

Committee Members: Commissioner Kiel (Chair),
Commissioner Barnes, Commissioner Rogers, Commissioner
Almberg, Jim Rackley, Jeremy Drew, Charlie Clements,
Josh Vittori, Cory Lytle, Alan Shepherd

Staff to the Committee: Mike Scott
Alan Jenne
Cody Schroeder

**Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners
Mule Deer Enhancement Program Oversight Committee**

**Wednesday, June 2, 2021 / 6:00 p.m.
Meeting held via www.Zoom.us**

Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Committee Members – Chairman Kiel

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM

In attendance:

Commissioner Kiel, Chair
Commissioner Barnes
Commissioner Rogers
Commissioner Almberg
Jim Rackley, Nevada Muleys Association
Jeremy Drew, Resource Specialist
Charlie Clements, Rangeland Scientist
Josh Vittori, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited
Alan Shepherd, Bureau of Land Management
Mike Scott, Nevada Department of Wildlife

2. Approval of Agenda – For Possible Action

Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to approve the agenda.

Committee Member Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Rogers absent.

3. *Approval of Minutes (December 16, 2020) – Chairman Kiel – For Possible Action

Committee Member Rackley motioned to approve the December 16, 2020 Minutes.

Committee Member Vittori seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Rogers absent.

4. *Approval of Minutes (April 28, 2021) – Chairman Kiel – For Possible Action

Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to approve the April 28, 2021 Minutes.

Commissioner Almberg seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Rogers absent. Commissioners Barnes and Lytle abstaining. Committee Member Vittori abstaining.

5. *Member Announcements and Correspondence – Chairman Kiel – Informational

No announcements were made. No correspondence was reported.

6. ***Mule Deer Enhancement Program Charter – Workshop – Game Administrator Mike Scott – For Possible Action**

The Committee reviewed the language of the proposed draft Charter (Attachment A). The Code of Conduct moved to Workshop at the April 28, 2021, meeting is now included in the proposed draft Charter. The adoption of a Charter will facilitate the participation of federal land management agencies seeking to participate in the Program. Committee Member Shepherd suggested Charter signatories should be the Director of the Department, the Wildlife Commission Chair, and the Chair of the Oversight Committee.

Commissioner Rogers joined the meeting.

Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to adopt the Charter as presented with the noted changes and upon signature by the Committee Chair to present the Charter to the Wildlife Commission Chair and the Director of the Department for signature.

Committee Member Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Mule Deer Enhancement Program Limiting Factor Form, Needs Assessment Form, Project Proposal Form and Project Scoring Matrix – Workshop – Game Administrator, Mike Scott – For Possible Action**

The Committee reviewed the proposed draft forms that will be used by the Subcommittees to evaluate mule deer in Nevada: Limiting Factor Form, Needs Assessment Form, and Project Scoring Matrix (Attachment B).

Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to adopt and move forward to approval to the Wildlife Commission the Mule Deer Enhancement Program Limiting Factor Form, Needs Assessment Form, Project Proposal Form as presented with the noted changes.

Committee Member Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to continue working on the Project Scoring Matrixes at a workshop during the next Committee meeting.

Committee Member Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

8. **Public Comment Period**

There was no public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM

**Nevada Department of Wildlife
Mule Deer Enhancement Program
Oversight Committee Charter**

I. Purpose

In response to decades of downward trending mule deer numbers and degradation of mule deer habitat, the Nevada Department of Wildlife has initiated the Mule Deer Enhancement Program (MDEP), a collaborative effort to conserve and improve mule deer habitat and minimize factors limiting healthy mule deer populations. A strategic effort to assess, research, and identify limiting factors may ultimately assist in achieving the goal of improving mule deer populations and lead to more broad scale prescriptions for managing this important game species for Nevada. The goal of having more mule deer on the landscape is consistent with NDOW’s mission “To protect, conserve, manage and restore wildlife and its habitat for the aesthetic, scientific, educational, recreational and economic benefits to the citizens of Nevada and the United States....,” A purpose-driven endeavor to collaborate with the Sagebrush Conservation Initiative, Nevada State Wildlife Action Plan, U.S. Department of Interior’s Secretarial Order 3362, and other conservation efforts to enact positive changes for wildlife in Nevada. This effort seeks to build partnerships with land management agencies, non-governmental (sportsman’s) organizations, sportsmen, industry partners, private landowners, conservationists, and others to plan, pursue funding for, and complete conservation and enhancement actions in mule deer habitat in Nevada.

Under the authority of the Wildlife Commission and the Nevada Department of Wildlife, specific objectives include but are not limited to:

1. Creation of the Mule Deer Enhancement Program Oversight Committee, consisting of Wildlife Commissioners, representatives of Sportsman’s organizations, environmental experts, and Land Management Agency representatives.
2. Creation of local Mule Deer subcommittees (Local Area Teams) consisting of NDOW game and habitat biologists, County Wildlife Advisory Board members, local sportsmen and sportswomen, representatives of sportsman’s organizations, members of industry including livestock, farming, and mining, and Land Management Agency (Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service) personnel.
3. Mule Deer subcommittees will evaluate limiting factors for mule deer in their local and regional areas of Nevada.
4. Mule Deer subcommittees will develop and submit habitat enhancement project proposals to the Oversight Committee for evaluation and consideration.
5. The Oversight Committee will prioritize projects and make recommendations for potential funding and implementation to the Nevada Department of Wildlife based on the merits of each project proposal.

II. Location

The principal office of the Mule Deer Enhancement Oversight Committee will be the Nevada Department of Wildlife Office at 6980 Sierra Center Parkway, Suite 120, Reno, NV 89511. The principal office will house the records associated with the Mule Deer subcommittees and the Oversight Committee (e.g., agendas, meeting minutes, project plans, etc.).

III. Oversight Committee Members

Initial members of the Oversight Committee will consist of the following:

1. Wildlife Commissioner Casey Kiel – Chair
2. Wildlife Commission Vice Chair Tom Barnes
3. Wildlife Commissioner Shane Rogers

4. Wildlife Commissioner Jon Almberg
5. Jim Rackley – Nevada Muley’s Association
6. Jeremy Drew – Resource Specialist (former Wildlife Commission Chair)
7. Charlie Clements – USDA Rangeland Scientist
8. Josh Vittori – Nevada Bighorns Unlimited
9. Cory Lytle – Meadow Valley Wildlife Unlimited
10. Alan Shepherd – BLM Deputy State Director for Resources
11. US Forest Service - TBD

IV. Local Area Subcommittee Members – suggested, but not limited to the following:

1. NDOW Game Biologist
2. NDOW Habitat Biologist
3. County Wildlife Advisory Board Chair or designee
4. Local Land Management Agency representative
5. Local sportsman or sportsman’s group representative
6. Local industry representative
7. Local private landowner
8. Local guide representative
9. Local political representative

V. Meeting Frequency

Oversight Committee meeting frequency will be at the discretion of the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Chair of the Oversight Committee to determine. The need for meetings may change, as necessary. Additional meetings may be held based on need.

Subcommittee (Local Area Team) meetings will be held at a minimum of quarterly, unless otherwise scheduled. Some of these meetings should be held as field trips to allow members to see projects in various stages of completion. Field trips will serve as educational experiences and stimulate conversation among participants.

VI. Code of Conduct

Although most of the meetings have conducted remotely using Zoom, we are expecting to transition to in-person meetings. We expect participants to act professionally and respectfully to move in a positive direction. Since the Mule Deer subcommittees and Oversight Committee include participants with different education, training, and experiences, a code of conduct for both remote and in-person meetings is necessary. The following are a few simple rules for both virtual and in-person meetings:

1. All meetings associated with the Mule Deer Enhancement Program are subject to the Open Meeting Law; minutes will be kept, agendas posted, etc.
 - a. Virtual meetings will be recorded.
2. Be on time – if you cannot attend or will be late, try to let the host or another attendee know, so attendees are not left waiting for you.
3. Wear suitable clothing.
 - a. Anything visible in your virtual background should be appropriate.
4. Language should be professional and appropriate.
 - a. Noises in virtual backgrounds during remote meetings should be minimal and appropriate.
5. Avoid drinking alcohol or using other substances during meetings.

6. Respect other participants. Anyone displaying erratic or unprofessional behavior, showing hostility toward, or disrespecting other participants, or undermining the intent of the Mule Deer Enhancement Program will be asked to leave the meeting.
7. Use accepted meeting protocols when interacting; do not interrupt others when speaking.
 - a. Any instances of “Zoom-bombing” will result in an immediate cancellation of the meeting.
8. When disagreements occur, please disagree respectfully.

VII. Participation Expectations (Oversight and Subcommittee Membership)

1. Members for both local Mule Deer subcommittees and Oversight Committee should come prepared and ready to engage in virtual or in-person meetings.
2. Members should make a good faith effort to attend all subcommittee or Committee meetings. If a member must miss a meeting, a designated substitute should attend the meeting and represent the member’s position.
3. Members that miss three or more consecutive virtual or in-person meetings may be asked to resign from the Subcommittee or Committee and a replacement assigned by the governing authority.
4. Members are expected to be responsive to fellow members by returning communication in a timely manner.
5. Members are expected to carry out assigned tasks in a timely manner and within the allotted time frame agreed upon.
6. All Mule Deer subcommittees and Oversight Committee meetings are subject to the Open Meeting Law and will be noticed and recorded as such.
7. Public participation is encouraged, and public input will be considered, however, only Mule Deer Subcommittee members will be allowed to fill in the various forms assigned to each subcommittee.

VIII. Officers

NDOW Game biologist will be considered the Mule Deer Subcommittee Leaders unless the Game Division Administrator makes other assignments. This ensures that NDOW is responsible for adhering to the Open Meeting Law, including properly posting agendas and noticing meetings, taking minutes, or recording meetings, and running individual Subcommittee meetings.

The Chair of the MDEP Oversight Committee will be responsible for approving the agenda and running Committee meetings.

Staff to the Oversight Committee include the Game Division Mule Deer Staff Specialist, the Chief of the Game Division, and the Chief of the Habitat Division.

IX. Schedule

On an annual basis, subcommittees will provide a maximum of three project proposals to the Oversight Committee by August 1st of each year. The Oversight Committee will meet during August to evaluate project proposals.

X. Process

The Oversight Committee will score project proposals through the approved project scoring matrix and provide the Department with a prioritize list of projects.

1. The Department will submit appropriate projects to the Heritage Committee for consideration.

2. Projects appropriate for submission through the Predator Plan will be submitted to the NDOW Staff Predator Biologist to be included in the following year's draft Predator Plan. Predator projects proposed by subcommittees will be evaluated to determine if funding is available as well as for feasibility.
3. Projects appropriate for Game Division implementation will be submitted to the Mule Deer Staff Biologist for consideration.
4. High-ranking projects that are neither Habitat- or Predator-related will be evaluated by NDOW staff to determine the best course of action to seek approval and funding to implement those projects.

Any projects suggested and approved that may be impossible to implement due to political, social, economic, or other constraints will be retained for consideration later.

XI. Dissolution

The utility of the Mule Deer Enhancement Program Oversight Committee and local area subcommittees will be evaluated by the Director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Chair of the Wildlife Commission for effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. Local subcommittees and jurisdictions may be altered if subcommittees fail to meet or to be productive. The Mule Deer Enhancement Program Oversight Committee and sub-committees may be dissolved if recommended by the Director of NDOW and the Chair of the Nevada Wildlife Commission.

XII. Signed or concurred by the following:

Chair, Oversight Committee: _____ Date: _____

Chair, Wildlife Commission: _____ Date: _____

Director, Nevada Department of Wildlife: _____ Date: _____

(Mule Deer Teams Step 1)**Mule Deer Limiting Factor Ranking Sheet**

County:		Mule Deer Unit Group		
Potential Limiting Factor	Rate (0 - 5)	Unit A	Unit B	Unit C
Wildland Fire				
Invasive or Noxious Weeds				
Pinyon-Juniper Invasion				
Shrub senescence				
Improper grazing - Wild horses				
Improper grazing - Livestock				
Climate/Weather				
Limited Water Distribution				
Inadequate Migration Corridor				
Human Impacts – Direct				
- Collisions with vehicles				
- Shed antler hunting				
- Off-road racing				
- Other:				
<i>Human Impacts - Direct - Mean</i>				
Human Impacts –Indirect				
- Fences				
- Powerlines				
- Development				
- Renewable Energy*				
- Other:				
<i>Human Impacts - Indirect - Mean</i>				
Heavy Industry*				
Predation				
Disease				
Human-caused mortality (hunting & poaching)				
Conflicts with Laws/Policies/Regulations**				

**NEPA, Wilderness, ESA, Wild Horse and Burro Act, BLM Fire Plan/Policy, lawsuits, NDOW policies, etc.

*Changes suggested by Oversight Committee 4/28/2021

(Mule Deer Teams Step 2)

Mule Deer Needs Assessment

5 = Highest Priority

0 = Lowest Priority

Potential Limiting Factors	Management Action	Strategy	Mule Deer Unit Group		
			Unit A	Unit B	Unit C
Wildfire and Invasives	Planting	Native Seed			
		Shrub Plantings			
		Strategic Non-Native Seeding			
	Herbicide	Chemical Fallow			
		Targeted Application			
		Biological Control			
	Fuels Management	Grazing Management			
		Mechanical Thinning/Removal			
		Green Strip			
		Chemical Fallow			
Mechanical Removal					
Fencing					
Prescribed Fire					
Conifer Invasion	Removal	Mechanical - Masticator			
		Mechanical - chaining			
		Hand Thinning			
		Lop and Scatter			
		Pile and Burn			
		Prescribed Fire			
	Restoration - Protection	Overseeding			
		Fencing			
		Grazing Management			
		Herbicide - Spot Treatment			
Lack of Diversity	Habitat Improvement	Mechanical Removal/Thinning			
		Overseeding			
		Shrub Plantings			
		Fencing			
		Grazing Management			
		Easement / Acquisition			
		Water Development			
		Spring Protection			

Potential Limiting Factors	Management Action	Strategy	Mule Deer Unit Group		
			Unit A	Unit B	Unit C
Lack of Connectivity	Protection	Easement / Acquisition			
		Transportation Passage			
		Migration Corridor			
		Fence Modificaitons			
		Land Use Planning			
		Dept. of Transportation Action			
		- Wildlife Crossing			
		- Add road signs			
		Private Lands Action			
Predation	Project	Coyote Removal			
		Mountain Lion Removal			
		Trail Camera Grid			
		Predator Research			
		Deer Collaring Study			
Wildlife Health & Disease	Prescription	Disease Testing			
		Age Structure Study			
		Limit Harrassment			
		Adjust Tag Numbers			
Data Gaps	Big Game	Big Game Collaring			
		Trapping & Transplant			
		Modify Survey & Inventory			
		Increased Law Enforcement			
		Add / Remove Late Hunt			
Other*	Prescription				

*Addition suggested by Oversight Committee 4/28/2021

(Mule Deer Teams Step 3) Habitat Project Proposal Form

MDEP Team(s) Submitting Proposal:			Hunt Unit Group:		
Project Title:					
1. Limiting Factor Rank Score:			Needs Assessment Strategy:		
2. Is project in crucial or critical mule deer habitat or migration routes?				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Habitat Type:	Sagebrush Steppe <input type="checkbox"/>	Pinyon-Juniper <input type="checkbox"/>	Mountain Brush <input type="checkbox"/>	Aspen <input type="checkbox"/>	Riparian <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Land Status:	BLM <input type="checkbox"/>	USFS <input type="checkbox"/>	USFWS <input type="checkbox"/>	State <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Project Duration:	one year <input type="checkbox"/>	two years <input type="checkbox"/>	three years <input type="checkbox"/>	more <input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Population Trend:	Decreasing <input type="checkbox"/>		Stable <input type="checkbox"/>		Increasing <input type="checkbox"/>
7. NEPA Status:	Completed <input type="checkbox"/>	Submitted <input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Is this project adjacent to or does it expand existing projects?				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Partner Financial Support?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Partner(s):					
10. Will this project benefit additional wildlife species?			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Additional Species Benefit:					
11. Will project expand knowledge of the mule deer population, mule deer habitat, or predator-prey relationships?					
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		Probably <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Will project increase connectivity between habitats?			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Probably <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Access for public hunting?			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>
14. Project monitoring plan?		Completed <input type="checkbox"/>	Not yet completed <input type="checkbox"/>		None <input type="checkbox"/>
15. Other MDEP teams that support the project:					
16. Additional projects approved for this team:					
Project Start Date:			Estimated End Date:		
Funding Source(s):			Estimated Project Cost: \$		
<i>Oversight Committee Use Only</i>					
Approved <input type="checkbox"/>			Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/>		
Priority #					
Route Project to:					

(Mule Deer Teams Step 3) Non-Habitat Project Proposal Form

MDEP Team(s) Submitting Proposal: _____ Hunt Unit Group: _____

Project Title: _____

1. Limiting Factor Rank Score: _____ Needs Assessment Strategy: _____

2. Justification: Downward Trend Chronic low fawn ratios Chronic low buck ratio
Low harvest numbers Disease detected Anecdotal reports

3. Body performing work: Wildlife Services Private contractor
NDOW-Wildlife Health Other

4. Project Category: Implementation Experimental Management

5. Type of Project: Lethal Non-Lethal
Capture & test Collaring effort Other

6. Level of Monitoring: Rigorous Intermediate Standard

7. Project Duration: one year two years three years 4+

8. Annual Cost: Under \$10,000 \$10 – \$25,000 \$25 - \$50,000 \$50,000+

9. Funding Source: Predator Fund Heritage Fund NDOW NGO Other

10. Will this project benefit additional wildlife species? Yes Probably No

Additional Species Benefit: _____

11. Access for public hunting? Yes No

12. Are there other predator projects in area? Yes No

13. Will project expand knowledge of the mule deer population, mule deer habitat, or predator-prey relationships?
Yes Probably No

14. Other MDEP teams involved: _____

15. Additional projects approved for this team: _____

16. Measure of success? Upward trend Increased fawn ratio
Increased 4-pts in harvest Higher observed buck ratio Other

Project Start Date: _____ Estimated End Date: _____

Funding Source(s): _____ Estimated Project Cost: \$ _____

Oversight Committee Use Only

Approved Not Approved

Priority # _____

Route Project to: _____

(OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE) Habitat Project Scoring Matrix

Project Name	1. Limiting Factor Rank Score	2. Is Project in Crucial Mule Deer Habitat?	3. Habitat Type	4. Land Status	5. Duration of Project:	6. Population Trend:	7. NEPA Status:	8. Adjacent to or expands existing project(s)?	9. Partner Financial Support	10. Will Project Benefit Other Species?	11. Will project expand knowledge or fill data gaps?	12. Will Project Increase Connectivity Between Habitats?	13. Is Project Area Accessible for Public Hunting?	14. Project Monitoring Plan Exists	15. Number of MDEP Teams that support the project:	16. Number of Projects Approved for Team	Total Score				
Seeding	4.2	5																			
Habitat Projects				Scoring Criteria																	
1. Limiting Factor Rank Score				Use score from Limiting Factor Ranking Sheet																	
2. Crucial Mule Deer Habitat				Winter Range or Fawning Area = 5					Summer Range or Migration Corridor = 4					No = 0							
3. Habitat Type				Sagebrush Steppe = 5			Pinyon-Juniper = 5			Mountain Brush = 4		Aspen = 3		Riparian = 5							
4. Land Status				BLM = 5				USFS = 5				USFWS = 2			Private = 1						
5. Duration of Project				1 year					2 years					3 years							
6. Population Trend:				Decreasing = 5					Stable = 3					Increasing = 1							
7. NEPA Status:				Completed = 5					Submitted = 3					In Progress = 2			None = 1				
8. Expanding existing projects				Yes = 5								No = 2									
9. Partner Financial Support				Yes = 5								No = 2									
10. Project Benefit to Other Species				Yes = 5					Probably = 3					No = 0							
11. Expand knowledge or fill data gaps				Yes = 5					Probably = 3					No = 0							
12. Increased Connectivity Between Habitats				Yes = 5					Probably = 3					No = 0							
13. Access for Public Hunting				Yes = 5								No = 2									
14. Project Monitoring Plan				Yes = 5					Not yet completed = 3					No = 0							
15. Number of MDEP Teams that support the project				Write in number of teams as score																	
16. Other Projects Approved for Team				1 = 5			2 = 4			3 = 3			4 = 2			5 = 1			6 = 0		

(OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE) Non-Habitat Project Scoring Sheet

Project Name	1. Limiting Factor Rank Score	2. Justification:	3. Who will perform the work?	4. Project Category	5. Type of Project	6. Level of Monitoring	7. Duration of Project	8. Annual Cost	9. Funding Source	10. Will Project Benefit other species?	11. Is public hunting allowed in area of project?	12. Are there other predator removal projects in the same area?	13. Will project expand knowledge?	14. Number of MDEP Teams involved:	15. Other Project Approved for Team	16. Measure of Success	Total Score
Other Projects			Scoring Criteria														
1. Limiting Factor Rank Score			Use score from Limiting Factor Ranking Sheet														
2. Justification			Downward trend	Low fawn ratios	Low buck ratio	Low Harvest numbers		Disease detected			Anecdotal Reports						
3. Who will perform the work			Wildlife Services		Private Contractor		NDOW-Wildlife Health			Other							
4. Project Category			Implementation = 5				Experimental Management = 4				Experimentation = 3						
5. Type of Project			Lethal	Non-lethal		Capture & test		Collaring effort			Other						
6. Level of Monitoring			Rigorous Monitoring = 5				Intermediate = 4				Standard Monitoring = 3						
7. Duration of Project			One year		Two years			Three years			More						
8. Annual Cost of Project			Under \$10,000 = 5			\$10,000 - 25,000 = 4		\$25,000 - \$50,000 = 3			\$50,000+ = 2						
9. Funding Source			Predator Fund		Heritage Fund		NDOW			NGO		Other					
10. Project Benefit to Other Species			Yes = 5				Probably = 3				No = 0						
11. Access for Public Hunting?			Yes = 5						No = 0								
12. Are there other predator projects in the area?			Yes = 5						No = 0								
13. Will project expand knowledge?			Yes = 5				Probably = 3				No = 0						
14. Number of MDEP Teams involved			Write in number of teams as score														
15. Other Projects Approved for Team			1 = 5		2 = 4		3 = 3		4 = 2		5 = 1		6 = 0				
16. Measure of Success			Upward Trend		Increased fawn ratio		Increased 4-points in harvest			Higher Observed Buck Ratio			Other				