Gunnison County
COLORADO

GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
Phone: (970) 641-7600, Fax: (970) 641-3061
Website: www.GunnisonCounty.org

November 15, 2012

Brandon Diamond
Wildlife Biologist
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
300 West New York Avenue
Gunnison, CO 81230

re: Draft Mule Deer Management Plans for DAUs D-21, D-22 and D-25

Dear Brandon:

At its regularly scheduled meeting on November 14, 2012, the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee (Committee) reviewed the draft Mule Deer Management Plans for DAUs D-21, D-22 and D-25 with reference specifically to interaction with Gunnison Sage-grouse and their habitats.

As you are aware, mule deer habitat and Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat overlap in many areas of the basin, particularly on the winter range of both species. The Committee appreciated your discussion of habitat issues in the draft plans, and consideration of those issues in the "Draft Preferred Alternative" population objectives for the three DAUs.

The Committee did not have any information before it that provided substantial evidence that the Draft Preferred Alternative population objectives should be different from those proposed. It is concerned, though, that assessment of the overlapping habitats be continued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (Williams, 2010 and 2011). A decline in habitat quality and condition would be detrimental to both mule deer and sage-grouse. The Committee also asks that CPW commit to a reassessment of these DAU plans if habitat condition and quality is demonstrated to be declining.

The Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee appreciates the opportunity to review the draft plans and will continue to work with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Parks and Wildlife Commission on issues that affect Gunnison Sage-grouse.

Sincerely,

Ken Stahlnecker

Ken Stahlnecker, Chair