

Meeting Date: July 26, 2018

Agenda Item No. 12

Agenda Item: Mule Deer Initiative Update

Bureau Chief Approval: 

Prepared by: Matt Pieron, Mule Deer Initiative Coordinator

Background:

This presentation will update the Commission on the Department's Mule Deer Initiative (MDI). The MDI Coordinator will discuss current priorities, ongoing projects and accomplishments, and future project development.

Recent focus of the MDI program has been on engaging and collaborating with public land management agencies to encourage and facilitate active habitat restoration and management to benefit mule deer populations across seasonal ranges. Staff are working with the Caribou-Targhee, Salmon-Challis, and Sawtooth National Forests as well as the Salmon, Challis, and Pocatello BLM field offices to complete and develop new aspen restoration projects on mule deer summer range. MDI staff have also developed collaborative strategies and agreements to restore important winter range on BLM lands in IDFG Regions 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Working with private landowners and producers to improve mule deer habitat continues to be an important component of the MDI. During the past year, MDI and Farm Bill staff in Region 5 developed more than 60 new State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) contracts on over 25,000 acres and worked with landowners to make habitat improvements on another 15,000 acres. Staff also worked with multiple private landowners and grazing permittees to install wildlife-friendly fencing that will benefit deer and elk, as well as the producers' operations.

MDI continues to collaborate with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) to develop strategies to minimize deer vehicle collisions in priority locations. Staff are working with ITD to make improvements to wildlife passage infrastructure on US 30 east of Lava Hot Springs. Additionally, MDI and other Department staff continue to work with ITD to develop potential solutions to provide passage for thousands of mule deer crossing US 30 south of Montpelier at Rocky Point.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

This project helps meet the Department policy of maintaining game populations to meet demand for hunting.

Public Involvement Process:

None. This agenda item is for Commission information.

Justification:

This agenda item is for Commission information.

Staff Recommendation:

N/A

Action Requested:

N/A