

**Minutes – Meeting 7**  
**Lander/Green Mountain Mule Deer Working Group**  
**February 5, 2015**  
**6:15 PM – 9:15 PM**  
**Lander, WY**

**Members In Attendance:** Jared Oakleaf, Katie Erickson, Rowdy Anderson, Stan Harter, Harold Schultz, Marla Lemm, Brad Hovinga, Joe Hutto, David Killebrew, Ember Oakley

**Absent:** Ken Metzler

**Public attendance:** Colby Erickson, Steve Agueda, Ron Smith, John Coffman, Ava Hunter, Griffin Hunter

**Game and Fish personnel:** Brady Frude, Linnea Sailor, Teal Joseph, Amy Anderson, Jason Hunter

**Facilitator:** Rene Schell

6:15 Welcome-minutes, agenda approval

Rene informed the group that Travis Stevenson has moved to Nebraska and will no longer participate in the working group. Group agrees that they would like to go on without that landowner representative, due to the burden of catching someone up.

6:20 Continue work on research recommendations – *led by Rene Schell*

- **Stan handout re: 5 research ideas (see attached)**
  - Stan added a 6<sup>th</sup> idea re: predator mgmt on the WRIR to compare trends over time in reproduction/recruitment – there's no predator harvest on the WRIR and the habitat type should be similar enough
- **Rene asked the group what the tangible thing they would like to see out of tonight's meeting...**
  - Joe: that's a function of funding and that all gets expensive real fast. That said, Joe would like to see a research recommendation come out of this meeting.
  - Harold would like to explore all the options available and at the least whittle them down to a few prioritized projects (draft recommendations).
    - Rowdy talked to Daryl about a collaring project of ~50 deer would cost \$300K-\$400K.
    - Jared brought up the thought of starting a Lander chapter of Muley Fanatics to assist, but doesn't want group to get discouraged by budget at this stage.

- Rene and Brad reiterated that President Klouda told the group to come up with recommendations and the Commission would find the funds and urged the group not to get too concerned with the budget aspects.
  - David wants to shoot for at least 1 recommendations.
  - Rowdy wants to leave here with 1 research recommendation that can be accomplished. (group accepted as the goal for the evening)
  - Ember wants to get as far as we get.
- What are the answers you want out of a research project (this adds on to last meeting's research list)?
    - David wants to find out if the animals we are counting post-hunt are the same ones that we are hunting in the fall (ie, collaring project)
    - Jared wants to know what is going on with the forest deer (SWR herd) – is there interchange between forest and shrublands. Is there interchange in Sweetwater herd where deer are leaving the herd unit boundary to surrounding limited quota areas?
    - Harold says you can find out all sorts of things by doing one thing
    - Harold wants to know where vehicle-deer collisions are occurring. Joe says he believes this is the leading cause of deer mortality by far. Is there a study with specific types of reflectors?
    - Rowdy wants to know what effects are current hunting season structure has on these deer
    - Jared has questions on distribution – it seems there is a lot of unused habitat; why are deer not selecting these habitats and/or what is preventing them from selecting these habitats?
    - Jared wants to know more about factors affecting fawn recruitment

7:30 Break

- Break out groups to get at broad questions in each research topic and if they affect one or both herds –
  - Timing of migration = both
  - Food source requirements/seasonal differences = both
  - Weather conditions = both
  - Predators at different areas of migration = both
  - Migratory routes = both
  - Nutritional value = both
  - Vehicle mortality in migration corridors = both
  - Habitat selection = both
  - Where are migration corridors = both
  - Why are particular migration corridors selected = both
  - Affects of climate change (fawns) = both
  - Presence of predators = both
  - Nutrition and forage (fawns) = both

- Hunting migratory versus resident(5) = both
- Counting migratory versus resident(5) = both
- Types of areas = both
- Vehicle mortalities – times of year = both
- Percent of deer affected = both
- Age classes of deer affected = both
- What works to prevent = both
- Why wait to fix problems = both
- Are hunting season dates correct = both
- What is the displacement of deer due to hunting seasons = both
- Targeted habitat mgmt = both
- Assess migration barriers = both
- Adjust hunting seasons
- Habitat utilization = both
- Excessive herbivory = both
- Long-term drought affects = both
- Nutritional content (plants) = both
- Succession/decadence = both
- Invasive species (native & non-native) = both
- What does the group feel is a way to tackle all these questions? (Broaden out recommendations)
  - Harold: **migration study** = when we find where the deer are going and what time of year, then we can determine fixes for those particular habitats
  - Jared: let's develop a recommendation for migration study and see how many of those questions we knock out
- The LGMMDWG recommends the WGFD...
  - collar mule deer ~~to study the migration patterns~~ of the Sweetwater and South Wind River herd units to study mule deer movements and distribution to address issues affecting declining populations; such as habitat use and selection, mortality factors, hunting season structure....

7:45 Presentation on Habitat projects - *Amy Anderson*

- postpone her presentation to next meeting where it might be more in context

8:00 Presentation on cooperative habitat projects – *Ron Smith*

- several issues that affect both BHS and MD
  - habitat degradation
  - selenium deficiencies
  - predation (especially mountain lions)
  - disease (include educational packet)
  - migration corridors
    - not a lot of deer up on the forest

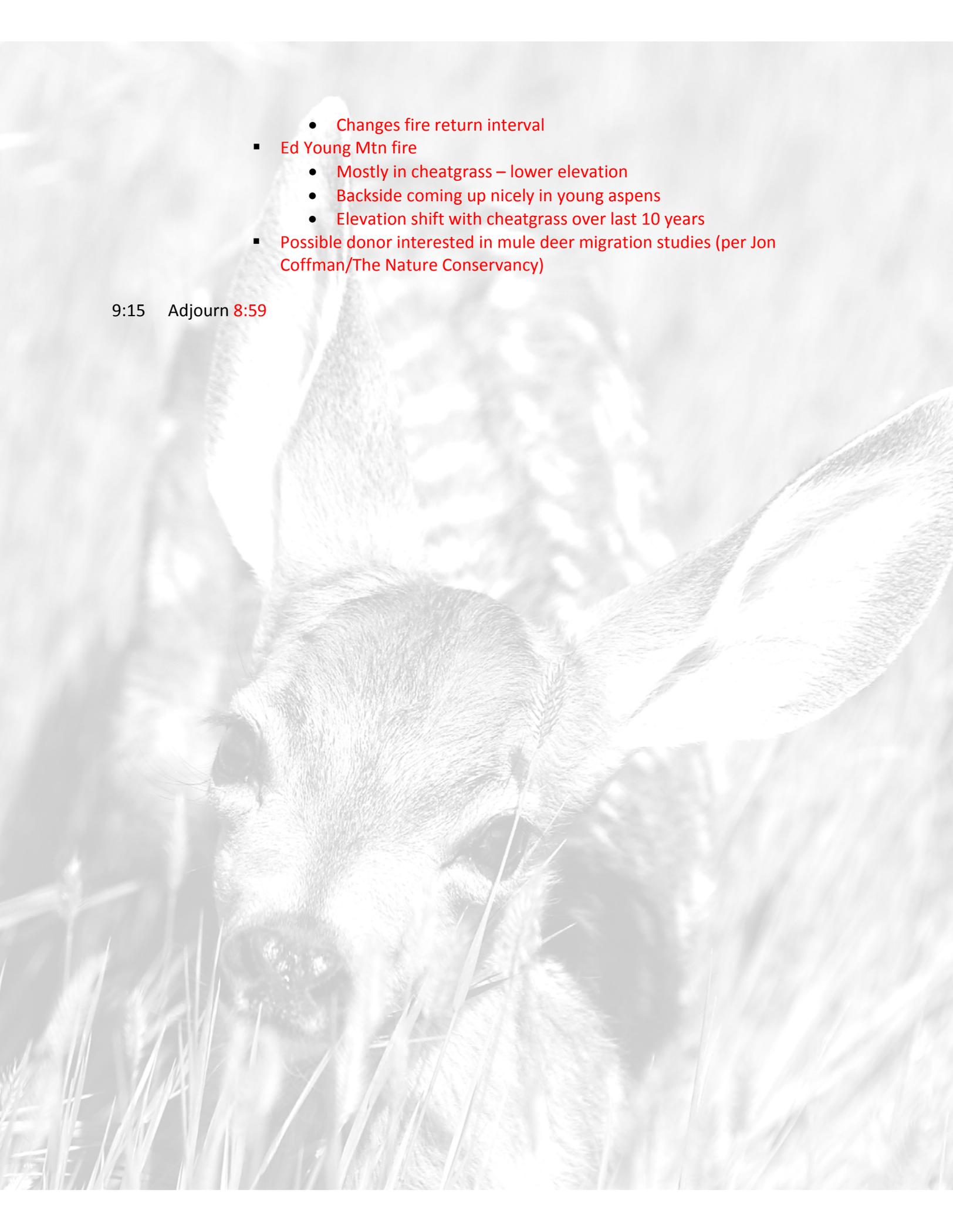
- currently USFS is looking at projects to open up areas for fire prevention, but could also be used for migration corridors
- approved through NEPA process; lacking personnel to complete project prioritization/completion
- Central Wyoming College environmental programs – lots of students and professors that would like to get involved
- Work with County Commission or City Council to bring in favorable businesses i.e. logging, wood stove pellet manufacturers, mills
- Work with Muley Fanatics, other private groups, to secure funds for these projects

8:15 Habitat recommendations – *led by Rene Schell*

8:45 Revisit timeline strategies

9:00 Wrap Up

- Next meeting date Feb 24<sup>th</sup>
- Topics for next meeting agenda
  - Finish up migration recommendation language
    - What did we miss
    - Statewide MD working group language
  - Add Habitat recommendation
    - ACTION: Come with developed recommendation on each research topic from each member (so finish the one on migration research and develop the one on habitat research)
    - ACTION: Prep for Habitat Recommendations
      - Costs
      - How many deer affected by area (value per acre treated)
      - Efficacy of treatments (for both deer and veg communities) – monitoring efforts
      - What critical habitats are there and which ones are having problems
  - Sue Oberlie – BLM habitat projects
  - Brandon Houck – USFS habitat projects
  - Amy Anderson – WGFD habitat projects
- Feedback (from public)
  - Concentrating on a singular topic is a good way to go because several other issues will come to light as you go
  - Cheatgrass issue in Sinks Canyon is a severe issue and needs addressed
    - Be careful when talking prescribed burns
    - Timing is crucial

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- Changes fire return interval
  - Ed Young Mtn fire
    - Mostly in cheatgrass – lower elevation
    - Backside coming up nicely in young aspens
    - Elevation shift with cheatgrass over last 10 years
  - Possible donor interested in mule deer migration studies (per Jon Coffman/The Nature Conservancy)

9:15 Adjourn 8:59