

EPLUS PROPOSED CHANGES
(UPDATED 8-27-18)

At the June 21, 2018 State Game Commission meeting the commission opened the EPLUS rule to allow for changes to portions of the program.

The Elk Private Land Use System (EPLUS) was developed in 2005 to recognize, **“Landowners who provide meaningful benefit to elk and accept elk on their properties and all elk hunters who wish to recreate on deeded lands or public lands within New Mexico’s exterior boundaries.”** (19.30.5.2 NMAC)

The Department of Game and Fish has identified the following areas that need to be reviewed.

- Enrolled properties that do not provide a “meaningful benefit”
- No definition of meaningful benefit
- Properties splitting into smaller acreages
- Allocation process for unconverted rate and bonus
- Small Contributing Ranch (SCR) draw system
- Outside Core Occupied Elk Range (COER) process
- Rule language needs updates
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Suggested improvements:

- Develop Commission approved Guidelines for program administration
- Define “meaningful benefit” based on biological criteria
- Use habitat based evaluation to screen all properties currently in EPLUS
- Re-evaluate any properties with acreage changes
- Remove properties that don’t provide meaningful benefit
- Route Bonus and Unconverted authorizations through the SCRs first
- Eliminate SCR draw history system
- Develop a weighted draw for SCR properties
- Make outside COER private land tags available over-the-counter
- Draft new rule language

Amendments as of 8-27-2018:

- Included COER boundary proposals from the Elk Rule Development to the EPLUS presentation
- Added Antlerless as a tag option for outside COER (Secondary Mgt. Zone)
- Added proposed hunt dates for outside COER (Secondary Mgt. Zone) in the presentation
- Allowed for a specific ranch code to be required before a hunter could buy an elk license Over-The-Counter
- Added public comments to presentation as of 8/20/18
- Recommend a property habitat score of seven for program participation
- Outlined appeal process for properties not meeting minimum criteria in presentation

If you would like to comment on the proposal, please send an email to:

DFG-EPLUS-Rules@state.nm.us