



State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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MULE DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN ADDENDUM 15-062 TO FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (SEIS) DATED: DECEMBER 12, 2014

Name of SEIS: 14-075 2015-2021 GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN

Description of SEIS: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has published a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) titled, 2015-2021 Game Management Plan. Changes to the 2009-15 Game Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are proposed to update the plan for 2015-21. Strategies that have been accomplished or are no longer a priority have been deleted. New issues, objectives, and strategies are proposed based on public and staff comments gathered over the past several months.

Significant new issues include: wildlife conflict management; recruitment and retention of hunters; hunter access to private lands; disease in big game; re-introduction of pronghorn; and wolf management. These new issues with corresponding objectives and strategies have been added to the original 2009-15 issues. Many of the original issues have been updated or modified based on new information and research, changing priorities, or emphasis.

Proponent: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Location of Project or Action: Statewide. Addended Mule Deer Management Plan is located in the eastern two-thirds of Washington.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

WDFW is providing updated information on this project which may be of interest to other agencies or the public. The updated information provided below does not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts in the existing SEIS.

The Mule Deer Management Plan should be addended to the SEIS dated December 12, 2014. The following is a summary of the Mule Deer Management Plan.

Washington State Mule Deer Management Plan November 2015

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is currently developing a management plan for Rocky Mountain mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus hemionus*). Mule deer are an icon of the American West. Common throughout much of eastern Washington State, mule deer occur at varying densities along the state's entire north-south extent, from the crest of the Cascade Mountains east to the Idaho border. This widely distributed cervid has considerable interest and is of significant importance to the people of Washington. It provides hunting and viewing opportunities for

many, economic support to the state and to local communities and it has long provided food and clothing for native peoples. Deer management plans come under the overall management guidance of the current Game Management Plan. The Mule Deer Management Plan is subject to amendment and will be updated, reevaluated, amended, and extended as new information becomes available.

The purpose of this plan is to provide background information on the natural history, biology, and status of mule deer herds in Washington State, describe current management issues, and establish objectives and strategies to guide future management. The emphasis is a science-based approach to managing of mule deer populations and factors affecting deer populations.

The over-arching goals of this mule deer plan are: 1) Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage deer and their habitat to ensure healthy, productive populations; 2) Manage deer for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural, subsistence, and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography; and 3) Manage statewide deer populations for a sustainable annual harvest.

This management plan launches a new approach to mule deer management delineations by dividing eastern Washington into seven Mule Deer Management Zones (MDMZs). Each MDMZ is based upon a combination of local knowledge, physiographic province and ecoregion. These MDMZs share common mule deer populations, and vegetative and geographic characteristics, but are not limited by any county or other administrative boundary. Using MDMZs as the largest mule deer management unit ensures that demographics are collected from a complete population (or sometimes metapopulation), and that management is applied at the population level.

This plan identifies management priorities that need to be addressed to effectively manage mule deer and achieve the three primary management goals. It also identifies management objectives and a variety of strategies to address each priority. WDFW will work collaboratively with Treaty Tribes, other governmental entities and the public to achieve those objectives.

Based on the original SEIS and the updated information provided in this addendum, the WDFW has determined that a new threshold determination is not warranted.

Location of Documents: The SEIS/2015-2021 Game Management Plan and Mule Deer Management Plan are available to be read during business hours at the WDFW headquarters office in Olympia (Wildlife Management Program, 5th Floor, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE). Alternatively, they can be obtained by calling WDFW Wildlife Program at (360) 902-2515 or downloaded from the WDFW website at the following addresses:

- <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01657/> (Final: Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the 2015-2021 Game Management Plan),
- <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01755/> (November 2015 DRAFT Washington State Mule Deer Management Plan), and
- http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html (both documents)

The first draft of the Mule Deer Management Plan was released on September 24, 2015 for a 38-day public review period. On the same date, WDFW released a news release to all Washington print, radio, and television media outlets. In addition, public meetings were held on October 13, 2015, in Ellensburg; October 15, 2015, Spokane Valley; and October 29, 2015, in Olympia where the draft plan was reviewed with members of the public and comments were solicited. The draft plan was posted on the WDFW website on September 24, 2015, for the entire 38-day

comment period. Comments were received and addressed. Changes were made to the plan based on the comments received. The proposed implementation date of the Mule Deer Management Plan is December 2015. The plan will remain functional until new developments warrant a revision or update.

This Addendum is issued under WAC 197-11-600(c). We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date of issue below. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **5:00 pm on December 16, 2015**.

Method of Comment:

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Dan Doty on behalf of Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

Address: 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal.

If you have questions about this addendum or the details of the proposal, contact Dan Doty at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call him at (360) 902-8120.

DATE OF ISSUE: December 2, 2015

SIGNATURE:



SEPA Log Number: 15-062