second St
 Roswell NM
 (575) 624-6135

E-PLUS LANDOWNER LISTS

There are three E-PLUS Landowner Lists published on the web each June and used by outfitters and hunters who want to obtain private land elk authorizations. Please make sure the phone number listed for the LO List on your E-PLUS agreement is up-to-date.

1. **E-PLUS Landowner List** (non-SCR signups) - *list is sorted by GMU, then Ranch Name*
2. **E-PLUS Small Contributing Ranch List** – *For convenience of the hunter in locating an authorization in a particular unit, this listing will indicate which SCRs have been issued an authorization in that specific unit.*
3. **Outside the COER Ranch Info** – list is sorted by GMU. All outside the COER authorizations are valid only on the privately-deeded lands of the participating property and cannot be used on any public lands.

RANDOM OWNERSHIP UPDATES – see 19.30.5.14

Periodically, the assigned ranch contact will be required to provide updated ownership documents that prove continued eligibility in E-PLUS, and will include, but not be limited to:

- deed(s)
- tax statement with legal description and acreage amounts listed
- ranch boundary map
- written directions to property
- notarized statement from **ALL** co-owners of the property (as listed on the deed) authorizing the ranch contact to represent their interest the property.

Failure to provide the update will result in the signup being placed on review until the documents are provided.

If late documents are provided after allocations have already been allocated for the upcoming season, the signup will remain on review until the following season when allocations can be made that will not affect other landowners in the same GMU.

INACTIVATION OF SIGNUP – 19.30.5.8 (B)(2)(d) and 19.31.2

If the department determines there has been a breach in terms of the agreement or false representation of a property's deeded acreage and/or rightful ownership, the department will suspend the signup from participation for a period up to 3 years and the owner or authorized ranch contact will be subject to the revocation processes set forth in 19.31.2 NMAC.

E-MAIL NOTIFICATION

For landowners wishing to be notified or reminded about proposed changes and upcoming E-PLUS deadlines, please send your e-mail address with the words "E-Mail Notification For Elk" in the Subject Line to:

ruth.anderson@state.nm.us

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE NM DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH:

Wildlife Management Division

Ruth Anderson
E-PLUS Coordinator
NM Dept of Game and Fish
One Wildlife Way
Santa Fe NM 87507
(505) 476-8033

NW Area Office

Bill Taylor
Area Game Manager
NM Dept of Game and Fish
3841 Midway Place NE
Albuquerque NM 87109
(505) 222-4700
GMUs 2 thru 12

NE Area Office

Ryan Walker
Area Game Manager
NM Dept of Game and Fish
215 York Canyon Rd
Raton NM 87740
(505) 445-2311
GMUs 44/45 thru 58

Wildlife Management Division

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SW Area Office

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GMUs 13 thru 24

SE Area Office

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1912 W. Second St
Roswell NM 88201
(505) 624-6135
GMUs 34 thru 37