

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation



Sage Advice: Helping landowners improve elk and sage grouse habitat

Craig, Colorado, is the “elk hunting capital of the world” and home to the state’s largest sage grouse population. In other words, this northwest corner of the state is an ideal place for RMEF to oversee a range and wildlife conservationist who assists landowners carrying out the Sage Grouse Initiative.

Chris Yarbrough serves in the SGI-RMEF partnership position, with additional dollars from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Intermountain West Joint Venture, and Conoco Phillips. He’s one of 25 SGI partnership employees in sage grouse strongholds.

You’ll often find Chris in the field with a rancher who’s improving grazing systems for nesting sage grouse and chicks, as well as for migrating and wintering elk. He listens to what ranchers want and gives them his sage advice. Together, they come up with a plan that’s funded with Farm Bill dollars via the NRCS and other matching partner funds. Projects include livestock watering systems, native plantings, fence removal, restoring wet meadows, and cutting invasive juniper.

“We’re thrilled to be part of a new paradigm of voluntary conservation on private lands that’s bringing back sage grouse and conserving our precious elk winter range, too. Both species need big, intact and healthy sagebrush-steppe to survive.” ~ Blake Henning, vice-president of lands and conservation, RMEF



Meet the RMEF

About

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation works to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage. The nonprofit group permanently protects crucial elk winter and summer ranges, migration corridors, calving grounds and other vital areas, while focusing on securing and improving hunter access. In addition, the RMEF helps fund and conduct habitat improvement projects and supports research and management efforts to help maintain productive elk herds and habitat. The organization also reestablishes elk herds in historic ranges. In 1984, four hunters from Troy, Montana, founded the RMEF. Today, more than 500 chapters thrive across the country.

Role with Sage Grouse Initiative

Elk and sage grouse share 40 million acres across the west—primarily elk winter range. RMEF administers and helps sponsor a Sage Grouse Initiative field staff position in Craig, Colorado, an outstanding area in Moffat County for supporting elk and sage grouse. The Foundation funds habitat enhancement and land protection projects throughout the western states in sagebrush steppe.

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