

# RAC AGENDA – July/August 2020 Electronic Meetings Only



- |    |  |                      |
|----|--|----------------------|
| 1. | Welcome, RAC Introductions and RAC Procedure<br>- RAC Chair  |                      |
| 2. | Approval of Agenda and Minutes<br>- RAC Chair  | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 3. | Wildlife Board Meeting Update<br>- RAC Chair   | <b>INFORMATIONAL</b> |
| 4. | Regional Update<br>- DWR Regional Supervisor   | <b>INFORMATIONAL</b> |
| 5. | Furbearer and Bobcat Harvest Recommendations for 2020-2021<br>- Darren DeBloois, Mammals Coordinator | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 6. | Cougar Recommendations and Rule Amendments for 2020-2021<br>- Darren DeBloois, Mammals Coordinator   | <b>ACTION</b>        |

### Regional Presentations Only

- |    |  |                      |
|----|--|----------------------|
| SR | Beaver WMA Habitat Management Plan<br>Gary Bezzant, SR Habitat Manager | <b>INFORMATIONAL</b> |
|----|--|----------------------|

**Presentations can be viewed at <https://wildlife.utah.gov/feedback.html>**  
**Public Comment can be provided by clicking the link under the presentation.**  
**RAC Public Comment for the NR and CR meetings will be accepted until 11:59 pm on Wednesday, July 22.**  
**RAC Public Comment for the SR, SER and NER meetings will be accepted until 11:59 pm on Thursday, July 30.**  
**Board Public Comment will be accepted until 11:59 p.m on Thursday, August 20.**  
**There will be no public comment accepted during the electronic RAC or Wildlife Board meetings.**

**CR RAC –** July 28th, 6:00 PM  
[https://youtu.be/1ZliDm7\\_s2M](https://youtu.be/1ZliDm7_s2M)

**SER RAC –** August 5th, 6:30 PM  
<https://youtu.be/SuWIs74R42E>

**NR RAC –** July 29th, 6:00 PM  
<https://youtu.be/WV0O8tDE7mo>

**NER RAC –** August 6th, 6:30 PM  
<https://youtu.be/JIAwdplXNdM>

**SR RAC –** August 4th, 7:00 PM  
<https://youtu.be/76YXBNZLckQ>

**Board Meeting –** August 27th, 9:00 AM  
<https://youtu.be/dKeevoc88vM>



GARY R. HERBERT  
Governor

SPENCER J. COX  
Lieutenant Governor

# State of Utah

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BRIAN C. STEED  
Executive Director

### Division of Wildlife Resources

MICHAL D. FOWLKS  
Division Director

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah Wildlife Board/Regional Advisory Council Members

FROM: Darren DeBloois, Predatory Mammals and Furbearer Program Coordinator

DATE: July 9, 2020

### SUBJECT: 2020-21 BOBCAT AND FURBEARER RECOMMENDATIONS

Bobcat populations are managed according to the Utah Bobcat Management Plan. The plan lists three parameters that we look at each year to determine the number of bobcat permits to issue that season. These parameters are percent juveniles in the harvest, percent adult survival, and percent females in the harvest. If two of the three parameters remain within management targets, baseline permit numbers are maintained at 6 per individual trapper with no cap on total permits sold. The season is also set at the most liberal length from mid-November to March 1<sup>st</sup>. If two of these parameters fall outside of management parameters, indicating a declining bobcat population, permits issued to individuals are adjusted down and the season is shortened to begin later in the year. If three parameters indicate a declining population, total permits sold are capped at 80% of sales from the previous year.

This year, two of the three parameters fall outside of the plan guidelines and indicate that bobcat numbers are declining. For this reason we are recommending lowering the number of permits per individual trapper from 5 to 4, shortening the season to begin later in November (November 25, 2020 – March 1, 2021), and maintaining the total number of permits available at 6,460.

All other furbearer seasons are as follows:

Beaver and Mink – September 19, 2020 – April 1, 2021

Marten, Badger, Gray Fox, Kit Fox, Ringtail, Spotted Skunk, and Weasel  
September 19, 2020 – March 1, 2021



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FROM: Darren DeBloois, Predatory Mammals and Furbearer Program Coordinator

DATE: July 9, 2020

### **SUBJECT: 2020-21 COUGAR PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Because of new legislation implemented in 2020, some actions have taken place under authority of the Division Director. These actions include predator management plans for several of the designated cougar hunting units in the state. Cougar units with predator management plans in place will be open for unlimited year-round harvest to decrease cougar population densities. The objective of this management action is to lower predation rates on mule deer and big horn sheep populations that have seen significant declines in recent years. Units under predator management plans are included in the attached chart with the hunt strategy listed as "PMP".

Additionally, the Division Director has declared a fall spot and stalk season for cougars beginning August 1, 2020 and ending December 31, 2020. Hunters who want to take advantage of this hunt may purchase a \$30 permit over the counter and take a cougar without the use of dogs during this season.

The above actions have been implemented and will be presented as informational items during this years RAC and Board process.

The following recommendations will be presented for public input and Wildlife Board consideration:

Permit and harvest objective recommendations can be found in the attached chart. If the listed hunter strategy is HO (harvest objective) the recommendation is for a quota, if it is Split the recommendation is for permits available through the draw. We have made these recommendations taking into consideration cougar harvest data from 2017-2020, prey population dynamics for mule deer and bighorn sheep, and using the Utah Cougar Management Plan. Adjustments to permits are within the parameters set out in the Utah Cougar Management Plan, and will help ensure healthy cougar populations while addressing local issues of concern including impacts to specific prey populations, livestock depredation and maintaining cougar hunting opportunities across the State.

The recommendation table includes several categories of management actions that a cougar unit can fall into depending on how the three-year average of harvest parameters aligns with the

management goals for the unit. The table divides cougar units into those categories and indicates under the “Plan Action for Permits/Quota” column the options for permit or quota changes spelled out in the plan. You will also find a column for the difference from last year’s permits/quota which shows how this year’s recommendation compares to last year.

Recommended season dates are as follows:

### **Split**

**Limited entry portion:** November 4, 2020 through February 21, 2021

**Harvest objective portion:** February 27, 2021 through May 31, 2021

Mt Dutton: February 27, 2021 through November 2, 2021

**Harvest objective and unlimited:** November 4, 2020 through November 2, 2021

La Sal; San Juan, Mountains; and Book Cliffs, East: no dogs April 15 through November 2, 2021

(This restriction is recommended because of bear hunting restrictions at the same time on these units)

**Pursuit season:** November 4, 2020 through May 31, 2021

La Sal; San Juan, Mountains; and Book Cliffs East units November 4, 2020 through April 15, 2021

Restrictions on the La Sal; San Juan, Mountains; and Book Cliffs, East are to avoid confusion during non-resident bear hunting restrictions on those units. Hunters with valid bear permits during this time frame can use dogs to pursue and/or hunt bears but not for cougar hunting. Cougar take during this time frame on these units tends to be low.

We are recommending some changes to cougar rule (R657-10). First, we recommend increasing the season take limit from one to two cougars between July 1 and June 30 or the following year. Second, we clarify when it would be illegal to take a collared cougar. If the Division decides to limit the take of collared cougars, units where this would be prohibited will be listed in the cougar guidebook. We are not recommending any restrictions currently. We are adding language that exempts cougar hunters from wearing hunter orange during other center fire rifle hunts. Details of these changes can be seen in the red-line rule included with this packet.

Unit Number	Unit Name	Summary of Harvest Data from last 3 Years					Plan Permit/Quota Adjustments	Permits/Quota Recommendation	Hunt Strategy	Recommended Permit/Quota Change
		Males	Females	Total	% females (Target <40%)	% >5 yrs old (Target 15 - 20%)				
1b	Box Elder, Desert	20	12	32	38%	21%	Maintain or increase	18	HO	0
1c	Box Elder, Pilot Mtn	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	biologist discretion	6	HO	0
6	Chalk Creek	30	17	47	36%	14%	maintain or increase	30	HO	0
27	Paunsaugunt	10	2	12	17%	30%	maintain or increase	14	HO	4
30a	Pine Valley, North	30	10	40	25%	24%	maintain or increase	20	HO	4
9bcd	South Slope, Bonanza/Diamond Mtn/Vernal	37	22	59	37%	15%	maintain or increase	24	HO	0
17a4	Wasatch Mtns, Salt Lake	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	biologist discretion	6	HO	0
19a	West Desert, Mtn Ranges	7	3	10	30%	10%	maintain or increase	8	HO	0
22a	Beaver, East	30	11	41	27%	38%	maintain or increase	30	Split	7
1a	Box Elder, Raft River	15	5	20	25%	11%	maintain or increase	10	Split	0
16a	Central Mtns, Nebo (excludes West Face)	31	10	41	24%	13%	maintain of increase	15	Split	0
5	East Canyon	17	8	25	32%	9%	maintain	10	Split	0
5a	East Canyon, Davis	9	5	14	36%	8%	biologist discretion	5	Split	0
25a	Fish Lake	27	16	43	37%	9%	Increase	12	Split	0
7	Kamas	2	1	3	33%	33%	Maintain or increase	7	Split	5
23	Monroe	30	5	35	14%	17%	Increase	22	Split	-1
4	Morgan-South Rich	27	19	46	41%	15%	biologist discretion	22	Split	-1
24	Mt Dutton	15	12	27	44%	8%	decrease	14	Split	-1
18a	Oquirrh-Stansbury, East	14	7	21	33%	18%	maintain or increase	12	Split	4
28	Panguitch Lake	28	11	39	28%	16%	maintain or increase	18	Split	6
17a3	Wasatch Mtns, West-Strawberry	25	4	29	14%	10%	maintain or increase	11	Split	0

19b	West Desert, Tintic-Vernon	10	4	14	29%	23%	biologist discretion	12	Split	0
10b/11b	Book Cliffs, Rattlesnake Canyon/Nine Mile, South	0	3	3	100%	0%	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
26	Kaiparowits	3	3	6	50%	20%	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
14b	San Juan, Desert	0	2	2	100%	0%	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
12	San Rafael	1	1	2	50%	50%	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
STATEWIDE TOTALS		990	551	1,541	36%	17%		326		27

### Predator Management Plan Units (Informational)

Unit Number	Unit Name	Summary of Harvest Data from last 3 Years					Plan Permit/Quota Adjustments	Permits/Quota Recommendation	Hunt Strategy
		Males	Females	Total	% females (Target <40%)	% >5 yrs old (Target 15 - 20%)			
2	Cache	39	41	80	51%	14%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
16a1	Central Mtns, Nebo-West Face	20	9	29	31%	14%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
16b2	Central Mtns, Northeast Manti	20	12	32	38%	32%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
16b1	Central Mtns, Northwest Manti	19	11	30	37%	8%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
16c2	Central Mtns, Southeast Manti	35	11	46	24%	22%	Unlimited	PMP deer	PMP
16c1	Central Mtns, Southwest Manti	34	15	49	31%	12%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
21a	Fillmore, Oak Creek	4	3	7	43%	14%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
21b	Fillmore, Pahvant	34	13	47	28%	28%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
15	Henry Mtns	10	7	17	41%	6%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
13	La Sal	13	7	20	35%	5%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
11a	Nine Mile, North	41	31	72	43%	10%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
8ab	North Slope, Summit/West Daggett	14	6	20	30%	5%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
8c	North Slope, Three Corners	6	2	8	25%	14%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
3	Ogden	25	24	49	49%	21%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
18b	Oquirrh-Stansbury, West	8	8	16	50%	42%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
30b	Pine Valley, South	12	6	18	33%	14%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP

25c	Plateau, Boulder	29	12	41	29%	26%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
25b	Plateau, Thousand Lakes	1	5	6	83%	20%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
14a	San Juan, Mountains	28	17	45	38%	24%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
9a	South Slope, Yellowstone	12	10	22	45%	13%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
20	Southwest Desert	17	14	31	45%	16%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
17bc	Wasatch Mtns, Avintaquin/Currant Creek	46	17	63	26.98%	18.42%	New Boundary	PMP BHS	PMP
17a2	Wasatch Mtns, Cascade	7	7	14	50%	20%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
17a1	Wasatch Mtns, Timpanogos	9	9	18	50%	19%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
29	Zion	34	24	58	41%	18%	Unlimited	PMP BHS/Deer	PMP

## **R657. Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources.**

### **R657-10. Taking Cougar.**

#### **R657-10-1. Purpose and Authority.**

(1) Under authority of Sections 23-14-18 and 23-14-19, the Wildlife Board has established this rule for taking and pursuing cougar.

(2) Specific dates, areas, number of permits, limits, and other administrative details which may change annually are published in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

#### **R657-10-3. Permits for Taking Cougar.**

(1)(a) To harvest a cougar, a person must first obtain a valid limited entry cougar permit, harvest-objective cougar permit, or cougar control permit, for the specified management units as provided in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

(b) Any person who obtains a limited entry cougar permit, harvest objective cougar permit, or cougar control permit, may pursue cougar on the unit for which the permit is valid.

(2) A person may not apply for or obtain more than one cougar permit for the same season, except:

(a) as provided in Subsection R657-10-25(3);

(b) as provided in Subsection R657-10-33; ~~or~~

(c) if the person is unsuccessful in the limited entry drawing, the person may purchase a harvest objective or cougar control [permit; or](#)

[\(d\) a person may acquire and use a permit issued pursuant to Utah Code Section 23-16-10 in addition to another lawfully acquired cougar](#) permit.

(3) Any cougar permit purchased after the season opens is not valid until three days after the date of purchase.

(4) To obtain a cougar limited entry permit, harvest objective permit, cougar control permit, or pursuit permit, a person must possess a Utah hunting or combination license.

#### **R657-10-6. Firearms, Archery Equipment, Crossbows, and Airguns.**

(1) For ~~limited entry and harvest objective hunts~~ [cougar hunt](#) identified in the Wildlife Board's guidebook for taking [cougar that allow harvest of a](#) cougar, a person may use the following to take cougar:

(a) any firearm not capable of being fired fully automatic, except a firearm using rimfire cartridge;

(b) archery equipment meeting the following requirements:

(i) the minimum bow pull is 30 pounds at the draw or the peak, whichever comes first;

(ii) arrowheads used have two or more sharp cutting edges that cannot pass through a 7/8 inch ring;

(iii) expanding arrowheads cannot pass through a 7/8 inch ring when expanded; and

(iv) arrows must be a minimum of 20 inches in length from the tip of the arrowhead to the tip of the nock;



- (c) a crossbow meeting the following requirements:
  - (i) a minimum draw weight of 125 pounds;
  - (ii) a positive mechanical safety mechanism; and
  - (iii) an arrow or bolt that is at least 16 inches long with:
    - (A) a fixed broadhead that is at least 7/8 inch wide at the widest point; or
    - (B) an expandable, mechanical broadhead that is at least 7/8 inch wide at the widest point when the broadhead is in the open position; and
- (d) an airgun used to hunt cougar must:
  - (i) be pneumatically powered;
  - (ii) be pressurized solely through a separate charging device; and
  - (iii) may only fire a bolt or arrow:
    - (A) no less than 16 inches long;
    - (B) with a fixed or expandable broadhead at least 7/8 inch wide at its widest position; and
    - (C) traveling no less than 400 feet per second at the muzzle.
- (2) Arrows and bolts carried in or on a vehicle where a person is riding must be in an arrow quiver or a closed case.
- [\(3\) A cougar hunt authorized pursuant to Utah Code Section 23-16-10 does not constitute a centerfire rifle hunt for the purposes of hunter orange requirements on any overlapping big game hunt in the area.](#)

**R657-10-21. Livestock Depredation and Human Health and Safety.**

- (1) If a cougar is harassing, chasing, disturbing, harming, attacking or killing livestock, or has committed such an act within the past 96 hours:
  - (a) in depredation cases, the livestock owner, an immediate family member or an employee of the owner on a regular payroll, and not hired specifically to take cougar, may kill the cougar;
  - (b) a landowner or livestock owner may notify the division of the depredation or human health and safety concerns, who shall authorize a local hunter to take the offending cougar or notify a USDA, Wildlife Services specialist; or
  - (c) the livestock owner may notify a USDA, Wildlife Services specialist of the depredation who may take the depredating cougar.
- (2) Depredating cougar may be taken at any time by a USDA, Wildlife Services specialist, supervised by the Wildlife Services program, while acting in the performance of the person's assigned duties and in accordance with procedures approved by the division.
- (3)(a) A depredating cougar may be taken by those persons authorized in Subsection (1)(a) with:
  - (i) any weapon authorized for taking cougar; or
  - (ii) with the use of snares only with written authorization from the director of the division and subject to each condition and restriction set out in the written authorization.
- (b) The option in Subsection (3)(b) may only be authorized in the case of a chronic depredation situation where numerous livestock have been killed by a depredating cougar and must be verified by Wildlife Services or division personnel.

(4)(a) The division may issue depredation permits to take cougar on specified private lands and public land grazing allotments with a chronic depredation situation where numerous livestock have been killed by cougar.

(b) The division may:

(i) issue one or more depredation permits to the affected livestock owner or a designee, provided the livestock owner does not receive monetary consideration from the designee for the opportunity to use the depredation permit;

(ii) determine the legal weapons and methods of take allowed; and

(iii) specify the area and season that the permit is valid.

(5)(a) Any cougar taken under Subsection (1)(a) or (4)(a) shall remain the property of the state and must be delivered to a division office or employee within 96 hours.

(b) The division may issue a cougar damage permit to a person who has killed a depredating cougar under Subsection (1)(a) that authorizes the person to keep the carcass.

(c) A person that takes a cougar under Subsection (1)(a) or (4)(a) may acquire and use a limited entry permit or harvest objective cougar permit in the same year.

(d) Notwithstanding Subsections (5)(b) and (5)(c), a person may retain no more than one cougar annually [taken with a cougar depredation permit](#).

(6)(a) Hunters interested in taking depredating cougar as provided in Subsection (1)(b) may contact the division.

(b) Hunters will be contacted by the division to take depredating cougar as needed.

### **R657-10-23. Taking Cougar.**

(1)(a) For each permit issued, a person may only take one cougar during the season and from the area specified on the permit.

(b) Limited entry permits may be obtained by following the application procedures provided in this rule and the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

(c) Harvest-objective permits may be purchased on a first-come, first-served basis as provided in guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

(d) Cougar control permits may be purchased as provided in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

(2) A person may not:

(a) take or pursue a female cougar with kittens or kittens with spots; or

(b) repeatedly pursue, chase, tree, corner, or hold at bay, the same cougar during the same day after the cougar has been released.

(3) Any cougar may be taken during the prescribed seasons, except a kitten with spots~~;~~ or any cougar accompanied by kittens~~;~~ ~~or any cougar accompanied by an adult~~.

(4) A person may not take a cougar wearing a radio [or gps](#) collar ~~[from]~~[on](#) any ~~[areas that are published]~~ [unit identified](#) in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar [as being closed to the take of collared animals](#).

(5) The division may authorize hunters who have obtained a valid cougar permit to take cougar in a specified area of the state in the interest of protecting wildlife from depredation.

(6) Season dates, closed areas, harvest objective permit areas, unlimited quota units, and limited entry permit areas are published in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

(7)(a) A person who obtains a limited entry cougar permit on a split unit may hunt on all harvest objective units after the date split units transition into harvest objective units. The split unit transition date is provided in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

(b) A person who obtains a limited entry cougar permit on a split unit and chooses to hunt on any harvest objective unit after the transition date is subject to all harvest objective unit closure requirements provided in Sections R657-10-29.

**KEY:** wildlife, cougar, game laws

**Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment:** June 22, 2020

**Notice of Continuation:** August 1, 2016

**Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law:** 23-14-18; 23-14-19

## **Habitat Management Plan for Beaver Wildlife Management Area Executive Summary – March 2020**

### **Primary Purpose of Beaver WMA:**

The Beaver WMA was formed to secure and improve critical winter habitat for big game. Big game and small game hunting is permitted on the Beaver WMA. Mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk, wild turkey, dusky grouse, mourning dove, and cottontail rabbits are the most often hunted species. Wildlife viewing and photography is permitted on the WMA as well.

### **Wildlife Species:**

The properties that make up the Beaver WMA were purchased for mule deer winter range. Other protected species that inhabit the WMA include Rocky Mountain elk, wild turkey, dusky grouse, mourning dove, cottontail rabbits, bobcats and cougars. Many songbirds, raptors including bald and golden eagles, and other species also use and inhabit the Beaver WMA.

### **Habitat Improvement:**

A significant number of habitat improvement projects have been conducted on the Beaver WMA over the past decade. Pinyon and Juniper encroachment have been treated using Lop and Scatter and Mastication on all 4 units of the WMA as well as some sagebrush rejuvenation utilizing both the Dixie harrow and chain harrow on the North Creek and Easement Units. Future projects will focus on maintaining and expanding these treatments.

The WMA will be monitored yearly for habitat quality and evaluated for future treatments.

Prescribed fire may be used to treat the oak in the upper elevations of the North Creek Unit for decadency and to promote new growth, if deemed necessary. This would be done in conjunction with the Division of Forestry Fire and State Lands, U.S. Forest Service, and the BLM.

### **Access Management:**

The Beaver WMA is crucial winter range for big game in the Beaver herd (unit 22). Due to the sensitive nature of wintering big game and the potential for human use to further stress animals, an Access Management Plan has been developed for the Beaver WMA (see Appendix D).

### **Maintenance Activities**

The habitat seasonal crew walks all of the boundary fences annually and notes needs for major repairs or replacement while conducting routine fence maintenance and signing. Major repairs and/or replacements may be handled by the seasonal crew or contracted based on funding and prioritization. Dedicated Hunters will also be utilized in fence maintenance activities as opportunities arise. Private contractors or the Beaver County Road Department will do road maintenance on an as needed basis.

## **Habitat Management Plan for Beaver Wildlife Management Area March 2020**

### **I. Background Information**

#### **Purpose of Division Ownership**

The Beaver WMA was formed to secure and improve critical winter habitat for big game. The B-hill and North Creek Units were purchased using Pittman Robertson Federal Aid Grant (W-121-L) for the specific purpose of providing deer winter range. No federal aid was used for the other two properties, but they were purchased for the same use. The Easement Unit was purchased by Sportsman for Habitat, Inc., which granted a conservation easement to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. The first portion of the South Creek Unit was acquired in a land trade with Rowland and Mary Yardley and the second portion in a land exchange with the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).

Big game and small game hunting is permitted on the Beaver WMA. Mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk, wild turkey, dusky grouse, mourning dove, and cottontail rabbit are the most often hunted species. Wildlife viewing and photography is permitted on the WMA as well.

#### **Historic Uses**

All four parcels of the Beaver WMA have been used historically for grazing livestock. Other uses may have included non-commercial fire wood gathering and cedar post cutting.

#### **Public Recreation Opportunities**

Big game and small game hunting is permitted and encouraged on the Beaver WMA. Dispersed camping is allowed on the WMA. OHV and other motorized uses are limited to existing roadways and subject to the limitations specified in the Access Management Plan (See Appendix D). In recent years the Easement Unit has been host to a youth pheasant hunt day utilizing pen-reared birds.

#### **Key Wildlife Species**

The properties that make up the Beaver WMA were purchased for mule deer and Rocky Mountain elk winter range. Other protected species that inhabit the WMA include wild turkey, dusky grouse, mourning dove, cottontail rabbits, bobcats and cougars. Many songbirds, raptors including bald and golden eagles, and other species also use and inhabit the Beaver WMA.

#### **Grazing**

Cattle grazing is not currently permitted on the Beaver WMA. All of the units within the Beaver WMA may be made available as grassbank properties and could be made available to grazers impacted by wildfire or to facilitate livestock rest on completed habitat treatment projects. If grazing is deemed as beneficial to the properties at a future date the properties would be made available through a public bid process following the guidelines in the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Lands Use Policy (R657-28).

### **II. Property Information**

#### **Property Descriptions**

The Beaver WMA consists of four parcels of land totaling 2483.8 acres located on the west face of the Tushar mountain range in Beaver County (see Appendix A). This WMA was assembled through five transactions made between 1937 and 2013. All of the parcels on the Beaver WMA are within the Beaver River drainage. The WMA consists of the North Creek Unit, Easement Unit, B-Hill Unit, and the South Creek Unit.

The North Creek Unit is an entire section of land totaling 645.71 acres (see Appendix A), located in Township 28 south, Range 6 west, section 32, (see appendix B-1, warranty deed for legal description) and is approximately 5 miles northeast of Beaver city.

The Easement Unit is a conservation easement granted to the Division by Sportsman for Habitat, Inc. It is located about 1.5 miles southeast of Beaver city and contains 598.09 acres of land (see Appendix A) in Township 29 south, Range 7 west, sections 23,24,25, and 26 (see Appendix B-2, Deed of Conservation Easement for legal description).

The B-hill Unit is a full section of land located 2 miles southeast of Beaver city (see Appendix A), and consists of 640 acres in Township 29 south, Range 7 west, section 36 (see Appendix B-3, warranty deed for legal description).

The South Creek Unit is a 600 acre parcel situated approximately 3 miles south of Beaver city (see Appendix A) in Township 30 south, Range 7 west, parts of sections 2, 3, and 10 (see Appendix B-4 and 5, warranty deed for legal description).

### **Land Acquisition History**

The North Creek Unit was formed through a single land purchase as follows:

- November 10, 1937 from W. Reed and Laura M. Smith (see Appendix B-1).

The Easement unit was formed through a Deed of Conservation Easement as follows:

- December 20, 2001 from Sportsmen for Habitat, Inc. (see Appendix B-2). The Easement Unit was purchased by Sportsmen for Habitat, Inc. from SITLA. The easement agreement assigns management responsibilities to the Division.

The B-hill Unit was formed through a single land purchase as follows:

- September 3, 1974 from SITLA (see Appendix B-3).

The South Creek Unit was created with two land transactions as follows:

- February 22, 1990 by trading the Division owned Gillies Property to Rowland B. and Mary Linda Yardley (see Appendix B-4).
- January 9, 2014 from SITLA in a land exchange (see Appendix B-5).

### **Encumbrances**

There is a road right of way granted to the Beaver City ATV Trail Committee for a road through the North Creek Unit (see Appendix C). There are no other known encumbrances or limitations for the North Creek Unit.

The Easement Unit was purchased for its value as big game winter range, and all encumbrances and limitations are associated with that purpose. As mentioned above Sportsmen for Habitat, Inc. are partners in the Easement Unit of the Beaver WMA, and the deed with the Sportsmen for Habitat, Inc. allows for the development of Water Rights for the purpose of farming and wildlife habitat improvement. Sportsmen for

Habitat, Inc. also reserved the right for a livestock-grazing lease on the Easement Unit. However, the Division may manage livestock usage of the property in accordance with the purpose of the easement (see Appendix B-2). There are also radio towers on the Easement Unit and a road leading to them and then on to adjacent private and public land. The towers and the road were in place before the Sportsman for Habitat purchased the property.

Mineral rights are reserved by the state on the B-hill Unit (see appendix B-3) and there are existing rights of way for canals, ditches, tunnels, and telephone and transmission lines. All of these right of ways were purchased and established before the Division purchased the property in 1974.

The federal government reserved the right to mine and produce any materials essential to the production of fissionable materials on the South Creek Unit (see Appendix B-4).

### **III. Property Inventory**

#### **Existing Capital Improvements**

The North Creek Unit has several roads that run through it which provide access to the unit and to the USFS property above the unit. One of these roads is the designated OHV trail with a right of way granted to the Beaver City ATV Trail Committee. This unit is also entirely fenced and the fence is in good condition.

The Easement Unit has a boundary fence that was completed by dedicated hunters in 2002, including cattle guards at the high volume entrances. This fence is in good condition. There are several roads that run through the unit providing access to the unit and to the BLM property beyond the unit. In addition, there is an access road that runs to the radio towers on the unit which is maintained by the right of way owners.

The B-hill Unit is fenced and fences are in good repair. There is a single road on the unit running from the center of the northern boundary to where it leaves the property on the eastern boundary.

The South Creek Unit is being fenced at the time of the writing of this document. The fence will include gates or cattle guards at the known major entrances. In addition, there are several roads that run through the property providing access to the unit and to the BLM property beyond the unit.

Fences on all of these units are maintained annually by the habitat sections seasonal maintenance crew with minor repairs being made on the spot and major repairs noted so that necessary repairs can be planned and carried out depending on size and funding requirements.

#### **Cultural Resources**

Much of the area within the WMA has been disturbed at some point, either by farming practices or habitat treatments. No new surface disturbing activities will be completed without prior cultural resource surveys. Significant cultural resources will be avoided during surface disturbing activities.

#### **Sensitive Species**

Sensitive Species that occur in Beaver County and are likely to occur on the Beaver WMA include: Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Lewis's Woodpecker, Northern Goshawk, Fringed Myotis, Little Brown Bat, Spotted Bat, Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Big Free-tailed Bat, Red Bat, Burrowing Owl, and Preble's Shrew.

#### **Important Fish and Wildlife Habitats**

All of the properties within the Beaver WMA are important winter range for deer and elk. The I-15 corridor severely diminished the amount of winter range accessible to the Beaver herds of deer and elk. The objectives for deer herd unit 22 are 18-20 bucks per 100 does and a population of 13,000 deer. The most

recent herd estimate from 2019 shows the deer herd slightly above objective at 12,000. Elk herd unit 22 has an objective of 1050 and the most recent estimate of herd size from 2019 has them slightly above objective at 1275. Since I-15 has cut off access to much of the historical winter range the Beaver WMA is an important tool in the management of big game herds. Therefore, it is important to improve and maintain the winter range on the WMA.

Although the land was originally purchased for big game use, there is significant habitat for wild turkey, cottontail rabbits, mourning dove, dusky grouse, cougar, bobcat and many species of raptors.

### **Habitat Types, Range and Watershed Conditions, and Habitat Limitations**

The North Creek Unit is in fair to good condition. Juniper encroachment on the east side of the unit has been treated recently and will continue to be monitored for future treatments. Portions of the sagebrush and bitterbrush have also recently been chain harrowed and have responded well with increased vigor and leader growth.

The Easement Unit is in fair condition and has recovered well from historical overgrazing by livestock as a result of the increased protection from fencing the unit. The unit has also received a dixie harrow treatment that has increased the vigor and leader growth on the sagebrush as well as increasing the diversity of grasses and forbs in the understory. Pinyon and Juniper encroachment is monitored and kept largely in check with dedicated hunter projects.

The B-hill Unit is in fair condition and receives heavy winter deer use. Improved fencing and maintenance has resulted in a decrease in unauthorized vehicle and OHV use providing a significant benefit to the unit.

The South Creek Unit is in poor to fair condition largely due to overuse by livestock and humans. There has been some recent projects to remove encroaching Pinyon and Juniper and some consideration given to a harrow treatment. It was however decided to first invest in the fence that is currently being built and see how the ground recovers after the livestock use is removed.

### **Human Use-Related Problems**

The construction of I-15 has limited the winter range for big game animals to the areas east of I-15. The creation and use of unauthorized roads and trails as well as unauthorized overland travel by motor vehicles results in habitat degradation and fragmentation and increases stress to wintering wildlife. These unauthorized uses seem to be proliferating with the growing popularity of shed antler gathering.

### **Adjacent Land Uses and Potential Impacts**

BLM, Forest Service, and private lands border the Beaver WMA. Livestock grazing takes place on most of the adjacent federal lands. A large percentage of the private land is grazed as well. In addition, many private lands adjacent to or nearby the Division lands are farmed, with alfalfa being the main crop. Due to the amount of grazing that occurs on adjacent lands, fences and fence maintenance are important to avoid livestock trespass. Habitat improvement projects are important to minimize wildlife depredation on surrounding agricultural lands.



### **Zoning and Land Use Ordinances**

All of the units in the Beaver WMA are zoned for multiple uses, and there is little danger of adjacent land being heavily developed or urbanized. However, it should be noted that both the North Creek and Easement Units are directly adjacent to ranchette type developments.

## **IV. Management Goals and Objectives**

The management of these WMA's will take into account the goals, objectives, and strategies of other Division planning efforts. These other plans are briefly discussed below.

### **UDWR Strategic Plan**

The Beaver WMA supports several aspects of the UDWR Strategic Plan. Under the Agency goal Objective A1 "Promote a culture that builds teamwork..." the Beaver WMA plan implements a strategy utilizing employees of multiple sections to identify and address needs on the WMA. Under the Resource goal Objective R2 "Maintain existing wildlife habitat and increase the quality of critical habitats and watersheds throughout the state." is supported through the conservation and improvement of the lands within the WMA.

### **Wildlife Action Plan**

While the Beaver WMA was specifically developed for big game winter range there are multiple ways its management supports the Wildlife Action Plan. The WMA is home to and conserves habitat for several Species of Greatest Conservation Need. This plan also helps to protect and restore several Key Habitat types identified in the Wildlife Action Plan including Gambel Oak, Lowland Sagebrush, and Mountain Sagebrush.

### **Wildlife Species Management Plans**

Unit management plans for deer and elk on Unit 22 call for direct range improvements on winter range, working with partners through Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative for fire rehabilitation, managing vehicle access in UDWR lands to limit disturbance to wintering big game, and dealing with Pinyon and Juniper encroachment through the use of treatments. All of these directives have historically been implemented and will continue to be implemented on the Beaver WMA.

## **V. Strategies for Property Management**

### **Development Activities**

Upon completion of the South Creek Unit fence a significant majority of the acreage within the WMA will be protected by fence. In one instance on the South Creek Unit due to a small acreage being on the north side of a major roadway and the significant expense to install cattle guards fence will run along the south side of the road. The acreage to the north will be denoted utilizing WMA boundary signs on the corners and along the boundary line.

A majority of the units in the Beaver WMA have signs posted at the major access points. Signs are also placed at corners and appropriate intervals along fenced boundaries.

There are some historical unauthorized roads and trails on the Beaver WMA which are managed largely through signage and enforcement. An access management plan has been formed with input from the Habitat Section, Wildlife Section, and Law Enforcement. There are three categories of roads noted in the access management plan. Roads that are damaging to habitat and will be closed permanently. Roads that are necessary for management and access, but cause disturbance to big game using the properties in the winter. Such roads will be closed from January 1 to April 30 of each year reducing disturbance to wintering big game. Right-of-way roads, through roads, and roads that can be used without disturbing wintering wildlife will be left open year-round (see Appendix D).

### **Annual Maintenance Activities**

The Habitat Seasonal crew walks all of the boundary fences annually and notes needs for major repairs or replacement while conducting routine fence maintenance and signing. Major repairs and/or replacements may be either handled by the seasonal crew or contracted based on funding and prioritization. Dedicated hunters will also be utilized in fence maintenance activities as opportunities arise.

Private contractors or the Beaver County Road Department will do road maintenance on an as needed basis. Private contractors, dedicated hunters, and Division employees will be used to close unneeded and unauthorized roads. On right-of-way roads, the owners of the right-of-way will handle the maintenance.

Noxious weeds have not been a problem on the Beaver WMA. However, if it becomes necessary to control noxious weeds on the WMA the Division will either handle it in-house, in cooperation with Beaver County Extension, or by utilizing a private contractor.

In high traffic areas of the Beaver WMA signs are often removed and/or damaged. A sign replacement budget will be requested annually to allow for replacement of missing, defaced, and damaged signs as part of the annual regional WMA maintenance proposal.

## **VI. Strategies for Habitat Management**

### **Unit Management Plans for Wildlife Species**

The lands that make up the Beaver WMA were originally purchased for big game winter habitat and have been managed accordingly. The Beaver WMA will continue to be managed as important winter range for big game, and steps are proposed to be taken to improve winter range conditions. Wild turkey habitat will also be improved on the units that have good populations of the birds.

Unit management plans for deer and elk on the Beaver unit call for direct range improvements on winter range, working with partners through Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative for fire rehabilitation, managing vehicle access on UDWR lands to limit disturbance to wintering big game, and dealing with Pinyon and Juniper encroachment through the use of treatments. All of these directives have historically been implemented and will continue to be implemented on the Beaver WMA.

### **Habitat Improvement Plan**

A significant number of habitat improvement projects have been conducted on the Beaver WMA over the past decade. In areas that have experienced Pinyon and Juniper encroachment, Lop and Scatter and Mastication treatments have been completed on all four units. Future projects will focus on maintaining these treatments as well as addressing more Pinyon and Juniper encroachment on all units within the WMA. Both the North Creek Unit and Easement unit have also been treated by either dixie harrow or chain harrow to re-invigorate browse and diversify understory grasses and forbs. Both of these units also received a subsequent treatment with Plateau herbicide to remove cheatgrass competition from the establishing understory.

All units will be monitored yearly for habitat quality. In the event that quality is unsatisfactory, plans for necessary treatments will be developed and carried out.

Prescribed fire may be used to treat the oak in the upper elevations of the North Creek Unit for decadency, and to promote new growth. This would be done in conjunction with the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, U.S. Forest Service, and the BLM.

### **Access Management Plan**

The Beaver WMA is crucial winter range for big game in the Beaver herd (unit 22). Due to the sensitive nature of wintering big game and the potential for human use to further stress animals an Access Management Plan has been developed for the Beaver WMA (see Appendix D).

### **Fire Management Plan**

Due to the difficulty associated with restoring browse species to burned landscapes and the importance of these browse species to wintering wildlife, a general practice of fire suppression will be used on all units within the Beaver WMA. Some limited prescribed fire may be utilized in the future in conjunction with the US Forest Service, BLM, and the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands in the oak communities as mentioned elsewhere in this plan.

In order to balance fire suppression practices on the WMA, an aggressive and proactive habitat restoration program has been and will continue to be implemented on the WMA. These restoration projects serve to reduce fire receptivity and behavior. Future projects will also focus on our uphill borders and creating defensible space that will allow for fire to be utilized on the upslope properties for beneficial purposes without creating a risk to the loss of winter range.

### **Wood Products**

Cedar posts and firewood are the most likely available wood products available on the Beaver WMA, with a little potential for Christmas trees. None of these are available in large enough quantities for commercial harvest, but individual use permits may be obtained through the Southern Region office.

### **Livestock Grazing Plan**

Cattle grazing is not currently used on the Beaver WMA. All of the units within the Beaver WMA may be made available as grassbank properties and could be made available to grazers impacted by wildfire or to facilitate livestock rest on completed habitat treatment projects. If grazing is deemed as beneficial to the properties at a future date the properties would be made available through a public bid process following the guidelines in the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Lands Use Policy (R657-28).

## **VII. Summary Statement of Proposed Uses**

The purpose of the Beaver WMA is to provide winter range for big game species. In addition, there is vital, high-quality turkey habitat on some of the units. Therefore, the Beaver WMA will be used to provide big game winter range for deer and elk, and to provide habitat for wild turkeys. Human uses that will be allowed include hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, and horseback riding. Dispersed camping will also be allowed but not promoted. OHV use will be allowed on the Beaver WMA only on designated right of ways and marked open roads. Destruction and/or degradation of wildlife habitat from any of these uses may result in further restrictions to protect the resource.

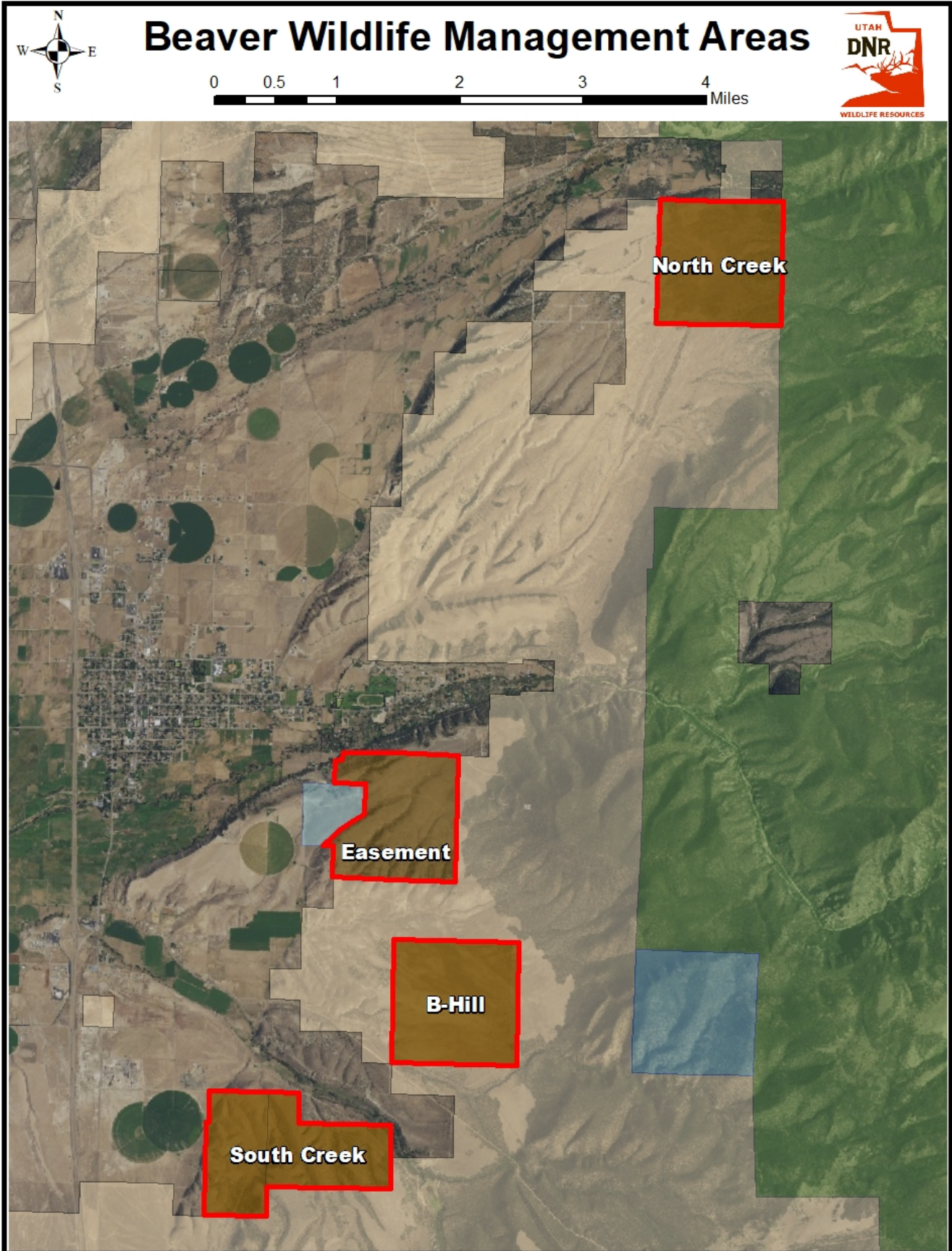
## **VIII. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The district wildlife biologist in conjunction with the area habitat restoration biologist and other habitat staff will do evaluations of the habitat and prepare habitat improvement proposals. The district conservation officer will monitor human use of the Beaver WMA and propose management modifications where problems are occurring with input from habitat and wildlife staff. The Habitat Section of the Southern Region of the Division of Wildlife Resources will present improvement projects to the Watershed Restoration Initiative, Habitat Council, and other sources for approval and funding.

## **IX. Appendices**

# **Appendix A**

## Maps



# **Appendix B**

## **Deeds**

**Copies of deeds related to the Fillmore WMA can be found at the  
Southern Regional Office of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, 1470  
N. Airport Rd. Ste. 1, Cedar City, UT 84720**

# Appendix C

## Encumbrances, Rights of Way, Easements, and Water Rights

**Copies of encumbrances, rights of way, easements and water rights related to the Fillmore WMA can be found at the Southern Regional Office of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, 1470 N. Airport Rd. Ste. 1, Cedar City, UT 84720**

# **Appendix D**

## **Access Management Plan**



# **Beaver WMA**

## **Access Management Plan**

The Beaver WMA is crucial winter range for big game in the Beaver herd (unit 22). Due to the sensitive nature of wintering big game and the potential for human use to further stress animals, an Access Management Plan has been developed for the Beaver WMA. This plan enacts seasonal road closures on some of the roads in the Beaver WMA. In addition, many roads and OHV trails on the WMA serve no purpose and damage wildlife habitat by leading off from established roads and reducing browse, forbs, and grass species. Those roads and trails will be closed permanently. All of the road closures will be closed under the authority of Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Resources Administrative Rule **R657-28-1 sections 2 and 3.**

### **Road Designation**

**The roads on the Beaver WMA will be designated in one of three categories: Open roads, Seasonally Closed Roads, and Permanently Closed Roads.**

#### **Open roads:**

These are roads that will be left open to the public year round, and are roads on established rights of way granted to Beaver County, private landowners with land only accessible through WMA lands, and state agencies. Some additional roads that are less damaging to wintering wildlife and do not damage habitat may be left open for public access.

### **Seasonally Closed Roads**

All roads will be closed seasonally from January 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> each year that are not on established rights of way and are not identified as open but are necessary for public access to the WMA. This will be done to limit disturbance of wintering big game when they are most vulnerable. Seasonal closures will also help to remedy the winter depredation problems on surrounding private land by allowing big game to winter on the WMA undisturbed. All roads will be closed between these dates unless posted open (Utah Code section 41-22-10.1).

### **Permanently Closed Roads**

All roads that are damaging to wildlife habitat and are unnecessary for public access or WMA management will be permanently closed (Utah Code section 41-22-13). The roads will be closed using signs, water bars, fencing and other obstructions. Some of the roads will be plowed and reseeded. Others in low traffic areas will be blocked and allowed to return to a natural state.

### **Carrying out Closures**

Habitat section staff, the district wildlife biologist, and district conservation officer will determine the status of each road on the Beaver WMA (see attachments 1-4). Input from the Beaver County Commissioners will be taken into consideration during the process.

Road closures will be carried out by dedicated hunters, Division employees, and private contractors. Dedicated hunters and Division employees will do reseeded with a seed mix developed by Division employees from the Great Basin Research Center.

### **OHVs**

OHVs will be allowed on open roads only (Utah Code section 41-22-10.1) or roads with recorded rights of way.

### **Enforcement of Closures**

DWR Conservation Officers will carry out the enforcement of road closures. Beaver County Sheriffs Department will also have jurisdiction (Utah Code Section 41-22-16). Trespass on closed roads is punishable as a class C misdemeanor and a monetary fine.

### **Informing the Public**

The public will be informed through signs at major access points, waterways, and on fence lines. The Beaver County Commission will also be notified of the Division's intent to close roads and given a chance to provide input. It should be noted that the roads on the WMA will be considered closed unless posted open; therefore, signing will be done as a courtesy to the public rather than being necessary for enforcement (Utah Code section 41-22-10.1).

