

## WGFD Sheep Mountain MDI Meeting

August 5-6, 2014

### Cheyenne and Laramie Meetings

#### Mule Deer Meetings Summary of Main Points for all Groups:

- Habitat quality and quantity, particularly summer and transition ranges
- Understanding cause specific mortality, what's killing deer, particularly fawns
- Reduce Hunter Crowding
- Manage Predators
- Interspecies Competition (elk, moose)
- Youth Involvement, education, and recruitment
- Travel management (reduce motorized travel impacts to deer and hunters)

#### Group 1 (Cheyenne)

##### Top 3 concerns:

- Identify fawn mortality causes
- Habitat effectiveness, especially transitional range
- Elk herd impacts, competition

##### Additional Comments

- There has been an increase in road density in the winter range and timing of impacts
- Increase in ATVs
- Importance of stopover habitats/ transition range
- What's the difference between areas that are producing mule deer (like Alberta) and Sheep Mountain?
- Apply lessons learned from Wyoming Range and Platte Valley MDI.
- Involve public in mortality survey transects on winter range
- Poaching impacts, what impact does poaching have on the population?
- Highway mortality
- Improve Habitat through:
  - Clear cutting
  - Rx Fire
- Predation:
  - Increase in Mountain Lions
- Drought Impacts
- Disease impacts
- Identify cause specific Fawn mortality
- Season structure changes
  - Closures
- Population objective/ management
- Estimation of carrying capacity

- Manage for increase of 66:100 rather than objective management, manage for a fawn ratio objective instead of a population objective
- Want high buck: doe ratio and higher density of deer
- Older age class bucks preferred
- Low hunter success rate non-factor – hunter success so low not impacting bucks
- Elk herds impact to mule deer population
  - Food and space competition
  - Resident elk herd impacts
  - Fawning period impacts
  - Mule deer pushed to less desirable habitat

## **GROUP 2 (Cheyenne)**

### **Top 3 concerns:**

- Habitat Health
- Predators
- Youth Involvement:
  - Education
  - Hunting
  - Outdoor recreation

### **Additional Comments**

- Food quality and quantity i.e. browse
- Like limited quota
  - Interstate herd- Colorado is limited quota and WY is general causing higher harvest of bucks in WY
- Does not like LQ
  - Landowner preference
  - Luck of draw
  - Leads to high preference points
  - Not passing on deer
  - Recruitment problems for youth recruitment
- Increase elk harvest
- Partnerships with NGOs federal government, private landowners to improve habitat, more public pressure on USFS and BLM
- Better rehabilitation after fire
- Address physical barriers i.e. roads, fences
- Remove woven wire fence
- Travel management on private and federal lands
- Seasonal road closures in winter range
- Shed hunting on crucial winter range- closure state wide
- Predators
  - Increase female lion harvest
  - Increase coyote control
  - Increase restrictions on snares and leg holds
- Like the 3pt or better- improved buck quality

- Trophy buck is in the eye of the beholder – trophy mule deer is defined differently by different people
- Reduce hunter crowding
  - Limited Quota
  - Restrict vehicle access
- Increase access to private land
- Youth only season
- Increase youth participation
- Eliminate any deer opportunity during archery season
- Would like a early season for youth opportunity
- Disease – is disease impacting this mule deer herd (CWD, EHD, etc.)

### **GROUP 3 (Laramie)**

#### **Top 3 concerns:**

- Habitat
- Travel management
- Predation

#### **Additional Comments**

- Road closures in fawning areas and winter range
  - Address the 3,000 acres of the Sheep Mountain Big Game Refuge, west of the fox creek road, that the USFS no longer acknowledges
  - Non-motorized
  - Change USFS use plan
  - Need more gates, signs and enforcement of the winter range closures
- Stronger voice on USFS land management
- Landowner outreach and education
- Predator management
  - Coyotes- put bounty
  - Mountain lions – put Anderson et. al. on web
- Habitat management
  - Cheatgrass control
  - Prescribe fire
  - Water developments
- Shed hunting restrictions/ state closure
- Mule deer specific treatments
- ORV and ATV restrictions
  - Management plan on ALL lands fed and private
  - Restrict vehicles in parturition areas and winter range
- Hunting seasons
  - Limited quota – for and against
  - Quality vs quantity
  - Restrictions the same for archery and rifle
  - Full closure of deer season
  - Like 3 point or better

- Elk displace deer through competition of space and forage

#### **GROUP 4 (Laramie)**

##### **Top 3 concerns:**

- Hunter Management
- Cause specific mortality study
- Habitat

##### **Additional Comments**

- Habitat
  - RX burning
  - Cheatgrass control
  - Bitterbrush is heavily browsed
  - Sagebrush is heavily browsed
  - Seeding after burn
  - Small transition range/little feed and need to target habitat projects here
  - Information and education dissemination
  - Direct to landowners –send mule deer habitat data to landowners
  - Especially in deer use areas
  - Website info – mule deer habitat data available online
  - Incentives – provide incentive to landowners who want to manage for mule deer on their land
- Predation
  - Lots of mountain lions in sheep mountain area
  - Need more lion hunters
  - Raise quota but we are also not meeting the current quota
  - Need data on predator effects on mule deer specifically fawns
  - Need predator population data
- Disturbance
  - road densities are too high, need travel management
  - reduce speed limits to reduce collisions
  - OHV use is causing noise disturbance
  - Decrease people densities
  - Increase enforcement in closed areas
  - Restrict antler hunters- state wide closure
  - Habitat fragmentation
- Competition
  - High elk populations
  - Moose
  - Pronghorn
  - Browse competition
- Increase fawn survival
  - Predation
  - Habitat

- Decrease mortality
  - Hunting regulations
- Enforcement
  - Funding
  - Increase G&F presence
  - USFS LEO #s
  - Education
  - Increase gates and signs
  - Self policing
- Access
  - Private land act as refuges
  - Increase PLPW program
  - Easements to public land through private
  - Corner hoping
- Overcrowding of hunters
- Hunter education/ manage expectations
  - % of deer classified that meet public perception of a “big deer”
  - More analysis of hunter satisfaction survey
  - Change the way hunter effort is measured
  - Consistent data collection
- There feels like there is over crowding but there are less hunters
  - Too much vehicle access
  - Different equipment from 50 years ago
  - Season overlaps elk season
  - Trophy vs substance hunting/ folks spend more time in field for trophy
- Better understanding needed of interstate movements with Colorado