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Comments: The Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) has reviewed the Anadarko Vegetation Management Project EA and supports the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest's (UWCNF) efforts to restore aspen ecosystems, increase vegetation age and structural diversity, restore riparian and upland meadow ecosystems, and reduce hazardous fuel loads. We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the project's Draft Environmental Assessment. MDF is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the conservation of mule deer and black-tailed deer and their habitat across the west, with strong roots in the state of Utah. Our organization has long been involved in efforts to support and improve wildlife habitat across Utah and is partnered with the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest to help further those efforts on the forest.

The actions proposed should both directly improve and help proactively protect habitat for mule deer and other wildlife across the forest. Integrated use of forestry and habitat management methods such as mechanical tree thinning, hand tree thinning, and prescribed fire should benefit this area of the Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District by helping to restore aspen and riparian ecosystems, bring fire return intervals and potential intensities back into the historic range, address forest health concerns and encourage diversity in forest structure and species composition. We encourage the UWCNF to continue their collaboration with the many conservation partners and stakeholders in Utah to incorporate expert technical assistance on stream restoration, forestry, watershed health and wildlife use and management.

MDF appreciates the use of science-based best management practices and the collaborative efforts that led to these guiding documents. These, combined with the specific local knowledge of UWCNF staff and project partners, should ensure that state-of-the-science and socially conscious decisions are made to give these habitat projects the highest potential for success. The Mule Deer Foundation hopes to see a supported decision to proceed with proposed treatments, the resulting protections and improvements to water quality, wildfire risk, mule deer and other wildlife habitat, and the broad social benefits that arise from those results. Thank you for your time today.