

# MANAGED LANDS DEER PROGRAM INFORMATION

## General Requirements

The Managed Lands Deer Program (MLDP) is intended to foster and support sound management and stewardship of native wildlife and wildlife habitats on private lands in Texas. Deer harvest is an important aspect of habitat management and conservation. Landowners enrolled in either the MLDP Harvest Option or Conservation Option are able to take advantage of extended season lengths and liberalized harvest opportunities.

## Application and General Enrollment Information

- MLDP participation is completely voluntary. Once enrolled, program participants must meet MLDP requirements for the year of enrollment and pay an annual fee.
- Applicants seeking to enroll in either the MLDP Harvest or Conservation Option must complete an online application through Texas Parks & Wildlife Department's Land Management Assistance Application (LMA, available at [lma.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://lma.tpwd.state.tx.us)). The application will require the landowner to create an account and to draw a property boundary in the online system.
  - Note: an email address is required for the landowner and any designated agents the landowner may assign to the account.
- If an applicant decides not to participate in MLDP, the deadline to withdraw from MLDP participation is the Friday before the start of MLDP season each year. The applicant must formally withdraw from MLDP through the department's online web application in LMA.
  - If the applicant fails to withdraw from MLDP by the deadline, no deer harvest may occur on the enrolled property except in accordance with MLDP rules during the enrollment year.
- A landowner may appoint a person to act as the landowner's authorized agent for the purposes of MLDP participation. Authorization of a designated agent will be completed through LMA.
- Multiple landowners may combine contiguous low-fenced tracts of land to create an **aggregate acreage** for enrollment in the MLDP Harvest or Conservation Option.

## MLDP Fees and Payment

- Participation in MLDP requires a **non-refundable** fee that must be paid by the deadline in order to act on harvest recommendations and receive MLDP tags.
- The deadline for payment is 11:59 pm on Friday, the day before the start of MLDP season each year.
  - If the applicant fails to submit payment by the deadline the tract of land enrolled in MLDP will be automatically removed from MLDP enrollment and will not be able to participate in MLDP for the upcoming season.

- Payment must be made online through LMA via credit or debit card only.
- Enrollment fees for each MLDP Option are as follows:
  - Harvest Option
    - Individual Property - \$30 per management unit
    - Aggregate site - \$30
  - Conservation Option
    - Individual Property - \$300 for the first management unit, \$30 for each additional management unit
    - Aggregate site - \$300
    - Wildlife Management Cooperative member - \$30 per management unit

### **Tag Issuance and Tagging Information**

- MLDP tags are issued to a program participant (either the landowner or designated agent).
  - The program participant will be responsible for printing and distributing MLDP tags issued for the enrolled property. A PDF document that contains the tags will be created upon acceptance of the harvest recommendation by the program participant.
    - Program participants may access their online account and print the tags at any time after acceptance of the harvest recommendation.
  - MLDP tags may be printed on any type of paper but the **hunter** must maintain the tag in legible condition until tagging requirements cease.
    - Waterproof paper, plain copy paper, card stock, colored paper, or other paper types are some options participants may use. MLDP tags should be printed on 8 ½ x 11 paper and will fit 6 tags to a page.
- MLDP tags are valid only for the specific tract of land for which they were issued.
- A properly executed MLDP tag meets “proof-of-sex” requirements.
- There is no personal or annual bag limit for the type of deer for which MLDP tags have been issued; however, every deer killed must be tagged with an appropriate MLDP tag.
- All hunters on a property that receives MLDP tags are required to possess the appropriate Resident or Non-resident General hunting license.
- Archery stamp requirements do not apply on the enrolled property for the type of deer for which MLDP tags have been issued (i.e., antlerless, buck).

- Once MLDP tags have been issued for a property, all deer harvested on the property must be tagged with the appropriate MLDP tag. Hunting license tags may not be used for deer harvested under the authority of a MLDP tag and may not be substituted in lieu of a MLDP tag.
  - Deer that are not subject to the provisions of the MLDP must be tagged with a hunting license tag and the hunter must complete the license log on the back of the hunting license. County season dates, bag limits, legal means of take, and any other restrictions apply.
- All deer harvested under the authority of MLDP must be immediately tagged with a MLDP tag by the person who killed the deer, unless the person who killed the deer immediately takes the carcass by the most direct route to a tagging station (location where tags are maintained on the enrolled property) where an appropriate MLDP tag shall be attached immediately.
- The MLDP tag shall remain attached to the carcass until the carcass reaches its final destination.

### **Harvest Log Requirements**

- The MLDP program participant is required to maintain a daily harvest log on the tract of land for which MLDP tags have been issued.
  - The daily harvest log shall be on a form provided or approved by the department.
  - The log must be maintained until the last day of tag validity (MLDP season ending date which is printed on the tag).
  - A hunter who kills a deer that is required to be tagged with a MLDP tag must legibly enter the required information in the daily harvest log the same day the deer is killed. A hunter should not list on their hunting license log deer harvested under the authority of a MLDP tag.
  - No MLDP tag and corresponding tag number may be entered into the MLDP harvest log or be used to tag a deer more than once.
  - The harvest log shall be available to any department employee upon request.

## Harvest Option (White-tailed Deer Only)

The Harvest Option (HO) is an automated, 'do-it-yourself' option for MLDP participation that provides landowners with a deer harvest recommendation, tag issuance, and general guidance about wildlife and wildlife habitat management. Participation in the Harvest Option does not require habitat management practices, deer population data, or the participant to receive technical assistance from a TPWD wildlife biologist. This option provides enhanced harvest opportunities through longer seasons and enhanced bag limits with minimal involvement from TPWD. Harvest Option participants may still request additional technical guidance from a TPWD biologist through our technical guidance program, but the MLDP deer harvest recommendations and tag issuance are automatically calculated on a one-time basis for each MLDP hunting season upon enrollment through TPWD's Land Management Assistance (LMA) online application and cannot be revised.

### Enrollment and Participation Requirements:

- Harvest Option enrollment for each upcoming deer season is available from May 1 to September 1 immediately prior to that season.
- Harvest Option enrollment is not auto-renewed and must be specifically requested by a landowner each season.
- Deadline to complete the online application for enrollment in the Harvest Option is September 1 of each year.
- The MLDP participant must report the number of bucks and does harvested by April 1 of each year. Failure to report harvest numbers by the deadline will result in MLDP tags not being issued for the succeeding season.

### Aggregate Acreage Properties

- Multiple landowners may combine contiguous tracts of low-fenced properties to create an aggregate acreage for program enrollment.
- All landowners in the aggregate acreage will be required to create an online account in LMA, provide a map of their property boundaries, and acknowledge consent for their properties to be part of the aggregate acreage.
- Program participants must designate a single participant as a point of contact for the aggregate acreage (known as the pooled property manager).
- MLDP tags issued to the aggregate acreage may be used on any tract of land within the aggregate acreage.

## Tag Issuance

- Prior to enrollment, a landowner will be able to preview the tag issuance for that property and decide whether to proceed with enrollment.
- Tags can only be issued for white-tailed deer under the Harvest Option. Mule deer tag issuance is not available under this option.
- Program participants may choose a harvest recommendation and MLDP tag issuance for:
  - only buck deer,
  - only antlerless deer, or
  - buck and antlerless deer.
- If MLDP buck tags are issued, the department will specify harvest recommendations for:
  - tags to be used on any buck, and
  - tags to be used only on bucks with at least one unbranched antler.
- An equivalent number of MLDP tags will be issued for the number of bucks and/or antlerless deer released (deer obtained from a permitted deer breeder) on the property during the two-and-a-half-year period prior to the current MLDP season. The landowner or agent is responsible for reporting the department-assigned release site identification number previously assigned to the property within the LMA online account in order to receive the additional tag issuance for released breeder deer on that property.
- Tag issuance is automated in the Harvest Option and TPWD staff cannot adjust or customize individual harvest recommendations for a property.

## Season Dates

- Antlerless Deer
  - September 28, 2024 through February 28, 2025.
    - May be taken by any lawful means, including modern firearms.
- Buck Deer
  - September 28, 2024 through November 1, 2024.
    - Bucks with at least one unbranched antler may be taken with any lawful means, including modern firearms.
    - Any other buck may be taken only with lawful archery equipment.
    - During the early youth-only weekend, licensed hunters 16 years of age and younger may harvest any buck by any lawful means, including modern firearms.
  - November 2, 2024 through February 28, 2025:
    - Any buck deer may be taken by any lawful means, including modern firearms.

## Conservation Option

The Conservation Option (CO) offers program participants the opportunity to work with a TPWD biologist to receive customized, ranch-specific habitat and deer harvest recommendations and MLDP tag issuance for white-tailed deer and/or mule deer. This option does require the reporting of certain types of deer data as well as completion of specific habitat management practices each year in order to participate and remain in the program.

### Enrollment Requirements:

- Conservation Option enrollment requests for each upcoming deer season may be made from April 2 to June 15 immediately prior to that season.
  - Conservation Option enrollment applications will not be accepted for the upcoming hunting season after the June 15 enrollment deadline, but the applicant may still choose to enroll in the Harvest Option for the upcoming season.
  - Once enrolled in the Conservation Option, participants who complete all required harvest and habitat management practice reporting via the LMA online system by the April 1 deadline for each season **will be automatically enrolled for Conservation Option for the next season**. Participants will need to opt out of MLDP enrollment if they do not plan to participate in the upcoming MLDP season.
- Entry into the Conservation Option requires a department-approved wildlife management plan (WMP) that includes:
  - Department-approved deer population data for the two years immediately preceding the application.
  - The number of bucks and does harvested during the two years immediately preceding the application.
  - Documentation of two department-approved habitat management practices conducted during the two years immediately preceding the application on the tract of land to be enrolled in the Conservation Option.
    - Consult with a TPWD biologist for more information on applicable habitat management practices.
  - A WMP may be prepared by TPWD biologist, landowner, or landowner's designated agent. A WMP prepared by a landowner or an agent must be in a format approved by TPWD and submitted to the cooperating TPWD biologist for approval. Enrollment will not be approved and MLDP tags will not be issued unless the WMP is approved by TPWD.
  - The participant must agree to allow site visits at the request of the department to assess habitat management practices and provide guidance and recommendations on habitat and wildlife management.

### **Continued Participation Requirements:**

- Note: An “MLDP Year” is the period in which deer population data or habitat practices must be completed and is defined as March 1 of the current year through the last day in February of the following year. An example would be March 1, 2024 through February 28, 2025.
- To be eligible for continued program participation in the Conservation Option, a program participant is required to:
  - Provide current MLDP year’s deer population data to the cooperating TPWD biologist.
    - Note: Additional tag issuance may be authorized on the enrolled property, provided the program participant furnishes survey or other population data that, in the opinion of the department, justifies additional harvest.
  - Report the number of buck and antlerless deer harvested each season via the LMA online system by April 1.
  - Implement three (3) department-approved habitat management practices for the current MLDP year for each enrolled tract of land as specified in the wildlife management plan.
    - Deer harvest may count as a habitat management practice provided an appropriate level of harvest is achieved each year.
    - Supplemental feeding (including non-native food plots and pelleted feed) is NOT considered to be a habitat management practice. Check with your local TPWD biologist for information about acceptable habitat management practices.
    - Habitat practices implemented on the property must be entered via the LMA online system for each MLDP report season by April 1.
- A MLDP participant must annually report the number of bucks and does harvested as well as the minimum of three (3) habitat management practices (as specified in the WMP) conducted on each tract of land enrolled in the Conservation Option. The report deadline is April 1 of each year.
  - Failure to report required data by the deadline will result in removal from the Conservation Option.

### **Wildlife Management Associations and Cooperatives**

- The department may enroll a Wildlife Management Association (WMA) or cooperative in the Conservation Option.
- A single WMP that addresses all tracts of land within the WMA or cooperative that will be enrolled in the Conservation Option and receive MLDP tag issuance must be submitted to and approved by a TPWD biologist.
- A WMA or cooperative may choose to receive MLDP tag issuance for:
  - Only antlerless deer.

- If only antlerless deer tag issuance is chosen, buck deer may be harvested on enrolled properties but are subject to county bag limits, restrictions, season dates, and must be tagged with a hunting license tag.
- Both buck and antlerless deer.
- MLDP tags will be issued to the landowner or landowner's agent of each individual property enrolled under the WMA or cooperative.
- All program participants of the WMA / cooperative are required to report (via LMA) the number of bucks and does harvested as well as the habitat management practices conducted on each property.
- The WMA or cooperative must collectively complete a total of 3 habitat management practices as specified in the WMP.

### **Aggregate Acreage Properties**

- Multiple landowners may combine contiguous tracts of low-fenced properties to create an aggregate acreage for enrollment in this option.
- All landowners in the aggregate acreage are required to create an account in LMA, provide a map of property boundaries, and acknowledge consent for their properties to be included as part of the aggregate acreage.
- A single WMP that address all tracts of land in the aggregate acreage is required.
- Program participants must designate a single participant as a point of contact for the aggregate acreage.
- MLDP tags issued to the aggregate acreage may be used on any tract of land within the aggregate acreage.

### **Season Dates and Tag Issuance**

- White-tailed Deer
  - September 28, 2024 through February 28, 2025.
    - Antlerless and buck deer may be taken by any lawful means, including modern firearms.
- Mule Deer
  - September 28, 2024 through November 1, 2024.
    - Antlerless and buck deer may be taken only by lawful archery equipment.
  - November 2, 2024 through January 26, 2025.
    - Antlerless and buck deer may be taken by any lawful means, including modern firearms.



## Refusal of Enrollment or Removal from MLD Program

- The department may refuse or terminate enrollment in the MLD Program for any applicant or program participant who:
  - fails to comply with reporting requirements,
  - exceeds the harvest recommendation,
  - fails to implement three (3) habitat management practices specified in the WMP, or
  - submits falsified data to the department.
- The department may refuse or terminate enrollment in the MLD Program for any tract of land on which a deer has been harvested but not presented to a mandatory check station for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing when required. When determining whether to refuse or allow enrollment the department shall consider:
  - Whether the applicant advised hunters of any mandatory check station requirements.
  - Whether the applicant encouraged, advised, or directed a person who killed a deer not to present a harvested deer at a mandatory check station.
  - The number of deer harvested on the tract of land owned or managed by the applicant that were not presented at a mandatory check station.
  - Any other aggravating or mitigating factors.
- The department may refuse or terminate enrollment in the MLD Program for any landowner who fails to comply with harvest, testing, and recordkeeping requirements at breeder deer release sites that are epidemiologically linked to a CWD-positive deer breeding facility.
- The department may prohibit any person from participating in the MLD Program if the person has a final conviction or has been assessed an administrative penalty for a violation of:
  - Parks and Wildlife Code, Chapter 43, Subchapter C, E, L, R, or R-1 (relating to permits authorizing the possession of live animals);
  - A provision of Parks and Wildlife Code not addressed in the previous bullet that is punishable as a Parks and Wildlife Code:
    - Class A or B misdemeanor;
    - State jail felony;
    - Felony;
  - Parks and Wildlife Code 63.002; or
  - The Lacey Act.

- The department may also refuse enrollment or participation to any person that is acting on behalf of or as a surrogate for another person prohibited from participation in MLDP.

## **Additional Information**

For additional information on Wildlife Management Plans and/or the Managed Lands Deer Program, please contact the nearest TPWD Wildlife Biologist or Technician through the following web page: [tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/technical\\_guidance/biologists/](http://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/technical_guidance/biologists/).