



*The Mission of the Mule Deer Foundation is  
to ensure the conservation of mule deer, black-tailed deer  
and their habitat.*

July 7, 2021

Neal Whitney  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
License Bureau  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

RE: **Proposal for one (1) 2022 Montana Mule Deer Auction License**

Dear Mr. Whitney:

Please accept this letter as our application for one (1) 2022 Montana Mule Deer License, which will be auctioned at our National Convention during the Western Hunting and Conservation Expo (WHCE) in Salt Lake City, Utah on February 10-13, 2022. Over 60,000 patrons visited our show in February 2020.

The Mule Deer Foundation is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization whose mission is to ensure the conservation of mule deer, black-tailed deer and their habitat. Headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, MDF has over 10,000 members throughout the U.S. MDF's goals center on restoring, improving and conserving mule deer habitat, resulting in self-sustaining, healthy, free-ranging, and huntable mule deer populations. MDF achieves its goals through partnering with state and federal wildlife agencies, other conservation groups, businesses, private landowners, and individuals to fund and implement habitat enhancement, research and conservation education projects. Attached is a list of our chapters in Montana and our Montana projects and funding.

Our national convention serves as our annual members' meeting along with providing the opportunity to raise funds for our mission. Additionally, our exhibit hall will have over 500 vendors promoting everything from outfitted hunts and trips to wildlife art. The WHCE had over 60,000 wildlife enthusiasts venture through our exhibit hall during our last in-person event in February 2020. Approximately 3500 attendees participated in our fundraising auctions and contribute significantly to the ~\$8.7M raised during the 2020 WHCE.

MDF has over 30 years of fundraising experience. We have achieved great success auctioning special big game licenses and tags at our convention. Earlier this year, MDF generated \$41,000 through the auction of the 2021 Montana Mule Deer License during our online Virtual Western Hunting and Conservation Expo. Other special state tags from Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Washington, Nevada, New Mexico, Alaska, and California raised over \$1.5 million for their states' respective wildlife.

Mule Deer Foundation has designed an aggressive media campaign, utilizing direct mail, out of state and local television, radio stations, and newspapers to advertise the event. We will promote the Montana auction license on our websites ([www.muledeer.org](http://www.muledeer.org) and [www.huntexpo.com](http://www.huntexpo.com)) and in many national publications including, our *MDF Member Magazine*. We will also outline details about the auction license in our auction guide and program. In addition, the MDF would like to offer the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) a complimentary booth in our exhibit hall where your department has the opportunity to help promote the license and provide information about the MFWP at the Expo.

MDF would retain 10% of the license auction proceeds, which would help offset costs to promote and administer the auction of the tag.

We appreciate the opportunity to apply for the 2022 auction license and hope that MFWP will consider our request. We appreciate our ongoing partnership and hope that together we can secure a strong future for Montana's mule deer and other wildlife.

Sincerely,



Amanda Yetter  
Senior Accounting Clerk/Tag Coordinator

Encls.

## Montana Chapters

Northeast Montana Chapter – Sidney, MT

Badland Bruisers Chapter – Glendive, MT

Black Gold Chapter – Baker, MT

Powder River Bucks Chapter – Miles City, MT

Big Sky Chapter – Billings, MT

Boulder River Bucks Chapter – Big Timber, MT

Missouri Breaks Chapter – Lewistown, MT

Bridger Bucks Chapter – Bozeman, MT

Treasure State Chapter – Butte, MT

Ghosts of the Madison Chapter – Ennis, MT

Beaverhead Chapter – Dillon, MT

Lewis & Clark Chapter – Helena, MT

High, Wide & Heavy Chapter – Great Falls, MT

Northern Rockies Chapter – Kalispell, MT

Dark Horn Chapter – Missoula, MT

Sapphire Range Chapter – Hamilton, MT

Montana 2021 Event Schedule

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>2021 Event Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
<i>Treasure State Chapter</i>	March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Butte, MT	Farley Hicks	(406) 491-6150	<a href="mailto:mdfhicks@gmail.com">mdfhicks@gmail.com</a>
<i>Big Sky Chapter</i>	April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Billings, MT	Lennie Buhmann	(406) 850-7667	<a href="mailto:leuhmann@gmail.com">leuhmann@gmail.com</a>
<i>Boulder River Bucks Chapter</i>	April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Big Timber, MT	Scott Ver Stratej	(928) 925-5379	<a href="mailto:rvoperator@yahoo.com">rvoperator@yahoo.com</a>
<i>Northern Rockies Chapter</i>	April 24 <sup>th</sup>	Kalispel, MT	Beau Albright	(406) 250-8677	<a href="mailto:beau.albright@outlook.com">beau.albright@outlook.com</a>
<i>Missouri Breaks Chapter</i>	May 5 <sup>th</sup>	Lewistown, MT	Mike Gapay	(406) 350-0121	<a href="mailto:mikeg@alliedsteelmt.com">mikeg@alliedsteelmt.com</a>
<i>High, Wide, &amp; Heavy Chapter</i>	May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Great Falls, MT	Matt Hagel	(406) 868-8321	<a href="mailto:matthewbhagel@gmail.com">matthewbhagel@gmail.com</a>
<i>Beaverhead Chapter</i>	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	Dillon, MT	Ryan Nagle	(509) 939-0185	<a href="mailto:bowtechnagle@gmail.com">bowtechnagle@gmail.com</a>
<i>Sapphire Range Chapter</i>	May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Hamilton, MT	Tom Stensatter	(406) 381-7510	<a href="mailto:tstensatter@yahoo.com">tstensatter@yahoo.com</a>
<i>Bridger Bucks Chapter</i>	June 12 <sup>th</sup>	Bozeman, MT	Lars Dorseth	(406) 570-9851	<a href="mailto:larsdorseth@gmail.com">larsdorseth@gmail.com</a>
<i>Dark Horn Chapter</i>	July 31 <sup>st</sup>	Missoula, MT	Chris Fortune	(406) 360-1029	<a href="mailto:chris@muledeer.org">chris@muledeer.org</a>
<i>Lewis &amp; Clark Chapter</i>	August 7 <sup>th</sup>	Helena, MT	Dave Cato	(406) 431-5648	<a href="mailto:tylenec@hotmail.com">tylenec@hotmail.com</a>
<i>Missouri Breaks Chapter</i>	Aug 28 <sup>th</sup>	Lewistown, MT	Mike Gapay	(406) 350-0121	<a href="mailto:mikeg@alliedsteelmt.com">mikeg@alliedsteelmt.com</a>
<i>Badland Bruisers Chapter</i>	TBD	Glendive, MT	Tim Mattick	(406) 939-7982	<a href="mailto:badlandbruisers@gmail.com">badlandbruisers@gmail.com</a>
<i>Black &amp; Gold Chapter</i>	TBD	Baker, MT	Tavis Renner	(406) 939-5362	<a href="mailto:mdfbaker@gmail.com">mdfbaker@gmail.com</a>
<i>Powder River Bucks Chapter</i>	TBD	Miles City, MT	Chris Fortune	(406) 360-1029	<a href="mailto:chris@muledeer.org">chris@muledeer.org</a>
<i>Ghosts of the Madison Chapter</i>	TBD	Ennis, MT	Shanna Swanson	(406) 600-7085	<a href="mailto:ghostsofthemadison@gmail.com">ghostsofthemadison@gmail.com</a>
<i>Northeast Montana Chapter</i>	TBD	Sidney, MT	Cory Baisch	(406) 478-3095	<a href="mailto:cbaisch@enerplus.com">cbaisch@enerplus.com</a>

Mule Deer Foundation Montana Chapter Rewards Projects

Projects:	Agency/Organization:	Total Project Cost:	MDF Allocated:	Acres Treated:
MT 1901 - Ash Coulee Conservation Easement	MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 952,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	3,530
MT 1902 - Sauerbier Ranches Conifer Removal Project	MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	50
MT 1903 - Big Sheep Creek Mountain Mahogany Restoration	MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 44,600.00	\$ 7,800.00	223
MT 1904 - Crooked Creek Unit K Prescribed Burn	BLM	\$ 140,600.00	\$ 5,000.00	7,290
MT 1905 - Fish Creek Wildlife Habitat Improvement	USFS	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	
MT 1906 - Starry Goat	USFS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	1,033 - 1,974
MT 1907 - Whiskey Gulch / Pole Canyon Habitat Restoration	BLM	\$ 89,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	232
MT 1908 - Dry Creek Aspen	USFS	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	46
MT 1909 - Middle East Fork Bitterroot	USFS		\$ 10,000.00	4,000
MT 1910 - Monitoring Mule Deer Populations in Northern Forests	MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 39,360.00	\$ 10,000.00	234,000
MT 1911 - Green Basin Ecosystem Enhancement	USFS	\$ 23,800.00	\$ 3,550.00	260
MT 1912 - Darby High School Mule Deer Restoration Project	Darby Schools	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 650.00	20
MT 1913 - Wild Horse Island Habitat Improvement Project	MT State Parks Foundation	\$ 19,600.00	\$ 5,000.00	2,220
MT 1914 - Middle Cottonwood Habitat and Access Project	Gallatin Valley Land Trust	\$ 607,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	
MT 1915 - Darby High School Mule Deer Restoration Project	Darby Schools	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 650.00	20
MT 2001 - Upper Little Whitetail Aspen 2020	USFS	\$ 67,500.00	\$ 11,000.00	300
MT 2002 - Madison Aspen 2020	USFS	\$ 46,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	260
MT 2003 - Deer Coulee Fence Removal	USFWS	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	8,000
MT 2004 - Ruby Willow Habitat Enhancement, Phase 2	USFS	\$ 26,010.75	\$ 5,000.00	66
MT 2005 - Petty Creek Big Game Ecosystem Maintenance Burning Project	USFS	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	5,600
MT 2006 - Elkhorn Mule Deer Habitat Enhancement	USFS	-	\$ 5,000.00	520
MT 2007 - North and South Steel Creek Aspen	USFS	\$ 75,900.00	\$ 11,000.00	276

## Mule Deer Foundation Montana Stewardship Projects

2019 Project #	Project Name	Agency/Org	Forest/District	FWP Region	Total Project Cost	MDF \$\$ Granted	Notes
MDF-21	Upper Little Whitetail Aspen	USFS	Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF - Butte RD	3	\$67,500	\$11,000	300 acres of conifer removal in aspen stands
MDF-20	North And South Steel Creek Aspen	USFS	Beaverhead- Deerlodge NF - Wisdom RD	3	\$75,900	\$11,000	276 acres of aspen stand enhancement
MDF-5	Deer Coulee Fence Removal	USFS	Charles M. Russell NWR	4	\$20,000	\$10,000	Removal of old fence on 8,000 acres
MDF-26	Madison Aspen	USFS	Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF - Madison RD	3	\$46,000	\$9,000	260 acres of aspen enhancement
MDF-25	Browning Ranch Fencing	Mule Deer Foundation	Miles City BLM DO/Lands	4&7	\$20,000	\$7,000	4 miles of fencing modified to wildlife friendly, in migration priority area
MDF-16	Ruby Willow Habitat Enhancement - Phase 2	USFS	Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF - Madison RD	3	\$26,011	\$5,000	60 acres of habitat enhancement
MDF-13	Petty Creek Burning Project	USFS	Lolo NF - Ninemile RD	2	\$1,000,000	\$5,000	5,600 acres of habitat enhancement thru prescribed burns
MDF-7	Elkhorn Mule Deer Habitat Enhancement	USFS & MT Fish, Wildlife, & Parks	Lewis & Clark NF - Townsend and Helena RD	3	\$52,000	\$5,000	520 acres of noxious weed eradication

We also allocated \$8,000 of the Bass Pro Shops/Cabelas grant toward the Browning Fence Modification proposal so the entire 4 miles will be complete.

Mule Deer foundation improves winter range on BLM.

The newly formed Beaverhead chapter of the Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) was off to a rough start in 2020. Following a successful fundraising membership drive in December 2019 that got members excited about mule deer conservation, all the hard work that went into planning a banquet was for nothing when it got canceled due to Covid-19 restrictions. Then the newly formed Chapter President Ryan Nagle contacted the BLM Dillon Field Office Biologist Kelly Bockting wanting to know if there was a habitat project, they could get involved in. He did not want the energy and momentum of a newly formed chapter to diminish. So, after a field trip to look at a mule deer winter range project on BLM lands, it was decided to set up a volunteer workday. The project comprised of removing juniper and Douglas fir that compete with curl-leaf mountain mahogany on mule deer winter range.

Curl-leaf mountain mahogany a crucial forage plant for wintering mule deer in southwest Montana. It's a browse species that meets protein requirements for wintering mule deer. It often occurs in rock outcrops and talus slopes with little to no soil development. Mountain mahogany is very long lived and can assume a tree form but in juniper and fir forests and woodlands it may eventually be overshadowed by taller trees and shaded out. A decrease in quality habitat equates to a decrease in mule deer population. Multiple other shrub species are present in the area that benefit as well, these include Black Currant, Buckbrush, Raspberry, Common Snowberry, and Shrubby Cinquefoil.

The work consisted of cutting conifers and lopping with hand loppers and piling the severed trees on heavily browsed mahogany plants to detour browsing and reduce plant stress. This allows the mahogany to grow up through the slash several years without browse pressure from wildlife.

The weather could not have cooperated any better for a mid-August day as temperatures were in the mid to upper 70's. The MDF volunteers completed 20 acres of conifer removal equating to 120 volunteer hours. Even with the unseasonably cool temperatures there was a lot of sweat poured out that day and glad to say, no blood. Everyone worked safely and the smiles at the end of the day said it all. These projects require maintenance over the years as small juniper and fir continue to resprout in the treated areas. Our goal is to maintain this partnership and have the local MDF chapter help maintain these treatments in the future. Since 2015 over 600 acres have been treated to benefit mule deer, this work has been accomplished using a combination of volunteers and field office workdays and contractors.