



# WGFD

Conserving Wildlife, Serving People

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## News Release DRAFT

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### ***WGFD Nabs Big Piney Deer Poachers***

Big Piney- On Saturday, February 21, 2009, what appeared to be an illegally killed mule deer buck was discovered in the Deer Hills west of Big Piney, WY. Less than two weeks later, Lee Hedlund and Travis Core, both of Big Piney, found themselves in court receiving a stiff sentence for the crime.

After receiving the report of the dead deer, investigative work by Adam Hymas, Big Piney Game Warden for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, determined the deer had been shot on February 18<sup>th</sup> along with a vehicle description. Within an hour of putting the word out the vehicle had been located in Pinedale and the two suspects were apprehended and questioned. Hedlund admitted to shooting the antlered deer while Core assisted, salvaging some of the meat.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Hedlund, 27, plead guilty to taking a deer during a closed season and Core, 26, plead guilty to accessory to taking a deer during a closed season. Circuit court Judge Curt Haws sentenced both individuals to five days in jail (30 days with 25 suspended), a loss of hunting and fishing privileges for three years, \$780 fines (all fines were suspended), 80 hours of community service, and one year of probation. Both Hedlund and Core had recently relocated to Big Piney from the state of Washington.

Big Piney Game Warden Adam Hymas applauded the efforts of Judge Curt Haws. “I think a clear message was sent that the illegal shooting of wildlife will not be tolerated in Sublette County.”

Hymas also recognized the efforts of Sublette County Attorney Allegra Davis and his office for their efforts in prosecuting the case and the individuals who commit wildlife crimes. “This is a good example of how justice was achieved through good investigative teamwork and

great vigilance and attentiveness from those that care about Wyoming's wildlife resource,” said Hymas. “I applaud both Judge Haws and prosecutor Davis for their continued dedication to our local wildlife.”

Thousands of mule deer from the Sublette and Wyoming Range deer herds spend their winters in the Pinedale-Big Piney-LaBarge area. “It’s no secret these animals are vulnerable this time of year,” said Hymas. “Not just to poachers, but vehicle collisions and harassment by winter recreationists, including antler hunters and photographers trying to get too close.”

In recent years, Game and Fish enforcement personnel have focused more attention on these mule deer winter ranges, but they still need your help. “Obviously, we do not have the personnel to be everywhere, all the time, so we rely on reports from people who are out there,” says Hymas.

“There are actually quite a few people out there watching deer and their reports of suspicious activity can really help us, as it did in this case. Whether you’re a hunter or just a wildlife enthusiast, people should be outraged about the illegal shooting of these animals,” said Hymas.

People should look for the following poacher profiles:

- Vehicles with evidence of travel in the countryside – often sport utility vehicles or pickups with toppers.
- Presence of camping, hunting or outdoor equipment.
- Firearms, spotlights, scanners or night vision equipment.
- Folks claiming to be in the area to hunt coyotes or photograph deer.
- Vehicles traveling in rural areas during the early morning, evening or late at night.
- Small amounts of blood or hair – poached wildlife are typically not readily visible.

***To report information on this poaching incident or other suspicious vehicles or activities call the Pinedale Game and Fish office at 1-800-452-9107 or the STOP POACHING hotline at 1-877-WGFD-TIP (1-877-943-3847) or your local game warden. Information can also be reported through the hunting page of the department’s web site <http://gf.state.wy.us>. Any information leading to the arrest and conviction may result in a reward of up to \$5,000.00.***

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