



## **Elk & Vegetation Management Program Volunteer- Team Member: Elk Culling**

Resource Stewardship Division

Contact: Volunteer Program Coordinator 970-586-1330

### **Background:**

Rocky Mountain National Park has an extensive program to document and preserve the park's natural resources. This encompasses a wide variety of initiatives including monitoring and management of the park's flora and fauna.

Research has shown that the elk herd in Rocky Mountain National Park and the Estes Valley, is larger, less migratory and more concentrated than it would be under natural conditions. As a result, willow and aspen stands are declining, depriving other wildlife of the important habitat they need.

The Elk and Vegetation Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement is the result of a seven year research phase followed by a four year interagency planning process. During plan development, the National Park Service (NPS) extensively consulted with cooperating agencies including, the town of Estes Park, Larimer County, the Estes Valley Recreation and Park District, the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), Grand County, the town of Grand Lake, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S.D.A. Forest Service. The plan, using adaptive management principles, will guide park management for the next 20 years. The Final Plan was released in December 2007. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed February 15, 2008. This plan will be implemented by the National Park Service (NPS) inside Rocky Mountain National Park.

The plan relies on a variety of conservation tools including fencing, elk redistribution, vegetation restoration, and lethal reduction (culling). National Park Service personnel would be responsible for culling operations. To augment NPS personnel, authorized agents may assist in culling operations under the direct supervision of NPS personnel. Cost, efficiency, and effectiveness will be the factors that determine when additional assistance is needed. For purposes of the plan, "authorized agents" could include: professional staff from other federal, state, or local agencies or Indian tribes, or qualified volunteers. The NPS will select and supervise all personnel, including qualified volunteers.

For more information about the Elk & Vegetation Management Plan please visit the Rocky Mountain National Park website at [nps.gov/romo](http://nps.gov/romo).

### **Ideal Candidate(s):**

The ideal candidate for this position adheres to a strong conservation/preservation ethic, is able to work well within a team, take direction from NPS personnel, and has a desire to contribute to the overall ecological health of Rocky Mountain National Park.

In addition, candidates should have some experience removing elk or ungulates, have experience field-dressing elk or ungulates, possess a high level of proficiency/accuracy with firearms, have a high degree of safety consciousness, and be in good to excellent physical condition.

### **Duties:**

This position, as a volunteer for the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, is within the division of Resource Stewardship at Rocky Mountain National Park.

Volunteers will be members of teams and assigned specific duties each day they are directly related to the success of the elk and vegetation management program. Specifically, the duties are:

1. to field-dress animals in a manner which will preserve the meat for human consumption.
2. to lift, drag, haul, skin, and generally process carcasses.
3. to lethally remove individual elk with a firearm as directed by NPS personnel.

This position may require contact or interaction with agency (NPS or CDOW) staff, park visitors, and the general public, and, therefore, will require the wearing of an item of clothing which will identify individual participants as a National Park Service volunteer.

This position may also involve assisting with collection of biological samples for Chronic Wasting Disease testing and general research, as well as participating in population surveys.

### **Skills, Experience and Other Factors:**

Selected candidate(s) must:

- Possess a valid state driver's license.
- Be a U.S. citizen and at least 18 years old.
- Pass a background investigation.
- Work as a crucial member of a team.
- Have the ability to work outside during winter months in adverse conditions including low temperatures (below 0°F), snow, wind, and rain.
- Have the ability to work early mornings in low light situations.
- Have the ability to report for work within 12 hours notice.
- Have the ability to take direct supervision from NPS staff.
- Be available for an interview with agency personnel prior to selection.
- Have the ability to lift, carry and/or drag up to 100 lbs., over uneven terrain in adverse weather conditions for up to two miles.
- Attend and pass a three-day training course which will include a rigorous range shooting test.

### **Working Conditions and Physical Demands:**

The work may include hiking several miles over uneven terrain and performing duties in adverse weather conditions at elevations greater than 10,000 feet. Before making a commitment to this position, individuals who are not accustomed to high elevations should contact their physicians or primary healthcare professionals about potential complications with medication or medical conditions which can be aggravated by high elevations and extreme physical activity in very adverse weather conditions.

### **Special Notes:**

- A volunteer of this project may not acquire any meat directly related to their culling activities or activities of their team members, but they will be eligible to participate in the acquisition of meat through a separate meat donation program (e.g., lotteries).
- Only approved and inspected firearms will be allowed or used in Rocky Mountain National Park.
- Any volunteer, who wishes to use his/her personally-owned firearm must agree to the firearm's inspection at any time and sign an affidavit ensuring the firearm has not been altered since its last inspection. Otherwise, government-owned firearms must be used.
- Acceptance into the training course does not guarantee participation in the culling program.
- Applications will be considered and evaluated in the order received.

### **Time Commitment:**

- Initially, three days of training; recertification and training may be required on an annual basis.
- Culling program commitment is flexible but may require availability on very short notice (12 hours).

### **Season:**

- Winter months

### **Housing:**

- No housing is provided.
- Limited free campsites (no hookups) are available at Moraine Park Campground, within the park, on a first-come, first-served basis on the same, or adjacent, day to volunteers who work at least four hours.

### **Uniforms:**

- Any required clothing will be provided.

### **Compensation:**

- A maximum reimbursement of \$7/day for food/out-of-pocket expenses may be available to team members who volunteer at least six hours in a day (this does not include travel time to and from the park).