

JEM Readers Respond . . .

I am writing regarding the Roosevelt Elk – Wildlife Habitat Decision Aid recently published in *JEM* 6(1) [see www.forrex.org/jem/2005/vol6/no1/vol6_no1_art5.pdf]. As you are aware, the management of Roosevelt elk on the Coast of British Columbia can be problematic with respect to reforestation efforts in some areas. This extension note does provide useful information to practicing foresters on the Coast. Those in the regional forest service office with experience in damage to regeneration from similar causes, including elk, however, would like to offer some additional suggestions.

In forestry, tradeoffs exist in everything we do. Some of these involve the balance between short-term costs and long-term timber supply. Your note didn't discuss the implications to timber supply of widespread use of the recommended stocking regimes. Below are some additional tools that can be used which do not affect timber supply:

- Economic consideration of elk damage before harvest
- Longer free growing periods
- Clumped distribution of trees
- Planting at higher densities
- Late introduction of cedar
- Seedling protection including fencing
- Effective management of elk herds

Regarding the statement that, "Stocking standards should be flexible for these areas," I believe that adequate flexibility already exists. Under the current legislation, licensees can propose alternative stocking standards for defined areas within their Forest Stewardship Plans. For example, in the past we have accepted

modified stocking standards to enhance grizzly bear habitat within defined areas.

If the purpose of this note is to enhance elk forage, then, rather than suggesting that stocking standards be compromised, we endorse the statement under "Site Control Options" about providing other sources of forage. Because elk prefer to graze rather than browse, we recommend the use of appropriate seeded forage species on deactivated roads, landings, and exposed cutslopes as alternative and preferred food sources for elk. We feel that this point is not emphasized as strongly as it should be in this decision aid.

Sincerely,

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Editor's Note:

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