

Elk-agriculture conflict hunt 2018/19 - update

What's happening?

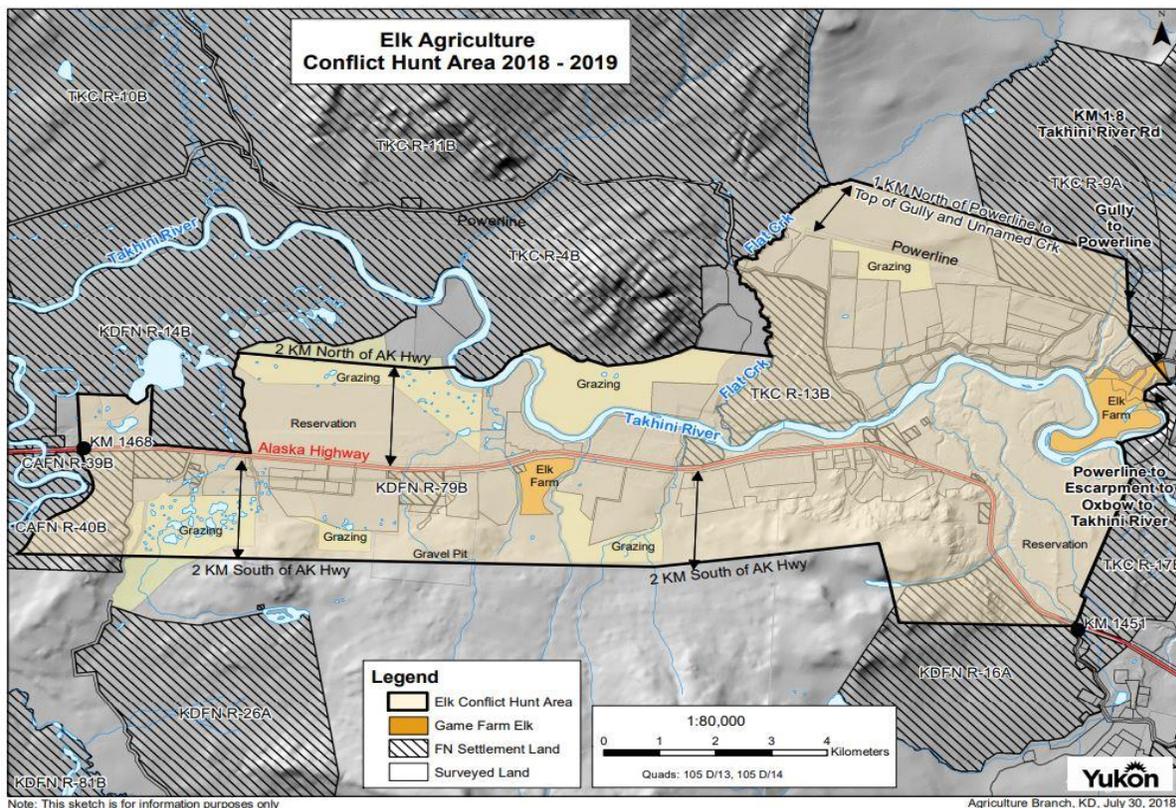
Since 2015-16 Yukon government has been using the elk-agriculture conflict hunt as a management tool to address human-wildlife conflict between farmers and elk in the Takhini Valley. This hunt has been managed case by case and has been farm specific and complaint driven.

This year the conflict hunt has taken a different form. Beginning August 1, 2018 groups of up to 10 hunters have a two-week period to hunt in a specific buffer zone around the Takhini Valley agriculture properties.

This hunting effort is an intensive, aversive technique aimed at conditioning the herd to stay away from specific areas, earlier in the season than in the past.

A group of elk must be present for the hunter to attempt a harvest, so that individuals in the group learn to avoid the area. Hunters are not permitted to harvest large bulls.

Hunters are required by the Yukon Wildlife Act to obtain permissions from occupants of residences within 1 kilometer of the hunt location.



What hunters are seeing this year

As of October 3, 2018, 22 hunters have been permitted to participate in the elk-agriculture conflict hunt in the specified buffer zone.

Hunters are seeing some groups of elk as well as single bulls, scattered in the identified harvest zone.

Hunters are reporting a variety of experiences – ranging from overall positive interactions with the hunt to frustrations trying to get permissions to enable hunting within 1 km of residences.

One hunter noted, “...it was getting more difficult to find the elk as the hunt went on, (and) it seemed like a win for the farmers because there was a lot of pressure and it did seem like the hunt was working”.

Another hunter commented that “this was a special opportunity to hunt before and after work, which is rare”.

Another hunter found that some residents were getting frustrated by the number of requests to hunt on their land.



What's next for the season

We will continue to apply the hunt as a management tool to aversively condition elk to move away from the identified zone.

We know from past years that with decreasing daylight hours, between mid-November to mid-January, the effectiveness of the hunt also decreases – in part due to elk behaviour becoming nocturnal.

We encourage landowners to obtain a Yukon *Wildlife Act* permit to enable them to haze elk away during this time.

Individual property owners may still request a hunter during this time to address property specific conflicts. Contact the Department of Environment to do this.

The effect of the elk-agriculture conflict hunt is being closely tracked through response questionnaires from permitted hunters, and through input from the Yukon Agricultural Association.

An independent evaluator will review the questionnaires as well as other documentation and work with the Elk-Agriculture Working Group to consider the effectiveness of this tool.

The Elk-Agriculture Working Group can make further recommendations to the Yukon government's Deputy Ministers of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources for future management if needed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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