Elk Foundation Grants Fund Research and Habitat Work in State

Local News

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Olympia, WA - Enhancing over 10,000 acres of habitat and using GPS collars to research the Snoqualmie Valley elk herd top a list of Washington conservation projects slated to receive 2012 grants from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

The RMEF funding commitment totals $189,960 and affects 11 counties: Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, Grays Harbor, King, Lewis, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Stevens and Yakima.

Two projects have statewide interest. One has implications across the northwestern U.S.
The research in Snoqualmie Valley will identify elk herd composition, habitat use and movement patterns, and the data will be used to identify highway crossings and improve management plans, we’re proud to work with the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Dept. of Transportation and other partners on this important project. - David Allen, RMEF president and CEO
Allen added that prescribed burning, weed treatment and forest thinning projects will be used to enhance habitat in many areas of the state.

RMEF’s mission is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife and their habitat. Since 1985, the organization and its partners have completed 484 conservation and hunting heritage outreach projects in Washington with a combined value of more than $106 million.

Funding for RMEF grants is based on local membership drives and banquet fundraising by RMEF chapters and volunteers in Washington. Allen thanked RMEF supporters for their dedication to conservation both in Washington and all across elk country.

RMEF grants will help fund the following 2012 projects in Washington, listed by county:

Asotin County—Prescribe burn 4,200 acres to rejuvenate decadent grasses for foraging elk and deer in the Wenatchee Creek area of Umatilla National Forest (also affects Garfield County); treat 200 acres of noxious weeds in the Blue Mountains Wildlife Area complex (also affects Garfield and Columbia counties); treat 816 acres of noxious weeds on public and private tracts across the county.

Columbia County—Improve public-land forage for elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer by treating noxious weeds on 1,100 acres in the North Touchet River drainage of the Blue Mountains; treat weeds and seed native grasses on 1,950 acres in the Starvout Ridge area near North Patit Creek and Mahloney Mountain.

Grays Harbor County—Thin forest canopy to improve forage for Roosevelt’s elk in the West Fork Humptulips area of Olympic National Forest.

King County—Research Snoqualmie Valley elk herd composition, habitat use and movement patterns using GPS collars to identify highway crossings and improve management plans.

Lewis County—Remove encroaching conifers to improve 290 acres of forage for elk and other wildlife in the Huckleberry Planning Area of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Okanogan County—Provide sponsorship for Bonaparte Lake 2012 Youth Fishing Derby to introduce students to outdoor recreation and conservation.

Pend Oreille County—Prescribe burn 200 acres to rejuvenate forage for elk in the upper Middle Fork of Calispel Creek area of Colville National Forest; prescribe burn 90 acres in the Lost Creek area of Colville National Forest.

Statewide—In coordination with state wildlife agencies in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, research effects of habitat, weather, predators and other factors affecting elk recruitment and future management models; provide sponsorship for the Washington State 2012 Youth Conservation Camp held in San Juan County to introduce students to outdoor recreation and conservation.

Stevens County—Prescribe burn 753 acres of elk winter range in the Hope Mountain area of Colville National Forest.

Yakima County—Thin trees and create forest openings across 123 acres, plus treat 300 acres of noxious weeds, to improve forage for elk in Oak Creek Wildlife Area.

Projects are selected for grants using science-based criteria and a committee of RMEF volunteers and staff along with representatives from partnering agencies and universities. RMEF staff and volunteers select education projects to receive grants.

Partners for 2012 projects in Washington include the Bureau of Land Management, Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service and other agencies, tribes, organizations, corporations and landowners.

About the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation:
RMEF is leading a conservation initiative that has protected or enhanced habitat on over 6 million acres—an area larger than Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Glacier, Yosemite, Rocky Mountain and Great Smoky Mountains national parks combined. RMEF also is a strong voice for hunters in access, wildlife management and conservation policy issues. RMEF members, partners and volunteers, working together as Team Elk, are making a difference all across elk country. Join us at www.rmef.org or 800-CALL ELK.