

COLORADO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Big Game Access Program Pilot Evaluation

Fact Sheet



Purpose of the study: To measure trends in hunter and landowner satisfaction, game harvest by species, and economic viability of the BGAP over the 3-year pilot program.

Methods: In 2007, we mailed 213 surveys to hunters and 7 surveys to landowners. 161 hunter (77%) and 7 landowner (100%) surveys were returned. In 2008, 499 hunter and 11 landowners surveys were mailed, and 173 hunter (35%) and 9 landowner (82%) surveys were returned. In 2009, 750 surveys were mailed to hunters and 15 to landowners. We received a total of 342 hunter (46%) and 9 landowner (60%) responses. Surveys were mailed between January and April each year.

Highlights of results: Key findings of this survey were as follows:

- Hunters who participated in the BGAP most often learned about the program through information on the CDOW website and their friends.
- Most hunters participated in the BGAP to access quality hunting land.
- BGAP hunters hunted for an average of between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $2\frac{1}{2}$ days for deer and 2 and $2\frac{1}{3}$ days for antelope. The mean number of days hunted on BGAP properties increased over the 3 years for both species.
- BGAP hunters hunted on non-BGAP properties for an average of between 1 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ days for deer and between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $1\frac{1}{4}$ days for antelope.
- Most hunters (59-68%) did not scout BGAP properties before hunting on them.
- BGAP hunters did not report experiencing much interference from other hunters, non-hunters or ATV users while accessing BGAP properties.
- Over the 3 years of the pilot program, hunter satisfaction with the number of deer and/or antelope they saw declined, however, hunters remained satisfied with the amount of access the program granted them in Colorado.
- Most BGAP participating landowners learned about the program from CDOW staff.
- Most landowners agreed that hunters played an important management role on the lands they had enrolled in BGAP.
- Landowners perceived very little interference among BGAP hunters on their property.
- A majority of landowners in all 3 years of the pilot program were satisfied with the BGAP, and hunter behavior and felt that their interactions with BGAP hunters was positive.
- In 2007, landowners reported the lowest satisfaction with fees earned, but satisfaction increased in 2008 and 2009.
- A majority of landowners in all 3 years reported that it was likely they would continue their participation in the BGAP in the following year.
- The BGAP had moderate success at increasing landowners' tolerance for larger deer and antelope herds.

For more information:

For full text of this and other Human Dimensions reports and surveys, please contact Stacy Lischka at stacy.lischka@state.co.us or (303) 291-7279.