2014-2018

Kootenay-Boundary Mule Deer Management Plan

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Province of British Columbia
Cranbrook, BC
2/21/2014
Executive Summary

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations used a structured decision making process to evaluate and make recommendations for mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) hunting regulations for 2014-18 in the Kootenay-Boundary Region of British Columbia (BC). FLNRO regional wildlife staff also identified actions that may increase mule deer populations based on consultation and a review of the latest scientific knowledge. This management plan will be implemented in 2014 and should be revisited in 2018.

In consultation with regional and provincial stakeholder groups, First Nations, the Conservation Officer Service and the general hunting public, FLNRO staff established management objectives for mule deer, identified a range of hunting season alternatives, and assessed how different season alternatives satisfied management objectives. Hunting clubs used this information to communicate with their members and vote on a preferred hunting season option. Mail-out surveys were conducted to collect additional information from resident hunters in the Kootenay-Boundary and a web-based survey allowed for input from hunters elsewhere in the province.

The vast majority of stakeholder groups and resident hunters consulted through meetings and hunter surveys supported an exclusive “4-point or greater” season across the Kootenay-Boundary. This option was identified as a means to maintain or achieve target buck ratios, while maintaining hunting opportunity, recognizing that this season would not likely increase mule deer population trends. An exclusive “4-point or greater” season would likely reduce mule deer hunters by 15-20% in the Kootenay-Boundary, compared to the current seasons which include any-buck opportunities. Based on the evaluation of trade-offs among different hunting, this plan recommends a “4-point or greater” season for 2014. Different closing dates were suggested by stakeholders and FLNRO staff recommended a closing date of November 10th to allow hunting opportunity in November when demand is highest and to align season dates with the Okanagan.

There was consensus among stakeholders that increasing mule deer populations would enhance hunting opportunity and hence specific actions are recommended to increase populations. Only actions supported by provincial policy and that have potential to increase mule deer survival and recruitment (based on current science) are recommended in this plan.
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1. Introduction
The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) developed this 2014-2018 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) management plan for the Kootenay-Boundary Region (Figure 1) in British Columbia (BC) in consultation with stakeholder groups, First Nations, the Conservation Officer Service (COS) and the general hunting public. This is the first mule deer management plan for the region.

A management plan is needed to address stakeholder concerns with current hunting regulations and to establish appropriate management actions meant to increase mule deer abundance so hunting opportunity can be enhanced. The plan contains two components:

1. Recommended mule deer hunting seasons for the Kootenay-Boundary based on an evaluation of options and stakeholder input
2. Recommended management actions to promote growth of mule deer populations in the Kootenay-Boundary, given that hunting regulations will likely not affect population trend

The Southern Interior Mule Deer Harvest Procedure [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/policy_procedures/index.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/policy_procedures/index.html) was the starting point for hunting season options and identifies performance targets for monitoring. Hunting regulations that fall outside of the recommendations of this procedure require a detailed plan and Wildlife Manager approval.

1.1 History of Mule Deer Hunting Regulations in Kootenay-Boundary
From the late 1980s to 1997 the Boundary had a long 51 day “any buck” season as well as an early “4-point or greater” season in Management Unit (MU) 8-15. From 1997 to 2010 the “any-buck” season was reduced to 20 days in October with 20 days of “4-point or greater” in September and 10 days of “4-point or greater” in late October. In 2010, as part of the changes to the mule deer seasons across the Southern Interior, the “any buck” season in the Boundary was extended by 10 days to the end of October replacing the former late “4-point or greater” season. In addition, limited antlerless permits have been available through Limited Entry Hunting (i.e., LEH; lottery) for a 21 day period in October.

The East and West Kootenay sub-regions had long “any buck” seasons until the 1990s. Antlerless mule deer permits were also available in the 1990s with seasons starting on October 10, and running to November 30 or December 10. Antlerless seasons were closed in 1997. This change was intended to increase mule deer population size in response to concerns about declines in the 1990s. Buck seasons became more restrictive (shorter seasons and 4-point seasons) in the late 1990s and 2000s to try and increase buck numbers. In 2010, an October “any buck” season was implemented across the Southern Interior of BC, along with “4-point or greater” seasons in September and November. The “any buck” season was implemented with limited support from stakeholders in the Kootenay Region and some concerns were raised that suppressed mule deer populations could not handle additional hunting pressure.
Figure 1: Management units in the Kootenay-Boundary Region.
1.2 Overview of the Management Plan Process

To develop this management plan, FLNRO staff:

1) Consulted stakeholders to establish mule deer population and hunting season objectives (Section 1.3)
2) Identified hunting season alternatives recommended by stakeholders (Section 2.3)
3) Developed a consequence table to evaluate how different hunting season options satisfied hunting season objectives (Section 2.4)
4) Identified the most supported hunting season option through evaluating the consequence table and additional input from stakeholders (Section 2.5)
5) Evaluated the impact of implementing the most supported hunting season option (Section 2.6).
6) Identified population objectives that cannot be addressed by modifying hunting seasons (Section 3.2)
7) Recommended actions to meet mule deer population objectives (Section 3.2)

1.3 Public Consultation

FLNRO staff consulted stakeholder representatives on the mule deer management plan. Stakeholders were affiliated with the following clubs: United Bowhunters of British Columbia, East Kootenay Hunters Association, Kimberley Wildlife & Wilderness Club, Southern Guides Association, East Kootenay Wildlife Association, West Kootenay Outdoorsmen, Okanagan Guides and Grand Forks Wildlife Association. The provincial British Columbia Wildlife Federation (BCWF) also provided input throughout the process.

Additional input was also collected through a mail-out hunter survey, which was distributed to a random sample of mule deer hunters in the Kootenay-Boundary Region, and through a web-based survey, which was open to anyone who hunts mule deer in the region (Stent 2013). The purpose of the web survey was to reach out-of-region hunters, who comprise approximately 20% of mule deer hunters in the Kootenay-Boundary (FLNRO, unpublished data). A link to the survey was provided to regional wildlife clubs and the BCWF requesting hunters to complete the survey and forward the link to other hunters.

The timeline for consultation was as follows:

**June 2012**: Started discussion on management plan with Region and Headquarters and developed draft management objectives.

**June 2012**: Prepared background document on management plan and limiting factors, which was posted on the FLNRO website.

**July 2012**: Hosted meetings in Cranbrook, Nelson and Grand Forks with representatives to introduce the management plan and discuss management objectives.

**July 2012**: Distributed mail-out survey to 1700 hunters in Kootenay-Boundary and set up the web survey.

**December 2012**: Summarized survey results and prepared a draft report on findings.

**February 2013**: Provided an update on the management plan at the Kootenay Wildlife Harvest Advisory Committee meeting and discussed different hunting season options.
March 2013: Held workshops in Cranbrook and Nelson to present results from the hunter survey, stakeholder consultation and hunting season options.

March 2013: Reviewed feedback from stakeholders on hunting season alternatives and identified the most supported regulation options.

March 2013: Reviewed recommendations for management actions to increase mule deer populations.

April 2013: Discussed mule deer management at the Ktunaxa hunter’s meeting.

May 2013: Completed a consequence table and prepared a draft management plan.

June 2013: Presented the most supported hunting season options at the Kootenay Wildlife Harvest Advisory Committee (KWHAC) meeting and had further discussion on tradeoffs.

September 2013: Submitted a proposed mule deer hunting regulation change to the Fish and Wildlife Director for the 2014 season.

October 2013: Posted the draft plan on the web and solicited input from stakeholder groups and the general public.

November 2013: Posted the proposed hunting regulation change in the Public Engagement Website for comment.

January 2014: Discussed mule deer management with the Ktunaxa Nation (Lower Kootenay, Akisqnak and Tobacco Plains bands).

2. Harvest Management

2.1 Primer on Mule Deer Harvest Management

Background information on mule deer harvest management was provided to stakeholders at meetings and on the web (http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/management-issues/docs/kootenay_md_background&limitations.pdf). The following section describes implications of common harvest strategies for mule deer, based on a review by Erickson et al (2003).

There is little evidence to suggest buck-only hunting seasons affect population viability because bucks are able to breed all available does even at low buck:doe ratios. Buck harvest can skew sex ratios and alter the age structure of the male component of the population, with high harvest rates resulting in few bucks reaching 3.5 years of age or older (Hatter, unpublished data). Antler point restrictions, including “4-point or greater” seasons have been adopted in several jurisdictions in an attempt to increase buck:doe ratios and increase average age of bucks. In some cases, “4-point or greater” seasons increased buck:doe ratios but at the expense of fewer hunters participating in the season. The number of 3.5+ year old bucks in the harvest did not increase following implementation of this season in most jurisdictions, while accidental kill (i.e., <4-point bucks) increased. Seasons that allow harvest across all age classes are generally preferred; however shortened seasons outside of the rut may be needed to achieve target buck ratios.

LEH seasons have been adopted in many western states and provinces to increase buck ratios and increase average age of bucks. However extreme reductions in hunting opportunity are
typically needed to achieve these objectives. Antlerless seasons are used to manage mule deer populations relative to habitat capacity providing information on population trends, adult survival and fawn recruitment is available to set appropriate harvest rates. Limited antlerless seasons exist in the Boundary but have been eliminated from the East and West Kootenay in an effort to increase abundance.

2.2 Mule Deer Hunting Season Objectives

A list of management objectives was developed following discussions with club representatives listed above, and an analysis of web and mail-out survey results. Objectives represented components of mule deer management that stakeholders and FLNRO felt should be considered in the context of this plan. Stakeholders supported similar management objectives across the region. Hence, an evaluation of hunting season alternatives was conducted at the regional level, instead of at the sub-regional level (i.e. East Kootenay, West Kootenay and Boundary) or Game Management Zone level.

The following list captures the range of objectives that relate directly to mule deer hunting seasons. Caribou and urban deer management objectives were discussed but stakeholders felt these objectives needed to be addressed through other means. Since the list is meant to be all-encompassing, some objectives are competing, and cannot be achieved simultaneously (e.g. increase proportion of 3.5 year-old bucks in population and maximize harvest). The objective to increase population size will not likely be affected by buck-only hunting seasons. However this objective was included in the consequence table to demonstrate that other tools are needed to increase populations (Section 3.0).

**Population Management:**

- Increase mule deer populations in areas that have the capability to support higher numbers (increase fawn recruitment and doe survival)
- Increase post-hunt buck:doe ratios and maintain at or above 20 bucks:100 does (post season)
- Increase proportion of 3.5+ year-old bucks in populations
- Ensure First Nations harvest needs are met

**Hunter Opportunity:**

- Maximise harvest and hunter success
- Provide youth hunting opportunity outside of the General Open Season (GOS)
- Provide archery hunting outside the GOS
- Provide hunting opportunity during the rut (late October – mid November)
- Provide hunting opportunity without antler point restrictions
- Maximise hunter recruitment and retention

**Viewing:**

- Provide opportunity to view deer in natural habitat, outside of the hunting season
- Provide opportunity to view bucks during the hunting season
Management and Enforcement

- Minimise administration cost (i.e., LEH and regulation changes)
- Minimise enforcement and monitoring costs
- Minimise regulation complexity within region
- Minimise regulation complexity among regions

2.3 Hunting Season Alternatives

Eight hunting season options were brought forward by stakeholders for consideration (Table 1). These range from the most liberal to the most conservative hunting seasons. Details and rationale for each regulation option are provided in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Hunting season alternatives for mule deer in the Kootenay-Boundary brought forward by stakeholder groups for evaluation during management plan meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option No.</th>
<th>Youth Season</th>
<th>Archery Season</th>
<th>Any-Buck Season</th>
<th>4-point or Greater Season</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Oct 1 - 31</td>
<td>Sept 10 - 30; Nov 1 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Oct 1 - 31</td>
<td>Sept 10 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Oct 21 - 31</td>
<td>Sept 10 - Oct 20; Nov 1 - 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Oct 1 - 9</td>
<td>Oct 10 - Nov 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sept 10 - 30</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9; Dec 1 - 10</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Sept 10 - Nov 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Sept 10 - Nov 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Oct 1 - 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>Sept 1 - 9</td>
<td>LEH (Oct 1 - 31)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Evaluation of Trade-offs

Data from composition surveys, population models and hunter harvest statistics were used by FLNRO to evaluate the likely effect of each hunting season option on the established management objectives (Table 2).
Table 2: Consequence table showing the likely effect of mule deer hunting season options for the Kootenay-Boundary on each management objective (darker colour = better). Data originate from population models, composition survey data and hunter harvest statistics. First Nations harvest needs are unknown. Hunting season dates are provided in Table 1 and further detail is provided in Appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Management:</th>
<th>What's Better</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>1.) 30 day any-buck; short Nov season</th>
<th>2.) 30 day any-buck; no Nov season</th>
<th>3.) Late short any-buck</th>
<th>4.) Early short any-buck</th>
<th>5.) Increase bow hunting</th>
<th>6.) Long 4-point only</th>
<th>7.) Short 4-point only</th>
<th>8.) Limited Entry Hunt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fawn recruitment</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Fawns:100 does</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doe survival</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Annual survival</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck:doe ratios post-hunt</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Bucks:100 does</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of 3.5+ yr old bucks</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>% of population</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hunting Opportunity:**

| | ↑ | # of deer (x100) | 15 | 12 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 30.0 |
|------------------------|--------------|-------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Annual harvest         | ↑            | Kills/100 days | 2.3 | 1.9 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.4 |      |
| Hunter success         | ↑            | # of hunters (x1000) | 12 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 2.5 |      |
| Maintain/increase hunter #s | ↑ | # of days | 62 | 52 | 67 | 67 | 67 | 67 | 52 | 0 |      |
| GOS hunting opportunity | ↑ | # of days | 17 | 7 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 7 | 7 |      |
| Hunting during rut (Oct 25-Nov) | ↑ | # of days | 31 | 31 | 11 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |      |
| Opportunity w/o antler restriction | ↑ | # of GOS days | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 19 | 9 | 9 |      |
| Archery hunting opportunity | ↑ | # of days | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 21 | 9 | 9 |      |
| Youth hunting opportunity | ↑ | # of days | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 5 |      |

**Viewing:**

| Ability to view deer outside hunt | ↑ | 5 = more deer | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |      |
| Ability to view bucks during hunt | ↑ | 5 = more bucks | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |      |

**Management and Enforcement:**

| Administration cost | ↓ | Annual cost | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 8000 |
| Monitoring costs | ↓ | Annual cost (x1000) | 25 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Enforcement costs | ↓ | 5 = higher cost | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 |      |
| Reg. complexity within region | ↓ | # of seasons | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 |      |
| Reg. complexity among regions | ↓ | 5 = more different | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 |      |
Additional information on the consequence table values is provided in Appendix 2. The consequence table was presented to stakeholders and tradeoffs among hunting season options were discussed. The consequence table was used to inform decisions but was not used to select the recommended option. Stakeholders were asked to present the hunting season options and trade-offs to their respective clubs and vote on the most supported option.

### 2.5 Most Supported Hunting Seasons

Thirteen stakeholder organizations identified their most supported hunting season option (Table 3). Regional clubs did not support options that included an “any buck” season; however this was supported by several club members in the West Kootenay and by the BCWF at the provincial level.

Ten of 12 regional clubs supported an exclusive “4-point or greater” season, although preferred season dates varied (Table 3). Hunters in support of the “4-point or greater” option felt this season would increase buck ratios in most areas, while maintaining hunting opportunity. There was general agreement among stakeholders that increasing mule deer populations would allow all hunting objectives to be achieved and this should be a priority for future management.

Table 3: Most supported hunting season options voted by stakeholder groups involved in the Kootenay-Boundary Mule Deer Management Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Most Supported Option</th>
<th>Comments/modification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elkford Rod and Gun</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Oct 31st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal Flats Wilderness Club</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Oct 31st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Windermere District Rod and Gun</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Oct 31st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Forks District Rod and Gun</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Oct 31st</td>
<td>Remove youth &quot;any-buck&quot; season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Kootenay Outdoorsmen (representing Nelson, Creston, Kaslo, Trail, Nakusp, Edgewater and Revelstoke clubs)</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Nov 15th</td>
<td>Some differences of opinion within local clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernie Rod and Gun</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Nov 15th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparwood Fish and Wildlife</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Nov 15th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden District Rod and Gun</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Nov 15th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Guides</td>
<td>4-point or greater; Sept 10th - Nov 15th</td>
<td>Close November 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberley Wildlife</td>
<td>4-point or greater; no season dates specified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Bowhunters of British Columbia</td>
<td>No comment on rifle season</td>
<td>December 1st - 10th archery season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okanagan Guides</td>
<td>Limited Entry Hunting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial BC Wildlife Federation</td>
<td>4-point or greater Sept 10th – 30th</td>
<td>Follow Southern Interior Mule Deer Harvest Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any-buck; Oct 1st – 31st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-point or greater; November 1st – 15th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To evaluate trade-offs between hunting season closure dates for the two most supported options, FLNRO staff analysed hunter survey data from 2006-2009. During this time there was a September 10th – November 15th “4-point or greater” season in the East Kootenay. The West Kootenay had a September 10th – September 30th and October 21st - November 10th “4-point or greater” season, as well as an October 1st - October 20th “any buck” season. The results suggest 43-56% of hunter days were expended in November, and thus an October 31st closure would substantially impact hunting opportunity (Table 4). A closing date of November 10th is recommended to maintain some hunting opportunity in November and align season dates with Region 8.

Table 4: November mule deer harvest and hunter days as a percent of annual totals for the Kootenay Region, 2006-2009. Data are from hunter survey reports. In the East Kootenay, mule deer seasons included a Sept. 10th – Nov. 15th “4-point or greater”. The West Kootenay had a Sept. 10th – Sept. 30th and Oct. 21st – November 10th “4-point or greater” season, as well as an October 1st – October 20th “any-buck” season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent of Annual Harvest in November</th>
<th>Percent of Annual Hunter Days in November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.6 Effect of Hunting Regulation Change

A regulation change to an exclusive “4-point or greater” season will likely result in a 15-20% decline in hunter numbers from 2010-12 levels. However, declining hunter numbers are expected with current seasons, considering the extremely poor success recently (82 days per kill across region in 2012; FLNRO unpublished data). Buck:doe ratios of at least 20 bucks:100 does should be achievable by 2016 in most MUs with an exclusive “4-point or greater” season, although buck ratios will likely remain below 20:100 does in MU 4-03 for several years based on 2012 composition survey results (Stent and Szkorupa 2013). This regulation change will require Wildlife Manager sign-off as per the Southern Interior Mule Deer Harvest Procedure (MoE 2010b).

### 2.7 Additional Hunting Opportunities

Support for special mule deer hunting opportunities such as youth/archery seasons and additional motor vehicle closures were evaluated at meetings and through the hunter survey. Support for these opportunities varied among stakeholder groups; some opportunities were very important to some interest groups but unimportant to others. Overall, support was highest for maintaining/increasing youth opportunity and lowest for increasing motor vehicle closures. FLNRO staff recommend maintaining opportunity for each unique interest to encourage hunter retention, given the wide array of hunter interests.
3. **Mule Deer Population Management**

Much of the concerns around mule deer management raised by stakeholders stemmed from declining mule deer populations across the region. FLNRO wildlife staff and stakeholders discussed factors limiting mule deer population growth and recruitment at mule deer meetings to identify actions that may increase populations. An overview of the latest science on factors limiting mule deer population growth was distributed to stakeholders prior to meetings and posted on the web (see [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/management-issues/docs/kootenay_mule_deer_faq.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/management-issues/docs/kootenay_mule_deer_faq.pdf), [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/management-issues/docs/kootenay_md_background&limitations.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/management-issues/docs/kootenay_md_background&limitations.pdf)). The feasibility of each action was assessed, including potential to increase mule deer adult survival and fawn recruitment (based on current science), relative costs and staff time required, and whether or not the action would be supported by current government policy. The actions below represent the highest priorities for the short term (1-3 years) and long term (>3 years). The delivery of these actions will depend in part on available funding and staff time. Many actions are not the primary mandate of FLNRO regional wildlife staff and will require partnerships with other departments and organizations.

Other actions that were assessed and deemed lower priority at this time are listed in Appendix 3. These will be revisited periodically as new research results are available regarding limiting factors, and as government capacity, funding and policy change over time.

An adaptive management approach will be used to implement management objectives. This will involve researching potential limiting factors to understand if they are hindering population growth and recruitment, then focusing management action on most important limiting factors and monitoring results.

### 3.1 Goal for Mule Deer Management

In general, stakeholders agreed that the primary goal was to increase mule deer populations within their current distribution. The Southern East Kootenay (MUs 4-01 to 4-06 and 4-21 to 4-26), Southern West Kootenay (MUs 4-07 to 4-18) and East Boundary (MU 8-15) were identified as the primary targets to increase abundance (Figure 1). These areas have had significant population declines and have high demand from hunters.

**Goal:** Increase mule deer abundance in the Southern East Kootenay, Southern West Kootenay and East Boundary within habitat capability.

**Performance Measures:**

- Mule deer population growth rate ($\lambda$, lambda) greater than 1.0 by 2018 (in monitored populations)
- Increasing buck harvest trend by 2018
3.2 Objectives to Address Limiting Factors

3.2.1 Predator Management

High predation rates can lead to mule deer population declines in multi-predator, multi-prey ecosystems (Robinson et al. 2002). In these systems, both fawn and doe survival may limit population growth (Forrester and Wittmer 2012). Cougar (*Felis concolor*) predation was the leading cause of doe mortalities (59%) in the South Selkirk Mountains when this population suffered a major decline (Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, unpublished data). In this study, an increasing white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) population led to an increase in cougar numbers and disproportionately high predation rates on mule deer (i.e., apparent competition; Robinson et al. 2002; Wielgus et al. 2009). The authors of this study recommended white-tailed deer reductions to reduce cougar population growth and predation on mule deer; however Stent (2013) found that hunters in the region did not generally support alternate prey reductions to benefit mule deer. Analysis of white-tailed deer, mule deer and cougar harvest trend data suggest white-tailed deer populations have increased in the Southern East Kootenay, while mule deer populations have declined (Aldous 2013), which could be attributed to apparent competition.

Research in southeast Idaho has shown limited effectiveness of predator control treatments to increase mule deer population size (Hurley et al. 2010). Ballard et al. (2003) suggested predator reductions have failed to increase mule deer growth rates when populations were at or near carrying capacity as mortality from predation is typically replaced by other natural mortality factors (i.e., starvation). Low recruitment rates have been documented in several Kootenay populations (Stent and Szkorupa 2013), suggesting fawn predation could be limiting growth of the population, although further research is needed to determine if fawn recruitment is limited by predation or nutrition.

- **Objective 1: Reduce cougar predation on mule deer, where it may be limiting mule deer population growth.**

  **Lead:** FLNRO regional wildlife staff  
  **Support:** FLNRO, Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Branch, external consulting biologists, universities, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) staff

  **Short Term Actions:**
  1) Determine whether cougar predation is a major source of mortality for mule deer populations, as per Ballard et al. (2003)  
  2) Estimate cougar density by MU for entire region and develop target harvest rates; develop a regional cougar management statement to guide management decisions  
  3) Propose modified cougar hunting regulations for 2014-16 (e.g., bag limits, female quotas, closing dates) across the region to increase cougar harvest when abundance is high, and enable more flexible management in response to fluctuating cougar populations

  **Long Term Actions:**
  4) Monitor cougar abundance and improve estimates in priority areas (e.g., where mule deer are declining and cougar predation is thought to be significant)  
  5) Monitor effect of cougar management on mule deer population growth
Objective 2: Reduce wolf (Canis lupus), bear (Ursus spp.) and/or coyote (C. latrans) predation on mule deer fawns and does, where predation may be limiting mule deer population growth.

Lead: FLNRO regional wildlife staff
Support: FLNRO, Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Branch, external consulting biologists

Short Term Actions:
1) Determine whether bear, wolf and/or coyote predation is affecting mule deer population growth rates
2) Identify an appropriate inventory method to monitor wolf, bear and coyote population trends

Long Term Actions:
3) Consider revising motor vehicle closures to facilitate winter predator hunting in situations where conservation values are not compromised
4) Implement trend monitoring for bears, wolves and/or coyotes, if these species are found to be limiting mule deer

Objective 3: Manage alternate prey (white-tailed deer and Rocky Mountain elk [Cervus elaphus nelsoni]) to meet mule deer objectives in priority areas.

Lead: FLNRO regional wildlife staff

Short Term Actions:
1) Maintain the GOS for antlerless white-tailed deer across the region for 2014-16 to limit population increases
2) Identify priority areas for future white-tailed deer management to benefit mule deer (e.g., where mule deer are declining, predation is high and alternate prey are thought to be supporting high predator populations, and where stakeholders support white-tailed deer reductions to possibly benefit mule deer)
3) Develop a regional white-tailed deer management statement to guide management decisions
4) Consider mule deer objectives during Kootenay-Boundary Elk Management Plan revisions (2015); work with stakeholders to determine whether there are areas where elk populations should be managed to benefit mule deer
5) Monitor buck harvest as an index of white-tailed deer population trend

Long Term Actions:
6) Develop a population model to monitor white-tailed deer trends
7) Consider white-tailed deer reductions in priority areas for 2016-17
8) Monitor the effectiveness of managing alternate prey to benefit mule deer

3.2.2 Habitat Management
The landscape of the Kootenay-Boundary Region has changed dramatically over the last century. Extensive forest loss occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900s due to large fires and land clearing for settlements and agriculture (MFR 2006). Since the 1950s, forest succession, changes in timber harvest practices, and aggressive fire suppression has resulted in greater
forest cover. These successional changes have reduced forage availability across the northern range of the species (Hayden et al. 2008; Peek et al. 2001).

Nutritional value of forage is low in the winter and mule deer may be unable to meet energy demands during this period (Parker et al. 1984). Improving winter habitat may increase deer survival by reducing predation risk and improving overwinter survival (Bishop et al. 2008). However, equally important may be the quality of summer and transitional habitat, as this affects mule deer body condition prior to winter. Tollefson et al. (2010) found enhanced nutrition in the summer and autumn increased fawn growth and survival rates, and increased pregnancy and twinning rates of does in Washington. After experimental predator reductions in Southeast Idaho failed to increase mule deer population growth rates, Hurley et al. (2010) recommended nutrition enhancement over predator reductions to increase mule deer populations.

Objective 4: Improve suitability of mule deer habitat by increasing forage quality and quantity.

Lead: FLNRO regional habitat staff
Support: FLNRO regional wildlife staff, external consulting biologists, FWCP biologists

Short Term Actions:
1) Identify candidate mule deer habitat restoration sites through Ecosystem Restoration (ER) operations and steering committees
2) Carry out planned winter range habitat restoration in MU 4-02
3) Support FWCP sheep/mule deer restoration in MU 4-21
4) Support ongoing restoration projects in Boundary and West Kootenay winter ranges
5) Identify other priority areas for habitat restoration and seek additional funding sources

Long Term Actions:
6) Identify efficient methods for conducting ER on mule deer winter ranges
7) Develop habitat prescriptions that can be applied to winter range, summer range and transitional habitat to restore mule deer habitat
8) Consult licensees and foresters to increase access to unproductive and inoperable stands in managed forests for ER purposes
9) Assess mule deer population response (survival and recruitment) to large scale habitat restoration
10) Support growth of the ER program and expansion to Natural Disturbance Type 3 (NDT 3) habitats.

Objective 5: Support reduction of invasive plants where they threaten mule deer habitat.

Lead: FLNRO regional habitat staff
Support: Regional districts, external consulting biologists

Short and Long Term Actions:
1) Support habitat branch and local government to manage invasive plants on mule deer winter ranges and provide input on priority areas
2) Support access management needed to prevent spread of invasive plants
Objective 6: Support fire management planning to increase fire frequency in mule deer habitat.

Lead: FLNRO regional habitat staff  
Support: Wildfire branch, FWCP biologists

Short Term Actions:
1) Map summer and transitional mule deer habitats  
2) Consult with wildfire and forestry staff to identify potential areas where natural fires could be managed to improve habitat for mule deer (i.e., “modified response” areas)

Long Term Actions:
3) Incorporate mule deer “modified response” areas into fire management planning

Objective 7: Support forest management to improve and conserve mule deer habitat.

Lead: FLNRO regional habitat staff  
Support: FLNRO regional wildlife staff, FLNRO forest tenures staff

Short Term Actions:
1) Identify logging and post-logging treatments that could be used to improve mule deer habitat suitability  
2) Map mule deer winter observations from aerial surveys and compare to Ungulate Winter Range (UWR) polygons  
3) Revisit UWR guidelines and ER projects in MUs 4-04, 4-05, 4-06, 4-07, 4-08 and 4-20 (Caribou Recovery Zones)

Long Term Actions:
4) Support implementation of logging and post-logging treatments that will benefit mule deer  
5) Refine UWR boundaries to encompass winter ranges used by mule deer during periods of high snow accumulation  
6) Maintain sufficient canopy cover on winter ranges in Interior Cedar Hemlock (ICH) and Montane Spruce (MS) subzones, which receive heavy snowfall

Objective 8: Assess forage quality and quantity on important winter ranges and incorporate into range management discussions.

Lead: FLNRO regional habitat staff  
Support: FLNRO regional wildlife staff, FLNRO regional range program, external consulting biologists

Short Term Actions:
1) Document browse quality and quantity on winter ranges where cattle, elk and mule deer overlap
Long Term Actions:
2) Manage ungulate use on mule deer winter ranges to maintain sufficient forage.

- **Objective 9: Maintain connectivity between summer, winter and transitional habitats.**

  **Lead:** FLNRO regional wildlife staff  
  **Support:** External consulting biologists, FWCP biologists

**Short Term Actions:**
1) Map known migration routes using findings from past monitoring projects and local knowledge

**Long Term Actions:**
2) Work with relevant organizations to remove or modify barriers to facilitate migration

3.2.3 **Access Management to Minimize Habitat Disturbance**

Motorized vehicle closures have been used as a tool to protect valuable mule deer habitat and/or restrict access to areas where mule deer are vulnerable at certain times of the year. Research suggests roads may impact ungulates by reducing habitat effectiveness and altering animal behaviour (Trombulak and Frissell 2000). Access management continues to be a contentious issue in the Kootenay Region and the survey of deer hunters (Stent 2013) found little support for additional motor vehicle closures, although some stakeholder groups do support road closures. Road densities have not been estimated in the Kootenay-Boundary and it is uncertain if current densities are impacting mule deer habitat effectiveness.

- **Objective 10: Manage motorized vehicle access to minimize disturbance and ensure valuable mule deer habitats are protected.**

  **Lead:** FLNRO regional habitat staff  
  **Support:** FLNRO regional wildlife staff

**Short Term Actions:**
1) Review current road densities, closures and justifications  
2) Use regional wildlife advisory and access committees to identify additional closures needed to protect important habitats

**Long Term Actions:**
3) Implement road closures needed to protect valuable mule deer habitats  
4) Increase road closure signage and enforcement  
5) Consider strategic road deactivations during forest development planning in high value mule deer habitats
3.2.4 Improving Knowledge of Mule Deer Population Trends

Hunter harvest statistics (kill per unit effort) have been the primary method for monitoring mule deer population trends; however this method may underestimate the rate of population decline and/or overestimate rate of population increase (Hatter 2001). Interpretations of harvest data are further complicated by changes to hunting regulations. Several Stratified Random Block (SRB) mule deer inventories have been attempted in the Kootenay Region to estimate population size using a sightability model; however this model was developed in relatively open habitat and is not believed to be accurate in forested winter ranges. An alternative to conducting SRB surveys is to use female survival and juvenile recruitment data to estimate population trend. This method has successfully predicted population trends of elk in the East Kootenay Trench and may be more cost-effective than repeated SRB surveys. Roadside surveys are the most affordable means to collect population data but have shown limited effectiveness in monitoring population trends for deer (Collier et al. 2012).

- **Objective 11: Improve inventory and monitoring methods to track mule deer population trends.**

  **Lead:** FLNRO regional wildlife staff  
  **Support:** External consulting biologists

  **Short Term Actions:**
  1) Seek funding to develop a cost-effective methodology for monitoring mule deer population trends in the Kootenay-Boundary.

  **Long Term Actions:**
  2) Monitor mule deer recruitment and survival annually  
  3) Develop a population model for reconstructing mule deer trends from recruitment, survival and harvest data  
  4) Support development of a Smartphone application to monitor mule deer and predator population trends  
  5) Develop a mule deer sightability model that can be used to accurately and precisely measure mule deer population size in forested habitat

3.2.5 Engaging Hunters in Mule Deer Management

Hunters are the main contributors to wildlife conservation (Hefflefinger et al. 2013) but often express frustrations about not being adequately included in management. Consultation through the mule deer management plan has revealed distrust between many hunters and government, which the Ministry hopes to improve through implementation of this plan.

- **Objective 12: Engage hunters and wildlife clubs in mule deer management activities.**

  **Lead:** FLNRO regional wildlife staff  
  **Support:** FLNRO regional habitat staff

  **Short Term Actions:**
  1) Communicate proposed research and ER activities with wildlife clubs  
  2) Work with ER committee to identify opportunities for wildlife clubs to conduct winter range enhancement.
3) Distribute relevant mule deer survey information, research findings and reports to interested hunters and wildlife clubs
4) Continue to provide mule deer hunting opportunities for unique interest groups

Long Term Actions:
5) Include wildlife clubs in mule deer research projects
6) Establish multi-year ER projects (i.e., slashing) for wildlife clubs to carry out
7) Conduct a follow-up survey of mule deer hunters to evaluate changes in satisfaction with mule deer management
8) Work with headquarters to identify methods to monitor number of bow hunters and archery harvest
9) Maintain regular communication with all stakeholders through club meetings and regional wildlife committee
4. References


5. Ministry Approval

Approval is sought for the Kootenay-Boundary Mule Deer Management Plan, 2014-2018:

Director, Resource Management
Resource Stewardship Division
Kootenay Boundary Region
Reviewed by: Paul Rasmussen
Date:
Signature:

Wildlife Manager
Resource Stewardship Division
Headquarters
Reviewed by: Ian Hatter
Date:
Signature:
Appendix 1: Mule deer hunting season alternatives brought forward by stakeholders in the Kootenay-Boundary that were evaluated at management plan meetings.

**Option 1: Sept ≥4 pt, October any-buck season, 10-day ≥4pt November season:** These are the current seasons in most of the region.
- Youth any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Bow any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Early 4-point season from Sept 10 – Sept 30
- Any-buck season from Oct 1 – Oct 31
- Late 4-point season from Nov 1 – Nov 10

**Option 2: October any-buck season, no November season:** These are the current seasons but with no November 4-point hunt. The intent of this season set is to reduce overall buck harvest while maintaining opportunities for any-buck hunting.
- Youth any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Bow any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Early 4-point season from Sept 10 – Sept 30
- Any-buck season from Oct 1 – Oct 31

**Option 3: Late 11-day any-buck season:** The intent of these seasons is to avoid overlap with the elk season. However a later any-buck season will likely result in higher harvest than an early any-buck season (since buck vulnerability increases closer to the rut and as bucks migrate in to more accessible areas).
- Youth any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Bow any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Early 4-point season from Sept 10 – Oct 20
- Any-buck season from Oct 21 – Oct 31
- Late 4-point season from Nov 1 – Nov 15

**Option 4: Early 9-day any-buck season:** The intent of these seasons is to retain a short any-buck season in early October, in order to continue to provide some opportunity for hunters to harvest smaller bucks. Our survey of hunters indicates that a segment of the hunting community in the region values the any-buck season.
- Youth any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Bow any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Early 4-point season from Sept 10 – Sept 30
- Any-buck season from Oct 1 – Oct 9
- Late 4-point season from Oct 10 – Nov 15

**Option 5: Increase bow hunting:** These seasons focus on increasing bow hunting opportunities. Bow hunters have expressed concern with the youth season overlapping the bow season. Hence the youth season below starts after the bow only season. Bow hunters have also requested consideration of a December any-buck season. The suggested rifle season is this option is 4-point or better only, to offset the anticipated increase in harvest associated with a December bow season.
- Bow any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Youth any-buck season from Sept 10 – Sept 30
- 4-point season from Sept 10 – Nov 15
- Late bow any-buck season from Dec 1 – Dec 10
Option 6: Long ≥4-point season: These seasons were in place in the East Kootenay prior to 2010, with the exception of the any-buck season for youth. The intent of these seasons is to limit harvest through a 4-point restriction, while allowing a long hunting season.

- Youth any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Bow any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- 4-point season from Sept 10 – Nov 15

Option 7: Short ≥4-point season: The intent of these seasons is to reduce buck harvest substantially, while still maintaining a General Open Season.

- Youth any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Bow any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- 4-point season from Oct 1 – Oct 31

Option 8: Limited Entry Hunt: This is the most conservative option. The intent of this season is to reduce buck harvest substantially through Limited Entry Hunt. This would likely result in the highest buck to doe ratios and more trophy (3.5+ year-old) bucks.

- Youth any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Bow any-buck season from Sept 1 – Sept 9
- Limited Entry Hunt any-buck season from Oct 1 – Oct 31
Appendix 2: Rationale for consequence table results for mule deer hunting season options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Management</th>
<th>What’s Better</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fawn recruitment</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Fawns:100 does</td>
<td>There was no significant difference predicted in fawn recruitment among season options, although inventory results suggest higher fawn ratios when buck ratios are lower. Research suggests fawn recruitment may increase with fewer bucks in the population if there is a density dependent increase in forage.</td>
<td>Bishop et al. 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doe survival</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Annual survival</td>
<td>There was no significant difference predicted in doe survival among season options. However there may be potential for high buck harvest to increase predation on remaining does in multi-predator ecosystems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck:doe ratios post-hunt</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Bucks:100 does</td>
<td>Buck to doe ratios increase with lower buck harvest, assuming constant doe numbers. Ratios here are based on composition surveys.</td>
<td>Kootenay Region composition surveys 2010-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of 3.5+ yr old bucks</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>% of population</td>
<td>Based on population model, higher harvest rate of bucks will reduce the number reaching 3.5+ years of age.</td>
<td>Erickson et al. 2003; Hatter, unpubl. data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure FN harvest needs met</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td># of deer</td>
<td>All options assume FN harvest needs will be met, since there is no harvest of females. Hunting of bucks only will likely have no or minimal impact on population trend. Current harvest levels are unknown.</td>
<td>Erickson et al. 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hunting Opportunity</th>
<th>What’s Better</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual harvest</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td># of deer (x100)</td>
<td>More liberal hunting seasons will result in higher harvest.</td>
<td>Hunter sample data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter success</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Kills/100 days</td>
<td>Highest hunter success is expected with LEH option. Options with &quot;any-buck&quot; season will have better success than antler restriction seasons. However population trends will affect hunter success regardless of hunting season option.</td>
<td>Hunter sample data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain/increase hunter #s</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td># of hunters (x1000)</td>
<td>More liberal hunting seasons are expected to maintain and/or increase hunter numbers.</td>
<td>Hunter sample data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOS hunting opportunity</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td># of days</td>
<td>Longer hunting seasons provide the most General Open Season opportunity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Hunting Opportunity (cont’d...)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s Better</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunting during rut (Oct 25-Nov)</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td># of days</td>
<td>More hunting days during the rut can be sustained with antler point restrictions as overall harvest is reduced when mule deer are most vulnerable and hunter demand is highest. Any-buck seasons in the Kootenays led to fewer hunting days during the rut (shorter season) to maintain target buck to doe ratios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity without antler restriction</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td># of GOS days</td>
<td>Number of “any-buck” season days for rifle hunters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archery hunting opportunity</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td># of days</td>
<td>Number of exclusive archery season days is highest for the &quot;increase bow hunting&quot; option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth hunting opportunity</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td># of days</td>
<td>Number of youth hunting days is highest for the &quot;increase bow hunting&quot; option since this option expands youth seasons as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Viewing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s Better</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to view deer outside hunt</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>5 = more deer</td>
<td>More restrictive seasons allow for more bucks, and hence more deer overall, to survive the hunting season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to view bucks during hunt</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>5 = more bucks</td>
<td>Hunter surveys showed the number of bucks observed contributes to enjoyment of the hunt. More restrictive seasons will increase the number of bucks hunters will see in a season.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Management and Enforcement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s Better</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration cost</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>Annual cost</td>
<td>Higher cost associated with administering a Limited Entry Hunt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring costs</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>Annual cost (x1000)</td>
<td>Liberal seasons require additional monitoring to ensure buck ratios do not fall below management targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement costs</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>5 = higher cost</td>
<td>Enforcement costs are higher with more types of seasons, antler restrictions, and more season days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation complexity within region</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td># of seasons</td>
<td>More liberal options have more types of seasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation complexity among regions</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>5 = more different</td>
<td>Option 1 is status quo for regions 3, 5 and 8. Options 7 and 8 differ the most from other regions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 3: Actions brought forward from stakeholders that are not recommended in the plan because of high cost, uncertain effectiveness and/or lack of support from provincial policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>What's Known?</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>What isn’t Known</th>
<th>Support from Policy?</th>
<th>Cost per year</th>
<th>Potential to Increase Survival and Recruitment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce wolf predation on mule deer</td>
<td>Lengthen hunting season and remove bag limit restriction</td>
<td>Wolves have recolonized the Kootenay-Boundary and prey on mule deer.</td>
<td>Mowat 2007</td>
<td>Effect of wolves on mule deer population growth</td>
<td>Possibly for increasing bag limit</td>
<td>Existing Budgets</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce wolf predation rates on mule deer</td>
<td>Implement trapper subsidy across region</td>
<td>Need repeated high harvest (70-80%) to have any effect.</td>
<td>Russell 2010; Hayes et al. 2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>In Caribou Recovery Zones</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce wolf predation rates on mule deer</td>
<td>Initiate aerial wolf reduction</td>
<td>Wolf control must be done to attain 70-80% reduction repeatedly for a minimum of 4 years and must occur over 10,000 km² to be effective. Estimated cost of $35/km².</td>
<td>Schneider et al. 2010; Alaska Department of Fish and Game 2007</td>
<td>Effect of wolves on mule deer population growth</td>
<td>NO (BC wolf mgt. plan)</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce black bear predation rates on mule deer</td>
<td>Lift requirement for hunters to remove edible portions of harvested bears</td>
<td>Neonate fawns susceptible to predation by black bears. Limited hunter interest in harvesting black bears.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Effect of black bears on mule deer population growth</td>
<td>NO (wildlife act)</td>
<td>Existing Budgets</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce black bear predation rates on mule deer</td>
<td>Legalize baiting of bears</td>
<td>Neonate fawns susceptible to predation by black bears. Limited hunter interest in harvesting black bears.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Effect of black bears on mule deer population growth</td>
<td>NO (wildlife act)</td>
<td>Existing Budgets</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce black bear predation rates on mule deer</td>
<td>Lengthen trapper season for black bears</td>
<td>Neonate fawns susceptible to predation by black bears. Not likely to increase harvest of bears.</td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Existing Budgets</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase coyote harvest</td>
<td>Lengthen hunting season</td>
<td>Coyotes are an important predator of mule deer in some areas. Coyote reductions did not increase mule deer populations elsewhere.</td>
<td>Hurley et al. 2010</td>
<td>Effect of coyote predation on mule deer population growth and recruitment in Kootenay-Boundary</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Existing Budgets</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce elk competition with mule deer</td>
<td>Reduce elk populations across region</td>
<td>Elk overlap with mule deer in certain areas and have expanded in the West Kootenay recently.</td>
<td>Szkorupa and Mowat 2010</td>
<td>Effect of elk density on mule deer survival and recruitment</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Existing Budgets</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>What's Known?</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>What isn’t Known</td>
<td>Support by Policy?</td>
<td>Cost per year</td>
<td>Potential to Increase Survival and Recruitment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve knowledge of harvest levels</td>
<td>Mandatory reporting of harvest and hunting effort</td>
<td>Switching to electronic licensing; will discuss this with data committee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce grizzly bear predation on mule deer</td>
<td>Implement GOS on grizzly bears in MU 4-23</td>
<td>Grizzly bears prey on juvenile and adult mule deer. Grizzly populations are believed to have increased in the Rocky Mountains.</td>
<td>Mowat 2007</td>
<td>Effect of grizzly bear reduction on mule deer population growth</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Existing Budgets</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce predation rates on mule deer</td>
<td>Institute predator bounty</td>
<td>Bounties have increased predator harvest in the past but have not achieved long-term reductions.</td>
<td>Bartell and Brunson 2003</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$ 15,000</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>