

Attachment #2

Elk Hunting – Initial Study

Impact Significance Analysis

Less Than Significant Impact

1. IV. Biological Resources. Less than significant impacts may occur for elk populations within hunting zones if harvest rates are exceedingly high in comparison to population levels, recruitment rates, other sources of mortality, and management unit objectives. The goal of California's elk program is to sustain or increase elk populations and ensure they are managed within habitat capabilities and in consideration of other land uses. Maintain healthy and productive elk populations that contribute to ecosystem functions. Continue to provide use and enjoyment of elk by the general public while conserving and enhancing elk habitat throughout the state.

2. XVIII Mandatory Findings of Significance. Less than significant impacts may occur for elk populations within hunting zones if harvest rates are exceedingly high in comparison to population levels, recruitment rates, other sources of mortality, and management unit objectives. The goal of California's elk program is to sustain or increase elk populations and ensure they are managed within habitat capabilities and in consideration of other land uses. Maintain healthy and productive elk populations that contribute to ecosystem functions. Continue to provide use and enjoyment of elk by the general public while conserving and enhancing elk habitat throughout the state. Harvest strategies use the best available population information as well as the previously stated goals and objectives to establish appropriate tag ranges and seasons. The elk program utilizes adaptive management as part of its overall elk management strategies. Adaptive management is a flexible decision-making process for ongoing knowledge acquisition, monitoring, and evaluation leading to continuous improvements in management planning and implementation of a project to achieve specified objectives. An adaptive management approach provides a structured process that allows for taking action under uncertain conditions based on the best available science, closely monitoring and evaluating outcomes, and re-evaluating and adjusting decisions as more information is learned. Previous, current, and future harvest rates have been and continue to be managed not to reduce populations below the ability to be self-sustaining.