



WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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Bates Hole / Hat Six Mule Deer Working Group Charter

July 22, 2014

Purpose:

The working group will assist the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) Casper Region's efforts in conducting a Mule Deer Initiative (MDI) for the Bates Hole / Hat Six mule deer herd unit (hunt areas 66 and 67). This mule deer working group (MDWG) will engage in a collaborative process to ultimately provide the Department with recommendations to consider for improving mule deer population performance and habitat in hunt areas 66 and 67. Hunt area 67 is predominately private and has been closed to hunting for over 60 years and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. This MDI will therefore focus on mule deer issues in Area 66.

Area 66 Mule Deer Working Group Mission Statement: It is the mission of the Area 66 MDWG to provide recommendations through discussion, public forum, and science-based information, to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to manage and improve mule deer populations and habitat in Areas 66 for sustainable hunting opportunities into the future.

Requirements:

- Working group members will be required to attend scheduled meetings to the extent possible.
- Members will be expected to present their own views and those of their peers on matters being discussed and be willing to engage in respectful, constructive dialogue with other members of the group and the general public.
- Members will be expected to attend public forums designed to increase public understanding and awareness of mule deer management in Area 66.
- Each working group member is required to communicate on a regular basis with the constituent group that he or she represents, keeping them informed of working group progress.
- WGFD may provide a working group facilitator if necessary and will provide a note taker. WGFD is responsible for information dissemination among the working group.

Deliverables:

- The working group will develop a management plan for the Bates Hole/Hat Six herd. This plan will provide recommendations to the WGFD that include but not limited to potential hunting season construct, potential habitat improvement projects, the postseason population objective review, predator control recommendations, etc.
- The management plan, including additional public review, will be completed no later than November 1, 2015 in order to incorporate potential changes for the 2016 deer hunting seasons.
- Recommendations will be presented to the public by December 2015.
- Written public comment will be solicited and considered by the entire working group.

Internal Decision Making Process:

Working group members, through the help of a Department facilitator, will strive for consensus whenever group decisions are necessary. Decision making tools will be agreed upon by the working group.

Timeline:

The formation of the working group will begin in July 2014. The Area 66 MDWG will sunset December 31, 2015.

Membership:

The working group will be comprised of individuals who represent sportspersons, landowners, outfitters, non-government organizations (NGOs), Casper businesses and the Game and Fish. The number and interests may be as follows:

- 4 - Public at large, hunters (Dusty Porter, Paul Threlkeld, Brian Scott and Jeff Muratore)
- 2 - Landowners/producers within hunt area 66 (Phil Marton and Pete/Steve Garrett)
- 1 - Outfitter (Randy Morrison)
- 1 - Casper area business (Miles Bundy – Sporstman’s Warehouse Manager)
- 3 - NGO representatives (Mule Deer Fanatics, Mule Deer Foundation) (Jim Wetzel, Chris Mikels and Ryan Kaiser)
- 1 - BLM representative (Rhen Etzelmiller)
- 2 - WGFD Casper Region field level wildlife managers (Justin Binfet, Matt Withroder and Heather O’Brien)

Technical advisors may be requested on an as needed basis.

Scope/Sideboards:

- Discussion and recommendations shall be specific to mule deer management in deer hunt area 66 (although discussions regarding hunt area 67 are also welcome). Discussion will also be entertained regarding any other issues affecting mule deer in this herd unit. However, we will not be discussing any other wildlife management issues that do not directly or indirectly impact mule deer issues in the Bates Hole / Hat Six herd.
- The Area 66 MDWG will be advisory in nature and will make recommendations to/through WGFD Casper Region, which will then go through additional review at the administrative level in Cheyenne.
- Any recommendations pertaining to hunting season regulations from the Area 66 MDWG to the WGFD must be approved via the public process and ultimately the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission.
- Recommendations shall be grounded in accepted mule deer management practices.

Endorsement Process: The working group is advisory in nature. The Department will look to this group for direct advice and innovation in formulating recommendations for the future management of the Bates Hole / Hat Six mule deer herd. The Department will incorporate the working group recommendations into future management decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Officers: The working group will select a chairperson. The chair's role is to work with the facilitator to develop meeting agendas, identify information and technical resource needs and to coordinate and collaborate with working group members throughout the tenure of the group. (Dusty Porter has been selected as Chairperson)