

## Agenda Item Summary

### BACKGROUND

Since the 1950's and '60s, mule deer have declined across the West, including Oregon. The most recent decline happened during the early 1990's and is believed to be primarily due to the combined effects of drought and severe winters. Predators may also now be contributing to keeping populations at suppressed levels in some areas. Currently mule deer populations are below population management objectives (MO) throughout most of their range in Oregon.

To focus efforts benefitting mule deer, the **Oregon Mule Deer Initiative** (MDI) was created. Five units were selected for more intensive management specifically designed to improve mule deer populations. The five units are Steens Mountain, Warner, Heppner, Murderers Creek, and Maury.

Management actions vary by unit and are designed to address six issues:

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) habitat,                | 4) law enforcement,       |
| 2) predation,              | 5) disease, and           |
| 3) disturbance/harassment, | 6) population management. |

Activities conducted in MDI units will be monitored and evaluated relative to paired units not receiving intensive management with the intent of applying the most successful management actions to other units.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Action Plan Committees comprised of members of the public including representatives of sporting organizations, landowners, county commissioners, public land managers, and Oregon State Police were formed for each of the five MDI units. Each Committee met several times and developed action plans for each unit.

### 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 MDI 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