

Subcommittee Members: Agee Smith, Chris Jasmine,
Joel McConnell, Todd Compston, Val Nance,
Wyatt Mesna, Cam Collins, Tyson Gripp

Department Representative: Kari Huebner
Brittany Trimble

**Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners
Mule Deer Enhancement Oversight Committee
Mule Deer Enhancement Program Subcommittee
Elko County; Management Area 7, 8, 9**

Meeting held via www.Zoom.us

Tuesday, August 16, 2022 / 5:30 p.m.

DRAFT Minutes

1. Call to Order – Department Representative

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm.

Attendees:

Agee Smith, Subcommittee Member
Val Nance, Subcommittee Member
Joel McConnell, Subcommittee Member
Chris Jasmine, Subcommittee Member
Cam Collins, Non-voting Member
Brittany Trimble, Department Representative
Kari Huebner, Department Representative

Absent:

Todd Compston, Subcommittee Member
Tyson Gripp, Non-voting Member
Wyatt Mesna, Subcommittee Member

2. Approval of Agenda – For Possible Action

Subcommittee Member Jasmine moved to approve the agenda.

Subcommittee Member McConnell seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

3. Approval of Minutes (July 26, 2022) – Department Representative – For Possible Action

Subcommittee Member McConnell moved to approve the Minutes.

Subcommittee Member Nance seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

4. Member Announcements and Correspondence – Informational

No announcements were made.

5. **Area 7, 8, 9 Project Proposals – Department Representative – For Possible Action**

Subcommittee Member Jasmin moved to approve the 4 projects presented with the edit of changing the cost figure of the Area 7 Fence Removal project from \$60,000 to \$25,000.

Subcommittee Member McConnell seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

6. ***Area 7, 8, 9 Five-Year Plan – Department Representative – For Possible Action**

The Subcommittee will discuss ideas for a 5-year plan guiding management of mule deer in Area 7, 8, and

Subcommittee Member Jasmin moved to approve the DRAFT 5-Year Plan.

Subcommittee Member Smith seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

7. **Public Comment**

No public comment was received.

8. **Future Subcommittee Meetings and Field Trip – For possible Action**

No plans were made.

Meeting adjourned by Kari Huebner 6:29 pm.

Habitat Projects

MDEP Subcommittee: Area 7, 8, 9	Hunt Unit Group: 071-079,091	
Project Title: Area 7 Fence Removal in Migration Corridor	Project Location: North Pequops	
Brief Description of Project: <i>Include any development plans such as vegetation removal, planting, seeding, or installation of structures; also include the schedule for obtaining any necessary permits, completing NEPA compliance, etc.:</i>	The project would remove up to 22 miles of barbed-wire fence located in crucial mule deer migration corridor and transistion area in the Pequop Mountains north of Interstate 80. The fence is on the private/public boundary and would not require NEPA for removal.	Score
Limiting Factor Score: <i>Use subcommittee cumulative score from Limiting Factor Score Form</i>	Maximum of 5 points possible	2.1
Unit Group 5-Year Published Deer Population Trend:	2017: 8,900 2018: 8,500 2019: 11,300 2020: 11,400 2021: 11,100	
	Decreasing = 5 pts Stable = 3 pts Increasing = 1 pt	3
Does this project directly address factors limiting healthy mule deer populations?	Yes = 10 pts No = 0 pts	10
<i>How will project address limiting factors?</i> Fences in migration corridors add to the energy expenditures that mule deer use during migration. In extreme cases they may prohibit movement, but more often require additional effort to jump the fence. This portion of the mule deer herd is migrating over 100 miles and encounters numerous fences along migration. They often become entangled in fences and in some case may die. Reduction of fences will limit these hazards and reduce the amount of energy these deer expend getting to crucial winter and summer ranges.		
Does this project protect, maintain or strategically restore statewide priority mule deer habitat, enhance critical habitat or a critical life stage for mule deer? <i>Score using the highest ranking criteria</i>	High priority (Critical Mule Deer Seasonal Range or Migration Route) = 10 points Moderate priority (High elev. summer range, PJ encroached shrub community, winter range) = 5 points Low priority (salt desert shrub or low density mule deer habitats) = 1 pt	10
The fences proposed for removal are in the migration path of a large segment of the Area 7 deer herd. It is estimated that more than 5,000 deer use this portion of the migration corridor. There are wildlife safety crossings that facilitate getting deer into and beyond the north Pequop Mountains. Many of these fences lie perpendicular to the migration path. Some of these deer not only migrate through this area, but will spend several weeks foraging in the area will putting on fat reserves for the winter.		
Is this mule deer habitat restoration or improvement of a long-term nature? <i>Does the project involve habitat trend and condition through restoration and improvement of a long-term or permanent nature? Projects of this nature are known to have long-term benefits with demonstrated history of past successes</i>	10+ years = 10 points 3-10 years = 5 points	10
Project Scale and Implications: <i>Is the size or magnitude of the project, relative to the habitat type or Mule Deer distribution, impactful? Does the project convey a large conservation benefit to important or critical habitat for Mule Deer? For instance, does a riparian project have a meaningful impact across multiple reaches within a watershed or would a seeding project address a large extent or important critical habitat?</i>	High impact = 15 pts Moderate impact = 10 pts Low impact = 1 point	15
Does the project build upon existing project work?	Yes = 5 pts No = 0 pts	5
Twenty miles of fence have already been either removed or modified in this migration corridor. Nine wildlife crossings have also been built to faciliate this crucial migration corridor across Highway 93 and Interstate 80. Every additional fence removed within the corridor will reduce energy expenditure or potential injury or death.		

Habitat Projects

<p>Timely Completion: <i>Needed permitting, authority, and mechanisms are completed or in process and does the project have a high probability of being completed on-time:</i> <i>-NEPA analysis or other statutory compliance is completed or not needed</i> <i>-Permits are completed or not needed</i> <i>-Contract mechanisms to support the work are in place or not needed</i></p>	<p>Timely completion (12 months) = 5 pts Extended completion (24 months) = 1 pt</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Urgency: <i>(Is the project urgent due to a narrow biological window that requires immediate attention and funding to address resource degradation or deterioration?)</i></p>	<p>Yes = 5 pts No = 0 pts</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Provide added details:</p>		
<p>Likelihood of Success: <i>What is the likelihood of successful completion and successful outcomes? Do the individuals and organizations involved possess the capability, experience, and proven methodology needed for implementation? Is the proposal supported by sound and established scientific or biological principals? Project objectives are realistic, measurable, and achievable with clearly defined methods</i></p>	<p>High likelihood= 5 points Moderate = 3 points Low = 1 point</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Provide added details: Project will be a straight forward removal of fence by a contractor or volunteers</p>		
<p>Partner Funding: <i>Does the project leverage funding or in-kind contributions by external partners and by how much?</i></p>	<p>>3x match = 10 pts 1.5-2.9 match = 7 pts 0.75-1.49 = 3 pts 0.1-.74 = 1 pt</p>	<p>1</p>
<p><i>(List amounts and sources if possible) Does the project have confirmed funding commitment from project partner such as a letter or memo with stated commitment amount?</i></p>	<p>Amount: \$5,146 Source: Rocky Mtn Elk Foundation Volunteers Amount: \$ Source:</p>	
<p>Cost Effectiveness: <i>Are the expected results worth the cost of the project?</i></p>	<p>Very cost-effective = 10 pts Moderately cost-effective = 5 pts Minimally cost-effective = 1 pt</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Provide added details: The landowner has requested to be able to re-use the t-post and wire so cost may be slightly higher than taking out the fence without salvaging the materials.</p>		
<p>Amount Requested:</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$60,000</p>	
<p>Total Project Score (100 possible points)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Sum of Scores 71.1</p>	

Habitat Projects

Project Narrative: *Be specific to the needs and issues associated with mule deer and/or habitat and your technical approach to addressing the issue. Identify potential benefits to mule deer and other wildlife. Describe if the project is on public or private land and any private landowner permissions. Please describe any NEPA permitting requirements if on public land and when NEPA completion is expected. Also provide a tentative project schedule of major tasks. If your project is associated with water rights (e.g. spring fencing project) please discuss the status of permissions to complete the project with water rights holders.*

The Independence Valley Ranch was recently purchased by the Winecup Gamble Ranch. The ranch manager along with the cow boss highlighted on a map the fences that are no longer necessary for cattle management in the Pequops north of Interstate 80. Their desire is to remove all unnecessary fences on the ranch. The fences are all located on the public/private boundary. BLM has been consulted and there is no NEPA required for the removal of fence, considering the fences are less than 10 years old. Removal of fences will not only benefit migrating mule deer. Pronghorn, elk, moose, and sage grouse are just a few of the other wildlife species that will benefit from less fences on the landscape. The Winecup Gamble has identified additional fences within the Pequop migration corridor they would also liked removed. The MDEP team would like to prioritize and strategically work on removing all of these fences in future years. This year the proposal is to remove up to 22 miles of fence in the north Pequops. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation will be partnering in this effort and have volunteers removing about one mile of fence as early as Fall 2022. The remaining fence removal would be through NDOW's exisiting contracts with NDF's Honor Camp program or other approved fencing contractors. The cost estimate is an estimate based on which contract will be used for the removal.

Habitat Projects

MDEP Subcommittee: Area 7-8-9	Hunt Unit Group: 071-079, 091	
Project Title: Mule Deer Migration Corridor Wildcat Fire Bitterbrush Planting	Project Location: Forest Service portion of 2022 Wildcat Fire - SE Jarbidge Mountains	
Brief Description of Project: <i>Include any development plans such as vegetation removal, planting, seeding, or installation of structures; also include the schedule for obtaining any necessary permits, completing NEPA compliance, etc.:</i>	This project aims to plant 67,200 antelope bitterbrush seedlings across 1,000 acres in the migration corridor and stopover areas for mule deer in the burned area of the 2022 Wildcat Fire on Forest Service land. The H-T National Forest Jarbidge Ranger District is supportive of this effort and has committed to completing any NEPA required before time of planting in Fall 2023.	Score
Limiting Factor Score: <i>Use subcommittee cumulative score from Limiting Factor Score Form</i>	<i>Maximum of 5 points possible</i>	4.4
Unit Group 5-Year Published Deer Population Trend:	2017: 8,900 2018: 8,500 2019: 11,300 2020: 11,400 2021: 11,100	
	<i>Decreasing = 5 pts</i> <i>Stable = 3 pts</i> <i>Increasing = 1 pt</i>	3
Does this project directly address factors limiting healthy mule deer populations?	<i>Yes = 10 pts</i> <i>No = 0 pts</i>	10
<i>How will project address limiting factors?</i> Wildland Fire was the highest ranked limiting factor for the Area 7 MDEP Subcommittee partly because of the length of time required post-fire for shrubs to recover in mule deer habitat. The decadent age of the bitterbrush in the burned area before the fire and the drought conditions that have been stressing the plants for the couple years before the burn reduces the likelihood of the shrubs resprouting, so seedling planting has been prioritized to help the bitterbrush community reestablish in this critical area for mule deer. Aerial seeding of sagebrush is planned as part of the post-fire rehab efforts as well to give the sagebrush community a jump start on recovering for mule deer and sage grouse in the area.		
Does this project protect, maintain or strategically restore statewide priority mule deer habitat, enhance critical habitat or a critical life stage for mule deer? <i>Score using the highest ranking criteria</i>	High priority (<i>Critical Mule Deer Seasonal Range or Migration Route</i>) = 10 points Moderate priority (<i>High elev. summer range, PJ encroached shrub community, winter range</i>) = 5 points Low priority (<i>salt desert shrub or low density mule deer habitats</i>) = 1 pt	10
<i>Provide added details:</i> The 2022 Wildcat Fire burned entirely within the Area 7 mule deer migration corridor, stopover habitat, and summer range where deer rely heavily on the mountain brush community for forage and cover.		
Is this mule deer habitat restoration or improvement of a long-term nature? <i>Does the project involve habitat trend and condition through restoration and improvement of a long-term or permanent nature? Projects of this nature are known to have long-term benefits with demonstrated history of past successes</i>	<i>10+ years = 10 points</i> <i>3-10 years = 5 points</i>	10
Project Scale and Implications: <i>Is the size or magnitude of the project, relative to the habitat type or Mule Deer distribution, impactful? Does the project convey a large conservation benefit to important or critical habitat for Mule Deer? For instance, does a riparian project have a meaningful impact across multiple reaches within a watershed or would a seeding project address a large extent or important critical habitat?</i>	High impact = 15 pts Moderate impact = 10 pts Low impact = 1 point	10
Does the project build upon existing project work?	<i>Yes = 5 pts</i> <i>No = 0 pts</i>	5
<i>Describe existing or past projects:</i> The Wildcat Fire burned 21,423 acres total with 17,353 acres occurring on BLM land, 3,075 acres occurring on Forest Service land, and 955 acres on private land. Elko BLM is planning to seed the entire burned area with upland grasses, forbs, and shrubs in fall 2022 and is also planning to plant up to 1 million bitterbrush seedlings throughout burned BLM land in fall 2023. Forest Service is unsure how much funding they will receive to be able to reseed or plant seedlings on their portion of the burn, so NDOW is planning to seed sagebrush on the 3,075 acres of Forest Service land in fall 2022 and the Area 7 MDEP subcommittee is proposing bitterbrush seedling planting for fall 2023 to accommodate the sagebrush seeding.		

Habitat Projects

<p>Timely Completion: <i>Needed permitting, authority, and mechanisms are completed or in process and does the project have a high probability of being completed on-time:</i> <i>-NEPA analysis or other statutory compliance is completed or not needed</i> <i>-Permits are completed or not needed</i> <i>-Contract mechanisms to support the work are in place or not needed</i></p>	<p><u>Timely completion (12 months) = 5 pts</u> Extended completion (24 months) = 1 pt</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Urgency: <i>(Is the project urgent due to a narrow biological window that requires immediate attention and funding to address resource degradation or deterioration?)</i></p>	<p><u>Yes = 5 pts</u> No = 0 pts</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><i>Provide added details:</i> The timeline for seedling planting entails ordering the seedlings with the nursery in December 2022, growout of seedlings in spring and summer of 2023, and delivery of seedlings and planting in fall/winter 2023. The funding amount needs to be known prior to ordering so the total number that can be grown and planted can be calculated and planned for. Planting of bitterbrush in this burned system should happen as soon as possible to reduce the time for invasive winter annual grasses to take over the site and deplete resources before seedlings can establish. Aerial application of pre-emergent herbicide is not approved on Forest Service land, further reducing the window of time to give bitterbrush seedlings the best chance of survival before cheatgrass takes over.</p>		
<p>Likelihood of Success: <i>What is the likelihood of successful completion and successful outcomes? Do the individuals and organizations involved possess the capability, experience, and proven methodology needed for implementation? Is the proposal supported by sound and established scientific or biological principals? Project objectives are realistic, measurable, and achievable with clearly defined methods</i></p>	<p><u>High likelihood= 5 points</u> Moderate = 3 points Low = 1 point</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><i>Provide added details:</i> Seedling planting has proven to be a more successful method of re-establishing shrubs than seeding. This project aims to increase success of bitterbrush establishment by caging seedlings to reduce wildlife predation while seedlings are most susceptible, and the higher precipitation zone of the project area will allow for greater seedling establishment than average. NDOW has an interlocal agreement in place with Lucky Peak Nursery for seedling growout and, through RFQ 3282 the State Contract for Fire and Fuels Reduction, the ability to contract seedling planting services. Biologists at NDOW have experience in planning and implementing seedling planting projects and understand the timelines and intricacies of the contracting process required to get the project done.</p>		
<p>Partner Funding: <i>Does the project leverage funding or in-kind contributions by external partners and by how much?</i></p>	<p>>3x match = 10 pts 1.5-2.9 match = 7 pts 0.75-1.49 = 3 pts 0.1-.74 = 1 pt</p>	<p>7</p>
<p><i>(List amounts and sources if possible) Does the project have confirmed funding commitment from project partner such as a letter or memo with stated commitment amount?</i></p>	<p>Amount: \$ (TBD) Source: US Forest Service - Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Amount: \$ Source: SO 3362 Funding - will pursue if available Amount: \$ Source: NGO Donations - will pursue if available</p>	<p></p>
<p>Cost Effectiveness: <i>Are the expected results worth the cost of the project?</i></p>	<p>Very cost-effective = 10 pts Moderately cost-effective = 5 pts Minimally cost-effective = 1 pt</p>	<p>7</p>
<p><i>Provide added details:</i> When wildfire burns decadent shrub stands that have been stressed for years previous to burning, the probability of community recovery without intervention is vastly reduced. Seedling planting yields better results than seeding, especially in the case of antelope bitterbrush since it requires deep burial in seed form. This project aims to increase success of bitterbrush establishment by caging seedlings to reduce wildlife predation while seedlings are most susceptible, and the higher precipitation zone of the project area will allow for greater seedling establishment than average. Plants, materials, and contracting will all be sourced from the most cost-efficient options.</p>		
<p>Amount Requested:</p>	<p>\$117,000.00</p>	
<p>Total Project Score (100 possible points) ***THERE ARE REALLY ONLY 95 POSSIBLE POINTS</p>	<p>Sum of Scores 81.4</p>	

Habitat Projects

Project Narrative: *Be specific to the needs and issues associated with mule deer and/or habitat and your technical approach to addressing the issue. Identify potential benefits to mule deer and other wildlife. Describe if the project is on public or private land and any private landowner permissions. Please describe any NEPA permitting requirements if on public land and when NEPA completion is expected. Also provide a tentative project schedule of major tasks. If your project is associated with water rights (e.g. spring fencing project) please discuss the status of permissions to complete the project with water rights holders.*

The 2022 Wildcat Fire burned in hunt units 072 and 075 through Area 7 mule deer migration corridor, stopover, and summer habitat, Sage-Grouse PHMA, crucial summer and winter elk habitat, crucial summer pronghorn antelope habitat, and Lahontan Cutthroat Trout habitat. It burned 21,423 acres total with 17,353 acres occurring on BLM land, 3,075 acres occurring on Forest Service land, and 955 acres on private land. Elko BLM is planning to seed the entire burned area on BLM land with upland grasses, forbs, and shrubs in fall 2022 and is also planning to plant up to 1 million bitterbrush seedlings throughout burned BLM land in fall 2023. In coordination with the BLM, NDOW will also be contracting the use of a smooth chain over portions of the fire in Fawn Basin that are not fit for drill seeding where an aerial seed mix including bitterbrush is seeded on BLM land. Forest Service is unsure whether they will receive funding to be able to reseed or plant seedlings on their portion of the burn, so in coordination with the Forest Service, NDOW is planning to seed sagebrush on the 3,075 acres of Forest Service land in fall 2022 and the Area 7 MDEP subcommittee is proposing bitterbrush seedling planting for fall 2023 to accommodate the sagebrush seeding. The decadence of the mountain brush community and drought conditions for the few years previous to the fire suggest poor conditions for antelope bitterbrush resprouting post-fire, and with the resistance to drill seeding on Forest Service land and near-zero establishment of bitterbrush from aerial seeding, seedling planting is the best method for giving the bitterbrush community a jump-start on recovery. Seedlings would be ordered at Lucky Peak Nursery in December 2022 with planned planting in fall 2023. NDOW has a standing agreement with Lucky Peak Nursery for purchasing seedlings and RFQ 3282 for contracting seedling planting with caging. Forest Service is supportive of this project and is confident that the archaeological survey can be completed and approved by SHPO with plenty of time before the planting of bitterbrush seedlings in fall 2023. Forest Service is also looking for additional funding to contribute to the project but is currently unsure what amount they can commit. Many species will benefit from sagebrush and bitterbrush reestablishment in the burned area, especially the mule deer that rely heavily on the shrub community in this area during their migration.

Habitat Projects

MDEP Subcommittee: Area 7-8-9	Hunt Unit Group: 081	
Project Title: 081 Mule Deer Crucial Winter Range Bitterbrush Planting	Project Location: Goose Creek Fire (2018) - White Rock Mountain	
<p>Brief Description of Project: <i>Include any development plans such as capturing, collaring, wildlife health analysis, etc. and include the schedule for obtaining any necessary permits, permission, funding, etc.:</i></p>	<p>The 2018 Goose Creek Fire burned more than 125,000 acres, some of which covered crucial mule deer winter range. The White Rock Mountain area of the Goose Creek Fire has been identified as especially important areas for mule deer and is prioritized for bitterbrush seedling planting by the Area 7-8-9 MDEP Subcommittee. This project was proposed by the Area 7-8-9 MDEP Subcommittee in 2021 and planned for completion in Spring 2022, but contractors were unable to access the planting area and seedlings were planted in other burn areas throughout the region. This project aims to plant 28,900 seedlings over 100 acres in crucial mule deer habitat around White Rock Mountain in Fall 2023.</p>	<p align="right">Score</p>
Limiting Factor Score: <i>Use subcommittee cumulative score from Limiting Factor Score Form</i>	Maximum of 5 points possible	
Unit Group 5-Year Published Deer Population Trend:	2017: 900 2018: 900 2019: 900 2020: 900 2021: 900 [2022: 850]	
	<u>Decreasing = 5 pts</u> <u>Stable = 3 pts</u> <u>Increasing = 1 pt</u>	
Does this project directly address factors limiting healthy mule deer populations?	Yes = <u>10 pts</u> No = 0 pts	
<p><i>How will project address limiting factors?</i> Wildland Fire was the highest ranked limiting factor for the Area 7 MDEP Subcommittee partly because of the length of time required post-fire for shrubs to recover in mule deer habitat. The White Rock Mountain area of the 2018 Goose Creek Fire is yet to have any bitterbrush reestablish and, due to the high amount of use historically seen by mule deer in 081, has been prioritized for restoration by the Area 7-8-9 MDEP Subcommittee.</p>		
Does this project protect, maintain or strategically restore statewide priority mule deer habitat, enhance critical habitat or a critical life stage for mule deer? <i>Score using the highest ranking criteria</i>	High priority (Critical Mule Deer Seasonal Range or Migration Route) = 10 points Moderate priority (High elev. summer range, PJ encroached shrub community, winter range) = 5 points Low priority (salt desert shrub or low density mule deer habitats) = 1 pt	10
<p><i>Provide added details:</i> White Rock Mountain is in critical mule deer winter range for the 081 herd, which historically relied on the the antelope bitterbrush in the area to forage during winter months.</p>		
Is this mule deer habitat restoration or improvement of a long-term nature? <i>Does the project involve habitat trend and condition through restoration and improvement of a long-term or permanent nature? Projects of this nature are known to have long-term benefits with demonstrated history of past successes</i>	<u>10+ years = 10 points</u> 3-10 years = 5 points	
Project Scale and Implications: <i>Is the size or magnitude of the project, relative to the habitat type or Mule Deer distribution, impactful? Does the project convey a large conservation benefit to important or critical habitat for Mule Deer? For instance, does a riparian project have a meaningful impact across multiple reaches within a watershed or would a seeding project address a large extent or important critical habitat?</i>	High impact = 15 pts <u>Moderate impact = 10 pts</u> Low impact = 1 point	
Does the project build upon existing project work?	Yes = <u>5 pts</u> No = 0 pts	
<p><i>Describe existing or past projects:</i> Around 23,000 acres of the Nevada portion of the Goose Creek Fire were aerially seeded by Elko BLM in 2018 and around 6,400 acres of private land were seeded in 2019. Areas were chosen for seeding based on priority wildlife habitat for sage-grouse, mule deer, and elk. The proposed project would occur in one of the areas seeded by BLM in 2018 to further enhance wildlife habitat post-fire.</p>		

Habitat Projects

<p>Timely Completion: <i>Needed permitting, authority, and mechanisms are completed or in process and does the project have a high probability of being completed on-time:</i> <i>-NEPA analysis or other statutory compliance is completed or not needed</i> <i>-Permits are completed or not needed</i> <i>-Contract mechanisms to support the work are in place or not needed</i></p>	<p><u>Timely completion (12 months) = 5 pts</u> Extended completion (24 months) = 1 pt</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Urgency: <i>(Is the project urgent due to a narrow biological window that requires immediate attention and funding to address resource degradation or deterioration?)</i></p>	<p><u>Yes = 5 pts</u> No = 0 pts</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><i>Provide added details:</i> The timeline for seedling planting entails ordering the seedlings with the nursery in December 2022, growout of seedlings in spring and summer of 2023, and delivery of seedlings and planting in fall/winter 2023. The funding amount needs to be known prior to ordering so the total number that can be grown and planted can be calculated and planned for.</p>		
<p>Likelihood of Success: <i>What is the likelihood of successful completion and successful outcomes? Do the individuals and organizations involved possess the capability, experience, and proven methodology needed for implementation? Is the proposal supported by sound and established scientific or biological principals? Project objectives are realistic, measurable, and achievable with clearly defined methods</i></p>	<p><u>High likelihood= 5 points</u> Moderate = 3 points Low = 1 point</p>	
<p><i>Provide added details:</i> Seedling planting has proven to be a more successful method of re-establishing shrubs than seeding. The higher precipitation zone of the project area will also allow for greater seedling establishment than average. NDOW has an interlocal agreement in place with Lucky Peak Nursery for seedling growout and, through RFQ 3282 the State Contract for Fire and Fuels Reduction, the ability to contract seedling planting services. Biologists at NDOW have experience in planning and implementing seedling planting projects and understand the timelines and intricacies of the contracting process required to get the project done.</p>		
<p>Partner Funding: <i>Does the project leverage funding or in-kind contributions by external partners and by how much?</i></p>	<p>>3x match = 10 pts 1.5-2.9 match = 7 pts 0.75-1.49 = 3 pts 0.1-.74 = 1 pt</p>	<p>7</p>
<p><i>(List amounts and sources if possible) Does the project have confirmed funding commitment from project partner such as a letter or memo with stated commitment amount?</i></p>	<p>Amount: \$50,000 Source: Elko BLM ESR Amount: \$ Source:</p>	
<p>Cost Effectiveness: <i>Are the expected results worth the cost of the project?</i></p>	<p><u>Very cost-effective = 10 pts</u> Moderately cost-effective = 5 pts Minimally cost-effective = 1 pt</p>	<p>7</p>
<p><i>Provide added details:</i> Seedling planting yields better results than seeding, especially in the case of antelope bitterbrush since it requires deep burial in seed form. The higher precipitation zone of the project area (12-16 inches per year) will also allow for greater seedling establishment than average. Plants, materials, and contracting will all be sourced from the most cost-efficient options. Depending on the total amount of funding received, the plants could be caged at the time of planting to reduce predation when they are most susceptible and increase the chance of survival.</p>		
<p>Amount Requested:</p>	<p>\$26,000.00</p>	
<p>Total Project Score (100 possible points) <u>***THERE ARE REALLY ONLY 95 POSSIBLE POINTS</u></p>	<p>Sum of Scores 78.4</p>	

Habitat Projects

Project Narrative: *Be specific to the needs and issues associated with mule deer and/or habitat and your technical approach to addressing the issue. Identify potential benefits to mule deer and other wildlife. Describe if the project is on public or private land and any private landowner permissions. Please describe any NEPA permitting requirements if on public land and when NEPA completion is expected. Also provide a tentative project schedule of major tasks. If your project is associated with water rights (e.g. spring fencing project) please discuss the status of permissions to complete the project with water rights holders.*

In partnership with the Elko BLM ESR Program, the Area 7-8-9 MDEP Subcommittee is proposing to plant antelope bitterbrush seedlings in critical mule deer winter range on the 2018 Goose Creek Fire in hunt unit 081. This project was proposed by the MDEP Subcommittee in 2021 and ranked 10th overall by the MDEP Oversight Committee in the Habitat Project category. Elko BLM had ordered the seedlings for the project but was unable to access the planting site in spring 2022 and ended up having to plant the seedlings in other burned areas throughout the region. Because the White Rock Mountain area within the burn is such an important area for mule deer during winter months and bitterbrush recovery since the fire is poor, this project is still prioritized. Elko BLM is also seeking funding to contribute to the project but is currently unsure how much funding will be available. Depending on the total amount of funding received, caging may also be incorporated into the planting contract to help protect the bitterbrush seedlings when they're most susceptible and trying to establish. The area receives between 12 and 16 inches of precipitation per year so survivability is expected to be greater than average. Both NDOW and BLM have standing agreements with Lucky Peak Nursery for growing out seedlings as well as standing contracts with vendors to plant seedlings. The ESR NEPA completed by BLM describes bitterbrush planting across 100 acres as a planned project and is still applicable so no further NEPA is required.

Investigations Projects

MDEP Subcommittee: Area 7, 8, 9	Hunt Unit Group: 081	
Project Title: Area 8 Tooth Collection and Age Analysis	Project Location: Unit 081	
Brief Description of Project: <i>Include any development plans such as capturing, collaring, wildlife health analysis, etc. and include the schedule for obtaining any necessary permits, permission, funding, etc.:</i>	The project would collect teeth from successful hunters in Unit 081 to determine average age of harvest, as well as comparing tooth/age data with point and antler length measurements to evaluate possibility of using antler metrics to estimate approximate age in similar manner to what we have done with elk.	Score
Limiting Factor Score: <i>Use subcommittee cumulative score from Limiting Factor Score Form</i>	Maximum of 5 points possible	
Has this mule deer management area or hunt unit group been identified as a statewide priority for research or investigations?	Yes = 10 pts	No = 0 pts 0
Does this project directly address identifying factors limiting healthy mule deer populations? (10 points possible)	Yes = 10 pts	No = 0 pts 0
<i>How will project address limiting factors?</i>		
Does this project occur in a crucial or priority habitat for mule deer? (10 points possible) (Score using the highest ranking criteria)	High priority (Critical Mule Deer Seasonal Range or Migration Route) = 10 points Moderate priority (High elev. summer range, PJ encroached shrub community, winter range) = 5 points Low priority (salt desert shrub or low density mule deer habitats) = 1 pt	10
<i>Provide added details:</i> Project will involve deer from all habitat types in the unit. Most deer harvested in this unit will be on crucial winter range		
Will the research or investigation improve knowledge of habitat and restoration of a long-term or permanent nature? Projects of this nature are known to have long-term benefits with demonstrated history of past successes.	10+ years = 10 points	3-10 years = 1 point 1
Is the sample size (# of marked animals) and project scale (distribution across an entire hunt unit or region) adequate to gain meaningful inference or statistical power for interpreting the relative impact of this investigation?	High impact = 10 pts	Moderate impact = 5 pts Low impact = 1 point 10
Does the project complement an adjacent project or study, previous project, or help inform future habitat projects?	Yes= 5 points	No = 0 pts 5
<i>Describe existing or past projects:</i> Tooth Collection will occur in the Fall 2022 from a previous MDEP project proposal. This proposal will extend the project for two additional hunting seasons.		
Needed permitting, authority, and mechanisms are completed or in process and does the project have a high probability of being completed on-time: -NEPA analysis for wilderness permits for capture work -Permission from private landowners or other government agencies (such as USFWS or D.O.D.) -Contract mechanisms to support the work are in place or not needed	Timely completion (12 months) = 5 pts	Extended completion (24 months) = 1 pts 5

Investigations Projects

Project narrative: *Be specific to the research needs and issues associated with mule deer and/or habitat and your technical approach to addressing the issue. Identify potential benefits to mule deer and other wildlife. Describe if the project would be conducted on BLM, FS, USFWS, or private land and if any private landowner permissions are necessary. Please describe any NEPA permitting requirements (such as permission to capture animals in wilderness) if on public land and when NEPA completion is expected. Also provide a tentative project schedule of major tasks (ie collar orders, capture dates, data collection period, reporting dates, etc). Please list any collaborators or project funding partners.*

In 2021 a similar project was submitted. The MDEP team would like to extend the project for two additional hunting seasons in order to increase the sample size. Two weeks before hunting seasons, letters will be sent to eligible hunters requesting their participation. Once teeth have been collected they will be sent to Matson's lab for age analysis. When age results are received, a department employee will compare the age of the deer reported with corresponding antler length measurements and report the results to the MDEP team.

MDEP 7,8,9 Five Year Plan August 2022

Fences – Minimize and/or Modify

- **Railroad ROW – between Holborn and Fenelon** – 3 miles
1.3 miles private (Monty Pearce and Winecup Gamble Ranch)
- **Railroad ROW – between Moor Exit and Ralph’s Well** – 4 miles
1.5 miles private (Monty Pearce, Winecup Gamble Ranch, and Weinger Family)
- **North Pequops**
22 miles private (Independence Valley Ranch – Winecup Gamble Ranch)
- **Meadow Creek** – 1.5 miles removal in migration corridor

Conservation Easements

- Antelope Peak Ranch – Erik Taylor
- Independence Valley Ranch – Winecup Gamble
- Gibbs Ranch – Wyatt Mesma
- Mary’s River Ranch – Preston Wright
- Memory Ranches – Monty Pearce

Habitat Restoration

- **Seedings:**
 - **Deer Fire** – O’Neil PPA EA Restoration Treatment – 15,776 acres BLM
Bitterbrush and Sagebrush seedling plantings
 - **South Cricket Fire** – O’Neil PPA EA Restoration Treatment – 5349 acres BLM, 6140 private (Pearce) Bitterbrush and Sagebrush seedling plantings
 - **Charleston Fire Shrub Rehabilitation** – Plant sagebrush and bitterbrush seedlings in important stop-over areas that didn’t regenerate after burn.
- **Conifer Removal:**
 - **Payne Basin** – waiting on DNA – 2,200 acres, juniper removal and possible seeding in transition and migration corridor.
 - **Murdock Mountain Mule Deer Habitat Enhancement** – Hand thinning and mechanical mastication of Phase 1 or 2 Juniper in migration corridor and winter range. Partners include USFWS, MDF, and Winecup Gamble Ranch.
 - **Collar and Elbow Basin** – 400 acres of private property owned by Simplot. Phase 1 juniper removal in critical winter range. A Partners for Fish and Wildlife Project
 - **Polygons #16 Deadman, #25 Northeast Pequops** – O’Neil PPA EA
Phase 1 and 2 conifer removal within 3 miles of sage grouse leks, treatments could include – hand thinning, mastication, broadcast and drill seeding, pile burning, greenwood fire cutting, herbicide, and/or temporary fencing.
- **Fuel Breaks:**
Meadow Creek Restoration – Mow 10 miles of a fuel break to protect critical transition and stop-over areas from burning (O’Neil Basin PPA EA)