

# Preserving Big Game Habitat

*Defending elk on the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest*



Photo Courtesy of EyeInTheWild.com

In 2016 the U.S. Forest Service made the ill-informed decision to abolish the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest's wildlife security standard, Standard 4A, which included both a road density and wildlife hiding cover component, and replace it with a new, untested "security area" approach.

Under this new approach—which did not account for road density and hiding cover—a clear-cut logging project could technically qualify as big game "security." The plan put wildlife habitat in jeopardy and set a dangerous precedent for Montana's forests.

In response, Helena Hunters and Anglers Association filed a lawsuit challenging the Forest Service's decision. The goal of the lawsuit was to restore the original security standard, Standard 4A, and ensure that any changes to the policy are based on sound science.

In December 2016, and in response to our lawsuit, the Forest Service removed its proposed new "security area" standard and reinstated Standard 4A, as we requested. We won round one, but the fight is not yet over.



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## Our Plan of Action

To ensure the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest remains a special place where big game thrive and hunting opportunities are plentiful, HHAA plans to engage in the following actions over the next few months:

1. Participate in the upcoming forest plan revision process to develop new big game security standards based on sound science that adequately protect big game security.
2. Bring legal challenges against harmful projects that weaken big game security on the Continental Divide landscape and within roadless areas.
3. Defend, as necessary, U.S. Forest Service decisions based on sound science that adequately protect big game security.

## Your Donation Supports Big Game Security

These efforts will take time, hard work, and determination, but we are ready to fight for a healthy, thriving big game population on the Continental Divide landscape. We know it is important to you that the natural heritage of Montana and its legacy of outdoor recreation remains strong and can be enjoyed by your children and grandchildren.

If you support science-based wildlife management that ensures future generations will be able to enjoy the natural beauty and wonder that is Montana, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to our organization. Thank you.