

DEER HERD UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN
Deer Herd Unit # 13B
Dolores Triangle
September 2025

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Unit 13B - Dolores Triangle - Grand County - Boundary begins at the Colorado River and the Utah-Colorado state line; south on this state line to the Dolores River; northwest along this river to the Colorado River; northeast along this river to the Utah-Colorado state line.

LAND OWNERSHIP

Subunit 13B - Dolores Triangle

RANGE AREA AND APPROXIMATE OWNERSHIP

Ownership	Area (acres)	Percentage (%)
Bureau of Land Management	92,482	91.70%
Utah Department of Natural Resources	464	0.46%
Utah State Institutional Trust Lands	5,236	5.19%
Private	2,675	2.65%
TOTAL	100,857	100.0%

UNIT MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage for realistic and attainable population management objectives that are below biological carrying capacity to maintain healthy and productive deer populations.

Manage the deer population at a level capable of providing a broad range of recreational opportunities, including hunting and viewing.

Balance deer herd goals and objectives with impacts on human needs, such as private property rights, agricultural crops and local economies.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Target Winter Herd Size – Manage for a target population of 3,000 wintering deer during the five-year planning period.

This objective is not necessarily the carrying capacity nor long-term objective. Deer populations will be assessed annually using the monitoring strategies outlined below to determine the current population status and their relationship to carrying capacity. Deer populations can be very dynamic depending on a number of factors that can change carrying capacity. Deer objectives can be adjusted based on range condition and trend assessments, as well as deer body condition, productivity and survival trends.

A reduction in population objective to 3,000 deer was implemented in 2020. This subunit is largely managed based on management actions and total population estimates from Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife. The Utah portion of the Dolores Triangle is a relatively small management unit and encompasses only a portion of the winter range for deer from Colorado's Unit #40. It is suggested that an obtainable population objective for the Dolores Triangle would be 3,000 deer. Given the very conservative permit levels that are issued for the Utah portion of the subunit, harvest will have negligible effects on this population.

Herd Composition – Manage as a Limited Entry unit for a 3-year average of 25-30 bucks per 100 does, in accordance with the statewide deer plan. Biologists will take into account current year buck/doe ratio, 3 year average buck/doe ratio and trend as well as fawn and adult survival when making permit recommendations.

Harvest - Continue Limited Entry buck deer hunting strategy to maintain herd composition objectives and quality hunting opportunities. Antlerless removal may be implemented if needed to maintain the population below carrying capacity and to address specific localized range degradation issues.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Monitoring

Population Size - Deer population will be modeled by the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife as part of their Unit #40 deer herd. About 40% of this herd winters in Utah; therefore, 40% of Colorado's population estimate for Unit #40 is used as Utah's population estimate. The modeled population estimate for the winter of 2024 was approximately 1,577 deer on the Dolores Triangle unit.

Buck/doe ratios and Age Structure - Collect buck/doe and fawn/doe ratio data during fall and spring composition counts. Monitor age structure of the buck population through tooth analysis, check stations, postseason classification and mandatory harvest surveys.

Harvest - The primary means of monitoring harvest will be through statewide mandatory hunter harvest reporting.

Research –Seek out and support opportunities to capture deer on the Dolores Triangle to investigate herd survival, body condition scores, cause specific mortality and movement between states.

Table 1. Population and Harvest Trend data for the Dolores Triangle (13B)

Year	Buck harvest	Permits	Post-Season F/100 doe	Post-Season B/100 doe	Post-Season Population	Objective	% of Objective
2020	14	20	48	33	1,900	3,000	63%
2021	19	20	46	25	1,900	3,000	63%
2022	19	20	52	29	1,900	3,000	63%
2023	20	20	48	27	1,600	3,000	53%
2024	15	17	48	28	1,600	3,000	53%
5 Year Avg.	17	19	48	28	1,780	3,000	59%

Antlerless Harvest

Use antlerless harvest to locally reduce deer populations when range conditions, deer adult and fawn survival, fawn production, and deer body condition suggest it is necessary.

Predator Management

Manage predators according to the predator management policy (W1AG-04) where habitat is not limiting and predators are demonstrated to have negative impacts on the population. Indices such as doe and fawn survival, population growth rate, body condition scores, fawn production, and cause specific mortality will be used to determine if predator management is deemed necessary.

Private Lands Management

Support programs that increase tolerance for deer on private lands including CWMU, landowner permits, and Walk-In Access programs.

Address all depredation problems in a timely and efficient manner.

Disease Management

Investigate and manage diseases that threaten mule deer populations and continue monitoring for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) as stated in the Statewide plan (Figure 2).

Urban Deer Management

There are no urban centers within the Dolores Triangle Unit.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Work with federal, private, and state partners to improve crucial deer habitats on the unit by protecting, maintaining, and enhancing existing crucial habitats and mitigating losses due to natural and human impacts through the WRI process.

Work with private landowners and federal, state, and local governments to maintain and protect critical and existing ranges from future losses and degradation, through grazing management and OHV and Travel Plan modifications.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Continue to improve, protect, and restore winter range habitats critical to deer, such as sagebrush steppe and riparian communities. Cooperate with federal land management agencies and private landowners in carrying out habitat improvements such as pinyon-juniper removal, reseeding, controlled burns, mechanical treatments, grazing management, water developments etc. on public and private lands. Habitat improvement projects will occur through the WRI process.

Continue to work with and support universities and land management agencies on habitat research projects.

Continue to monitor permanent Range Trend studies located throughout the unit. The next updated report will be available in spring of 2026. Specific information about site locations and results for the Dolores Triangle can be found at:

https://wildlife.utah.gov/pdf/range-trends/archive/2015_Northeastern_Region_Unit_Summary_Report.pdf

Work toward long term habitat protection and preservation through the use of agreements with federal agencies and local governments and the use of conservation easements on private lands.

Support, cooperate with, and provide input to land management planning efforts dealing with actions affecting habitat security, quality and quantity.

Work with land management agencies and energy companies to minimize and mitigate impacts of energy development activities.

Protect deer winter ranges from wildfire by reseeding burned areas, creating fuel breaks and vegetated green strips and reseed areas dominated by annual grasses with desirable perennial vegetation. Seek opportunities to increase browse in burned areas of critical winter range.

Reduce expansion of pinyon-juniper woodlands into sagebrush habitats and improve habitats dominated by pinyon-juniper woodlands by completing habitat restoration projects like lop-and-scatter, bullhog and chaining.

Utilize antlerless deer harvest to improve or protect forage conditions when vegetative declines are attributed to deer over utilization.

Work with private landowners, federal, state, and local governments to maintain and protect critical and existing ranges from future losses and degradation through grazing management and OHV and Travel Plan modifications.

RECREATION OBJECTIVES

Provide mule deer hunting that encourages a variety of hunting opportunities while maintaining population objectives.

RECREATION STRATEGIES

Evaluate areas where extended archery hunts or HAMSS hunts could occur.

Work with land managers to maintain access during hunting seasons where appropriate.

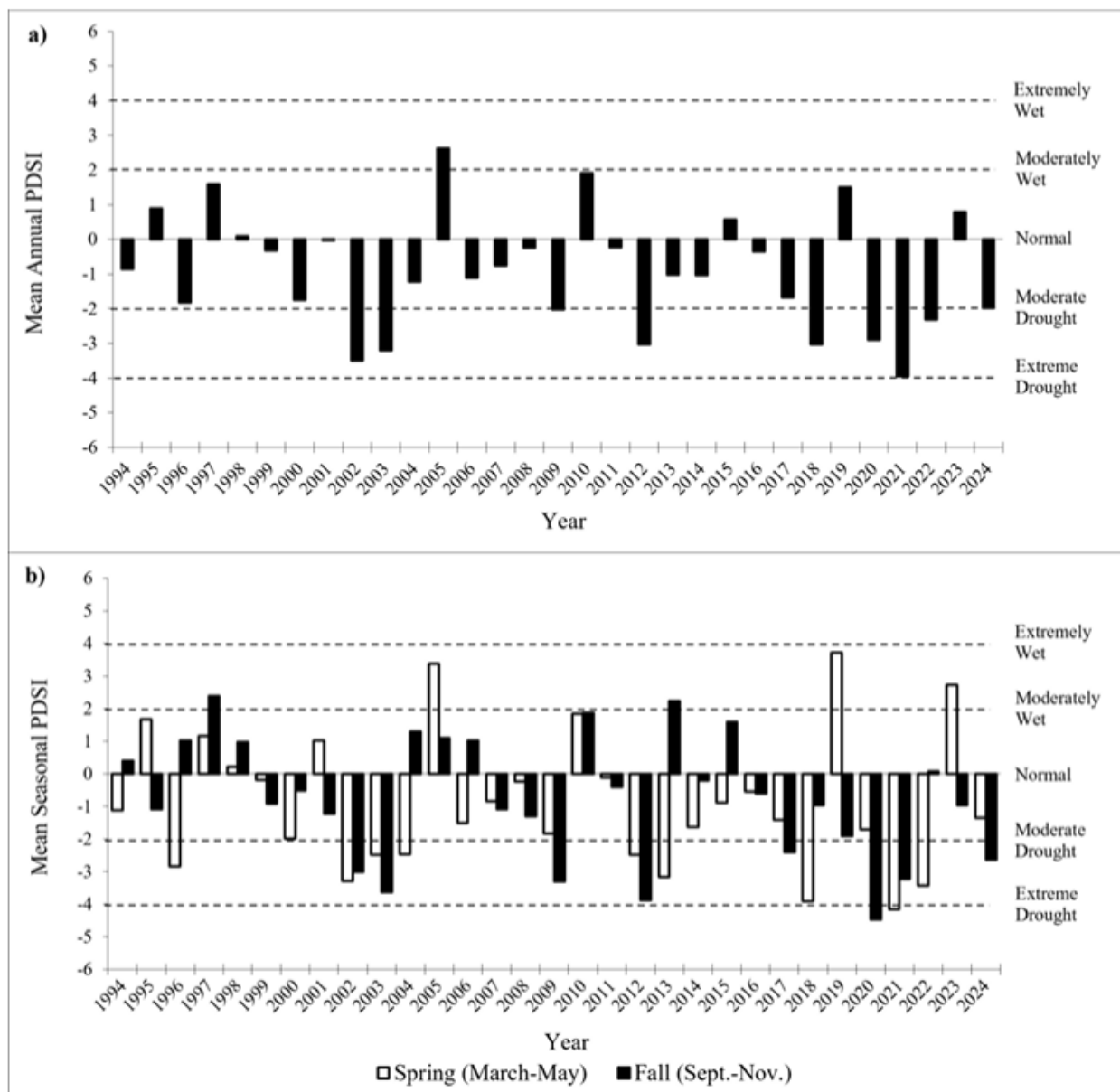


Figure 1. Drought Index, Southeast Utah. Top Graph Depicts the Entire Year; Bottom Graph Depicts Spring and Fall.

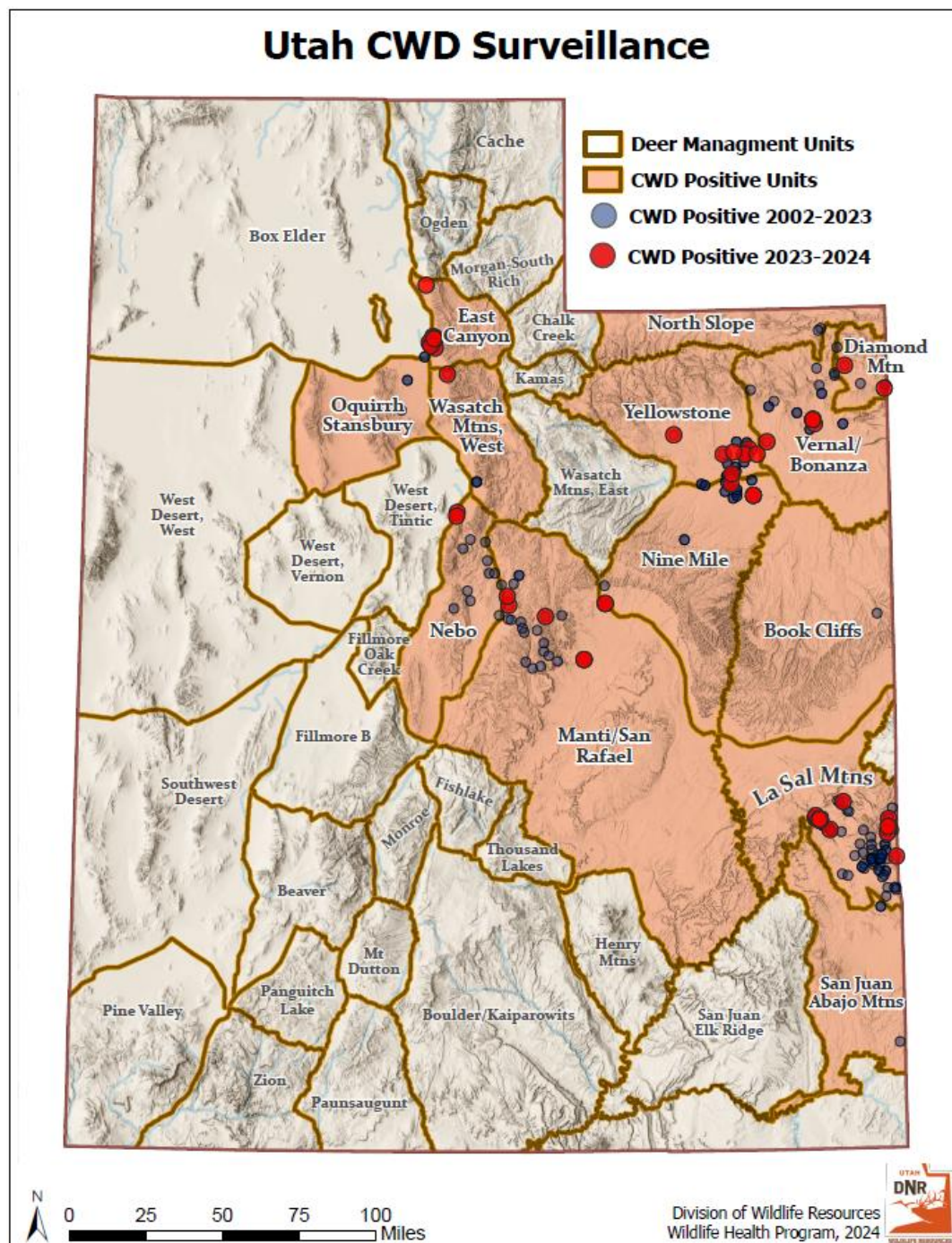


Figure 2. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Location in Utah, 2002-2024.

DURATION AND AUTHORITY OF PLAN

This unit management plan was approved by the Division Director in Sept. 2025 and will be in effect for five years, or until amended. Unit deer plan goals, objectives and strategies are constrained within the sideboards set in the statewide deer plan, which supersedes unit plans. It is possible that changes to the statewide deer plan may affect unit plans. Additionally, changes to Utah State Code and/or Administrative Rules may also affect deer unit plans.