

## Elk Damage Reporting Steps for Private Property Owners

### Step 1: Report the damage

Upon experiencing property damage resulting from elk, property owners are asked to contact the Mill Creek office of the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mill Creek Office  
Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Email: [teammillcreek@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:teammillcreek@dfw.wa.gov)  
Phone: 425-775-1311

### Step 2: Investigation of damage

The initial report will be given to a WDFW enforcement officer. The officer will then contact the property owner to file a report and investigate the damage.

### Step 3: Determination of damage

The report from the investigation is combined with other reports of elk damage in the area. If the damage is severe, reoccurring or financially debilitating, the property owner may choose to be placed on a list to be eligible for a special damage hunt.

### Step 4: Arranging access

In late summer, the enforcement officer and hunt master will contact the property owner to arrange access for a state recognized master hunter to harvest a problem elk on the property.

### Step 5: Harvesting a problem elk

If the property owner chooses to allow a master hunter to harvest an elk on his/her property the hunt master will coordinate contact information between the property owner and the hunter so that the property owner can contact the hunter when the elk are present.

Harvested elk become the property of the hunter.

### For More Information

For more information regarding elk and elk damage to private property, please visit the following website:

Living with Wildlife: Elk  
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living/elk.htm>

The mission of  
The Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group  
is to work collaboratively to minimize property damage and public safety risks associated with elk and to manage elk for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing and photography.

### Collaborating stakeholder agencies and interest groups:

Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Department of Natural Resources  
Department of Transportation  
United States Forest Service  
King County Water and Land Resources  
King County Sheriff's Office  
King County Parks  
City of North Bend  
City of Snoqualmie  
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe  
Tulalip Indian Tribe  
Snoqualmie Indian Tribe  
Hancock Forest Management  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Mountains to Sound Greenway  
Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association  
Hunters, property owners,  
and concerned citizens.



Upper Snoqualmie Valley  
Elk Management Group

# Elk and Private Property Damage

Prevention, Deterrents, and Reporting



Photography by Andrea Toomey

Provided by the  
UPPER SNOQUALMIE VALLEY  
ELK MANAGEMENT GROUP

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[snoqualmievalleyelk.org](http://snoqualmievalleyelk.org)

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### Common Elk Habits

Elk are primarily active at dawn and dusk. During high temperatures and harassment elk become more active at night. Elk may be seen periodically during the day if temperatures are mild and they are undisturbed.

### Favorite Trees to Eat

Aspen, cottonwood, red alder, vine maple, and willow.

### Favorite Shrubs and Ground Cover to Eat

Blackberry, huckleberry, Oregon-grape, salal, salmonberry, thimbleberry, and wild rose.

### Other Favorite Foods

Bear grass, cat's ear, clover, cow parsnip, fireweed, foamflower, Oregon oxalis, pearly everlasting, and sword fern.



## Elk Deterrents and Damage Prevention

### Hazing

Hazing is frequently done by various wildlife departments to move elk out of areas where they can get into trouble. Hazing usually involves very noisy disruptive things like ATVs, snowmobiles, helicopters, or even horses to move the elk away. Hazing is not something that can be done very easily or safely in a suburban environment.

### Scare devices

These are objects we have such as pots, pans, trash can lids, whistles, etc. that make loud noises to scare the elk away.

These are rather temporary in nature as the elk are very intelligent animals and eventually get used to the noise if no actual danger is associated with it. When it does work, the elk tend to leave in a hurry trampling through anything that gets in their way. Including that ornamental shrub you just planted. A very heavy animal moving with haste can do a lot of damage to local plant life, including your lawn! So if this is something you wish to avoid, scare devices are probably not your best bet.

### Fencing

Fencing is far the best option for protecting your plant life for the average homeowner.

A well built, eight-foot high woven wire fence will keep elk out of enclosed areas. Recently, electric fences have been proven to be a cheaper alternative. These fences feature eight to ten strands of high tensile steel wire supported by conventional fencepost systems. Polytape electric fencing more visible (for both elk and people) than traditional electric wire fencing and is meant to work as a visual repellent as well as a shocking device. Once an elk has been shocked by a polytape fence, it is likely to both remember and recognize the wide brightly colored tape and avoid going near it again.

The greater visibility of the tape prevents the fence from being knocked down as often, making for less maintenance too.

For any fence to be effective, it must be seen by elk. A group of elk led by the dominant cow will go through any type of fence, except perhaps a cyclone fence, if it is in their path and they don't see it before the group is upon it. Similar to a kid going through a sliding screen door.

Placing branches along the top of fences and draping survey or similar tape from electric wires makes fences more visible to elk.

If you have only a few plants/items you wish to protect, and fencing your entire property is impractical, you can protect individual trees by a six foot tall cylinder made of welded wire. Individual protectors for conifer seedlings are effective until the leader (growing tip) or lateral branches grow out of the protectors and are once again subject to elk browsing. Plastic or nylon tubes, netting, and bud caps have all been used successfully too.

Providing more attractive elk grazing areas It makes sense if the elk have a better place to be than on your lawn/property they'll go there instead. Supporting local efforts to increase elk grazing areas on public land is a lot easier and (generally) more effective than trying to do all of the work yourself.

