



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Oregon's first Mule Deer Management Plan was adopted in 1990 with a subsequent revision adopted 13 years later in 2003. Since the last revision of the plan, the biological and social environment for mule deer has changed dramatically. Changes have occurred in the landscape mule deer rely on for persistence, mule deer populations, populations of other species sharing the landscape with mule deer including predators, and the social and political values associated with mule deer have evolved. This plan updates the history and scientific information relative to mule deer management, identifies and updates information and status of factors affecting mule deer, and incorporates the synthesized feedback from individuals and groups providing comments on the plan. Through the updated goal and associated objectives, this plan provides direction to the department, and communicates that direction to partners and the public, for navigating through the contemporary, complicated interactions of all the biological, environmental, and social factors affecting mule deer. The resulting combined effort is focused on improving mule deer populations to meet the department's mission to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- In anticipation of the Commission consideration of the proposed rules, the department published notice of the proposed rulemaking (Attachment 2).
- The public has had multiple opportunities throughout the revision process to provide comment orally and in writing during the webinars and public meetings and orally during the hearing that occurs at the Commission meeting. Following each of these increments, staff reviewed comments and made adjustments where appropriate.
 - Solicited and received input from sports group leaders in March 2022 regarding subjects and topics to include in the revised plan. Staff incorporated this input when drafting the sections of the plan.
 - Sections of the plan were released for review as they were completed beginning in January 2023, followed by webinars covering three to five sections at a time. Each of the five webinars included a live question and answer period with authors of the sections that were presented.
 - A complete initial draft plan was compiled and released for public review in January 2024 followed by three public meetings, each of which included a brief presentation of the plan and an opportunity to provide public comment by meeting attendees.
 - Throughout the entire webinar and public meeting period, written comments were accepted via direct email to the department and through an email link on the department website.
 - Following the March 15, 2024 update to the Commission, department staff also conducted additional outreach to stakeholders in response to a variety of comments received.

- The initial draft plan was revised to incorporate public input where appropriate with the revised draft plan released for public review May 14, 2024.
- The public will also have the opportunity to provide input leading up to and during the June Commission meeting.

ISSUE

Evaluation and revision of the Oregon Mule Deer Management Plan.

ANALYSIS

Significant changes have occurred in mule deer populations and habitats since the last update of the mule deer management plan in 2003. The 2024 revision of the Mule Deer Management Plan establishes an updated goal and associated objectives for mule deer management in Oregon. Notable among the changes in the 2024 plan is the defining of herd range boundaries and the shift to managing at the biologically relevant herd range scale rather than the wildlife management unit scale. The plan describes and establishes new population and buck ratio management objectives at herd range scale. Within the plan appendices each herd range is described and priority management actions are identified to serve as a road map for addressing primary factors affecting mule deer in each herd range.

With incorporation of mule deer herd ranges as the basis for population monitoring, data collection, and harvest management, this plan forms a stronger scientific basis to inform management decisions, direct habitat management actions benefitting mule deer, and conserve mule deer into the future in the face of pressures from increasing human populations and a dynamically changing environment.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt staff recommendations to revise Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan goal, objectives, issues and strategies, and population and buck ratio management objectives.
2. Amend staff recommendations to revise Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan goal, objectives, issues and strategies, and population and buck ratio management objectives.
3. Reject staff recommendations to revise Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan goal, objectives, issues and strategies, and population and buck ratio management objectives.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Option 1.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to amend Oregon Administrative Rule Division 190 as proposed by staff to revise Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan goal, plan objectives, issues and strategies, and population and buck ratio management objectives.

Effective Date: *Upon Filing*