

Meeting Date: August 22, 2019

Agenda Item No. 4A

Agenda Item: Adopt Mule Deer and White-tailed
Deer Management Plans (ACTION)

Bureau Chief Approval: TB

Prepared by: Daryl Meints, Natural Resources Program Coordinator Deer and Elk

Background:

Staff presented an overview of the status and content of the Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer Management Plan revisions at the Commission meeting in March, and provided a second update and a draft of the plans to the Commission at their May meeting. Staff provided an overview of public comments received on the draft plans at the July Commission meeting.

The intent of revisions to the Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer plans is to provide guidance for the Department and their partners to implement management actions that will aid in protection and management of Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer populations in Idaho and guide harvest season recommendations. These plans will function as the action plans for deer management in Idaho. Major issues that affect deer are identified, and set overall direction for deer management during the next 6 years (2020-2025). These plans will guide the Department in annual work plan development and program prioritization, and provide guidance on development of regulatory recommendations.

Staff will present the final draft of the Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer Management Plans for Commission adoption.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Species Management Plans are the guiding documents to manage wildlife and are a direct reflection of the Department Strategic Plan. The Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer Plans will function as the action plan for deer management in Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:

The Department sought input on the draft Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer Management Plans from the public, interested groups, and affected agencies. The draft plans were posted on the Department's website on May 31, 2019 and the Department accepted comments through June 30, 2019. (31 days). On June 4, the Department sent an email to 60,531 resident regular and white-tailed deer hunters from 2016-2018. Again on June 19, the Department sent an email to 60,483 resident and 18,241 nonresident deer hunters. Regions held 11 Open Houses across the state to gather additional comments.

Public Input Summary:

Mule Deer

Staff reviewed and considered all comments received, and in response to this input, made improvements to the draft plans and prepared the final Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer Plans to present to the Commission for adoption.

Justification:

The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans. The Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer Management Plans will guide management actions, monitoring activities, and harvest season recommendations through 2025.

Staff Recommendation:

The staff recommendation is for the Commission to adopt the Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer Management Plans (2020-2015).

Suggested Motion: That the Commission adopt the staff recommendation to adopt the Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer Management Plans (2020-2025).