14 members of the public attended the BMDH meeting in Rawlins. Game and Fish personnel included Steve DeCecco, Daryl Lutz, Kim Olson, Brady Frude, Tony Mong, Ian Tator, Katie Cheesbrough and Lucy Diggins-Wold. After a presentation of the process, herd update, and how the working group will be chosen, the group was split into two breakout groups and their responses were recorded. The question posed to the group was: Based on your observations and experiences what are some issues (I) affecting the BMDH and what are some of your suggestions for solutions (S) for these issues? *All of the groups’ comments were recorded and each group was asked to rank their top three issues. The order of the issues is not in order of importance. Additionally, many issues were lumped together as they are related.

I=issues and S=solutions

GROUP 1

Top Three Issues:
1. Lack of Coordination
2. Competing multiple land uses
3. Poor habitat quality

I= Different missions for each agency (land managers) resulting in lack of coordination and lack of collaboration/threshold management
S= Formalized agreements with “teeth”

I= State population objectives are not being discussed or addressed by other agencies
S= Better and more coordination

I= Lack of hunter success/harvest survey information; poor return on hunter harvest surveys
S= Implement mandatory reporting or else you don’t get to buy a hunting license; Oregon does this

I= USFS not emphasizing habitat treatments on summer range—actually, not implementing any projects
S= Public pressure to do something meaningful and better coordination between agencies

I= Drought; climate changes have resulted in poor forage base and lack of available water
S= Targeted habitat improvement treatment projects
S= Shift habitat improvement focus to higher elevations

I= Short term vision and solutions
S= Long term vision and solutions

I= Beetle killed forests results in limited habitat access and limited hunter access as well as limited or changing wildlife movements
S= Better, proactive forest management

I= lack of or poor hunt area management; crowding, limited access, lack of hunting opportunities
S= Reevaluate hunt area management
 Offer different opportunities, like primitive hunt option, or hunters have to choose a week to hunt (offer four weeks of hunting) like Colorado does

Juniper encroachments
More targeted juniper removal

Energy development causing poor habitat quality, low mule deer numbers, fragmentation
Better road and travel management
Better and more proactive planning
Identify crucial areas for wildlife and avoid disturbance in these crucial wildlife areas
Identify stopover habitats and reduce or limit disturbances in these areas
Reevaluate recommendations with current data using adaptive management measures; there have been more recent wildlife studies that have shed new light on mule deer movements and responses to human disturbances so use that new data.
Identify mitigations

Weather: there are data gaps in how animals move in response to weather and climatic changes.
More and better data on weather and how it affects mule deer movements/behavior

Elk numbers increasing in areas that used to hold mule deer; competition and resource overlap
Reevaluate the population objective

Hunter crowding versus Hunter recruitment and retention
None offered

**GROUP 2**

Top Three Issues:

1. ORV misuse negatively impacting hunt quality and increasing mule deer stress
   Reduce ORV use

2. Declining habitat condition/quality and fragmentation
   More habitat work
   Mitigation for energy development

3. Predation
   (Surgically—be more precise and targeted) remove predators
   More quality/targeted habitat improvement projects that benefit mule deer

Negative impacts from wind energy
Mitigation

Disruption of the elk rutting season
Eliminate the late November and December elk hunting seasons
Limited quota hunting seasons elsewhere in the region are causing hunter crowding, lack of hunter recruitment and lack of opportunity

G&F Commission hunting regulations are not flexible enough to address changing circumstances

Shed antler hunters causing stress to mule deer

Hunters have unrealistic expectations

Mule deer nutrition poor in summer and fall habitats

Urban mule deer getting too aggressive

Competition for resources between elk and mule deer

Decrease in hunter access with decrease in hunter density

Significant decline in mule deer numbers in the Sandhills

Choose your method; firearms or archery

Research and find out what caused the mule deer numbers to decline