

## Agenda Item Summary

**BACKGROUND**

Since the 1950s and '60s, mule deer have declined across the west, including Oregon. The most recent decline happened during the early 1990s and is believed to be primarily due to the combined effects of drought and severe winters. Currently mule deer populations are below population management objectives throughout most of their range in Oregon.

To focus efforts designed to benefit mule deer the **Oregon Mule Deer Initiative** (MDI) has been created. Five units have been selected to receive management strategies specifically designed to improve mule deer populations during the initial phase of the Mule Deer Initiative. The five units identified are Steens Mtn., Warner, Heppner, Murderers Creek, and Maury.

Management actions will vary by unit and will be monitored to find out which actions are most effective; actions will be implemented to address six issues, 1) habitat, 2) predation, 3) disturbance/harassment, 4) law enforcement, 5) disease, and 6) population management.

Activities conducted in Mule Deer Initiative units will be monitored and evaluated with the intent of applying the most successful management actions to other units.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Action Plan Committees were formed for each of the five MDI units; each Committee met several times. Committees were comprised of members of the public including representatives of sporting organizations, landowners, County Commissioners, public land managers, and Oregon State Police. Some meetings were also attended by members of the public.

**ISSUE 1**

Low mule deer survival and recruitment influenced by factors such as severe winters, dry summers, changing predator/prey relationships, and increased habitat loss, have resulted in mule deer populations lower than the department and public desire.

**ANALYSIS**

The Mule Deer Initiative Action Plans provide management concepts for increasing mule deer populations in five Wildlife Management Units.

**OPTIONS**

Informational item, no action necessary

**STAFF  
RECOMMENDATION**

|                       |                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>DRAFT MOTION</b>   | No action requested at this time. |
| <b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> |                                   |

