



ORDER – UNGULATE WINTER RANGE #U7-011

On being satisfied that the establishment of the ungulate winter range dealt with in this order is necessary to meet the habitat requirements of the ungulate species, and that the management objectives dealt with in this order are necessary to maintain the ungulate species within those areas, and under the authority of section 69 (1) (a) and (b) of the Operational and Site Planning Regulation, B.C. Reg. 107/98, the Deputy Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection orders that:

1. the ungulate winter range shown in the map set out in the attached Schedule A (#U7-011) is established;
2. the ungulate winter range referred to in section 1 is approved for mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus hemionus*); and
3. the following practices are established as management objectives inside the ungulate winter range referred to in section 1:

Within all proposed Mule Deer UWR units maintain winter range to provide high suitability snow interception cover and foraging opportunities (shrubs, conifer and arboreal lichen litterfall) at both landscape and stand-levels. This will be accomplished by applying the following specific management objectives to the proposed UWRs:

Habitat Condition

For UWR units VD-04, VD-03, and VD-07 (deep snowpack biogeoclimatic zones (i.e. SBSdk, SBSdw2, SBSdw3)), maintain a minimum of 40% of winter range area in age class 8 (>140 years) or greater at all times. Maintain a crown closure of >56% (Douglas-fir, Spruce).

For UWR units¹ VD-05, VD-06, VD-01, and VD-02 (very-deep snowpack biogeoclimatic zones (i.e. SBSmc2)), maintain a minimum of 50% of stands in age class 8 (>140 years) or greater. Maintain crown closure of mature forests >66% (Douglas-fir, Spruce).

For all UWR units, within each UWR unit maintain species composition as Douglas-fir leading with a minimum of 50% Douglas-fir.

For all UWR units, maintain 30-40% deciduous shrub component of preferred deciduous forage species. This may include a combination or a dominance of the following species: Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), Prickly Rose (*Rosa acicularis*), Common Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Choke Cherry (*Prunus spp.*), Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), Willow sp, (*Sallix sp*), Black Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrate*), Highbush Cranberry (*Viburnum edule*), Douglas Maple (*Acer galbrum*), Black Huckleberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*) and Trembling Aspen regeneration (*Populus tremuloides*)

¹ The entire VD-05 UWR will be treated as if it were in the very deep snowpack subzone (SBSmc2), although some portions of this UWR are within the SBSdk, which is a deep snowpack subzone. Similarly, VD-02 spans 2 different biogeoclimatic zones, but the majority is within the very deep snowpack subzone.

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Timber Harvest

For UWR units VD-04, VD-03, and VD-07 (deep snowpack biogeoclimatic zones (i.e. SBSdk, SBSdw2, SBSdw3)), maintain a minimum of 40% of winter range area in age class 8 (>140 years) or greater at all times. Maintain a crown closure of >56% (Douglas-fir, Spruce).

For UWR units VD-03 and VD-07, no forest harvesting within the UWR, with the exception of forest-health related sanitation activities as described below.

For UWR units VD-05, VD-01, VD-06, VD-02, VD-04:

- Any timber harvesting openings within UWRs shall be irregular in shape and <1ha in size and < 250 m wide.
- Develop and implement harvesting schedules that time forestry operations to avoid activities during the winter periods (December 15th to April 15th) when deer are using the UWR. If Mule Deer are not utilizing the UWR, winter harvest may be considered if supported by monitoring information on the spatial arrangement of Mule Deer (i.e. evidenced through overview flights, track assessments, radio collar data etc.)

Forest Health Management

For all UWR units, maintain high suitability winter habitat attributes by managing bark beetle populations to maintain low levels of beetle brood in the UWR. “Low levels” are those that still allow for maintenance of high suitability winter habitat attributes. Sanitation thinning (partial harvest) may occur within UWR, only if it is within the limits of UWR stand structural attribute requirements (see habitat condition management objectives).

Fire Management

For all UWR units:

- Consider the use of prescribed fire to reduce understory fuel loading and improve UWR forage characteristics.
- Limit fire suppression and allow natural fires to burn within UWR where there is no significant risk to adjacent forest lands or property.
- ²Reflect UWR objectives in appropriate Fire Management Plans. During unsuitable burning conditions, an aggressive first response, (which may include a full and rapid
- response to a “light hands on the land” policy) would be utilised to prevent stand destroying events.

Range Management Objectives

For all UWR units

- Avoid displacement of Mule Deer by livestock.
- Livestock use will not exceed more than 10% of current year's shrub growth.
- Manage for a desired plant community with abundant shrub species composition that will maintain a 30-40% cover of deciduous shrubs that are preferred browse species including, but not limited to, Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), Prickly Rose (*Rosa acicularis*), Common

² If the season is suitable and burn conditions favorable (i.e. early spring), a low intensity ground fire may be of benefit to Mule Deer habitat, and so in some areas UWR should be allowed to burn.

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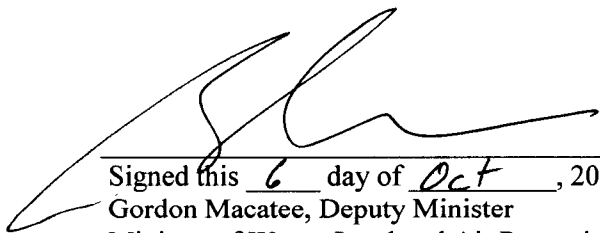
Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Choke Cherry (*Prunus spp.*), Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), Willow sp, (*Salix* sp), Black Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrate*), Highbush Cranberry (*Viburnum edule*), Black Huckleberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*, Douglas Maple (*Acer galbrum*) and Trembling Aspen regeneration (*Populus tremuloides*).

- No livestock grazing should occur on south facing slopes until shrub leaf out.
- New range development features such as, but not limited to, waterholes, fences, salt blocks, corrals, access road and trails, that would result in concentration of livestock in the UWR unit will not be developed within the UWR unit.

Access Management

For all UWR units, avoid/minimize new road or access development. This is to be achieved through application of the following sub-objectives:

- Where reasonable alternatives exist, plan the location and design of major/secondary access routes to avoid the UWR.
- Review and update Access Management Plans to consider UWR areas and objectives. Avoid human use of high value Mule Deer habitat during winter periods. Access management points should include access closure points by signage and physical structures (i.e. concrete barriers, deep road trenches etc.), or other proven methods.
- Minimize new road construction and other access development. New roads should be in the vicinity of existing roads to decrease landscape fragmentation.
- Construct roads and trails to the lowest class with the proposed use and necessary safety and environmental standards.
- Maintain the existing length of active roads by permanently closing and rehabilitating roads in a 1:1 ratio to the amount of new road construction.



Signed this 6 day of Oct, 2003
Gordon Macatee, Deputy Minister
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection