Another benefit of the PLOTS program is that it allows landowners to improve, enhance, or rehabilitate habitat. Working with the landowners and North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) biologists, we identify what can be done on the land to improve it for wildlife and the landowner's operational goals. The landowner benefits, the sportsmen benefit, and women benefit with the access, and of course, some make deer and other wildlife benefit as well.

Since last summer, 2016 MDF chapters in North Dakota set a goal to double our PLOTS (Prime Land Open To Sportsmen) program with a target of over 50,000 acres. Mission accomplished!!! Today MDF supports 217 PLOTS across western ND and agreements were signed for access to be open from three to 10 years. The Outdoor Heritage Funds have helped us leverage PLOTS with habitat improvement projects, but it is the State Mule Deer Tag raffle that provides the funds to support the PLOTS agreements.

This fall we will begin selling the 2018 statewide mule deer tag raffle and in January you will receive in the mail an opportunity to invest in PLOTS as well as buybows, as your purchase of these tickets is supporting access for you and others to North Dakota. Basically, for every $1.00 to $2.00 raised, that is an acre of PLOTS that we can sponsor for NI sportsmen and women. For those that live in central and eastern ND, for every dollar that we sponsor in western ND (prime mule deer habitat) that is a $5.00 to $10.00 increase, it is a win-win.

We are leveraging NDGFD's budgeted dollars to secure more PLOTS acreage statewide than what NDGFD is budgeted for, a win for the entire state.
Arnold Karsky, ND Youth Coordinator loves the trailer, “Freew my garage up!” Karsky continues “what is great about this trailer is the ability for any MDF volunteer to grab the trailer and take it to an event in their area.” The ND MULEY program now has a rolling billboard on the highways and events throughout North Dakota and there is space for five more sponsors on the trailer. This year, the trailer debut was at the MULEY days hosted by the Northern Badlands Chapter back in July. Karsky took it from there and has since hit both Buhler Coulee in Westhope and Medora, the NDPC annual fishing derby and a private company event. Coming up on September 24th is the Teddy Roosevelt Days in Bismarck at McDowell Dam where we will be running the pellet gun booth in front of 1500 plus kids. Arnold Karsky explains the private company event, “MIBI has been a major sponsor at our Teddy Roosevelt Chapter banquet every year and they approached us after seeing what we have been doing with our pellet and archery ranges.” Karsky continued “MIBI is expecting several hundred people at their company event and will be the opportunity for the kids and in return for our volunteers work, it making a donation to the TR Chapter in addition to their banquet donations.” Our exposure at city and commercial events has really caught the attention of people and we have seen an increase in attendance at our banquets as well as people having raised their hand to become a volunteer due to our MULEY connection.

On another note, I will be relocating back to North Dakota so that I can provide more support as well as develop new chapters in ND and SD. I am originally from Mandan and my wife is from Dickinson so we are excited to come back to ND after 30 years away from our families.

I will be looking at starting chapters east of the Missouri River, so if you or friends and family are interested in what a chapter does, please feel free to contact me at 605-855-8745 or marshallh-muledeer.org to answer your questions or to set up an informational meeting in your area. The Mule Deer Foundation has the mission, but it is the volunteers that make things happen. Help us help the mule deer of North Dakota.