

<b>Non-Habitat Project Proposal Form</b>	
MDEP Team(s) Submitting Proposal: <b>White Pine Area 11-12</b>	Hunt Unit Group: <b>121</b>
Project Title: <b>Cherry Creek Range Mountain Lion Removal</b>	
1. Limiting Factor Rank Score: <b>4.1</b>	Needs Assessment Strategy: <b>Mountain Lion Removal 4.3</b>
2. Justification: Downward Population Trend <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-yr avg low fawn ratios <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-yr avg low buck ratio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-yr avg low harvest numbers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disease detected <input type="checkbox"/> Anecdotal reports <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Body performing work: Wildlife Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private contractor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NDOW-Wildlife Health <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Predator Plan Project Category: Implementation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Experimental Management <input type="checkbox"/> Experimentation <input type="checkbox"/> Data Gathering <input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Type of Project: Lethal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Lethal <input type="checkbox"/> Capture & test <input type="checkbox"/> Collaring effort <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Level of Monitoring: Rigorous <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Standard <input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Project Duration: one year <input type="checkbox"/> two years <input type="checkbox"/> three years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Annual Cost: Under \$10,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 – \$25,000 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$25 - \$50,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Funding Source: Heritage Fund <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/> Predator Fund <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NDOW <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Services <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Is funding source eligible for matching funds? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11. Will this project benefit additional wildlife species? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Probably <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Species Benefit:	
12. Access for public hunting? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
13. Are there other predator projects in area? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
14. Will project expand knowledge of the mule deer population, mule deer habitat, or predator-prey relationships? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Probably <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
15. Other MDEP teams involved: <b>White Pine Area 11-12</b> <b>White Pine Area 11-12</b>	
16. Additional projects approved for this team: <b>None</b>	
17. Measure of success? Upward population trend <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-yr avg increased fawn ratio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-yr avg higher observed buck ratio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-yr avg increased 4-pts in harvest <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Project Start Date: 12/1/23	Estimated End Date: 3/31/26
Funding Source(s): <b>Predator Fund</b>	Estimated Project Cost: \$ <b>\$75,000</b>
<i>Oversight Committee Use Only</i>	
Approved <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/>
Priority #	
Route Project to:	
Comments: <b>See Attached.</b>	

## **Cherry Creek Range Mountain Lion Removal**

The north end of the Cherry Creek Range has typically had lower mule deer density than southern portions of Hunt Unit 121. In recent years, mule deer density has drastically declined in this portion of the unit. In the fall of 2016, NDOW surveyed 150 mule deer on post-season surveys from the McDermid Creek area north. In 2020, NDOW surveyed 76 mule deer in the same area. Survey conditions were similar, except slightly better snow cover in 2016. Survey effort and coverage was far better in 2020 with 2 hours and 47 minutes being expended on survey compared to 1 hour and 12 minutes in 2016. Increased survey effort and fewer observed deer is evidence of a declining population. The decline in mule deer population is primarily drought related. However, with the current low mule deer numbers, mountain lions may be suppressing this population. Due to the supplemental prey sources of feral horses and domestic sheep in this area mountain lion populations may not have mimicked the mule deer decline. Removing 3-5 mountain lions per year for three years will provide relief to mule deer and allow for faster recovery of mule deer when and if drought and habitat conditions improve. Removal would be targeted on the areas north of McDermid Creek and Snow Creek. After three years of mountain lion removal, this project would be reevaluated to determine success and/or continuation of the project. Success criteria for this project may include an assessment of drought and habitat conditions over the timeframe, change in mule deer numbers, and change in mountain lion demographics (sex and age of removed mountain lions).