

ATTACHMENT SS2

REGION 2 SENSITIVE SPECIES EVALUATION FORM

Species: <b>Rocky Mountain elk (<i>Cervus elaphus nelsoni</i>)</b>			
Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
<b>1</b> Distribution within R2	<b>C</b>	There were 6 subspecies of North American Elk, 2 are now extinct. In Region 2, the Rocky Mountain Elk ( <i>C. e. nelsoni</i> ) historically occupied the mountainous regions of western CO and WY, and the Manitoban Elk ( <i>C. e. manitobensis</i> ) occupied the open plains of eastern CO, WY, and SD, NE, KS. The Manitoban Elk is now confined to central Canada. The Rocky Mountain Elk and Rocky Mountain Transplants now occupy all States within Region 2.  Confidence in Rank <b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Jack W. and Dale E. Toweill. 1982.</li> <li>• Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. 2001.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> Distribution outside R2	<b>C</b>	The Rocky Mountain Elk is located throughout the Rocky Mountains from central British Columbia and Alberta to southern Arizona and New Mexico. Rocky Mountain Elk have been successfully transplanted into several states in the central and eastern U.S.  Confidence in Rank <b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Jack W. and Dale E. Toweill. 1982.</li> <li>• Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. 2001.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> Dispersal Capability	<b>C</b>	The Rocky Mountain Elk disperses readily across landscapes, with few habitat-related limitations. They are highly mobile species with virtually no limits to dispersal.  Confidence in Rank <b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Jack W. and Dale E. Toweill. 1982.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> Abundance in R2	<b>C</b>	Populations are very abundant on Forests within the Region, but less abundant on the Grasslands. Hunters harvest thousands of elk each year in CO, WY, and SD. Elk harvest is far less in NE (61 permits) and KS (32 permits).  Confidence in Rank <b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorado Division of Wildlife. 2001.</li> <li>• Wyoming Game &amp; Fish. 2001.</li> <li>• South Dakota Department Game, Fish, Parks. 2001.</li> <li>• Nebraska Game &amp; Parks Commission. 2001.</li> <li>• Kansas Department. Wildlife &amp; Parks. 2001.</li> </ul>

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Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
5 Population Trend in R2	C	State wildlife management agencies indicate elk populations within the Region are stable or increasing.  Confidence in Rank <b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorado Division of Wildlife. 2001.</li> <li>• Wyoming Game &amp; Fish. 2001.</li> <li>• South Dakota Department Game, Fish, Parks. 2001.</li> <li>• Nebraska Game &amp; Parks Commission. 2001.</li> <li>• Kansas Department. Wildlife &amp; Parks. 2001.</li> </ul>
6 Habitat Trend in R2	B	Rocky Mountain Elk utilize a wide variety of habitats and are very adaptable to changing conditions. The quantity of available habitat on National Forest lands is stable, and increasing in value as habitat on adjacent private land is lost to human development. Habitat quality on National Forest lands is likely to be stable to declining due to active fire suppression, livestock grazing practices, and extensive road systems.  Confidence in Rank <b>Moderate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. 2001.</li> </ul>
7 Habitat Vulnerability or Modification	B	Active fire suppression and livestock grazing facilitate advanced succession of vegetation and reduction of forage quality. Habitat effectiveness is reduced and bull elk harvest vulnerability is increased from extensive systems of roads, trails, and off-route travel.  Confidence in Rank <b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Jack W. and Dale E. Toweill. 1982.</li> <li>• Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. 2001.</li> </ul>
8 Life History and Demographics	C	Reproductive rates for elk are high. Breeding at 2 years of age is common for females; 3-4 years for males. One to two young born each year with high survival rate. Females are sensitive to disturbance during calving. Predation on calves can be high but usually not significant. Elk herds also sensitive to disturbance during winter. Repeated disturbance increases stress, depleting energy reserves. Chronic wasting disease is present in the area near the corner of CO, WY and NE but it does not appear to be impacting wild elk populations at this time.  Confidence in Rank <b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Jack W. and Dale E. Toweill. 1982.</li> <li>• Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. 2001.</li> </ul>
Initial Evaluator(s): Craig Grother, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison National Forests			Date: 09/19/2001

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National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region where species is KNOWN (K) or LIKELY(L)<sup>1</sup> to occur:

<u>Colorado NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely	<u>Kansas NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely	<u>Nebraska NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely	<u>South Dakota NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely	<u>Wyoming NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely
Arapaho-Roosevelt NF	X		Cimmaron NG	X		Samuel R.McKelvie NF			Black Hills NF	X		Shoshone NF	X	
White River NF	X					Halsey NF			Buffalo Gap NG			Bighorn NF	X	
Routt NF	X					Nebraska NF			Ft. Pierre NG			Black Hills NF	X	
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison NF	X					Ogalala NG						Medicine Bow NF	X	
San Juan NF	X											Thunder Basin NG		
Rio Grande NF	X													
Pike-San Isabel NF	X													
Comanche NG														
Pawnee NG														

<sup>1</sup> Likely is defined as more likely to occur than not occur on the National Forest or Grassland. This generally can be thought of as having a 50% chance or greater of appearing on NFS lands.