Meeting Objectives

1. Develop an Understanding of Collaborative Learning
2. Background and Present conditions
3. Identify issues and interests related to Wyoming Mule Deer Herd
4. Collaboratively determine next steps

Main Points Group 1, Bernie Holz

1. Habitat—Long term: better coordination, winter range is limiting factor
2. Quality of hunting experience—Short term: spread seasons and hunters out
3. Partnerships
4. County mule deer working groups

Group 1 Notes – Concerns and Interests

• Spread seasons and hunters out
  o Longer seasons
  o Standardize season openers and closing dates or split seasons
• Habitat
  o Better coordination/mechanism between interest groups to identify habitat projects & get work done on the ground
  o Monthly meeting
  o Winter range is limiting factor and most crucial
  o Need better mechanism/better relationship with land management agencies & permittees to identify problems and generate solutions
  o Locals working with permittees
    ▪ Replace forage allotments
    ▪ Forage reserves
• Partnerships
  o Land management agencies
  o WGFD
  o Sportsmen
  o Landowners/permittees
• Contracting for NEPA compliance
  o Identify other sources for research & specific research projects
• County mule deer working groups
  o County commissioners, WGFD, BLM, USFS, public, permittees/landowners
  o Goals: mule deer objective, winter habitat, fences
Main Points Group 2, Jessica Clement, Facilitator

1. Winter range must be improved
2. Use large scale & long term landscape restoration strategies using collaborative approaches between all agencies and the public
3. Use science-driven approaches to improve trophy quality and herd health

Group 2 Notes – Concerns and Interests
- Hold oil & gas companies responsible for restoring what they disturbed—roads
- Prescribed burns—are they effective?
- What’s time that lapses between a burn & it’s beneficial for mule deer
  - Need to find a way to increase seedlings if don’t want to go back too much successationally
  - Need to do something to increase aspen stands and suppress conifers
- Habitat restoration
  - Use stewardship agreements and CFLRP’s (Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act) for large landscape scale approaches
  - Work collaborative with multiple agencies and communities
  - Restoration very necessary on state lands & BLM to improve winter range. Perhaps an acre for acre formula for land disturbed to land restored. Or % of each barrel goes to restoration. Or use incentives. But not legislation.
- Increase/improve collaboration between agencies. E.g. with BLM (land orientation) and WGFD (wildlife orientation)
- State legislation encourage (maybe fed legislation) this collaboration
- Additional resources for WGFD e.g. need more wildlife biologists and habitat biologists
- Underpass needed at Big Piney/Labarge Hwy.
  - All through Wyo Range
- Manage for trophy quality
- Get attention of legislators for WR mule deer herd
- Limited quota licenses
- More enforcement of off-road vehicles
- Limiting stress on herds though e.g. education re road closures
- Restore WGFD tools e.g. ability to age animals, aerial time, money to census & biological sampling

Main Points Group 3, Susan Boston, Facilitator

1. Habitat
2. Quality of hunt—uniform openers due to pressure on migration to winter range
3. Accurate count of deer

Group 3 Notes — Concerns and Interests
- Winter habitat
- Safe migration – vehicle collisions, number of mortalities
- Ways to improve habitat
- Habitat other than oil & gas
- What’s affecting the deer?
- Hear about winter range and do burns, but still hear that populations are decreasing
  - Do we have increasing or decreasing populations?
    - Have heard both and have different perspectives from public
  - Better way to count deer
    - More accurate count of deer
    - Mandatory harvest survey
  - Losing winter habitat with oil & gas
  - Enforcement of returning habitat (reclamation)
  - Enforcement in oil & gas areas
    - WGFD ability to enforce in those areas; deals with statutory authority besides wildlife laws
  - Uniform openers due to pressure on migration to winter range
  - Quality of hunt
    - Resident hunter densities
    - Where people hunt
    - More deer than hunters
  - Uniform openers & closing dates
  - Get money from oil & gas (ex: per acre)
    - Involve WGFD in reclamation
    - Get money for WGFD
  - Length of season to spread hunting pressure on deer
    - Improve quality of hunt for hunters

**Main Points Group 5, Mark Gocke, Facilitator**

1. Improve winter range (and all habitat)
2. Redistribute hunting pressure—standardize opening and closing dates
3. Reduce roadkill
4. Increased public awareness & enforcement of laws (e.g. game laws & travel laws)
5. Work with fed agency on energy development impacts

**Group 5 Notes—Concerns and Issues**

- Standardize hunting opening dates & closing dates to reduce pressure on the deer
- Improve winter range
- Implement winter range closures for public & energy development
- Increased enforcement of antler season, including energy workers
  - Sportsmen need to help enforce too
- Increased public awareness of antler season
- Enforce off-road restrictions
- We do need some areas for ATVs
- Reduce hunting pressure
- Reduce roadkill—increased underpasses
- Winter range improvements (e.g. seedlings?)
- Set hunting seasons by NR regions
  - Standardize
- Possible influence of other species (ie. elk)
Main Points Group 6, Jeff Short

1. Habitat—control development; emergency feeding; burns (improvement); work with oil & gas companies to improve habitat while there and when they leave
2. Improve relations between outfitters, guides, local sportsmen, G&F—can't get anything done if fighting
3. Sportsman's accountability—enforcement; atv's
4. Limited quota, standardized opening
5. Antler restrictions on & off except youth

Group 6 Notes — Concerns and Issues

- Improve relationships between hunters and outfitters and WGFD
- Concern Wyoming residents have a misconception of what limited quota truly means for opportunity
- If hunter numbers need to be reduced, cut the nonresidents
- Use consistent opening date to spread hunters
- All of Region G open same day
- Cutting nonresidents has very little impact on hunter numbers since they are already low (including residents)
- Hunter distribution, hunter crowding in local areas, “no secret spots”
- Outfitter drop camps allowed in Wyoming Range—impacts the above point—outfitters not respecting others “territories”
- 5 point or better except for youth—harvest any buck
  - Increase mature bucks
- Limit ATV access
  - Designate areas for them outside mule deer habitat
- More accountability for ATV users
- Hunters can shoot too far and don’t follow up shots
- Maintain and increase enforcement presence
- Habitat quality
  - Concern over shrub age class
- Concern about development
  - Rural subdivisions
- Limited public access through private lands
- Work with oil & gas companies
  - Improve reclamation during and after they are done
- 3-4 points every other year, youth any buck
- 2 point only 5 years then hunt the big bucks
- Emergency winter feeding
- No do hunting, including archery
- Enhance winter habitat to support a mule deer population at much higher numbers while still sustaining the current population
- Manage Wyoming Range mule deer balancing “trophy quality” & not eliminating recreational opportunities for young hunters & first time hunters
- Common opening dates and season lengths and the effect they have on quality of deer and the deer hunting experience
  - Spreading hunter distribution over a larger area
- Predation management
• Minimizing impact on the winter range & migration corridors
  o Increasing fawn recruitment through decreasing stress on deer populations while on winter range

Main Points Group 7, Daryl Lutz, Facilitator

1. Quality habitat (winter) is important to sustain this herd.
2. Past management has been unsuccessful in maintaining Wyo Range mule deer
3. Fawn recruitment
4. Trophy unit versus recreation management
5. Too many hunters to sustain trophy quality given number of deer in the herd
6. Too much disturbance on winter range (antlers, oil/gas, videographers, ATV) no consideration for deer welfare
7. Hunter recruitment
8. Need to better understand effect of predation and to manage/mitigate for it.
9. Season length (all species)
10. Better distribute hunters by having a common opening date throughout
11. Maintain adequate season length to provide quality hunt
12. Motorized access affects deer distribution negatively
13. Landowner/sportsman relations need to improve
14. Increase penalties for robbing us of our wildlife

Group 7 Notes — Concerns and Issues

• Quality habitat (winter) is important to sustain this herd
• Past management has been unsuccessful in maintaining Wyo Range mule deer
• Fawn recruitment needs to increase—factors to address are predation, winter range, forage, and habitat fragmentation
  o Need to engage in zoning/planning
  o Maintaining migration corridors
• Trophy unit versus recreation management
  o "trophy" is something different to everybody
• Too many hunters to sustain trophy quality given number of deer in the herd
• Hunter recruitment
  o Need to provide opportunity for the young hunter
  o Need to provide a QUALITY experience
• Need to better understand effect of predation and to manage/mitigate for it.
• Season length (all species)
  o Elk seasons occurring too late, increases stress on mule deer
• Better distribute hunters by having a common opening date throughout
• Maintain adequate season length to provide quality hunt
• Motorized access affects deer distribution negatively
• Landowner/sportsman relations need to improve
• Increase penalties for robbing us of our wildlife

Evaluation

WGFD Mule Deer Management Plan Collaborative Learning Process Notes
Afton, Wyoming June 22, 2010
PLUS (positive aspects)
- Picking groups by counting down
- Like collaborative learning process vs. open house
- Revisit plan/meetings annually

DELTA (things that could be changed)
- More time
- Joint effort b/w agencies
  - USFS, BLM, etc. O&G leading process
- Involve high level administrators
- Apply collaborative learning to other agency public processes/issues
- Website reporting
- Process supported by state leaders
- Send data ahead