

**MULE DEER**  
FOUNDATION

**BLACKTAIL DEER**  
FOUNDATION



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Mule Deer Foundation & Blacktail Deer Foundation

## OUR MISSION

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

### Mule deer are the vanishing icon of the West.

Mule deer populations across much of the West have faced long-term pressure as habitat has changed, migration routes have been disrupted, and seasonal range has been lost. With herd numbers declining as much as 50-60% in recent decades, Mule Deer that once defined the West are becoming the “Vanishing Icon of the West.”

### The challenges are complex, but they are not unsolvable.

The Mule Deer Foundation works to reverse that trend by turning conservation funding into measurable habitat improvements: restoring migration corridors, improving seasonal range, and delivering on-the-ground restoration projects across the West. MDF estimates that for every acre of habitat improved, the land can support roughly 10 percent more deer.

### MDF is growing more mule deer on the landscape.

Over the past decade, MDF-supported projects have improved 1.8 million acres of habitat, creating the potential for more than 180,000 additional mule deer on the landscape. Recovery takes time, but when habitat improves, mule deer respond.

Success depends on diverse partners (e.g., members, volunteers, landowners, donors, elected officials, state/federal agencies) uniting around efforts to advance and invest in the landscapes mule deer need to thrive.

### FOUNDER

Emmett Burroughs

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Luke Thorildsen

#### VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Matthias Sayer

#### BOARD SECRETARY

Jon Barker

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Eric Barnes

George Emmerson

Kelly Hepler

Gary Jenkins

Sam Seeton

Nick Seifert

Mark Truax

Jon Zinnel

### STAFF

#### PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Greg Sheehan

#### CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Bob Ziehmer

#### CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Jeremy Snitker

#### CHIEF CONSERVATION OFFICER

Steve Belinda

#### WESTERN HUNTING & CONSERVATION EXPO EXECUTIVE

Ray Crow

#### CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Eric Sharpe

#### CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Katie Hale

#### DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Brittany Sylvester

#### EXHIBIT HALL MANAGER

Katie Gourdin

#### EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/HUMAN RESOURCES

Lana Bingham

## A DEFINING YEAR

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### 2025 was a defining year for mule deer conservation.

Across the West, we saw what's possible when people come together around a shared purpose. Our members, volunteers, donors, and partners showed up in a big way—and because of that, we delivered real, on-the-ground results that are improving habitat where it matters most.

This progress is driven by a dedicated staff and guided by a committed board of directors who turn vision into action across the landscapes mule deer depend on.

We are not guessing at solutions. We are applying what works, investing in habitat restoration, improving migration corridors, and advancing projects that will benefit mule deer

and black-tailed deer for years to come. From sagebrush landscapes to forested winter range, this work is making a measurable difference on the ground.

Just as important, we continue to build momentum. The growth of our membership, the strength of our partnerships, and the expansion of the Blacktail Deer Foundation all point to an organization that is gaining traction and increasing its impact across the West.

The future of mule deer won't be decided by chance; it will be decided by the work we choose to do today.

There is still work ahead. But there is also real momentum and a clear path forward.

Thank you for being part of it.

“

The future of mule deer won't be decided by chance; it will be decided by the work we choose to do today.

### Greg Sheehan

President & CEO  
Mule Deer  
Foundation



## CONSERVATION

# HABITAT WORK



### Wildlife Friendly Fencing

Modifying or removing fencing to ensure deer and other wildlife can travel along their migration corridors.



### Wildfire Prevention & Restoration

Coordinating projects that can reduce the severity of forest fires while also providing nutrition and cover for deer and other wildlife.



### Habitat Connectivity

Utilizing wildlife overpasses and funnel fences to help wildlife cross or exit highways safely, allowing wildlife and landscapes to stay connected.



### Invasive Plant Management

Coordinating projects that help fight the invasion of non-native grasses like cheatgrass, medusahead, and ventenata.



### Water Availability

Installing guzzlers which provide wildlife with a water source when conditions are dry.



## 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

**129**  
herds benefitted

**153**  
conservation projects

**18**  
states with MDF chapters

**537K+**  
acres benefitted

**149**  
miles of fencing removed or improved

**\$13.4M+**  
total MDF investment

**3:1**  
match ratio

**\$48.2M+**  
total investment including partner match

## SIX YEAR CUMULATIVE IMPACT

**826**  
conservation projects

**1.8M+**  
acres benefitted

**556**  
miles of fencing removed or improved

**\$51.6M+**  
total MDF investment

**\$201.3M+**  
total investment including partner match



# 2025 PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS



## WYOMING

### Battle Mountain Habitat Enhancement

Battle Mountain is a legendary mule deer landscape, famously chronicled by hunting legend Jack O'Connor. To preserve this storied legacy, MDF and the USDA Forest Service partnered in 2025 for a critical habitat restoration project within a priority migration corridor.

Using mastication—a mechanical process that mulches encroaching timber and dense overstory—crews strategically treated 404 acres. This reduction in woody cover allows essential understory forage to flourish, directly benefiting 2,020 acres of critical summer and transitional range.

This active stewardship ensures one of Wyoming's most iconic landscapes remains healthy and productive for the West's premier big game herds.

commercial timber harvest with strategic biomass removal. This massive effort generated 2.5 million board feet of timber and 31,300 tons of biomass, successfully turning a conservation need into tangible economic value.

The project restored 5,025 acres of habitat, allowing vital sunlight to reach the forest floor and stimulate forage growth for the Mooretown and Doyle herds. By reducing catastrophic fire risk and supporting local jobs, this investment proves that active forest management benefits both the ecosystem and the community.

## CALIFORNIA

### Tomcat & Deer Service Projects

In the Sierra Nevada foothills, once-productive forests have become overstocked and increasingly inhospitable to wildlife. On the Plumas National Forest, the Tomcat and Deer Service projects addressed this by combining

## IDAHO

### Winter Range Restoration Shrub Planting

Southern Idaho's sagebrush-steppe faces a dire threat from invasive grasses and altered fire regimes, which destroy the native shrubs deer need for winter survival. To combat this, MDF coordinated a massive cross-agency effort involving the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

In 2025, crews hand-planted 291,000 native shrubs across four critical deer units. This labor-intensive project restored thermal cover and nutritional forage across 16,000 acres of winter range and core sage-grouse habitat.

This partnership effectively bridged jurisdictional boundaries to create a seamless, functional landscape that provides mule deer with the resources they need to survive the harshest months of the year.





**MULE DEER FOUNDATION**  
EST. 1988

**BLACKTAIL DEER FOUNDATION**  
EST. 2024

**MEMBERSHIP**

- ★ **1,675** Lifetime Members
- 📍 **143** MDF Chapters
- 🐾 **15,084** Total Members

- + Total membership grew from 13,955 to 15,084, a net increase of 1,129 members (+8.1%)
- + Annual membership growth accounted for most new members, indicating **effective recruitment** and entry-level engagement.
- + Continued Life Member growth demonstrates sustained long-term investment from the organization's **most committed supporters**.

**AUDIENCE**

**185,697**  
Social Media Followers

**104,647**  
Email Mailing List

**82,000+**  
Event attendees

**189,981+**  
Audience across all platforms

**MEMBERSHIP**

- 🔄 **559%** Net Growth
- 📈 **19** BDF Chapters
- 🐾 **1,186** Total Members

- + Total membership grew from 180 to 1,186, a net increase of 1,006 members (+559%).
- + 21 Life Members were added, establishing the foundation for a **long-term supporter base**.
- + 19 BDF chapters were established in the 1st year of the foundation
- + **Rapidly growing membership** reflects increasing awareness, successful outreach, and interest in black-tailed deer conservation.

**AUDIENCE**

**4,284**  
Social Media Followers

**1,173**  
Email Mailing List

Blacktail Deer Foundation, a subsidiary of Mule Deer Foundation, is dedicated to conserving and restoring habitat for Columbian and Sitka black-tailed deer across the Pacific coast.

**CORPORATE PARTNERS**

Industry leaders recognize that healthy mule deer and blacktail deer populations depend on the conservation and restoration of critical habitats.

Through the Corporate Partner Program, brand sponsors, product collaborators, promotional partners, and outdoor retailers play an important role in advancing the mission while engaging their customers in conservation.

**2025 INITIATIVES**

- Strengthening focus on mission-driven partnerships, aligning corporate support with conservation initiatives and member engagement.
- Increasing integration of partners into events, member programs, and conservation initiatives.



# GIVING CLUBS

We proudly recognize the members of our Giving Clubs: dedicated supporters whose generosity makes our work possible. Their commitment drives meaningful conservation impact for mule deer, their habitat, and future generations.

## SAGEBRUSH LEGACY CLUB

**\$100K–\$499K**

Stan Atwood

Glen Cooper

Alden Glidden

Ross Jackson

## EVERGREEN CLUB

**\$50K–\$99K**

Benjamin & Angela Carter

Guinn Crousen

Linda & Rich Fletcher

Gerald Hoefner

Eric Montague

## HIGH DESERT CLUB

**\$25K–\$49K**

Guy Brown  
Dustin & Liene Coleman  
David Dibben

Bob Jacobs  
Pat Juhl  
Milton Millman

Miles Moretti  
Richard Pierce

## CASCADE LEGACY CLUB

**\$10K–\$24K**

Haiman Atwood  
Bob Barry  
Steve Boero  
Emmett Burroughs  
Bill Curley  
Michael Dover  
Doc Gilbertson  
Farley Hicks  
Scott Hampel  
Kenn Loch  
Chuck Melman  
Craig & Mary Monaghan  
David Stevens

## CHAIRMAN'S CLUB

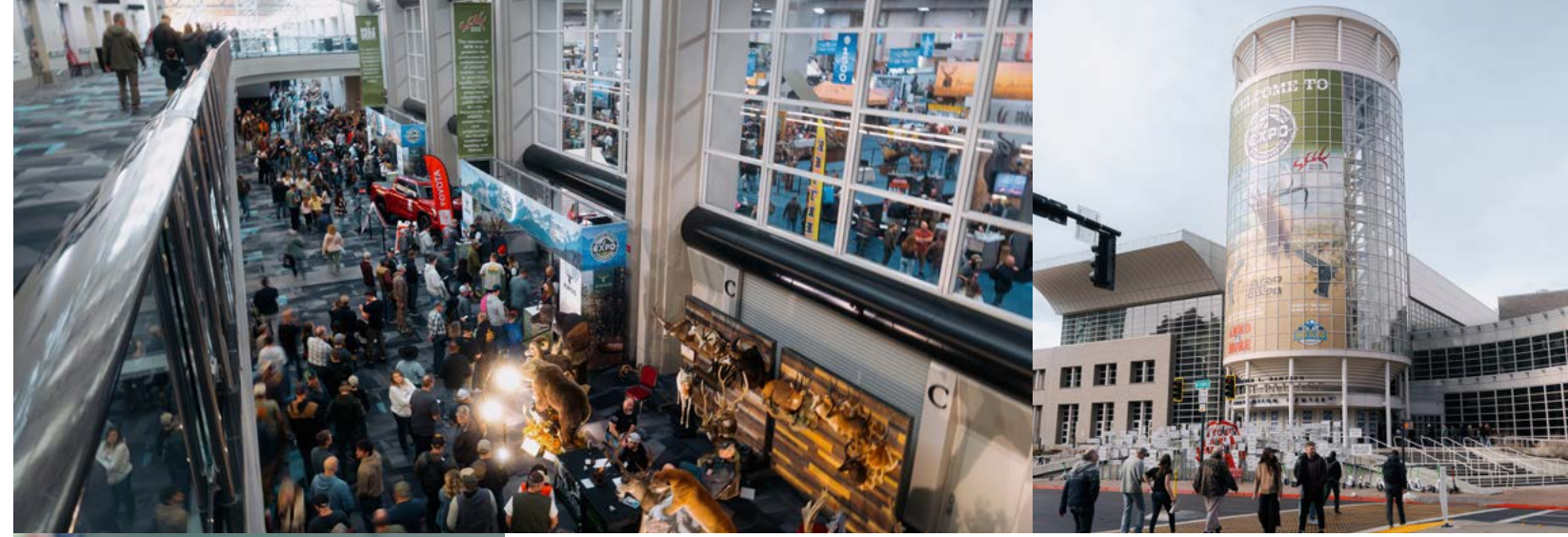
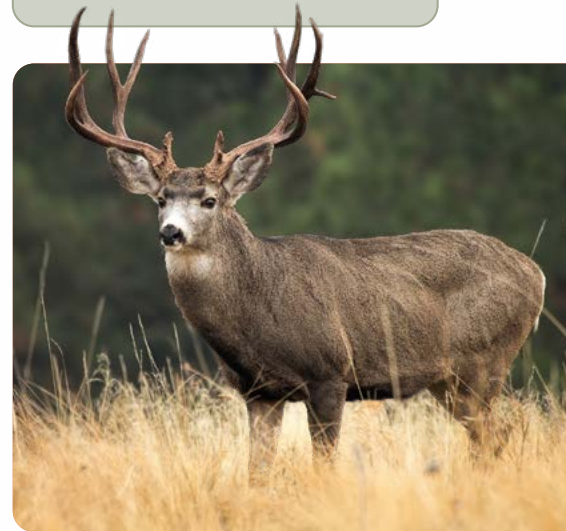
**\$10K ANNUAL**

Dustin & Liene Coleman  
Max Fransen  
Jerry Hoefner  
John Nau  
Jim Nieman  
Kevin Shields

## WESTERN HORIZON CLUB

**\$5K–\$9K**

Thomas Billingsley  
Austin Chleborad  
Brian Mehmen  
Pete Widener



# THE MULE DEER FOUNDATION'S WESTERN HUNTING & CONSERVATION EXPO 2025 RECAP

**MDF's annual expo has generated over \$100M for on-the-ground conservation since its inception.**

The Mule Deer Foundation and Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife recently concluded a record-breaking **2025 Western Hunting and Conservation Expo (WHCE)**. Spanning 565,000 square feet and hosting 590 global vendors, the event served as a massive hub for outdoor innovation and wildlife advocacy.

The Expo's financial impact reached new heights, raising an **unprecedented \$15.4 million** for habitat preservation. Highlighting the community's generosity, several special tags fetched record amounts:

- Utah Statewide Mule Deer:** \$370,000
- Nevada Statewide Mule Deer:** \$300,000
- Antelope Island Rocky Mountain Sheep:** \$200,000

Beyond the auctions, the 200-permit drawing saw nearly 20,000 applicants, demonstrating the hunting community's deep engagement. These funds provide critical boots-on-the-ground results; for instance, the Mule Deer Foundation recently allocated over **\$2.2 million** to Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative.

This year's success reinforces the WHCE as more than a convention—it is a vital conservation movement. By uniting enthusiasts and professionals, the Expo ensures the longevity of North America's wildlife and hunting heritage.



# OUR IMPACT

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Mule Deer Foundation puts **89¢ of every dollar** to work where it matters most: on-the-ground conservation.



Mission Accomplishment  
\$30,549,662

**89%**

Fundraising  
\$2,034,101

**6%**

Administration  
\$1,902,398

**5%**



## TOP PERFORMING CHAPTERS

1. Shasta/Lassen Chapter  
REDDING, CALIFORNIA
2. Great Basin Chapter  
ELKO, NEVADA
3. Northbay Blacktail Chapter  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA
4. Dark Horn Chapter  
MISSOULA, MONTANA
5. Lewis & Clark Chapter  
HELENA, MONTANA
6. Teddy Roosevelt Chapter  
DICKINSON, NORTH DAKOTA
7. Droptine Chapter  
WATFORD CITY, NORTH DAKOTA
8. Southeast Idaho Chapter  
POCATELLO, IDAHO
9. Weber Davis Chapter  
LAYTON, UTAH
10. Dakota Gray Ghost Chapter  
SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA
11. Northwest Colorado Chapter  
CRAIG, COLORADO
12. Curt Gowdy Chapter  
CHEYENNE, WYOMING
13. Western Kansas Chapter  
GARDEN CITY, KANSAS
14. Star Valley Ladies Chapter  
ALPINE, WYOMING
15. Southwest Desert Chapter  
CEDAR CITY, UTAH
16. Vets And Bucks Chapter  
FALLON, NEVADA
17. El Paso Chapter  
EL PASO, TEXAS
18. Western Dakota Chapter  
RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA
19. North Central Washington Chapter  
CHEHALIS VALLEY, WASHINGTON
20. Pecos County Chapter  
FORT STOCKTON, TEXAS
21. Pass the Buck Chapter  
RIFLE, COLORADO
22. Magic Valley Chapter  
TWIN FALLS, IDAHO
23. North Oregon Chapter  
OREGON CITY, OREGON
24. Linn-Benton Chapter  
ALBANY, OREGON
25. Yuma Chapter  
YUMA, ARIZONA
26. Great Lakes Chapter  
CLOQUET, MINNESOTA
27. Skagit Valley Chapter  
MOUNT VERNON, WASHINGTON
28. Kodiak Blacktail Chapter  
KODIAK, ALASKA
29. Mount Edgumbe Blacktail Chapter  
SITKA, ALASKA



# THE WAY FORWARD

As we close the chapter on a strong 2025, we look ahead with clear eyes and renewed determination. This past year proved what is possible when volunteers, members, landowners, hunters, corporate partners, state and federal agencies, and our dedicated staff come together with shared purpose. Our united unwavering commitment to advancing the Foundation's mission is the basis of every acre restored, every migration corridor protected, and every step forward we have made. We value and take pride in our accomplishments.

**Progress will not come all at once, but it will come through persistence, partnerships, and shared vision.**

Our work is far from finished. In some regions, mule deer populations remain as much as 50 percent below their mid-century highs, a sobering reminder of the urgency before us. Habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species, and more extreme weather cycles/events are just a few topics challenging the resilience of both mule deer and the western landscape. This is why our focus remains sharp: restoring priority habitats and ensuring migration routes remain open and functional for generations to come.

The Foundation is driven not only by data and strategy, but by something deeper, the moments that define why this work matters. A sunrise breaking over a frost-covered landscape. The scent of sage carried on a cold north wind. The quiet movement of mule deer at last light. These are the experiences we are working to protect. Together, as a united team, we will meet the challenges ahead. Progress will not come all at once, but it will come through persistence, partnerships, and shared vision. Thank you for standing with us. The horizon is bright, and the work continues with confidence.

Sincerely,  
Bob Ziehmer  
Chief Operating Officer



# 2025 PROJECT MAP



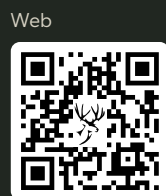
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