

2023 Hunter Satisfaction Survey Results



Directorate of Public Works (DPW)
Environmental Division, Conservation Branch
Fort Carson, Colorado

Report written by Amanda Luper (FC Wildlife Biologist) and Richard Riddle (PCMS Wildlife Biologist)

Summary and Purpose

From Sept. 16, 2023 to Feb. 1, 2024, the Fort Carson Directorate of Public Works (DPW) asked hunters (Active Duty Soldiers, Veterans and civilians) from Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS) Game Management Unit (GMU) GMU 142 and Fort Carson GMU 591 to provide feedback about their hunting experiences.

Unfortunately, fewer responses were received this year than last year with approximately 27 people answering each question to the end in the survey and approximately 70 percent of those who responded only hunted on PCMS this year.

How do I interpret the results of the satisfaction survey?

The results included are from anonymous comments and ratings. The beginning of the report uses charts to display the results of the answers in the survey. Questions 1-5 and 14 were yes and no, and questions 6 – 12 were rated by stars: 1 star – extremely dissatisfied, 2 stars – somewhat dissatisfied, 3 stars – neutral/neither, 4 stars – somewhat satisfied and 5 stars – extremely satisfied.

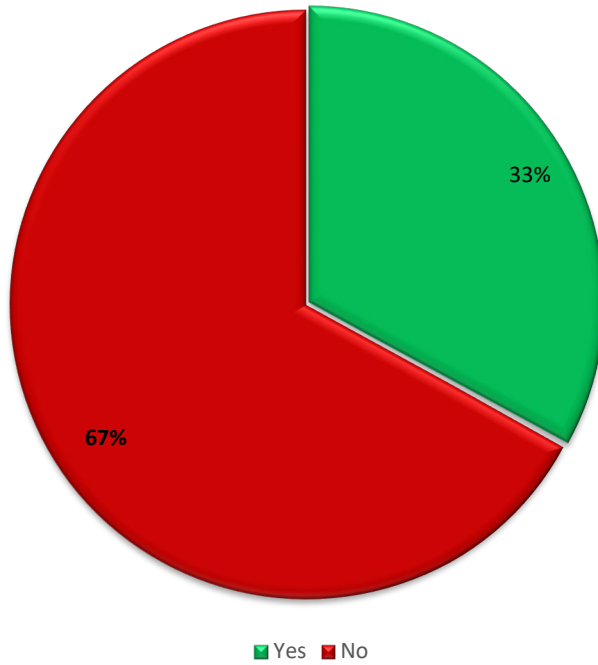
Questions 13, 15- 19 were open comment boxes for hunters to leave details answers in the survey. The end of the report includes input from the Fort Carson staff to address some of the comments. Hunter's comments have not been altered or changed in this report unless the entire comment or part of the comment was omitted.

Please keep in mind that although Fort Carson is requesting feedback and experiences to help the installation shape future changes, comments that are abusive, have explicit language or that use identifying information, can't be used. Those comments will be omitted from presentations and reports published and viewed by the public. For the 2024-2025 big game seasons, Fort Carson DPW anticipates the upcoming hunter survey to be published on the homepage of iSportsman by September 2024 to enable a larger sample of hunters the opportunity to participate in the next survey.

Thank you for the honest responses from last big game season.

- Amanda Luper (Fort Carson DPW wildlife biologist) & Rich Riddle (PCMS DPW wildlife biologist)

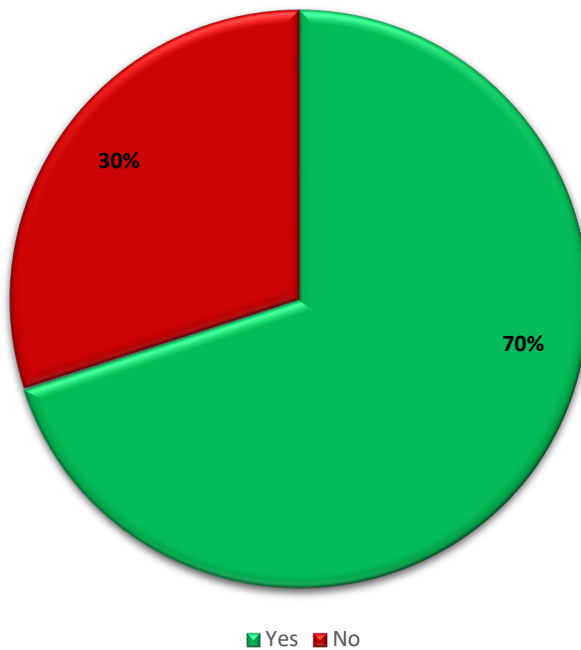
Q1 DID YOU HUNT ON FORT CARSON?



Number
respondents
n=27

Did you hunt on Fort Carson?
33% YES
67% NO

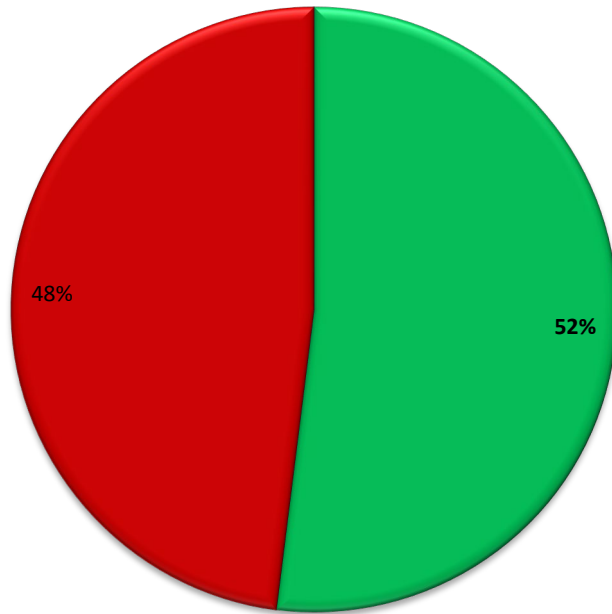
Q2 DID YOU HUNT ON PCMS?



Number of
respondents
n=27

Did you hunt on PCMS?
70% YES
30% NO

Q3 DID YOU FILL YOUR TAG THIS YEAR?



Number of respondents
n=27

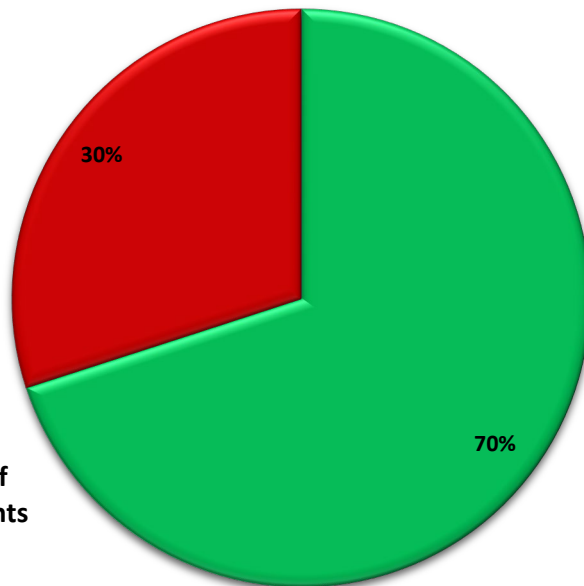
■ Yes ■ No

Did you fill your tag?

52% YES

48% NO

Q4 DID YOU HAVE A POSITIVE HUNTING EXPERIENCE?



Number of respondents
n=27

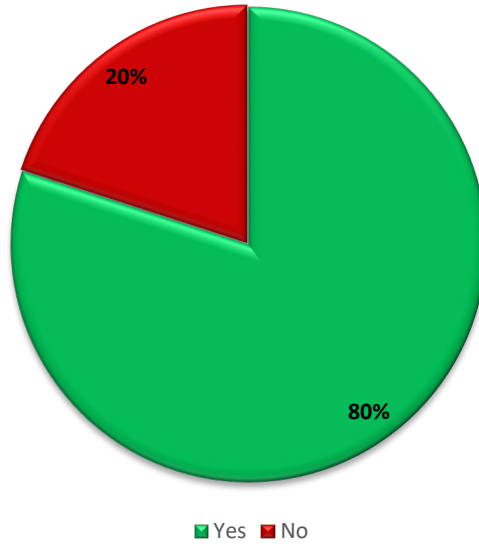
■ Yes ■ No

Did you have a positive hunting experience?

70% YES

30% NO

Q5 WILL YOU HUNT AGAIN AT FC/PCMS?



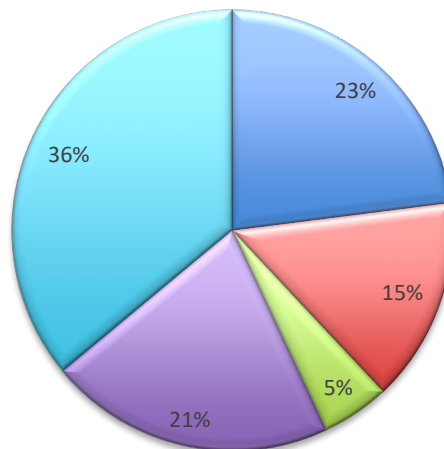
Number of respondents
n=25

Will you hunt again at FC/PCMS?

80% YES

20% NO

Q6 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE FC/PCMS HUNTING PROGRAMS?



Number of respondents
n=39

How satisfied are you with the FC/PCMS hunting program?

36% EXTREMELY SATISFIED

21% SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

5% NEUTRAL/ NEITHER

15% SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED

23% EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED

Extremely dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

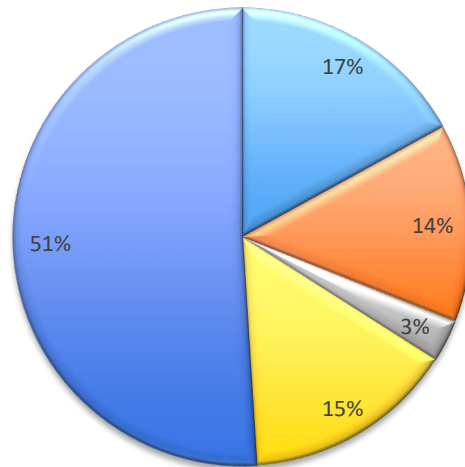
Extremely satisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Q7 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH ACCESS AND CHECK-IN STARTING AT 4 AM?

Number of respondents
n=35



How satisfied are you with access and check-in starting at 4 am?

51% EXTREMELY SATISFIED

15% SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

3% NEUTRAL/NEITHER

14% SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED

17% EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED

Extremely dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

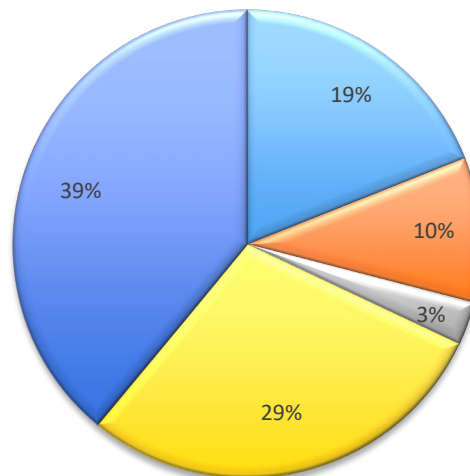
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Extremely satisfied

Q8 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE AVAILABILITY OF OPEN AREAS FOR HUNTING?

Number of respondents
n=31



How satisfied are you with the availability of open areas for hunting?

39% EXTREMELY SATISFIED

29% SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

3% NEUTRAL/NEITHER

10% SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED

19% EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED

Extremely dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

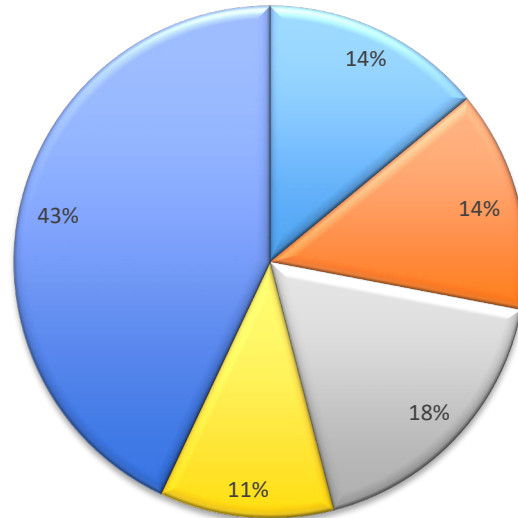
Neither

Somewhat satisfied

Extremely satisfied

Q9 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE AREA CHECK-IN AT PCMS

Number of respondents
n=28



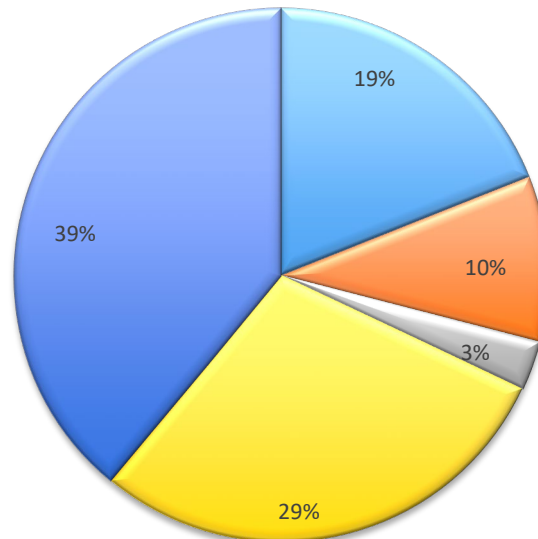
How satisfied are you with area check-in at PCMS?

- 43% EXTREMELY SATISFIED**
- 11% SOMEWHAT SATISFIED**
- 18% NEUTRAL/NEITHER**
- 14% SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED**
- 14% EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED**

- Extremely dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

Q10 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE MAX OCCUPANCY OF HUNTING BLOCKS OR TRAINING AREAS?

Number of respondents
n=32

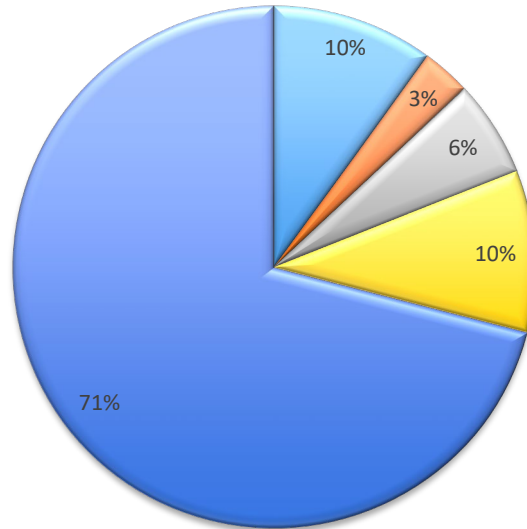


How satisfied are you with the max occupancy of blocks or TAs?

- 39% EXTREMELY SATISFIED**
- 29% SOMEWHAT SATISFIED**
- 3% NEUTRAL/NEITHER**
- 10% SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED**
- 19% EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED**

- Extremely dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

Q11 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH SAFETY BRIEFINGS ONLY BEING OFFERED ONLINE?



Number of respondents
n=31

How satisfied are you with the safety briefings only being offered online?

71% EXTREMELY SATISFIED

10% SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

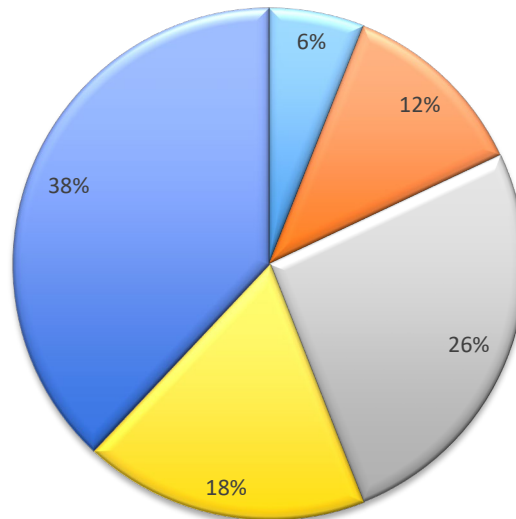
6% NEUTRAL/NEITHER

3% SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED

10% EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED

- Extremely dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

Q12 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE QUALITY OF ANIMALS YOU'VE SEEN ON FC/PCMS?



Number of respondents
n=34

How satisfied are you with the quality of animals you have seen at FC/PCMS?

38% EXTREMELY SATISFIED

18% SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

26% NEUTRAL/NEITHER

12% SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED

6% EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED

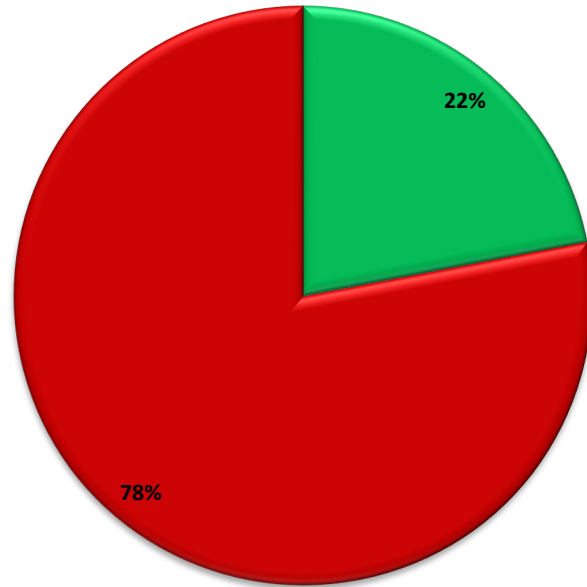
- Extremely dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

13. If you encountered any game wardens while hunting, what was your experience like? (Positive, helpful, negative, etc.)

Un-edited Responses

- Positive, all good guys doing their jobs
- Very positive
- Positive & helpful
- positive
- no
- warden was one of the nicest gentlemen I've encountered in Colorado. He helped me understand the area better and pointed me toward the last location he had seen elk. He warned me for speeding and handled everything in a very professional manner. Excellent interaction.
- Very positive, although it's a little inconvenient to be stopped and checked every time I'm hunting, it was always a pleasant, positive experience.
- Positive
- Positive
- Very positive
- Excellent interaction.
- Positive
- Both negative with the MP and very positive with the civilian
- Very Positive, Very Helpful, Extremely Awesome
- Positive
- Positive
- Positive
- Positive
- Mostly positive, except for one comment. I mentioned to the warden that I passed on a 220 yard shot with my muzzleloader. The warden said, "You won't get one if you don't sling some lead. I am not into hail Mary shots and wounding an animal I was surprised that he would make a comment like that. The next day I harvested my doe with a 125 yard shot. A shot I was comfortable with taking..
- Outside of officer L, every one of them acts hostile
- Positive
- Positive

Q14 IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO 13, WERE YOU WARNED, FINED AND/OR SUSPENDED?



If you answered question 13, were you warned, fined, and/or suspended?

22% YES

78% NO

**Number of respondents
n=18**

■ Yes ■ No

15. What season(s) did you hunt this year?

Un-edited Responses

Multiple or N/A

- Black powder & archery pronghorn, 147 deer, 142 late cow elk
- Spring turkey, Archery, Rifle, late rifle
- Spring turkey, Archery, Rifle, late rifle
- Archery elk rifle elk (cow) archery deer 147
- Bear rifle and buck deer rifle
- Archery elk and bear
- Archery elk and bear rifle and muzzleloader
- Muzzleloader (unknown season)
- n/a

Deer

- Deer Archery
- Archery mule deer

Elk

- Archery elk
- 4th rifle elk
- Fall archery elk
- 4th season elk
- second otc bull
- Archery Elk
- Archery elk
- Elk cow late rifle
- Archery elk
- Elk 2
- Elk Archery

Pronghorn

- Muzzleloader Antelope
- Antelope, going to hunt elk in October
- Pronghorn
- Rifle antelope
- Muzzleloader pronghorn

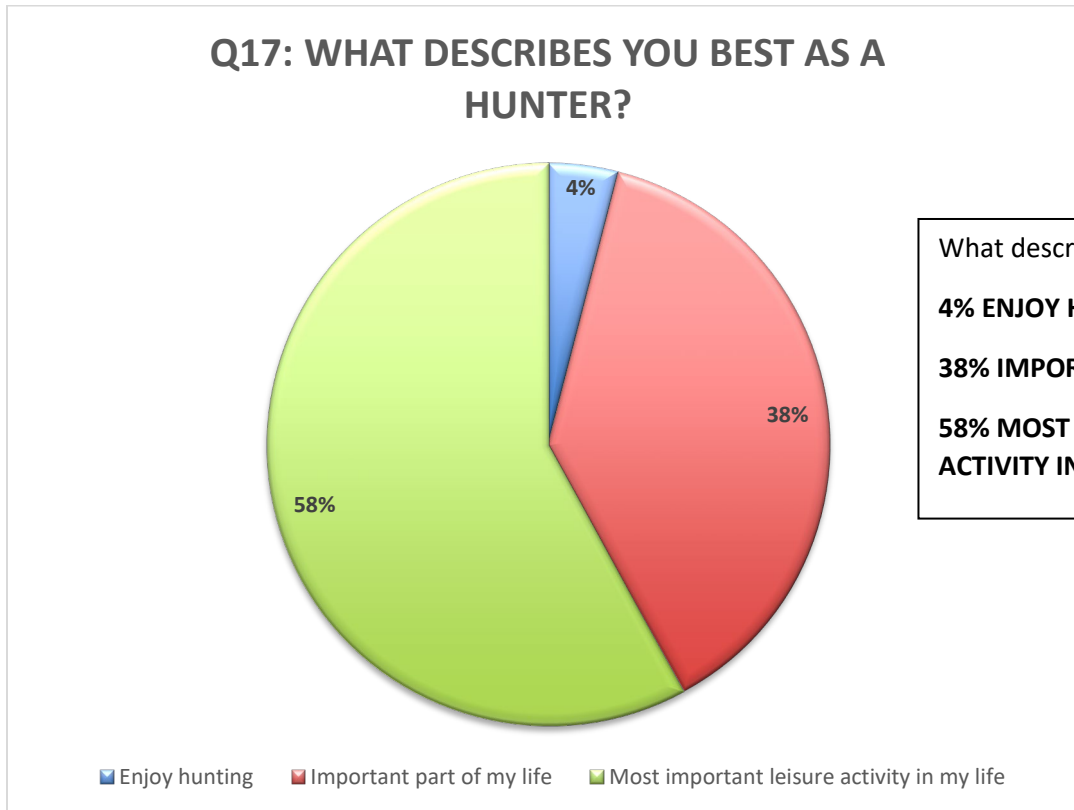
16. How can we improve the FC/PCMS hunting programs?

Un-edited Responses

- Would love the opportunity to use my e-bike during "LV seasons only "on PCMS two tracks. I would be willing to purchase a bicycle use permit & register my bike if needed. Would be a great way to hunt archery or black powder.
- Get CPW to separate limited licenses between military and civilians for 591 & 142. It should be available to both populations but most active duty will not have enough preference points to draw before they ETS/PCS from Fort Carson.

- Put some more animals on the post!
- Stop what appears to be the random permanent closure of the TA's or parts of the TA's (example: the entire field in 18, that is a great spot for turkey), I think that people would be less dissatisfied if there would be some type of reason put out for these closures, and yes I know training takes precedents.
- More spring and summer moisture. :)
- More access.
- limit licenses
- Habitat improvement. Digging small water holes in gullies that have moisture with a backhoes might help disperse the animals across the entire PCMS
- forget the check in and check out in and out of every hunting block
- Stop changing the map. Only open to active or retired military
- Get rid of area checkins or make clump together more areas for ease of hunting.
- Always have areas open when they are not training in them, which is a lot of the time.
- Reduce the number of hunters per block slightly.
- At PCMS-Nothing.
- Remove the staff of Range Control and replace with a staff that has worked on other military installations. The restrictions in place on FC are like no other.
- As a non-resident, being able to draw a license much more frequently.
- Combine more units. Have a total of 4-5 regions to hunt with all the units clustered under one region. Service is too poor to always check in and out.
- Remove or enlarge the hunting areas on PCMS. The blocks do not make geographic sense. You state safety and finding lost hunters as a reason. The reality is, the topography of PCMS might compliment your map for military but does not agree with hunting and wildlife. Your blocks need to be redone. I support your intent but it is not working.
- Service member need to be given priority to hunt. Allow them to check in 1 hour before everyone else. The TA management is awful. When you block TAs together some are open fields so it increases the number of hunters for the blocks but still funnels them into the small areas. It still over populated TAs. There's no reason for all the closers. Look at any other base. Those programs are run way more efficiently and give more access. FC has by far the worst recreation program in the army which is not surprising because the base is just as poorly run
- My low rating for availability is directed at FC not PCMS. It's easy to see TA's that are not being used for training are not open to hunt. This has been an Issue every weekend of the archery season. The result is packing all hunters into the same TA's creating more of a crowding issue than we should have. Also the increased hunter presence tends to move the game out of those units into the closed units

17. What describes you best as a hunter?



Staff Responses

First of all, the Fort Carson DPW thanks everyone who took the time to go through the 23-24 end of season survey and provided feedback to the questions asked. The survey will be reviewed by Fort Carson leadership. The Fort Carson staff understands the majority of hunters and recreationists feel the opportunity to hunt or recreate on Fort Carson is a very important leisure activity in their life, which was demonstrated by the responses provided in the 22-23 survey along with improving hunter morale, mental health and fitness.

Hunting and the harvesting of big game species is also an important tool which allows DPW wildlife biologists and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to manage population dynamics and to test and manage populations for Chronic Wasting Disease in our GMUs.

There are a multitude of challenges that come with people choosing to hunt and recreate on an active military installation. The restricted areas, changes to public access and the recreation map will unfortunately continue to change as time moves forward to meet the military's needs and implement identified safety issues. To what extent, is not currently known, but every restricted area is approved by Fort Carson leadership prior to being implemented.

It is important to note again that Fort Carson and PCMS are state GMUs and there are a lot of aspects the installation has no control over or authority to change. Hunting season dates, hunting license draw and number of residents and non-residents, etc., are determined through CPW. The CPW offers multiple public forums for public concerns, questions and discussion throughout the year through their commission if hunters want to voice a change they feel is needed.

Checking in and out of areas or blocks of areas is always a big topic of discussion each year, and that requirement will likely not change. Fort Carson staff needs to know where hunters are and what they are doing while hunting and recreating on Fort Carson and/or PCMS. This is for safety reasons and helps the staff do their jobs. Between the DPW wildlife staff, fire department, conservation law enforcement officers and range control there is a lot oversight behind the scenes when Fort Carson allows open areas to ensure public safety, accountability and that **everyone** can go home safely at the end of the day.

The Fort Carson staff needs to know where to find hunters or where to start looking for them if they fail to checkout or get injured. There is frequently live-fire training at night and weekends and just one missing hunter or failed checkout will shut down all military training until they are located. That type of training impact is not taken lightly.

If hunters had access to all open areas, hundreds or thousands of acres and were freely moving around, the time it would take to find a hunter may be the difference between life and death. In addition, there have been times either due to training conflicts, live unexploded ordnances, weather conditions and wildland fires where Fort Carson staff had to shut down an area, or block of areas, and move hunters out as fast as possible. Again, the staff has to know where individuals are to be able to do this effectively and as fast as possible.

Grouping of training areas (TAs) for hunting or recreating areas, or blocks of areas, are done as efficiently as possible on Fort Carson and PCMS. The DPW wildlife staff does now have the ability to determine these groupings when programming the website. They will make an extra effort to group them as best as possible without making them too large.

Maximum occupancies are the number of people allowed per TA based on historical hunter numbers, acres in a given TA and the maximum may change depending on the hunting season and weapons being used. If four TAs of similar size have the maximum occupancy number set to three people per TA and those are assigned into a block, the maximum occupancy is then 12 people. Once people check into that block, the staff cannot determine or control where they will go or whether they end up spread out or in closer proximity. That will be up to the individual hunters checked in.

Early check in for Soldiers has been discussed for many years, however current capabilities of iSportsman do not allow it to be programmed for one demographic over another to have check in early. If early check in for Soldiers were allowed, more staff would need to be added to allow for manual check ins to be conducted. Currently, there is one person managing the Fort Carson

hunting program and one person managing hunting at PCMS. Fort Carson simply does not have the staff available to operate outside of iSportsman for early check in. If the installation were to gain additional staff, the issue of early check in for Soldiers will be revisited.

It does get very dry in the summer and early fall each year at PCMS and Fort Carson and the staff works to truck or bring well water into the hidden or off-the-path water guzzlers for wildlife. Construction of any in-ground, un-natural, permanent water sources is not likely to become a project in the near future.

Last but not least, open area access. Fort Carson is only open for hunting on the weekends, unless otherwise posted. PCMS depends on training tempo and staff availability. Why? This is generally the time when there is less training activity and most Army civilians are not working. There is a lot of work, land rehabilitation and Army civilians working downrange that does not involve Soldiers or military training. Range operations have been opening a lot of low-velocity areas to hunting Fridays to try and allow for “weekday” access. Army civilians and contractors are not allowed to work downrange in TAs with weapons in use. If a TA shows no training, it does not mean that someone is not working in that TA performing some facet of an official duty. All of these official activities have higher priorities than opening areas for downrange recreation, so please keep that in mind when deciding to hunt on Fort Carson or PCMS.