

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. During the initial phase of the MDI, five units have been selected to receive management strategies specifically designed to improve mule deer populations. The units are Steens Mountain, Warner, Heppner, Murderers Creek, and Maury.

Management actions will vary by unit and will be monitored to determine 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.

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 hunting organizations, landowners, County Commissioners, public land managers, and Oregon State Police. Some meetings were also attended by members of the public. During May 2010, the MDI was discussed at 26 public meetings throughout Oregon and attended by almost 600 individuals.

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

DRAFT MOTION

No action requested at this time.

EFFECTIVE DATE