

Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources News

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Kentucky to help Wisconsin boost its elk herd

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Kentucky will help Wisconsin boost its elk herd by providing 150 elk cows, calves and yearling male elk over the next 3-5 years.

“Kentucky’s own free-ranging elk herd began with the release of seven elk from Kansas in 1997,” said Commissioner Gregory Johnson of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. “We eventually released more than 1,500 elk from six states to create a herd of approximately 10,000 elk in Kentucky today.

“It is fitting that we pay this debt forward by partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to help them build their own herd.”

Wisconsin officials announced the finalized agreement between the two states today and said they were looking forward to re-establishing their elk population.

Wisconsin will pay the cost of the translocation program. Wisconsin will also assist Kentucky financially in the development of forest habitat projects in eastern Kentucky that will benefit wildlife, with a special emphasis placed on ruffed grouse.

This will enhance our current forest management efforts in eastern Kentucky, which is critical for improving ruffed grouse populations, explained Chris Garland, acting Wildlife Director for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.

“Cooperation is how wildlife agencies do business,” added Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Elk and Deer Program Coordinator Gabe Jenkins. “Agencies help each other for the benefit of all.”

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, which was instrumental in the establishment of Kentucky’s elk herd, will supply additional support.

Elk trappers in the coming weeks will focus on areas with the highest number of complaints about nuisance elk. Only cows, calves and yearling male

elk will be relocated.

Elk will be held in quarantine in Kentucky for disease testing before being transported to Wisconsin for the calving season. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources employees will assist with the trapping, disease testing and elk caretaking while the animals remain in Kentucky.

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The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources manages, regulates, enforces and promotes responsible use of all fish and wildlife species, their habitats, public wildlife areas and waterways for the benefit of those resources and for public enjoyment. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is an agency of the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet. For more information on the department, visit our website at fw.ky.gov.