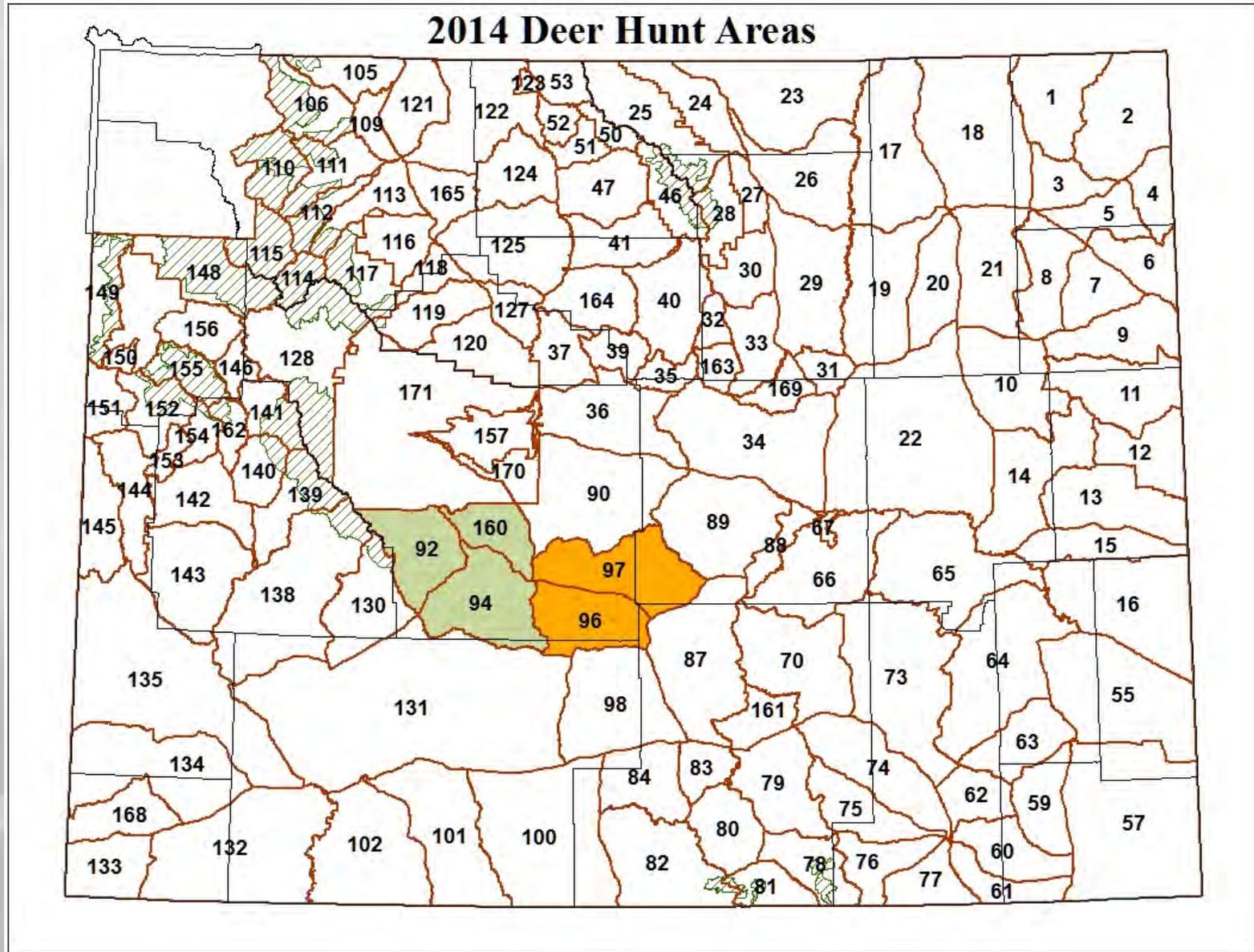


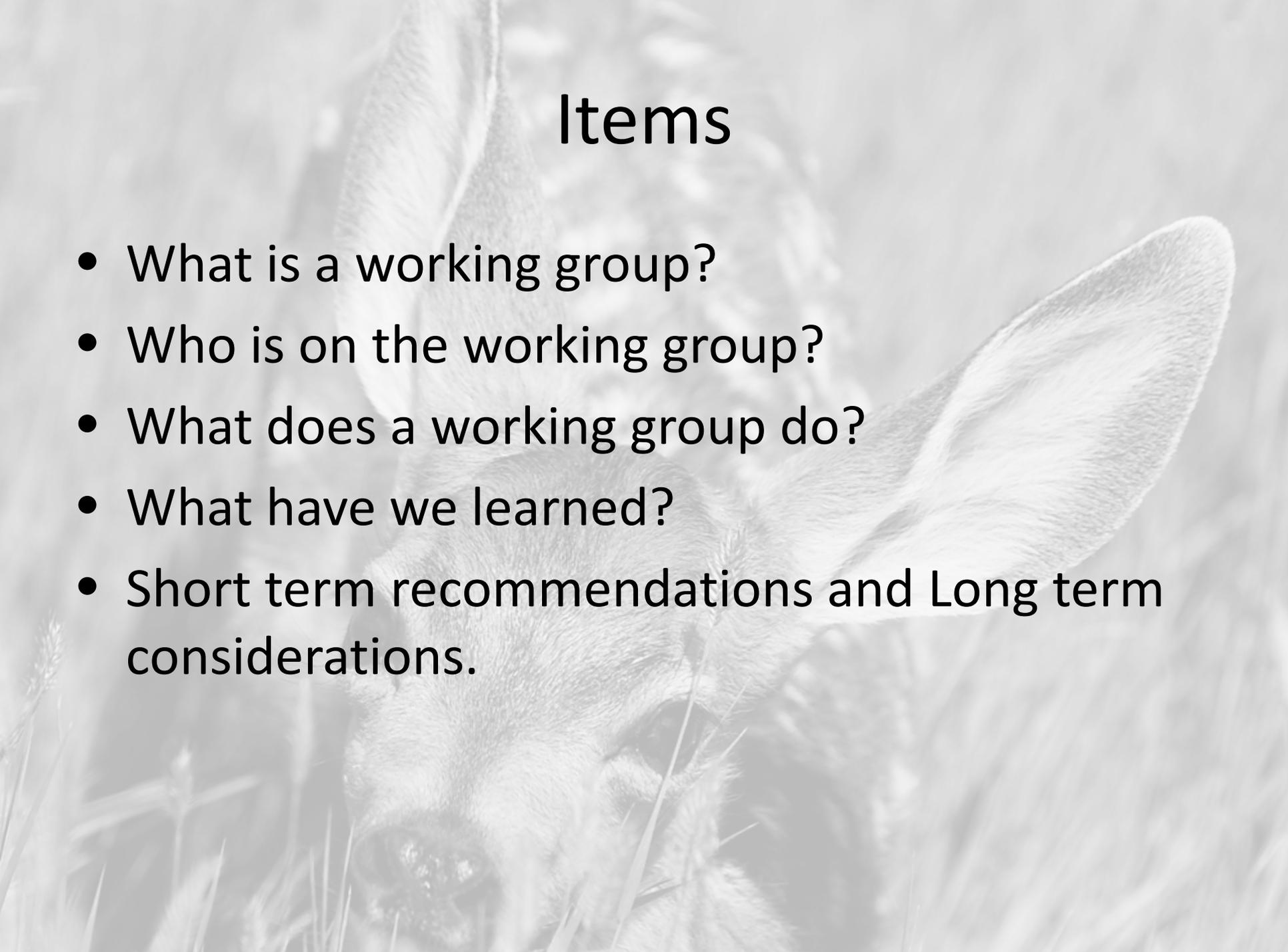
# An Update From The Lander/Green Mountain Mule Deer Working Group



# Working Group Area

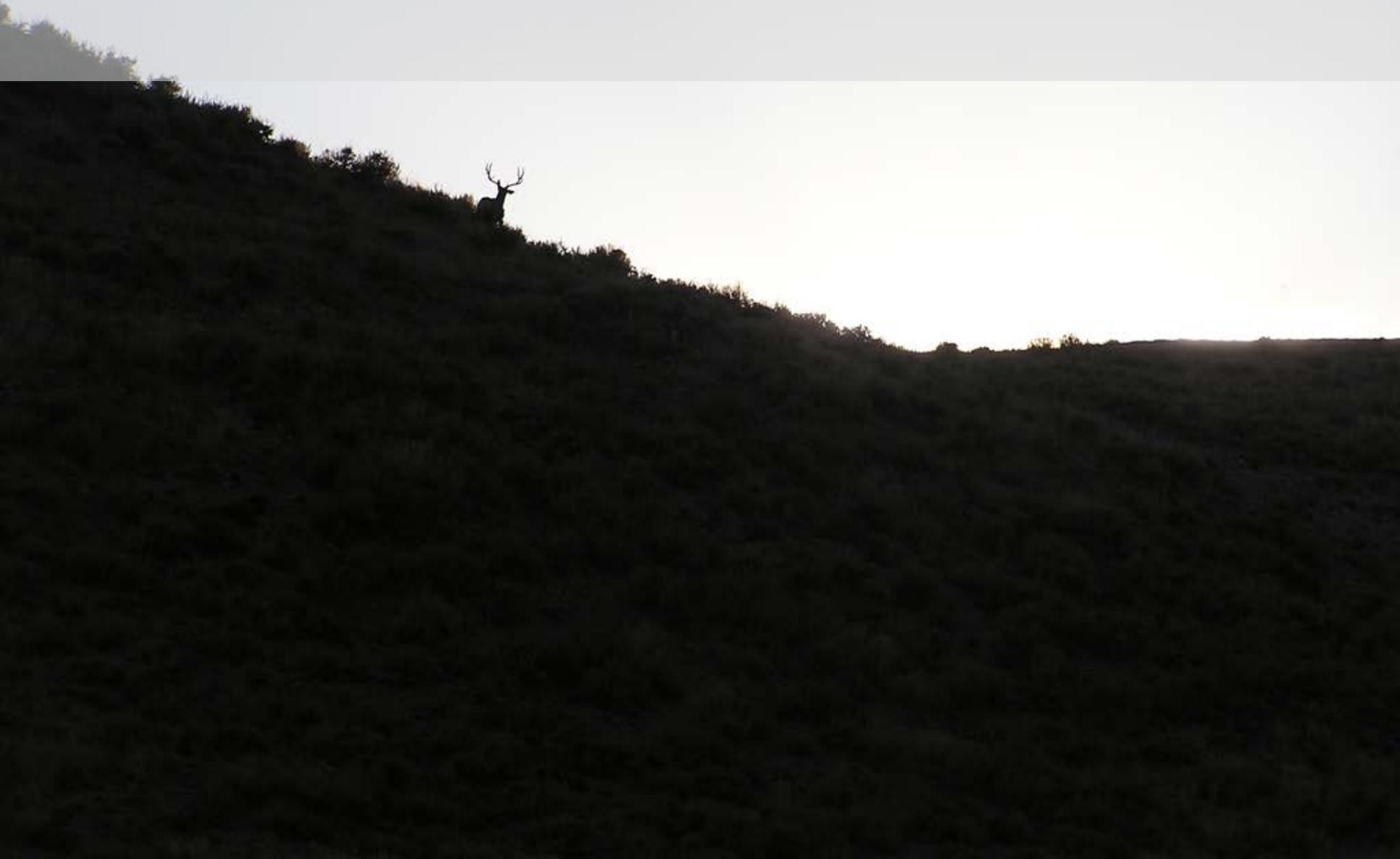


# Items



- What is a working group?
- Who is on the working group?
- What does a working group do?
- What have we learned?
- Short term recommendations and Long term considerations.

# What Is A Working Group?



# The Standard WGFD Public Process

**WGFD Develops Seasons Proposals  
(some public input)**



**Public Reacts to Season Proposal**



**WGFD Sometimes Makes Changes Based on  
Public Reaction**



**WGFD Left Wondering Why  
the Public Does Not  
Understand the Science  
Behind the Solution**



**Public Left Wondering Why  
the Agency Does Not  
Understand Their  
Expectations**

# What is a working group?

***"In concert with the premises of the North American Wildlife Conservation model, citizen based working groups are a valuable tool to integrate society's expectations in management decisions and strategies. The best management strategies for mule deer are those founded in their biology and supported by society."***

***Daryl Lutz, WGFD***

# A Change For The Better

**WGFD Develops Seasons Proposals  
(some public input)**



**Public Reacts to Season Proposal**



**WGFD Sometimes Makes Changes Based on  
Public Reaction**



**WGFD Left Wondering Why  
the Public Does Not  
Understand the Science  
Behind the Solution**



**Public Left Wondering Why  
the Agency Does Not  
Understand Their  
Expectations**

# In With The New

**WGFD and Public Work Together To Develop Solutions To A Problem Through A Shared Learning Process**



**WGFD and Public Review Effectiveness and as Necessary Consider Modifications or Changes**



**WGFD Approves Solutions or Explains Why Solution Cannot Be Implemented.**



**Improved WGFD Understanding of Public Expectations**



**Improved Public Understanding of Differing Public Expectations, Science, and WGFD Limitations**

# What is a working group?

- One part of a larger public engagement process
- Diverse group of individuals representing breadth of interest towards a given problem.
- A group of citizens capable of meeting more regularly to participate in the shared learning process.
- A group of citizens capable of meeting more regularly to share public interests and values with WGFD.
- Tasked with making recommendations (to WGFD) that will arrest and reverse the decline in Mule Deer in the Sweetwater and South Wind River Herd Units.

# Who Is On The Working Group?



# Who is on the working group?

Member Name	Representing	Email Address
Jared Oakleaf	Hunter	never.sky.lined@gmail.com
Travis Stevenson	Ranch Manager	travis@schiffarms.com
Katie Erickson	Youth Hunter	beavercreek5@wildblue.net
Harold Schultz	Non-profit (WWF)	harolds@wyoming.com
Joe Hutto	Public at large	joenhutto@aol.com
Rowdy Anderson	Hunter	rowyanderson78@gmail.com
David Killebrew	Landowner	dkbrew@wyoming.com
Ken Metzler	Outfitter	kmetzler@wyoming.com
Marla Lemm	Business Person	uniqueoutdoorent@hotmail.com
Ember Oakley	Public at large	emberoakley@gmail.com
Brad Hovinga	WGFD Game Warden	brad.hovinga@wyo.gov
Stan Harter	WGFD Wildlife Biologist	stan.harter@wyo.gov



**Ken Metzler**

Outfitter

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**Marla Lemm**

Business Person

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## **Brad Hovinga**

WGFD Game Warden

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**Dave Killebrew**

Landowner

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## **Stan Harter**

WGFD Wildlife Biologist

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## **Rowdy Anderson**

Hunter

[rowyanderson78@gmail.com](mailto:rowyanderson78@gmail.com)



## Jared Oakleaf

Hunter

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## **Harold Schultz**

Non-profit (WWF)

[harolds@wyoming.com](mailto:harolds@wyoming.com)



**Joe Hutto**

Public at large

[joenhutto@aol.com](mailto:joenhutto@aol.com)



## Ember Oakley

Public at large

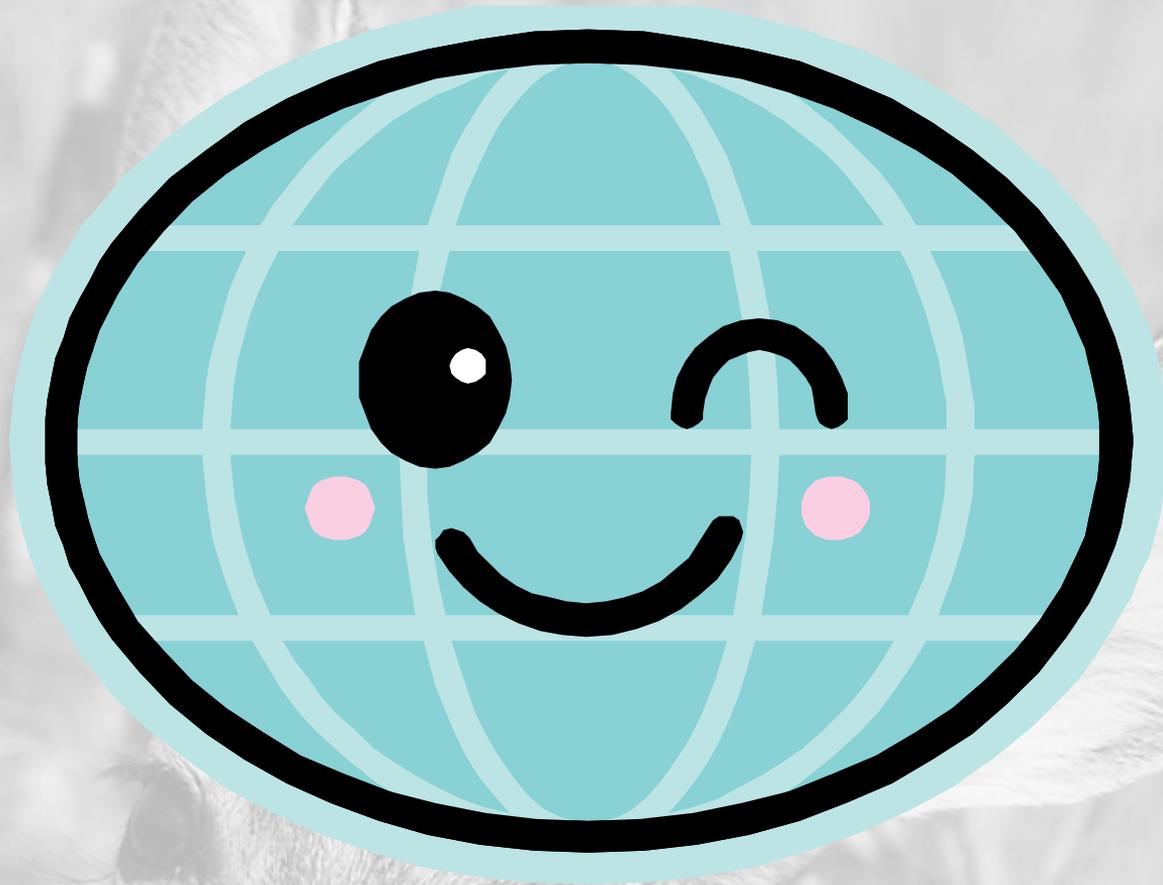
[emberoakley@gmail.com](mailto:emberoakley@gmail.com)



**Katie Erickson**

Youth Hunter

[beavercreek5@wildblue.net](mailto:beavercreek5@wildblue.net)

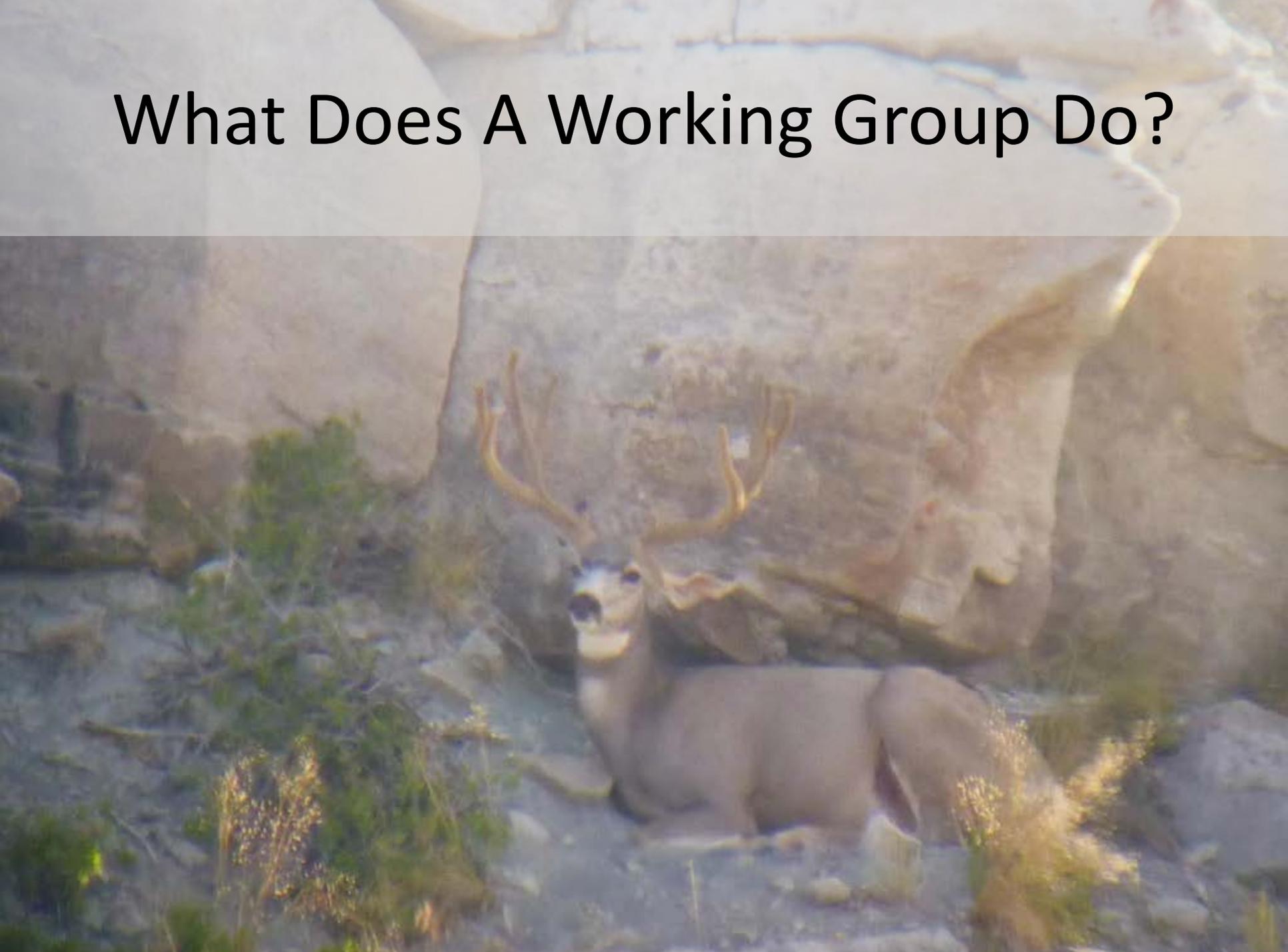


**Travis Stevenson**

Ranch Manager

[travis@schiffarms.com](mailto:travis@schiffarms.com)

# What Does A Working Group Do?



# What does a working group do?

## **Mission Statement:**

*“To support the conservation and enhancement of the South Wind River and Sweetwater mule deer herds based on scientific research, quality game management and habitat improvements for future generations.”*

# Group Sideboards

## Solutions

To be considered viable, a proposed solution must meet all of the established sideboards.

**PROVEN EFFECTIVE**

**SUPPORTS MISSION**

**PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE**

**MONETARILY FEASIBLE**

**TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE**

**BEST FOR THE DEER**

**LASTING BENEFITS**

**SCIENCE BASED**

**COST EFFECTIVE**

# Consensus Based Decision Making



I like it very much.



I'm very comfortable with this.



I can live with it.



I don't like this, but my reservations are not enough to hold up the process.



I don't support the proposal.

If all members of the group present express approval at levels 5,4,3,or 2, then the solution passes as a consensus recommendation.

If 2/3rds of the group present agree at a 3 level or better, the solution becomes a recommendation.

If some members continue to disagree (level 1), then consensus has not been reached and objections will be documented for future discussion.

# What Has The Working Group Learned?



# What has the working group learned?

## *Sweetwater and South Wind River mule deer population background - Stan Harter, WGFD*

- Both deer populations are in decline and presumed to be the result of declining fawn production and survival.
- The effects of antler point restrictions have been mixed with regard to buck:doe ratios and also dependent on fawn production and survival.
- When all other factors remain stable, mule deer populations grow when recruitment exceeds 66 fawns/100 does.
- Important factors affecting these herds include: habitat degradation and loss, predation, weather, disease, and competition with other animals

# What has the working group learned?

## *Hunting Seasons and Mule Deer Populations*

Brad Hovinga, WGFD

- Even where harvest has been greatly limited (such as area 90) mule deer populations are declining in a similar or faster manner than the general hunt units.
- Changes in hunting season structure will not recover deer populations.
- When all other factors remain stable, mule deer populations grow when recruitment exceeds 66 fawns/100 does.

# What has the working group learned?

*Summary of The April 24<sup>th</sup> Lander Mule Deer Workshop*  
Rene Schell, WGFD

## **Mule Deer Workshop Summary of Main Points for all Groups:**

- More family opportunity (youth)
- See quality habitat
- Fewer hunters & ATVs
- Improved quality & quantity of Mule Deer
- Ethics (enforcement presence in field)

# What has the working group learned?

## *Learning what we can do for Wyoming mule deer*

Kevin Montieth, UW

- Carrying capacity is not a static number, but instead varies from year to year with climatic conditions and plant growth.
- Mule deer does have very high pregnancy rates.
- Most often impregnated with twins.
- Do not abort fawns, instead choose to mother the fawn based on the doe's condition during and after the birth.
- The importance of transition zones and stopover areas is equally as important as winter range.

# What has the working group learned?

## *Habitat Project Summary*

Amy Anderson, WGFD

- Habitat improvement projects were initiated in the Lander Area in the mid 2000's. Aimed at improving shrub structure and quality for mule deer.
- Originally focused on improving winter range and has since broadened to incorporate transitional ranges such as aspen regeneration project on South Pass.

# What has the working group learned?

## *History of the South Wind River and Sweetwater Mule Deer Herds- Stan Harter, WGFD*

- Current population levels remain within historic fluctuations dating back to 1971.
- Trends in mule deer population generally follow weather patterns, such as population declines during drought.
- Currently lacking complete migration data, but some movement is known based on field observations and mid 1980s Hall Creek mule deer study.
- Hunter numbers and harvest tend to follow population trends.
- Receiving harvest survey responses is critical to informing the management.

# Short Term Recommendations and Long Term Considerations.



# Recommendations and Considerations

## Short Term (2015 Hunting Season) Recommendations

- Adjust Whitetail Season
- Remove Antler Point Restrictions
- Address Youth Seasons

## Long Term (beyond 2015) Considerations

- Habitat
- Research
- Education
- Intensive Management
- Hunting Season Structure
- ATV Issues
- Predator Control
- WGFD Presence

# Short Term Recommendations

## White-tailed Deer Management:

- ✓ Start general any white-tailed deer season on October 1 (14 days before mule deer season) and end it the same day as mule deer season on October 22.
- ✓ Increase length of special draw white-tailed season through November 30.

# Short Term Recommendations

- Reduce likelihood of forage and breeding competition between Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer.
- Reduce harvest on Mule Deer by focusing meat hunting opportunities on White-tailed Deer.
- Reduce hunter crowding by allowing hunters to tag-out earlier on White-tailed Deer.

# Short Term Recommendations



## Mule Deer Management:

- Remove Antler Point Restrictions, maintain existing season length and general license opportunity.

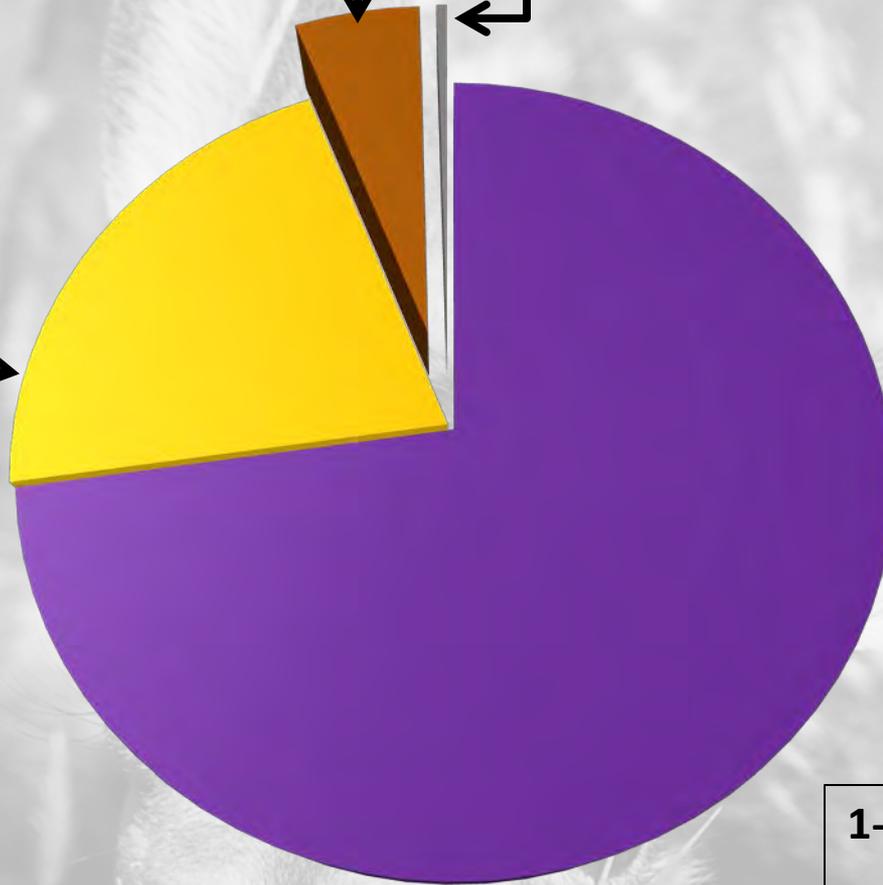
# Short Term Recommendations

- Suppresses older age class deer by focusing the harvest on these animals.
- Recent data has not shown improvement in buck ratios due to poor fawn recruitment.
- Illegal harvest of deer below point restriction has been documented and is increasing.

# A Population of Bucks

5-7 years old= Antler Peak

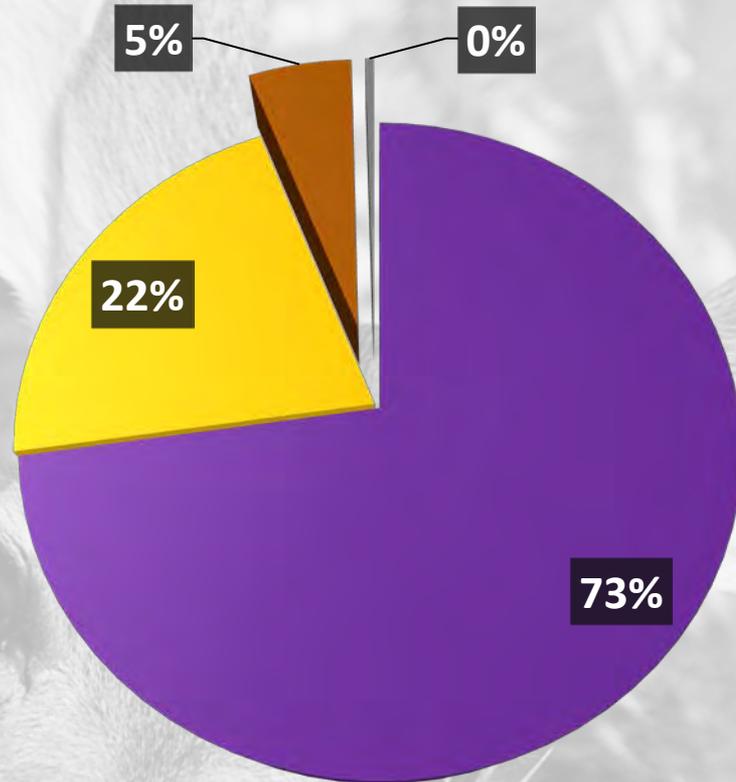
>7 years old= Antler Decline



3-4 years old= Focus of Harvest During Antler Point Restrictions

1-2 years old= Protected During Antler Point Restriction

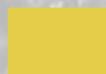
# Beginning Year



**Legend: Age Class Of Male Mule Deer In Population**



1-2 Years



3-4 Years



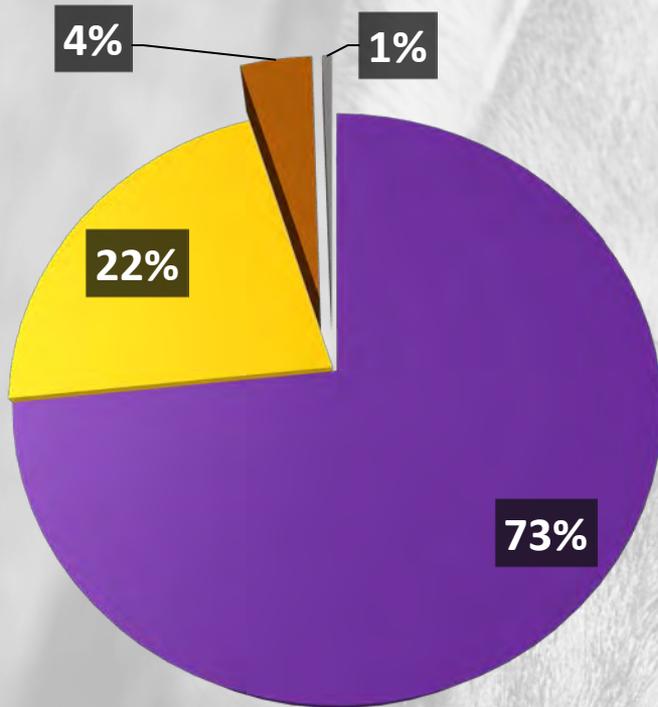
5-7 Years



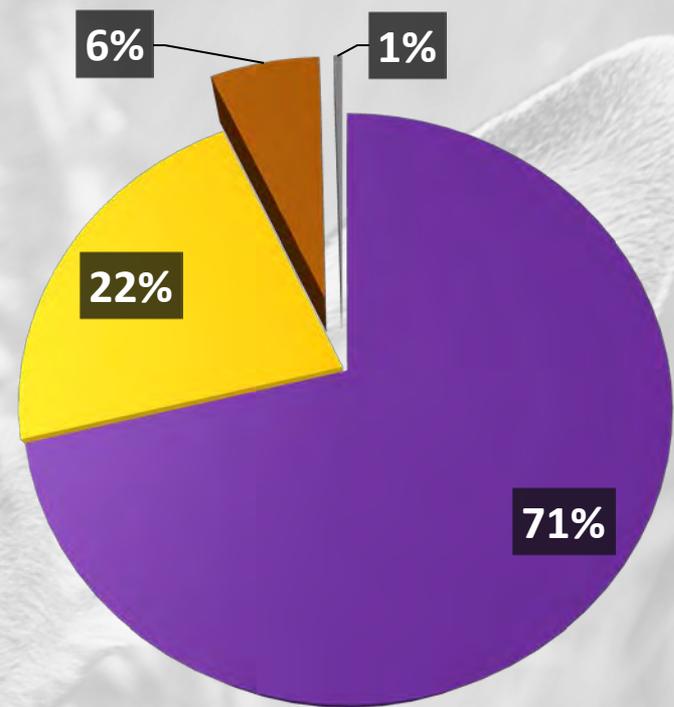
> 7 Years

# After One Year

## No APR



## APR



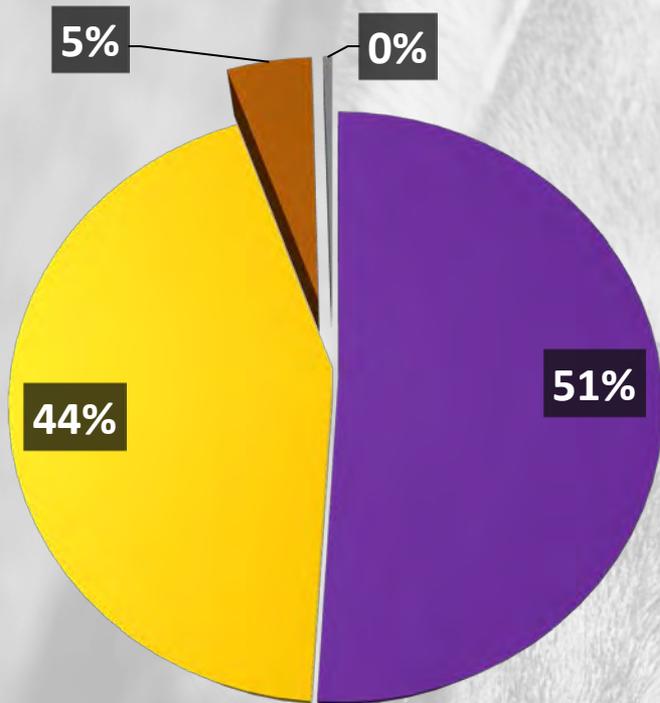
### Legend:

Age Class Of Male Mule Deer In Population Going Into Hunting Season

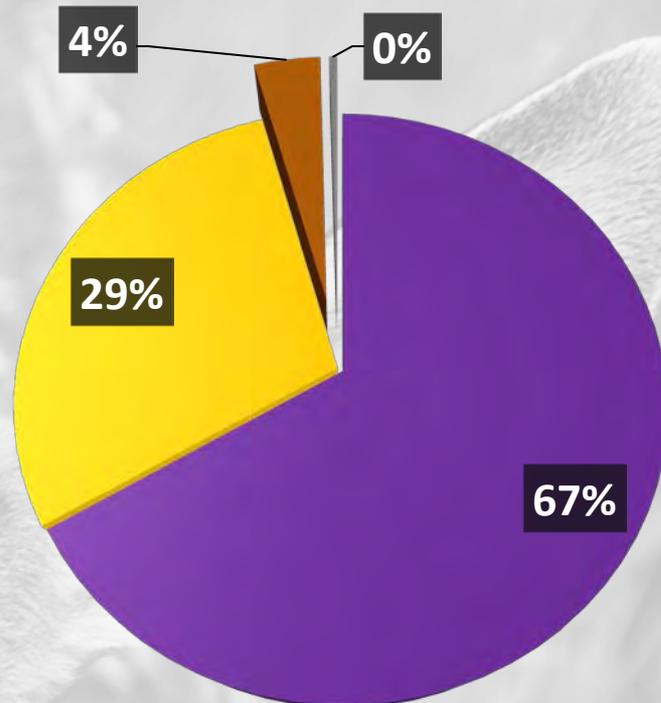


# After Two Years

## No APR



## APR



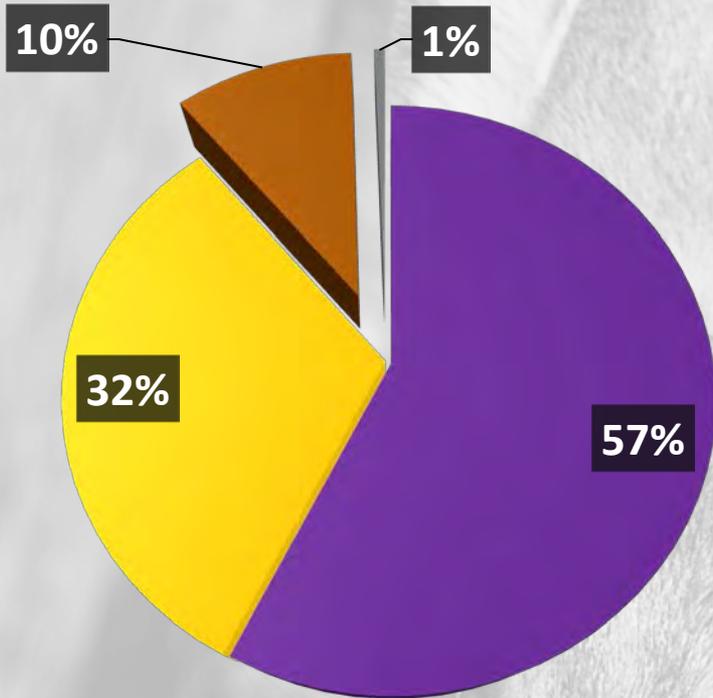
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Age Class Of Male Mule Deer In Population Going Into Hunting Season

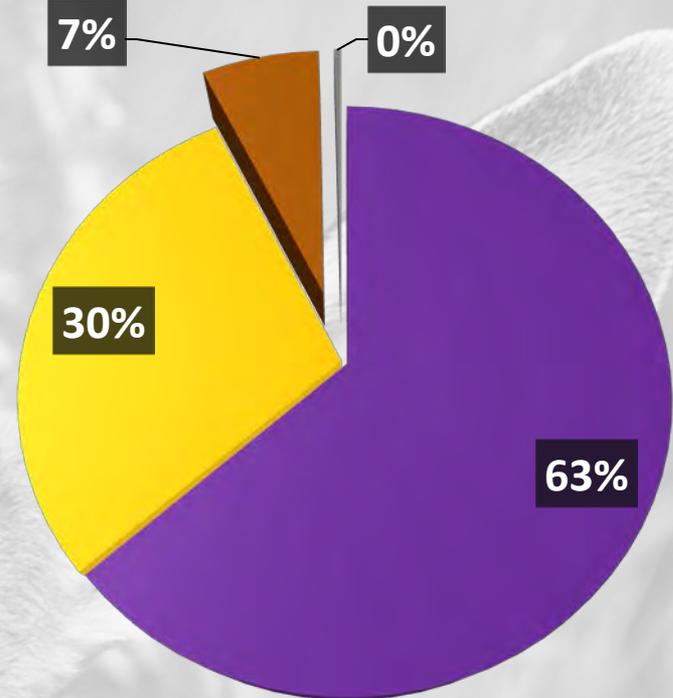
- 1-2 Years
- 3-4 Years
- 5-7 Years
- > 7 Years

# After Three Years

## No APR



## APR



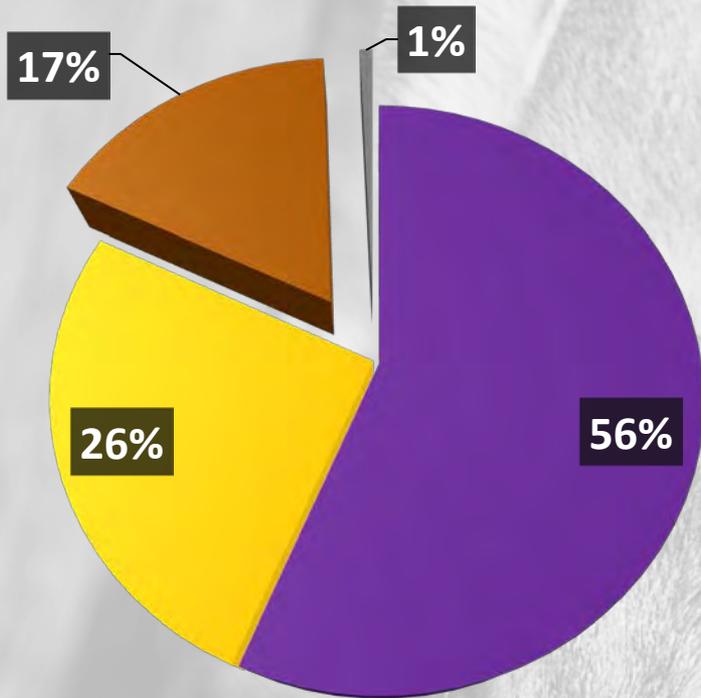
### Legend:

Age Class Of Male Mule Deer In Population Going Into Hunting Season

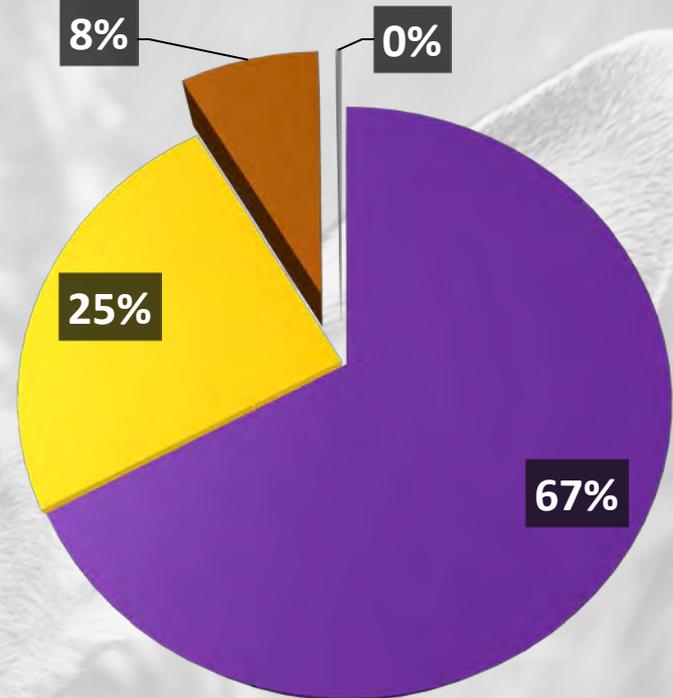


# After Four Years

## No APR



## APR



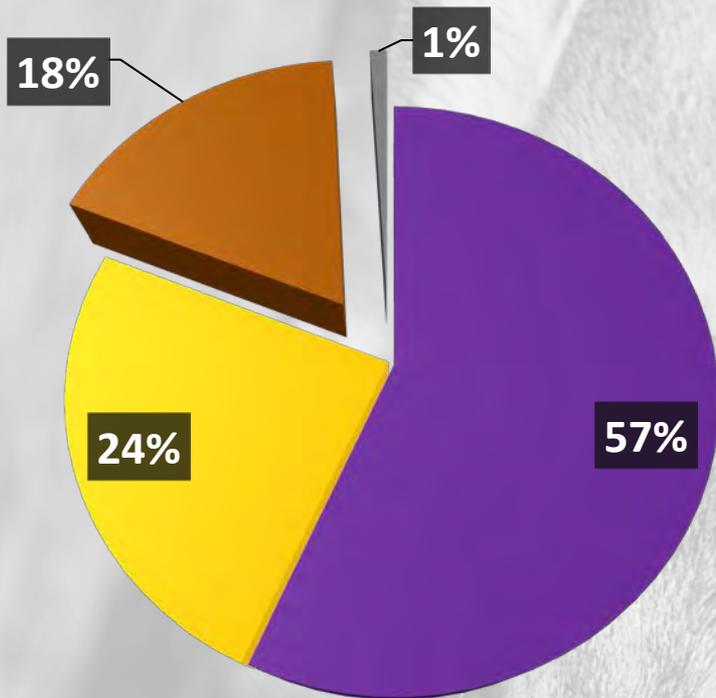
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Age Class Of Male Mule Deer In Population Going Into Hunting Season

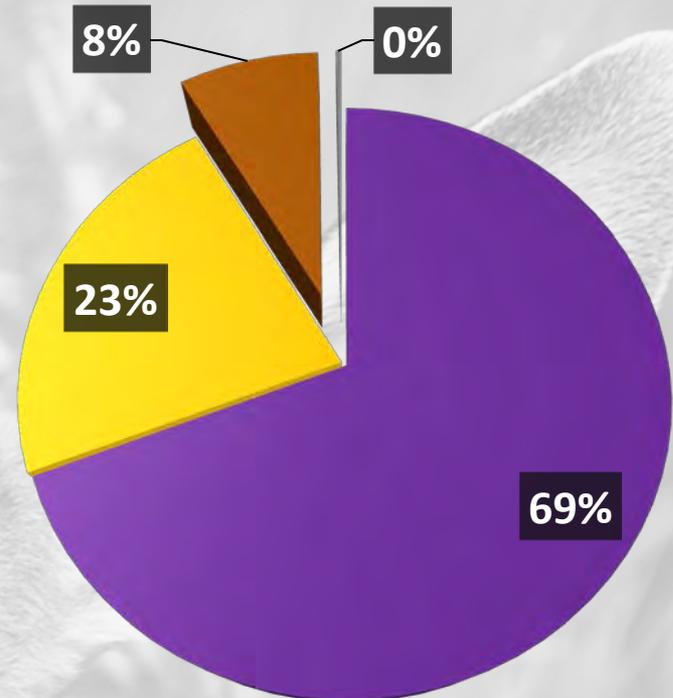


# After Five Years

## No APR



## APR



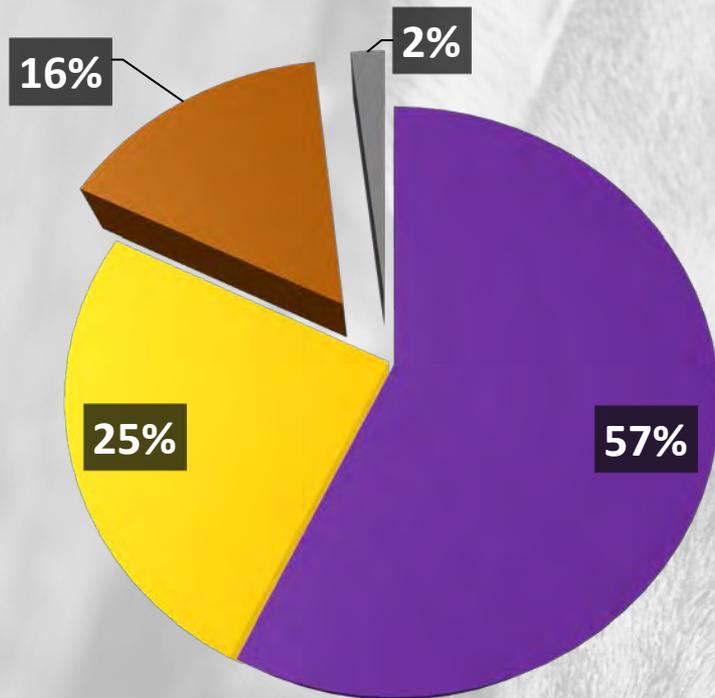
### Legend:

Age Class Of Male Mule Deer In Population Going Into Hunting Season

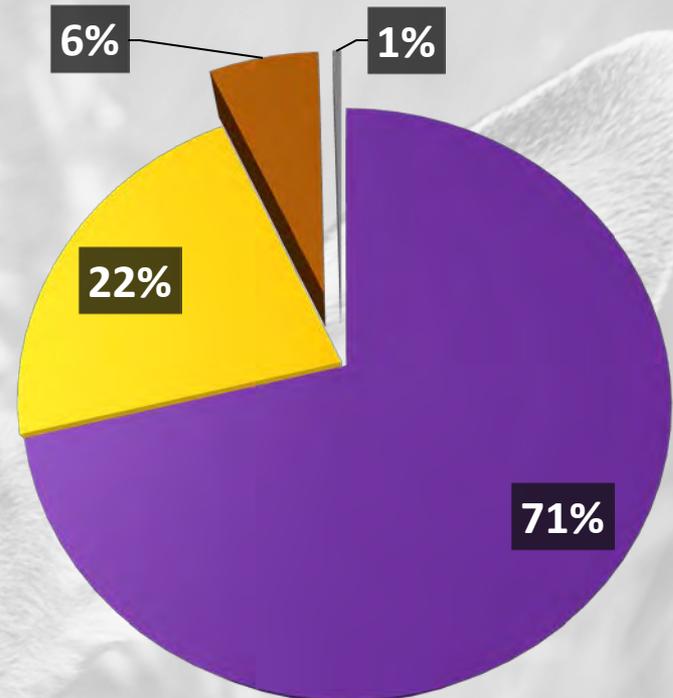


# After Six Years

## No APR



## APR



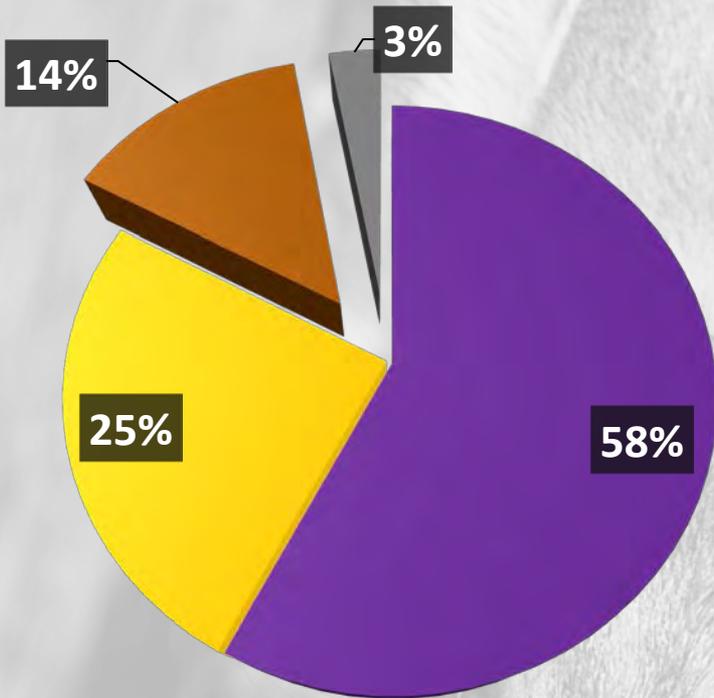
### Legend:

Age Class Of Male Mule Deer In Population Going Into Hunting Season

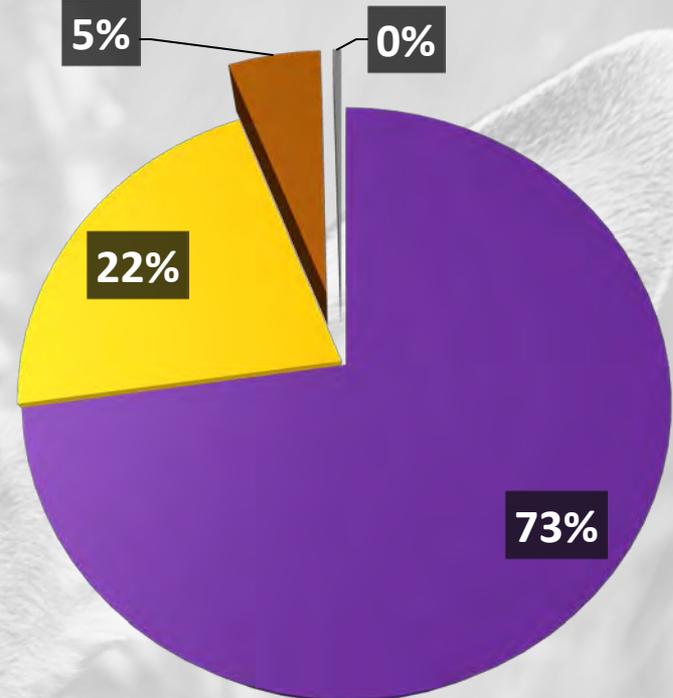


# After Seven Years

## No APR



## APR



### Legend:

Age Class Of Male Mule Deer In Population Going Into Hunting Season



# Short Term Recommendations

## Youth Deer Seasons:

- Continue to allow for youth hunting seasons.
- October 1-22<sup>nd</sup> areas 92, 94, and 160.
- October 15-25 area 96 and 97.
- Restrict youth harvest in the same manner as the general season, such as buck only vs any mule deer.

# Short Term Recommendations

- Reduces the potential for uncontrolled mule deer doe harvest.
- Teaches younger generation the importance of a regulated harvest.
- Teaches younger generation the importance of discipline and patience while hunting.

# Recommendations and Considerations

## Short Term (2015 Hunting Season) Recommendations

- Adjust Whitetail Season
- Remove Antler Point Restrictions
- Address Youth Seasons

## Long Term (beyond 2015) Considerations

- Habitat
- Research
- Education
- Intensive Management
- Hunting Season Structure
- ATV Issues
- Predator Control
- WGFD Presence

# Clarifications?

