

# Rocky mountain elk foundation

Business



Wapiti, Cervus Elaphus, Elk: no matter what you call them, elk are one of the most majestic animals in North America.

Their populations are sadly dwindling, however, and we need to manage the population. Here in Minnesota we have a herd of around 130 elk in the Northwest corner of the state, and I personally would love to see the herd expand into other parts of the state. These goals are obtainable through the efforts of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, or RMEF for short. I support the RMEF, a non profit, because they work toward the conservation of elk as well as their habitat, work to reestablish elk herds in their historic ranges, and provide hunting opportunities to many people who otherwise have no opportunity. The RMEF Protects nearly 2000 square miles of elk habitat throughout the country. The land has been obtained through though land easements, as well as land donations and exchanges.

The RMEF has saved critical elk habitat such as winter ranges and feeding grounds from deforestation and urbanization by buying land and making deals with ranchers and farmers to preserve their land for habitat. In Northeast minnesota the DNR has over managed and studied the moose population into the ground. Some people may argue that if we introduced elk to that part of the state, they would push the moose out and out compete them for food. I however say that in other states such as Montana and Idaho, Moose and elk coexist quite well and I think that if elk were imported here, then wolves and bears would have more food so the moose population could rebound from the overprediction that is currently happening. Many people do not think of Minnesota as being “ Elk Country” but in our state alone the

RMEF has worked to conserve, protect, and improve over 900 acres of habitat in the North west, in Kittson County near the town of Grygla.

I think that the conservation of elk in Minnesota is a fantastic thing, seeing as the elks range once stretched well into Minnesota before unregulated hunting all but wiped them out. The RMEF seeks to restore the populations that were destroyed. Elk once roamed from the Atlantic to Pacific, however unregulated hunting soon caused their population to shrink. The RMEF works to reestablish elk herds in their historic ranges. The organization has successfully restored multiple self sustaining elk herds in places such as Wisconsin, Kentucky, And Ontario.

The RMEF does thorough feasibility studies before transplanting elk to make sure that the herd can sustain itself as well as make sure that each individual animal is healthy and has no diseases. This shows me that this is an organization that is truly worth standing for and supporting, because they are working for the betterment of the elk herd. Currently the RMEF is trying to work with The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to restore wild Elk to Northeastern Minnesota, a place where elk one roamed freely. I personally would love to see elk in Northeast Minnesota because if nothing else they are undeniably a very majestic animal and I believe that they can help the moose population rebound from its current decline. I believe that they can help the moose population rebound because they provide a new food source for wolves and bears, which will take the pressure off of moose and especially their calves. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation provides hunting opportunities to many people who otherwise have no opportunity.

The RMEF sponsors many public hunting access sites whether it be through paying ranchers for access or maintaining trails and campgrounds that are used to access public land. As an avid hunter and conservationist I believe that hunting in its entirety is conservation on a fine scale. Hunting keeps the population in check and makes sure that the carrying capacity of an area is not surpassed. Hunting also ensures the health of the herd, if there is too many animals in one area the area is over browsed and the animals do not have enough food. Not only does the RMEF provide hunting opportunities, but they also provide scholarships to high school students to help them get through college. They also provide scholarships to college students that want to pursue conservation.

Through providing hunting opportunities as well as encouraging and helping people pursue conservation, the RMEF is actively helping conserve and protect the population of elk in many states, including Minnesota. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation works toward conserving elk herds and helping them prosper. They also restore elk to their historic ranges by transplanting them through a careful process of studies and tests. They provide hunting opportunities to those who are unable to hunt on their own. The RMEF does fantastic things for conservation all across the country and is an organization that I stand behind, because I believe in their work.

If you like nature and conservation, then the RMEF is an organization that you should seriously consider joining and helping out.