

MULE DEER WORKING GROUP DIRECTORS REPORT

Mid-Winter WAFWA Meeting ~ January 8, 2021

Chair – Jim Heffelfinger, Arizona Game and Fish Department



Revision of MDWG Statement of Purpose

The Mule Deer Working Group's "Statement of Purpose" was updated by the MDWG at our last 2 meetings and the final draft was sent to all directors December 14th by Chris Moore for review. The original Statement of Purpose was written in 1998 and needed to be updated to reflect what the MDWG actually does today. With the approval of this report, I will be asking that you approve the updated 2021 Statement of Purpose shared December 15, 2020.

Action Item: Request that you approve the revised MDWG Statement of Purpose distributed December 15, 2020.

Fact Sheets

We have now switched to a cloud-based review of our documents which is a lot more efficient as it allows everyone to edit the same document and see each other's comments in real time.

We have 4 Fact Sheets that were sent out by Chris Moore on December 15th for your review and vetting. With the approval of this report, I'll be asking for your approval of these 4 Fact Sheets.

- 1) *GPS Collar Technology*
- 2) *Developing and Implementing Mule Deer Habitat Projects on Federal Lands (w/BLM, USFS, MDF)*
- 3) *Role of Private Lands in Mule Deer Management*
- 4) *Chronic Wasting Disease Overview (WHC and MDWG)*

Representatives from BLM, USFS, and Mule Deer Foundation with experience in habitat enhancement projects took the lead in writing the Fact Sheet on *Developing and Implementing Mule Deer Habitat Projects on Federal Land*.

The WAFWA Wildlife Health Committee took the lead on the CWD Fact Sheet and then it was reviewed and edited by the MDWG. We would like to ask the directors to approve the CWD Fact Sheet with the additional provision that we can update the USGS map of CWD occurrences as updates are appropriate with future detections. The map version we have in the final approval draft has changed even before we could finish the Fact Sheet with new detections of CWD in southwestern Colorado. We would not change any text (only the map) without bringing it back to the directors for approval.

We reviewed all 35 existing Fact Sheets to identify any that need updating. The only one identified is # 11 "Diseases and Parasites." We will be working with the Wildlife Health Committee in updating that one this year.

Action Item: Request that you approve the 4 Fact Sheets distributed December 14, 2020.

Implementation of Secretarial Order 3362

- Year 3 State Action Plans were submitted in September.
- NFWF has \$3.5 Million available for habitat improvement

- Deadline was Nov 18th 2020
- Awards will be announced on March 2021
- Projects must be in SO3362 State Action Plans/Identified Priority Corridors
- Projects must be approved by State Directors
- Corridor Mapping Team
 - [“Ungulate Migrations of the Western United States, Volume 1”](#) highlighting all the work by the CMT was released in November. CMT is currently working on over 50 additional corridors for the 2020 final report.
- [“Secretarial Order 3362: Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors, Implementation Progress Report”](#) by Casey Stemler was released in October 2020.

2021 Deer/Elk Workshop Update

California scheduled to host this WAFWA-sponsored workshop in May 2021. This workshop occurs in odd years, but its status currently under discussion due to COVID-19 restrictions and emerging vaccine distribution. A lot of other WAFWA workshops are being postponed and we may need a coordinated discussion about when these can be rescheduled so they are not all planned for 2021.

Reseeding Guidance Document Revisions

At our last meeting, the MDWG reviewed the latest version of the reseeding document with suggested plant species appendix. The goal is to develop an appendix for the reseeding document organized by ecoregion. Work on this document and the appendix is ongoing.

Miscellaneous

- Miles Moretti, MDF President/CEO, is retiring in March 2021.
- Western Hunting & Conservation Expo – February 11-14, 2021 Virtual Auctions only
- WAFWA Mule Deer Work Group Virtual Meeting - February 10, 2021 (1-5pm)
- Our Director Sponsor Mike Fowlks has retired and we are in need of a new Director Sponsor for the MDWG. Thanks to Mike for always being there to help us when we need it.

Action: That concludes my report and I ask the approval of this report include approval of the 4 Fact Sheets and revised Statement of Purpose as presented.

Jim Heffelfinger, Chair
 WAFWA Mule Deer Working Group
 January 8, 2021