



Elk Feedgrounds: A Challenge We Can Take On Phase I Collaborative Process

February 2021



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Introduction..... 2

SECTION 1: Phase I Background and Feedground Steering Team..... 3

SECTION 2: Phase I Planning..... 5

SECTION 3: Phase I Meetings 7

SECTION 4: Phase I Attendee Questions 9

SECTION 5: Phase I Public Comment.....10

SECTION 6: Phase I Reflections15

SECTION 7: Phase II Recommendations, Steps, and Tentative Timeline.....16

Appendix A: Phase I Communications and Outreach.....19

Appendix B: Phase I Presentations21

Introduction

Elk have been utilizing the feedgrounds of northwest Wyoming since they were established in the early 1900s. Feedgrounds were initially created to prevent large die-offs of elk in harsh winter conditions. The purpose for feeding has since grown to keep elk out of ranchers' hay and prevent elk from transmitting brucellosis to cattle. Thousands of elk are fed each year on the 22 Game and Fish Department operated feedgrounds in Teton, Sublette, and Lincoln counties, as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Elk Refuge. As elk have gathered on feedgrounds for over a century, high concentrations of elk create concern around the transmission of wildlife disease and its impact on herd health over the long-term.

The supplemental feeding of elk on feedgrounds is a highly complicated and often contentious issue with biological, social, economic, and political considerations along with concern around wildlife diseases. From agriculture operators to sportspeople, wildlife watchers to wildlife managers, area residents to tourists, many stand to be impacted by this issue. A multi-phased collaborative process is being undertaken to engage the public, share information, and gather input to develop a long-term management plan to move this discussion and associated decisions forward.

This report describes Phase I of this collaborative process. Phase I was designed to share information on feedground history, operations, and related disease concerns. Phase I was also designed to gather feedback that would inform how these issues are addressed in Phase II. The following pages detail the Phase I Steering Team's effort to deliver information, receive comments, and design preliminary recommendations for future phases of this collaborative process. Additional details on this process can be found at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Get-Involved/elk-feedgrounds>.

SECTION 1: Phase I Background and Feedground Steering Team

Phase I Background

During the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's (Department) 2019-2020 chronic wasting disease (CWD) management planning and development process, elk feedgrounds were identified as a complex issue to be addressed separately from the CWD planning process. As outlined in the Department's July 2020 approved Wyoming CWD Management Plan, the public CWD Working Group recommended the Department initiate a separate, comprehensive effort to address elk feedgrounds (CWD Working Group Final Report, Recommendation 1.4). While CWD is a significant factor in elk feedgrounds management, the ultimate goal of the elk feedgrounds collaborative process is to consider all biological, social, economic, and political issues, along with wildlife diseases, to achieve a durable, publicly supported long-term feedgrounds management plan for Department operated elk feedgrounds.

Phase I of the elk feedgrounds collaborative process was launched in spring 2020 with the development of a Department feedground steering team (Steering Team). As outlined in a May 2020 memo from Department Director Brian Nesvik and Wildlife Division Chief Rick King, the goals of Phase I are to:

1. share information related to feedground history, objectives of the program, and the complexities that have evolved related to continuing feeding operations, and
2. secure public and stakeholder feedback that will lead to the development of future strategy and policy for the State of Wyoming feedground program, and set the conditions for Phase II.

The Phase I target completion date was mid-January 2021.

Steering Team Members and Goals

The Phase I Steering Team was led by Scott Edberg, Wildlife Division Deputy Chief, and included the following Department personnel:

- Dr. Sam Allen, Wildlife Veterinarian
- Hank Edwards, Wildlife Health Lab Supervisor
- Mark Gocke, Jackson-Pinedale Public Information Specialist
- Brad Hovinga, Jackson Region Wildlife Supervisor
- Jordan Kraft, South Pinedale Game Warden
- John Lund, Pinedale Region Wildlife Supervisor
- Janet Milek, Casper Public Information Specialist
- Brandon Scurlock, Pinedale Region Wildlife Management Coordinator
- Ben Wise, Jackson Region Wildlife Disease Specialist

Gary Hornberger, Feedgrounds Supervisor, and Dave Hyde, Feedgrounds Manager, were also contributors to the Steering Team.

Federal partners involved in Phase I include:

- Frank Durbian and Eric Cole, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - National Elk Refuge
- Douglas (Gus) Smith, National Park Service - Grand Teton National Park
- Mark Thonhoff, Bureau of Land Management - Pinedale Resource District
- Jim Wilder, United States Forest Service - Bridger Teton National Forest

Tara Kuipers of Tara Kuipers Consulting was hired as a process facilitator to assist with Phase I. The Steering Team met at least monthly from June through December 2020. Additional sub-groups met more frequently for focused work on presentation content, technology considerations, meeting publicity and outreach, and related topics. Throughout Phase I, the Steering Team remained focused on the Phase I goals described above, striving to highlight the complexity of feedgrounds, the continuing public education needs, and how to execute future phases.

SECTION 2: Phase I Planning

Public Meeting Planning

Initially, six public meetings were scheduled at locations across Wyoming: November 30, 2020, in Jackson; December 1, 2020, in Afton; December 2, 2020, in Pinedale; December 3, 2020, in Green River; December 14, 2020, in Casper; and December 15, 2020, in Cheyenne. The Steering Team remained committed to holding in-person Phase I meetings and planned accordingly throughout early fall 2020.

In October 2020, in light of COVID 19-related safety considerations and public health advisories/orders, the committee transitioned all Phase I public meetings to an online format. The revised schedule included the following online public meetings:

- Tuesday, December 1, 2020, at 5:00 pm
- Wednesday, December 2, 2020, at 1:00 pm
- Wednesday, December 2, 2020, at 6:00 pm
- Thursday, December 3, 2020, at 4:00 pm

While online public meetings allowed Phase I to move forward in a timely manner and meet its goals, there may have been different information and communications exchanged between attendees and Department personnel if an in-person format were possible. The Steering Team recognizes the virtual format's challenges in Phase I and will plan Phase II with those dynamics in mind.

Technology Considerations

Although the meetings transitioned to a virtual format, opportunities to share information, address clarifying questions, and receive comments were maintained. This included:

- Holding public meetings via Zoom Webinar® with panelists sharing their presentations and addressing questions during each of the four public meetings.
- Offering Question and Answer (Q & A) opportunities with presenters both verbally (as attendees could unmute and ask questions) and in writing (as attendees could use the chat function to type questions to be addressed either in the meeting or in a follow-up correspondence).
- Recording all meetings and providing a link to one recorded presentation (December 1, 2020 session) available on the Department's feedground website the week following Phase I meetings.
- Gathering public comment via SurveyMonkey®, a web-based survey to collect Phase I participant input, from December 1, 2020, through January 8, 2021. General written comments were also received by mail at the Department's Casper office.

-
- Creating a website to share information on the elk feedgrounds collaborative process:
<https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Get-Involved/elk-feedgrounds>.

Phase I Communications and Outreach

The Department engaged in various public outreach efforts to build awareness of and invite involvement in Phase I. This included the creation of a dedicated elk feedgrounds website and email address; seven Department press releases (one jointly released with Grand Teton National Park); two direct emails to interested parties; two features in the monthly Hunting Update; seven social media posts; several follow-up media contacts to correct information; and, a number of mentions and links in regional newsletters and television and radio programs. A detailed outline of Phase I Communications and Outreach is found in Appendix A.

SECTION 3: Phase I Meetings

Internal Meeting

A Phase I webinar was conducted virtually to Department personnel on November 10, 2020. It was designed to inform Department personnel of the upcoming collaborative process and gather feedback on presentation content ahead of the public meetings. This internal meeting followed the same format and agenda as the public meetings. This webinar was recorded for future viewing by employees who could not attend on November 10.

Public Meeting Registration Process and Attendance

In press releases and outreach information shared about Phase I, a link was provided to register for one of the four meetings. Immediately upon registering with their name, email address, city, and state, attendees received a confirmation email containing a link to join the meeting at their respective date and time, a description of the meeting format and length, instructions on how to use the webinar platform, and a contact email for questions. The same confirmation email was re-sent to registered attendees approximately 12 hours prior to the beginning of each respective meeting.

Space was limited to 90 participants per meeting. This allowed panelists and the facilitator's attendance at each meeting, and ensured a group size for attendee questions and comments to be appropriately managed. Individuals were encouraged to sign up for an alternative session or be added to a waitlist if a preferred session was filled. Due to continual registration changes from participant sign-ups and cancellations, all attendees who expressed a desire to attend were accommodated. Several attendees who inquired about registering for one of the four meetings opted to view the recording upon learning that was an option.

Figure 1: Summary of Public Meeting Registration and Attendance

		Registered	Attended
Session 1:	12/1/20, 5:00 PM	90	34
Session 2:	12/2/20, 1:00 PM	90	47
Session 3:	12/2/20, 6:00 PM	90	24
Session 4:	12/3/20, 4:00 PM	90	32
COMBINED:		360	137

Of the 137 attendees, 112 (81.75%) indicated they were Wyoming residents.

Meeting Agenda and Presentations

Each Phase I meeting lasted approximately three hours and followed the same agenda as the example in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Public Meeting Agenda

5:00 pm	Welcome and Meeting Purpose: Scott Edberg
5:05 pm	Overview of Technology and Agenda: Tara Kuipers
5:15 pm	Panelist Presentations and Q&A Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• John Lund: Feedgrounds History and Operations, then Q&A• Hank Edwards: Disease Overview• Brandon Scurlock: Brucellosis Management, then Q&A
6:45 pm	Federal Partner Presentations and Q&A Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frank Durbian and Eric Cole, US Fish and Wildlife Service• Jim Wilder, US Forest Service• Mark Thonoff, Bureau of Land Management• Gus Smith, National Park Service• Q&A on Federal Partner Presentations
7:15 pm	Public Comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendees were asked to share comments via an online survey link• Option for verbal and written comments in the webinar
8:00 pm	Next Steps and Adjourn: Scott Edberg

Other Steering Team members were available to provide additional information to participants and worked behind the scenes to ensure the meetings were managed well. A copy of each Phase I presentation is found in Appendix B.

Phase I and Question and Answer Session Recordings

The Phase I presentations were recorded and made available on the feedground website on Monday, December 7, 2020. At the time of preparing this report, the Phase I recorded presentations video has been viewed 469 times. The average viewing time is 26 minutes, and 65 viewers (14%) completed the recording in its entirety.

A supplemental Q&A session was held on January 5, 2021, at 4:00 pm to provide additional public engagement for those unable to attend a live meeting but watched the recorded public meeting. After viewing the recording, this session offered members of the public an opportunity to ask clarifying questions of the Department and federal agency panelists. The session was limited to 90 attendees. Twenty-seven individuals registered for the session, and 23 individuals attended. The session lasted until all attendee questions were addressed, which was approximately 90 minutes. The Q&A Session was recorded, and the recording was included on the feedground website on January 6, 2021. At the time of preparing this report, the Q&A Session video has been

viewed 15 times. The average viewing time is 24 minutes, and three viewers (21%) completed the recording in its entirety.

SECTION 4: Phase I Attendee Questions

A goal of Phase I was to address clarifying questions on each presentation and on feedgrounds overall. Questions were received from attendees verbally and in writing during the live public meetings. They were addressed by panelists in the meeting or, if needed, in follow-up correspondence. Attendee questions ranged widely. *A list of several questions received during Phase I meetings is included below. A complete compilation of all attendee questions is available upon request.*

Historical and Operational Questions

- *What are the historical or earliest recorded elk populations in the area?*
- *Where would elk have wintered historically?*
- *How do surrounding states deal with these issues, or are feedgrounds unique to Wyoming?*
- *Does the cost of feedgrounds provided include the cost of damage paid by the Department?*
- *Is there good connectivity between winter feedgrounds to summer range? Do the elk linger near feedgrounds during the summer?*

Disease Questions

- *Is the issue of elk comingling with cattle only important during elk calving?*
- *Should hunters be concerned with contracting disease from harvested elk?*
- *How long can an elk potentially live if infected with CWD?*
- *Do you feel there will be more death loss from disease or from starvation from discontinued feeding programs?*

Federal Partner Questions

- *Are federal feeding programs supported via state license sales or federal appropriations?*
- *Does the National Park Service (NPS) test for wildlife disease in the park?*
- *Are there additional areas of the Forest and BLM that could be considered for winter range protections to expand wintering habitat for elk and reduce the need for supplemental feeding?*
- *Does the National Elk Refuge (NER) employ low-density feeding? Do they have enough room for low-density feeding?*

Overall Questions

- *How have panelists considered climate change on disease transmission?*
- *How much would elk populations decline if winter feeding was discontinued?*
- *How do wolves influence elk use of native winter ranges?*
- *What species of wooded plants, trees, and other vegetation are we most concerned about in relation to the feedgrounds, with an increase in native land use?*

SECTION 5: Phase I Public Comment

The Steering Team developed the following questions for Phase I participants:

1. Did this presentation provide you with new information?
2. What additional information pertaining to elk feedgrounds do you need?
3. What role do you believe elk feedgrounds play in Wyoming today?
4. What role do you believe elk feedgrounds play in Wyoming into the future?
5. What ideas or suggestions do you have as we begin to plan Phase II?
6. Please rank the following topics according to your priorities:
 - a. Wildlife Disease (scale of 1: low to 5: high)
 - b. Impacts on Agriculture (scale of 1: low to 5: high)
 - c. Economic Impacts (scale of 1: low to 5: high)

Phase I public comments were primarily collected via SurveyMonkey® to address the questions above. The survey link was provided to attendees at each meeting, in an email following each meeting, and was available on the feedground website. General written comments were also received by sending them to the Department's Casper region office.

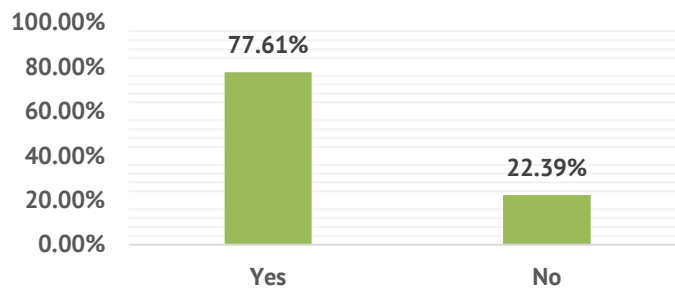
Comments via Online Survey

From December 1, 2020, through January 10, 2021, 171 individual respondents accessed and initiated comments on the web-based form, and approximately 130 respondents addressed all (or nearly all) questions. Of the 171 respondents, 119 (70%) indicated they were Wyoming residents, and 113 (66%) indicated they participated in a Phase I meeting or watched the recording. *A summary of responses and primary themes from public comments received are included below. A complete compilation of all attendee responses is available upon request.*

Q2: Which group do you most strongly associate with? (169 responded)

Conservation NGO	8.3%
Federal Agency	1.2%
General Public	22.5%
Landowner	3%
Landowner-Agriculture	3%
Local Government	0.6%
Outdoor Media	1.2%
Outfitter/Guide	12.5%
Scientist	3%
Sportsperson	44%
State Agency	0.6%

Q3: Did this presentation provide you with new information on elk feedgrounds operation and disease issues? (134 responded)



Q4: After listening to this presentation, is there additional information pertaining to elk feedgrounds that you need to make an informed contribution in Phase II? (119 responded)

- *Changes to winter elk habitat over time; specifically, municipal and agriculture development*
- *Economic impacts of feedgrounds (their existence, closure, agriculture damages, etc.)*
- *The strategies other Western states have done (or are doing) on winter elk habitat and management*
- *Candid information on the political pressures related to this contentious issue*
- *Impacts of feedgrounds (positive or negative) on other species (mule deer, predators, bison)*
- *Predictive modeling related to disease and elk populations and management trade-offs (e.g., if we do X, we predict the outcome will be Y)*
- *How landowners are (or can be) compensated for elk use during winter*
- *Carrying capacity of available native winter range for elk and other wildlife in the absence of feedgrounds*
- *How can or how are elk encouraged to use native winter range versus feedgrounds, rancher's hay*
- *The implications of CWD for humans given CWD is detected in water sources*

Q5: What role do you believe elk feedgrounds play in Wyoming today? (130 responded)

- *Feedgrounds are critical to elk population stability; address development pressure and loss of historic winter habitat; improve traffic safety by reducing elk-vehicle collisions; allow opportunities for non-consumptive users (e.g., wildlife watching, photography) to enjoy elk; provide economic benefits via tourism, wildlife viewing, and hunt outfitting; reduce conflict and damage payouts to agriculture producers; allow for healthier beef industry through reduced brucellosis transmission.*
- *Feedgrounds artificially interrupt elk migration patterns; create an unnecessary and highly risky disease reservoir; represent a costly measure to state resources; allows for irresponsible land management and grazing practices; are an unsustainable solution to a complex issue.*

Q6: What role do you believe elk feedgrounds play in Wyoming into the future? (130 responded)

- Close feedgrounds immediately to mitigate against urgent disease risks
- Minimize feedgrounds as the first step in the eventual closure of feedgrounds
- Use feedgrounds on an emergency basis, but not as a sustaining option
- Improve habitat, reduce livestock use on public land winter range, and work with ranchers on fence-out/protection strategies to reduce reliance on feedgrounds
- Minimize feedgrounds and shift focus on elk management practices that do not involve congregating elk (e.g., maintain feeding but minimize feedgrounds whenever possible)
- Maintain feedgrounds, and shorten feeding times as much as possible
- Maintain feedgrounds, and turn more focus on disease monitoring and research
- Maintain with no change to sustain elk populations, agriculture/cattle industry, economic benefits, and viable hunting opportunities

Q7: Our next phase (Phase II) will include sharing more in-depth information and research, weighing alternatives and trade-offs, and making recommendations about long-term management of elk feedgrounds. What ideas or suggestions do you have as we begin to plan Phase II? (For example, what ideas do you have for a successful collaborative public process, who do you feel should be involved as we move forward with developing the next phase?) (118 responded)

WHO?

- Landowners impacted by, in close proximity to, and/or familiar with feedgrounds
- Ranchers, farmers, and cattle producers
- Sportspersons (resident and nonresident)
- WY taxpayers and WY hunting license holders
- Outfitters and guides
- Recreationists, wildlife watchers, photographers, guides
- NGOs and environmental organizations
- Local elected officials and citizens
- Land management agencies
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department
- Scientists and biologists
- Health Department officials
- Tourism and economic development leaders
- Individuals invested in the outcome, willing to listen to evidence and facts, and respect others' values

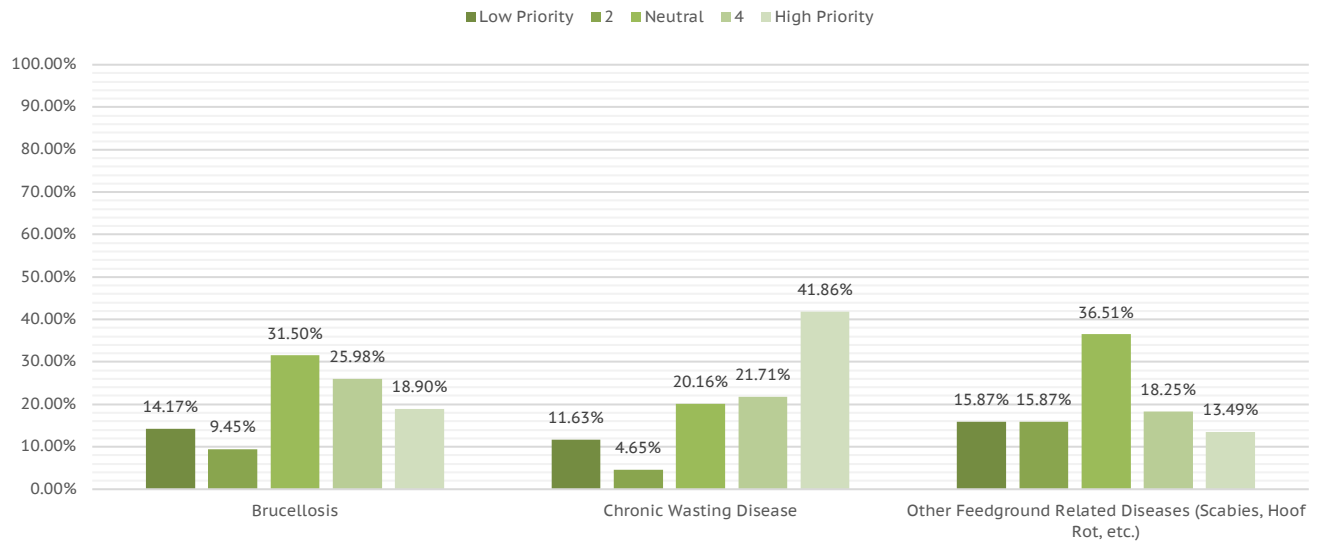
HOW?

- Data-driven, science-first
- Take the long-term view
- Ensure elk are primary stakeholder and focus
- Focus on ALL alternatives
- Department maintains decision-making role
- Education-focused, to continue sharing relevant facts and facets
- Online allows for broader participation
- In-person preferred for engaging with others
- Clearly define the problem and the parameters

Please Rank the following topics based on your priorities:

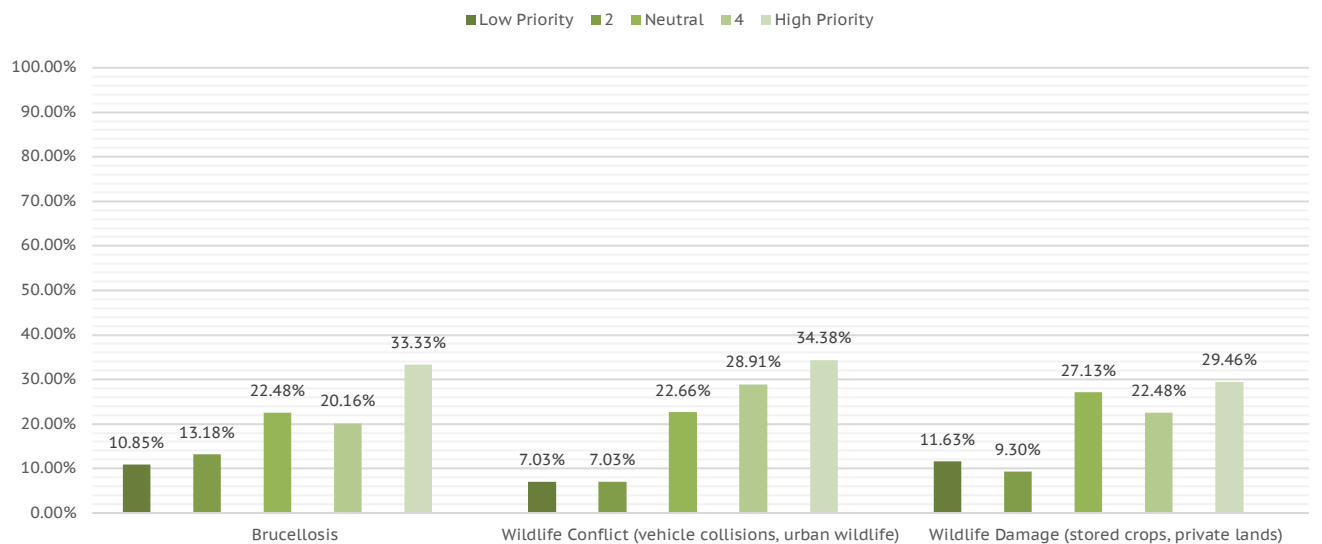
(Using a 5-point scale, 1: Low to 5: High)

Q8: Wildlife Disease (129 responded)



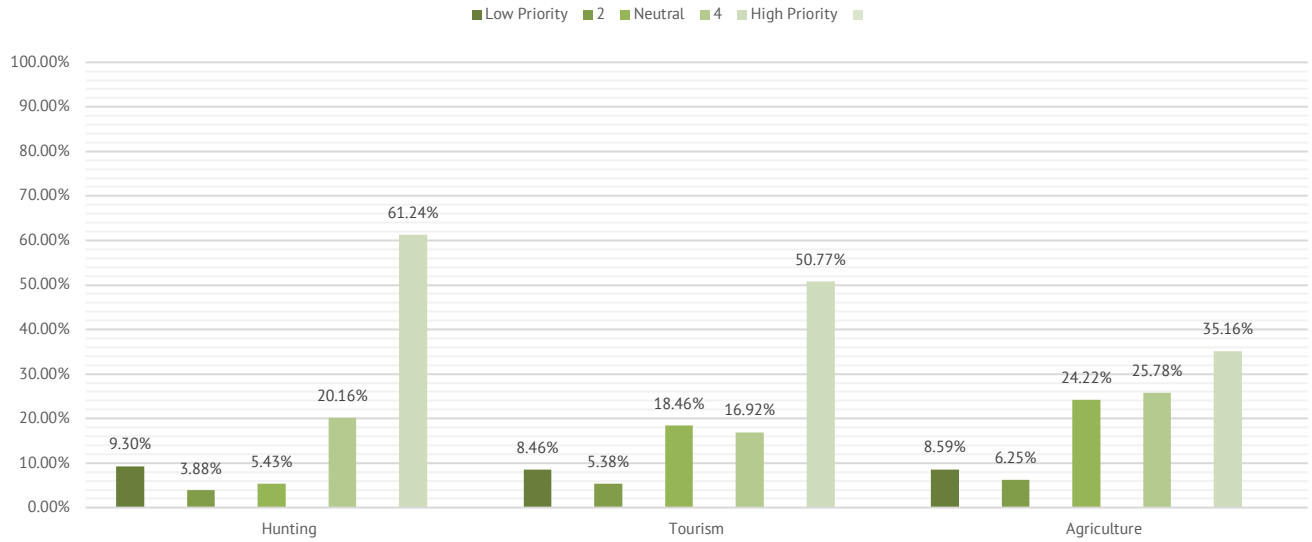
	1: Low		2		3: Neutral		4		5: High	
Brucellosis	14.17%	18	9.45%	12	31.50%	40	25.98%	33	18.90%	24
Chronic Wasting Disease	11.63%	15	4.65%	6	20.16%	26	21.71%	28	41.86%	54
Other Feedground Related Diseases	15.87%	20	15.87%	20	36.51%	46	18.25%	23	13.49%	17

Q9: Impacts on Agriculture (130 responded)



	1: Low		2		3: Neutral		4		5: High	
Brucellosis	10.85%	14	13.18%	17	22.48%	29	20.16%	26	33.33%	43
Wildlife Conflict	7.03%	9	7.03%	9	22.66%	29	28.91%	37	34.38%	44
Wildlife Damage	11.63%	15	9.30%	12	27.13%	35	22.48%	29	29.46%	38

Q10: Economic Impacts: Hunting, Tourism, Agriculture (130 responded)



	1: Low		2		3: Neutral		4		5: High	
Hunting	9.30%	12	3.88%	5	5.43%	7	20.16%	26	61.24%	79
Tourism	8.46%	11	5.38%	7	18.46%	24	16.92%	22	50.77%	66
Agriculture	8.59%	11	6.25%	8	24.22%	31	25.78%	33	35.16%	45
Other	10.26%	8	0.00%	0	65.38%	51	6.41%	5	17.95%	14

Written Comments

In addition to specific Phase I comments received via SurveyMonkey®, the online survey, 196 general written comments were also submitted. The general written comments included a variety of perspectives on elk feedgrounds, similar to the comments described above. Of the 196 submissions that indicated the state of residency, 27% were from Wyoming, 70% were nonresidents, and residency for 3% is unknown.

SECTION 6: Phase I Reflections

Phase I was designed to provide the public and stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of elk feedground operation and secure feedback that will shape the public process for Phase II, which leads to the development of a future long-term feedground management plan. All aspects of Phase I were planned with those aims in mind, and they were primarily accomplished.

- The comments sought in Phase I were intentionally open-ended (e.g., there wasn't a proposal to specifically comment on). The Steering Team took a broad approach in requesting insight from attendees. While some public processes ask for participant feedback on a particular plan, proposal, or decision, Phase I was purposely a broader information-sharing and information-seeking approach.
- Because some members of the public perceived Phase I was initiated to present a specific feedgrounds plan or proposal, the Department clearly stated at each meeting that feedgrounds were not being imminently closed. Some Phase I participants took that statement to mean the Department would never entertain feedground closure. On the contrary, the Department is engaging in this process intent on considering all viable options. Specific plans and proposals will be taken up in Phase II, so it was clear that a determination on feedground closure was not “on the table” in Phase I.
- Phase I set out to demonstrate the variety of issues surrounding feedgrounds and offer information highlighting their complexity. The Department was able to transparently and flexibly address the myriad questions brought before the presenters at each live meeting. Based on feedback received from Phase I commenters, this approach was appreciated for the expertise and candor displayed and supports the notion that the Department has the knowledge and credibility to continue leading into Phase II.
- The pivot to a virtual format was successful in achieving the essential goals of Phase I. Some respondents and Steering Team members expressed the changed dynamics of virtual was a disadvantage over face-to-face interaction and deliberation. Others appreciated the virtual format for its flexibility and the possibility to engage a broader group of stakeholders. It appears everyone interested in participating in Phase I had an opportunity to do so, as the Department has not received feedback from those who were not aware of or unable to participate in, Phase I meetings. Overall, the virtual format likely impacted who participated and how they engaged.

SECTION 7: Phase II Recommendations, Steps, and Tentative Timeline

The elk feedgrounds collaborative process is designed to consider all biological, social, economic, and political issues to achieve a durable, publicly supported feedgrounds management plan. As evidenced in Phase I, this issue is highly complex, long-term, and historically contentious. Therefore, all future collaborative efforts for Phase II and beyond must be undertaken with care, conscientiousness, and transparency.

Overall Recommendations

1. **Begin with clear, purposeful Department mission and direction.** All future planning and implementation steps will benefit from a strong guiding mission from Department leadership on the direction and cadence of the future of feedgrounds. Unity and clarity across all levels of the Department are imperative, as the Department serves as leaders and conveners of this effort.
2. **The Department serves as the key leaders and conveners in developing the feedgrounds management plan.** As the experts on the issue in both science and practice, and as the entity responsible for guiding the long-term future implementation of a plan, the Department is positioned to develop the feedgrounds management plan. While the Department takes the leadership role in plan development, there will be ongoing consultation, plan improvement, shared learning, and implementation accountability with the public.
3. **Shared learning on the best available science and information must be a priority.** Phase I stakeholders expressed a desire to use the best available science and information to address this highly complex issue. Any future feedgrounds management plan must weigh all biological, social, economic, and political issues along with practical implementation constraints. This means that all parties involved (Department leaders and personnel, partners, and interested members of the public) must be committed to and willing to learn from each other and the best available science and information. This can be gained from experts, seminars, research presentations, on-site tours, and other sources, and can utilize in-person sessions, video or virtual platforms, written reports, and other means.
4. **Implementation must recognize and be adapted to individual feedgrounds.** One complexity of future feedgrounds management lies in the uniqueness of each particular feedground in terms of proximity to agriculture operations and other private lands; proximity to public land, population centers, and highways; elevation, landscape, and topography features; feedground utilization trends; and other factors. To acknowledge and leverage these

distinctions, implementation of recommendations may differ across all Department feedgrounds and benefit from site-specific stakeholders with local perspectives.

Proposed Phase II Steps and Tentative Timeline:

TIMELINE	PHASE II STEP	DESCRIPTION
March 2021- June 2021	<p>STEP 1: INTERNAL CLARITY AND STAKEHOLDER GROUP SELECTION Clarify Phase II internal mission and direction; Finalize Phase II timeline and details; Identify and convene stakeholder focus groups composed of specific stakeholders (e.g., sportspersons, local and state elected officials, agriculture landowners and ranchers, outfitters/guides, conservation organizations, tourism and business representatives, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department clarifies its overall mission and direction for the long-term future of feedgrounds and their evolving management • Communicate mission and direction internally (within Department) and externally (with stakeholders and the public) • Steering team meets to clarify roles, timeline, and expectations; and, determine the elements of a viable feedgrounds management plan (e.g., preliminary outline or structure identifying items to address) • Develop preliminary set of expectations for stakeholder focus groups, and a method to recruit and select group members • Convene stakeholder focus groups for initial discussions
June 2021- January 2022	<p>STEP 2: SHARED LEARNING AND STAKEHOLDER GROUP INPUT Continue shared learning between Department and stakeholder focus groups; Identify relevant learning needs, information gaps, and best available information resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared learning among the steering team, partners, and stakeholder focus groups to address feedground-related issues and questions • Receive input from stakeholder focus groups on their long-term feedground management expectations, concerns, and ideas
January 2022- June 2022	<p>STEP 3: DRAFT FEEDGROUND MANAGEMENT PLAN The steering team, along with federal partners, draft the initial feedground management plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft plan will include management options that align with (a) the Department’s overall mission and direction and (b) the best available science and information, and (c) takes into consideration stakeholder expectations, concerns, and ideas

<p>June 2022- December 2022</p>	<p>STEP 4: COMMENT ON DRAFT PLAN Stakeholder focus groups and general public comment opportunities to provide comments on the draft plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder focus group members who have been engaged in prior shared learning will review and share input on the draft plan • The draft plan will also be shared publicly for review, input, and engagement with any interested members of the public
<p>December 2022- March 2023</p>	<p>STEP 5: CONSIDER COMMENTS, REVISE AND FINALIZE PLAN The steering team, along with federal partners, considers input and revises the plan accordingly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department considers all input, then makes revisions and finalizes the plan
<p>March 2023- May 2023</p>	<p>STEP 6: PLAN APPROVAL Final plan presented to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedgrounds management plan is presented to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission for their review, edit, and approval, then publicly shared and positioned for implementation
<p>June 2023 onward (end Phase II, begin Phase III)</p>	<p>STEP 7: IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY Feedground-specific implementation and ongoing accountability measures are put into place as Phase II concludes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEEDGROUND-SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION: The Department may convene groups of locally knowledgeable, locally invested stakeholders (e.g., biologists, landowners, sportsmen, conservation organizations, citizens) in Implementation Teams, as needed, to ensure plans are implemented with integrity, and steps for plan implementation are being led and coordinated by appropriate partners and stakeholders. • ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES: To ensure plans are implemented with integrity, specific challenges are being addressed, and the public is aware of progress, the Department offers updates to the commission, interested stakeholders, and/or the public

Appendix A: Phase I Communications and Outreach

PRESS RELEASES

Sent statewide and to Jackson/Pinedale public and media (9,894 recipients)

November 1, 2020 - TV News - *Feedgrounds Public Process* Aired on KTWO in Casper and KGWN in Cheyenne.

- Approx. 125,000 Viewers

November 9, 2020 - [Game and Fish begins Elk Feedgrounds Public Collaborative Process](#)

- 164 clicks from news release

November 16, 2020 - [Reminder: Game and Fish holding virtual meetings on elk feedgrounds](#)

- 45 clicks from news release

November 29, 2020 - [Reminder: Game and Fish holding virtual meetings on elk feedgrounds](#)

- 103 clicks from news release

December 10, 2020 - [Game and Fish updates Wyoming lawmakers on elk feedgrounds public process](#)

- 170 clicks from news release

December 18, 2020 - Joint news release with Grand Teton National Park on CWD positive elk in GTNP.

- Joint release referenced Feedgrounds Public Collaborative

December 28, 2020 - [Game and Fish offers additional Q&A on elk feedgrounds](#)

- 49 clicks from news release

MEDIA INTERVIEWS/CORRESPONDENCE

Jackson Hole News & Guide (x3), Casper Star Tribune, WyoFile, Wyoming Public Radio, Mountain Journal, Wyoming Livestock Journal, Powell Tribune, Billings Gazette, Utah Public Radio, Public News Service

DIRECT EMAILS

November 20, 2020 - [WY needs your input on elk feedgrounds](#)

- 15,104 recipients (elk management stamp holders, people interested in feedgrounds)
- 40% Open Rate; 272 clicks to sign up for webinar; 174 clicks to website

December 10, 2020 - [WY elk feedgrounds meeting recording posted](#)

- 15,209 recipients (elk management stamp holders, people interested in feedgrounds)
- 39% Open Rate; 727 clicks to website

HUNTING UPDATE

November Issue - Featured [Game and Fish begins Elk Feedgrounds Public Collaborative Process](#)

- 332,444 recipients; 32% open rate; 331 clicks to read article

December Issue - Featured [Game and Fish updates Wyoming lawmakers on elk feedgrounds public process](#)

- 355,074 recipients; 29% open rate; 1,070 clicks to read article

SOCIAL MEDIA

- November 11, 2020 - [Facebook Video](#)
- November 12, 2020 - tweet
- November 23, 2020 - [Facebook Events](#)
- December 4, 2020 - [YouTube video - Initial meeting](#)
- January 4, 2021 - [Facebook Post](#)
- January 4, 2021 - [Facebook Event](#)
- January 7, 2021 - [YouTube video - Q&A session](#)
- Referred 74 visits to the Feedgrounds webpage from social media

FEEDGROUNDS WEB PAGE AND EMAIL

- Created an elk feedgrounds web page and made regular updates, including recordings of the public meetings/presentations
- Created an elk feedgrounds email account and provided regular correspondence with the public on any questions and/or comments they wished to provide

OTHER MEDIA

- November 12, 2020 - Lander and Riverton Radio Shows talked about the upcoming meetings, encouraging attendees and talking about how to register
- November 23, 2020 - Lander Region November Newsletter (3925 recipients). Advertised the meetings with a photo and link to the press release.
- November 25, 2020 - Included info and links in the Sheridan Region November newsletter (4245 recipients)
- November 30, 2020 - Mentioned the upcoming meetings on Sheridan monthly radio program
- December 9, 2020 - Mentioned that one of the recently completed feedground meetings was recorded and available for viewing on the Department website.
- December 16, 2020 - Mentioned on Buffalo monthly radio program that the feedground meeting recording was available for viewing on the Department website.

Appendix B: Phase I Presentations