**Subcommittee Members: Steve Marquez, Shane Boren, Trent Gordon, Jake Rosevear, Gracian Uhalde, Jr., Justin Rozich, Cody Coombs, Matt Rajala**

**Department Representative: Samantha Fino Madi Stout**

**Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners**
**Mule Deer Enhancement Oversight Committee**
**Mule Deer Enhancement Program Subcommittee**
**White Pine County; Management Area 13**
**Nevada Department of Wildlife**
**1218 Alpha Street**
**Ely, Nevada 89301**

**Wednesday, August 24, 2022 / 5:00 p.m.**

# DRAFT Minutes

## 1. Call to Order – Department Representative

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m.

In Attendance:
Shane Boren, Subcommittee Member
Trent Gordon, Subcommittee Member
Justin Rozich, Subcommittee Member
Cody Coombs, Subcommittee Member
Sam Fino, Department Representative
Madi Stout, Department Representative

## 2. Approval of Agenda – For Possible Action

**Subcommittee Member Shane Boren motioned to approve the agenda.**

**Subcommittee Member Justin Rozich seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed.**

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

**Subcommittee Member Justin Rozich motioned to approve the minutes.**

**Subcommittee Member Shane Boren seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed.**

## 4. Member Announcements and Correspondence – Informational

Categorical Exclusion on BLM is possible for up to 10,000 acres (lop and scatter) and or 4,500 acres (chaining) for vegetation treatments Guzzlers will need an EIS, thereby requiring a longer time frame for this project.

## 5. Area 13 MDEP Project Proposal Forms – Department Representative – For Possible Action

The Subcommittee discussed project proposals in the format of the appropriate forms to be submitted to the Oversight Committee.

**Subcommittee Member Shane Boren motioned to approve the project proposal forms.**

**Subcommittee Member Trent Gordon seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed.**

## 6. Area 13 MDEP 5 Year Plan – Department Representative – For Possible Action

The Subcommittee discussed a five-year plan and desired projects of focus in the upcoming years. This outline will be submitted to the Oversight Committee.

**Subcommittee Member Justin Rozich motioned to approve the five-year plan.**

**Subcommittee Member Shane Boren seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed.**

## 7. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

## 8. Future Subcommittee Meetings – For possible Action

A future meeting will be scheduled in the winter to discuss the outcome of 2022 project proposals by the Oversight Committee and projects of interest for 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 PM.

# Conservation Actions for the Area 13 Deer Herd
# August 2022

We hope that an extensive radio-collaring project for MA13 will be approved and initiated in 2023. We are expecting that spatiotemporal movement data from radio-collared deer will further inform us on most impactful locations for effective habitat management efforts. These data are *vital* in the decision making process for future habitat projects and will ultimately greatly benefit the herd.

We aim to keep the subcommittee apprised of any developments both in the management area as well as in the region at large. This includes across agencies as well as industries. This 5-year plan will be revisited annually and adaptive, thereby adjusted and modified as needed.

**Water developments – Enhance or Add**

- Additional guzzlers through the Golden Gate, Seaman, Irish, and Quinn Canyon Ranges, as well as in Coal Valley, to provide a more extensive network of water resources in drastic drought conditions
    - Central Nevada Water Development Project EA may allow for DNA procedures within the Tonopah Field Office area of responsibility
- Enhancing established springs throughout the Grant/Horse Range by conducting and or expanding PJ removal and installation of wildlife-friendly pipe rail fence to protect water sources

**Habitat Restoration**

- **Conifer Removal:**
    - Through Perish Springs and surrounding areas (important migration corridor)
    - White Pine Range to expand the work being conducted by the Forest Service
        - Fawning grounds by Hamilton
    - Expanding work being conducted in the Douglas Hills and Ellison Knobs areas
    - Benches of the Grant Range

- **Seedings:**
    - In the entirety of the management area – recent fires in the area have provided an opportune window
        - Herbicide to reduce infiltration of cheatgrass and other invasives

**Predator removal**

- If radio collar data indicates a particular species as a primary predator causing a significant amount of mortalities and or a particular area where deer are significantly more vulnerable to predation

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **MDEP Subcommittee: White Pine** | **Hunt Unit Group: MA13** | |
| **Project Title:** CRUCIAL MIGRATION CORRIDOR HABITAT ENHANCEMENT: CURRANT TO UPPER PERISH | **Project Location: S131 and N132** | |
| **Brief Description of Project:** *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.:* | Pinyon-Juniper encroachment also impedes water resource availability on the landscape. Improving the habitat quality of an important migration corridor and pinch point will facilitate successful movement to and from summer and winter ranges, as well as allow for deer to hold up in these areas for longer | **Score** |
| **Limiting Factor Score:** *Use subcommittee cumulative score from Limiting Factor Score Form* | ***Maximum of 5 points possible*** | 4.3 |
| **Unit Group 5-Year Published Deer Population Trend:** | ***2018: 5,000 2019: 5,000 2020: 4,500 2021: 4,300 2022: 2,200*** | |
| | ***Decreasing = 5 pts Stable = 3 pts Increasing = 1 pt*** | 5 |
| **Does this project directly address factors limiting healthy mule deer populations?** | ***Yes = 10 pts No = 0 pts*** | 10 |
| *How will project address limiting factors? Pinyon-Juniper encroachment impedes water resource availability on the landscape. Improving the habitat quality of an important migration corridor and pinch point will facilitate successful movement to and from summer and winter ranges in MA13. Further, pinyon-juniper treatments that increase habitat quality would allow for deer to hold up in these areas for longer periods of time, resulting in a staggering of movements across the migration path. Thus, food resources will be more likely to persist and remain available throughout the migration season versus getting depleted in a short time frame. Migration has a high energy requirement, especially for fawns, thereby increasing food resources across a larger area will greatly reduce the risk of poor body condition and migration (energy expenditure) related mortality events* | | |
| **Does this project protect, maintain or strategically restore statewide priority mule deer habitat, enhance critical habitat or a critical life stage for mule deer?** *Score using the highest ranking criteria* | ***High priority*** *(Critical Mule Deer Seasonal Range or Migration Route)* ***= 10 points***<br>***Moderate priority*** *(High elev. summer range, PJ encroached shrub community, winter range)* ***= 5 points***<br>***Low priority*** *(salt desert shrub or low density mule deer habitats )* ***= 1 pt*** | 10 |
| *Provide added details: Conducting pinyon-juniper removal (lop and scatter) in surrounding and nearby areas will require minimal clearances and likely proceed to the implementation steps in a short period of time once funding is secured. More specifically, these desired areas would undergo a class 1 survey for archaeology, which involves a literature search of the records to see if any archaeological surveys have been completed in the past in the designated project areas. If past surveys had been completed and unevaluated or eligible archaeological sites were found, these sites would be completely avoided of PJ treatments. If no surveys were conducted in the past, and no unevaluated or eligible archaeological sites were found, hand cutting of PJ with chainsaws will proceed. In the future, we would like to further expand the pinyon-juniper removal (lop and scatter) effort down through the Horse Range (where deemed necessary) and to Upper Perish* | | |
| **Is this mule deer habitat restoration or improvement of a long-term nature?** *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* | ***10+ years = 10 points 3-10 years = 5 points*** | 10 |
| **Project Scale and Implications:** *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?* | ***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 |
| *Describe existing or past projects: NEPA procedures for the polygons in the map below have already been completed by the Forest Service through the Currant-Ellison Environmental Analysis (2016). The Forest Service has SNPLMA money to treat pinyon-juniper within White Pine County. We would like to expand this pinyon-juniper removal work into Nye County so that the greater landscape is improved and there is maximized benefit for the mule deer herd.* | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Timely Completion:** *Needed permitting, authority, and mechanisms are completed or in process and does the project have a high probability of beinig completed on-time:*<br>*-NEPA analysis or other statutory compliance is completed or not needed*<br>*-Permits are completed or not needed*<br>*-Contract mechnisms to support the work are in place or not needed* | ***Timely completion (12 months) = 5 pts*** ***Extended completion (24 months) = 1 pt*** | 5 |
| **Urgency:** *(Is the project urgent due to a narrow biological window that requires immediate attention and funding to address resource degradation or deterioration?* | ***Yes = 5 pts*** ***No = 0 pts*** | 5 |
| *Provide added details: Fawn:doe ratios in MA13 are one of the lowest in the state and population size has been steadily decreasing over the last few years. During the 2021 post-season aerial survey, number of adults observed in units 132 and 133 (327.75 ± 61.98 and 266.33 ± 91.20, respectively), as well as number of fawns observed in all MA13 units, were all significantly below the 5 year average (131: 29.5 ± 4.86, 132: 104.5 ± 25.87, 133: 74.33 ± 27.30). The fawn:adult ratio in units 131 and 132 were statistically below the 5 year average (0.36 ± 0.03 and 0.31 ± 0.03), and the fawn:adult ratio observed in unit 133 was within the 5 year average (0.27 ± 0.08), however, a very small sample size compared to previous years was observed. Deer are experiencing additional pressure resulting from harsh environmental conditions the last few years (i.e., drought = reduced food resource quality and availability), resulting in low recruitment rates. As a result* | | |
| **Likelihood of Success:** *What is the likelihood of successful completion and successful outcomes? Do the individuals and organizations involved possess the capability, experience, and proven methodolgy needed for implementation? Is the proposal supported by sound and established scientific or biological principals? Project objectives are realistic, measurable, and achieveable with clearly defined methods* | ***High likelihood= 5 points*** ***Moderate = 3 points*** ***Low = 1 point*** | 5 |
| *Provide added details: PJ removal treatments have been proven to be beneficial to wildlife by allowing for increased water flow and native flora.* | | |
| **Partner Funding:** *Does the project leverage funding or in-kind contributions by external partners and by how much?* | ***>3x match = 10 pts*** ***1.5-2.9 match = 7 pts*** ***0.75-1.49 = 3 pts*** ***0.1-.74 = 1 pt*** | NA |
| *(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?* | **Amount: $** **Source:**<br>**Amount: $** **Source:** | |
| **Cost Effectiveness:** *Are the expected results worth the cost of the project?* | ***Very cost-effective = 10 pts*** ***Moderately cost-effective = 5 pts*** ***Minimally cost-effective = 1 pt*** | 10 |
| *Provide added details: PJ removal treatments have been proven to be beneficial to wildlife by allowing for increased water flow and native flora.* | | |
| **Amount Requested:** | **$250,000** | |
| **Total Project Score** **(100 possible points)** | **Sum of Scores** | 89.3 |

**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. Desribe 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.*

Pinyon-Juniper encroachment impedes water resource availability on the landscape. Improving the habitat quality of an important migration corridor and pinch point will facilitate successful movement to and from summer and winter ranges in MA13. Further, pinyon-juniper treatments that increase habitat quality would allow for deer to hold up in these areas for longer periods of time, resulting in a staggering of movements across the migration path. Thus, food resources will be more likely to persist and remain available throughout the migration season versus getting depleted in a short time frame. Migration has a high energy requirement, especially for fawns, thereby increasing food resources across a larger area will greatly reduce the risk of poor body condition and migration (energy-expenditure) related mortality events. NEPA procedures for the polygons in the map below have already been completed by the Forest Service through the Currant-Ellison Environmental Analysis (2016). The Forest Service has SNPLMA money to treat pinyon-juniper within White Pine County. We would like to expand this pinyon-juniper removal work into Nye County so that the greater landscape is improved and there is maximized benefit for the mule deer herd. Conducting pinyon-juniper removal (lop and scatter) in surrounding and nearby areas will require minimal clearances and likely proceed to the implementation steps in a short period of time once funding is secured. More specifically, these desired areas would undergo a class 1 survey for archaeology, which involves a literature search of the records to see if any archaeological surveys have been completed in the past in the designated project areas. If past surveys had been completed and unevaluated or eligible archaeological sites were found, these sites would be completely avoided of PJ treatments. If no surveys were conducted in the past, and no unevaluated or eligible archaeological sites were found, hand cutting of PJ with chainsaws will proceed. In the future, we would like to further expand the pinyon-juniper removal (lop and scatter) effort down through the Horse Range (where deemed necessary) and to Upper Perish Springs (a primary corridor in most need of habitat management). Additional NEPA clearances will need to be submitted as efforts progress southbound and onto BLM land. Areas with lower densities of trees will be targeted (if density is too high, coarse woody debris would impede deer movements through those patches) and slashed at 32 inches starting on June 30 (end of sage grouse nesting season) – Oct 31, creating a landscape-wide mosaic of cleared and forested areas, thus still providing opportunities of cover and potential food or resting resources for wildlife. Due to the large size of this target area, this project will likely span a few years and be submitted as an annual project proposal. At costs of approximately $60-80/acre (personal communication, J. Rozich, Forest Service), we estimate that project costs would be about $250,000 annually until completed. Table 1. Treatment by segments if funding for all requested patches is not allocated in one year. These patches are prioritized sequentially and these patches are additive.

| Scenario | Acreage | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| All patches | 4,320 | $259,200 - $345,600 |
| Patches: 4-7, 9 | 776 | $46,560 - $62,080 |
| Patch 3 | 97 | $5,820 - $7,760 |
| Patches 8 & 10 | 766 | $45,960 - $61,280 |
| Patches: 0-2 | 2,680 | $160,800 - $214,400 |

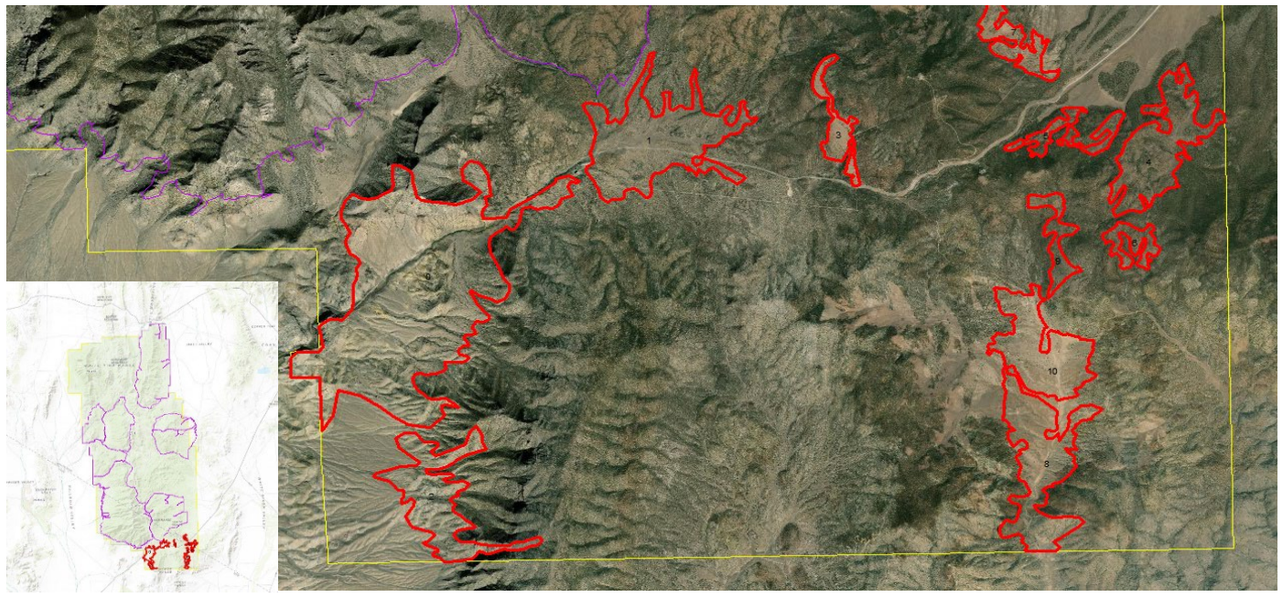
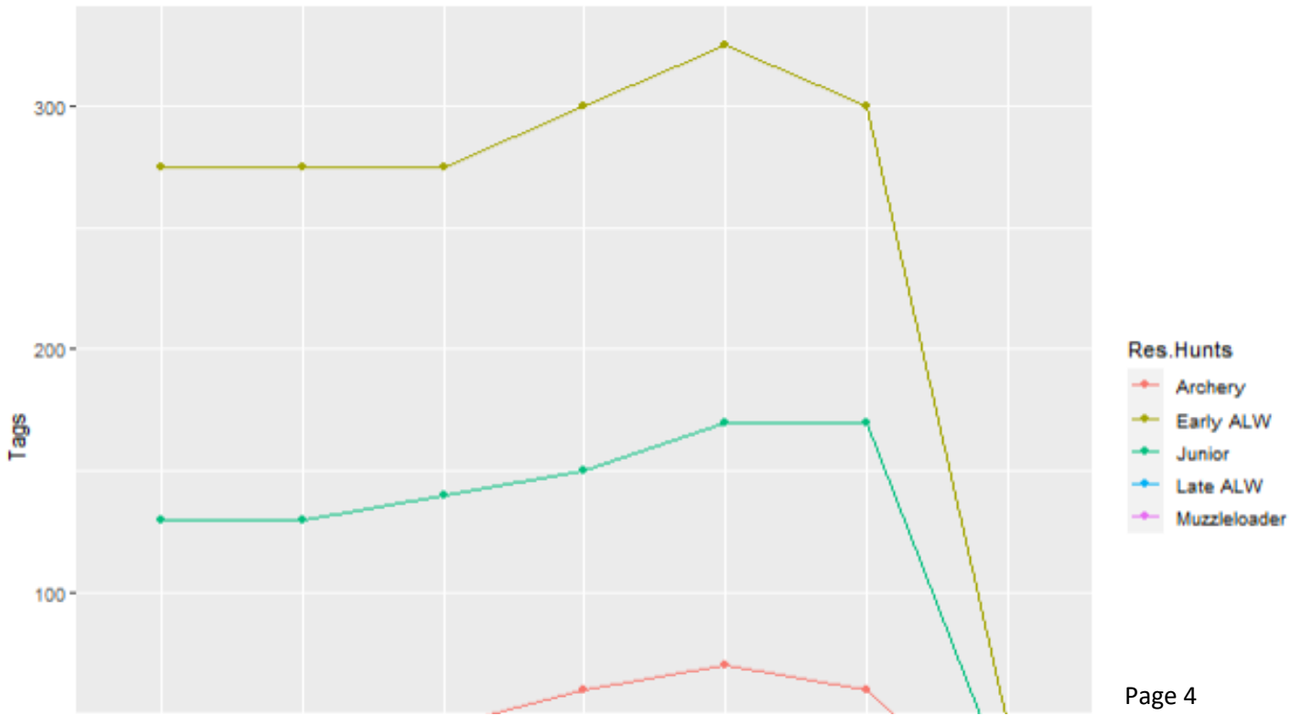


Fig 1. Red polygons highlight target areas for pinyon-juniper removal and are all within the yellow boundary which encompasses areas under NEPA clearances. The purple boundaries are wilderness



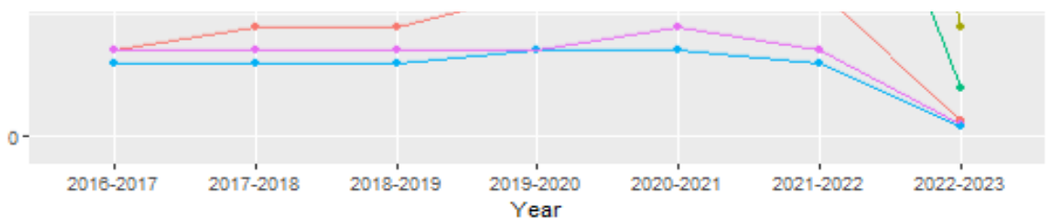



Fig. 2. Resident hunt tags distributed to Nevadans from the 2016-2017 hunt season to the 2022-2023 hunt season in MA13.