

## Drinking and Guns Don't Mix

In July, two men drove around the Bear River Divide HMA north of Evanston while consuming alcohol and carrying rifles. The men spotted a doe mule deer and decided that they would shoot her. One man fired his .22 magnum rifle at the doe but missed. The second man fired his .30-06 rifle and hit the doe in the vitals. He then fired a second round into the deer's skull. The two men dragged the carcass to the edge of a nearby pond and left it to rot. The deer was shot near property owned by the Belle Butte Grazing Association (Association), which owns the private ground enrolled in the HMA. Following up on a report from a concerned citizen, Evanston Game Warden Nick Roberts talked to an employee for the Association who said he observed a vehicle with 19 county license plates that day. The employee described the vehicle in detail and also said he heard two or three shots from the area where the deer carcass was located. The next day Warden Roberts, along with Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas and Kemmerer Game Warden Chris Baird, combed the scene for any evidence. They were able to locate several items, including an empty box of .30-06 rifle rounds and an ATM receipt. The evidence led officers to one of the suspects. Warden Baird went to the man's address and observed a pickup matching the witness' description. Sitting on the passenger seat were two spent, large caliber rifle casings. Further investigation by Warden Roberts revealed that the man had been arrested for DUI on July 6. Police records showed that he was pulled over in Evanston just before 11 p.m. for a broken taillight and faulty exhaust in the same truck described by the witness leaving the area of the deer carcass a few hours earlier. On July 21, both men were charged with wanton destruction of a big game animal, taking a big game animal without a license, waste of edible portions of a big game animal, taking a big game animal during a closed season and hunting while intoxicated. On July 24, one suspect pled guilty to all charges. In total, he was ordered to pay \$775 in fines, court costs and restitution and had another \$2,000 in fines suspended. He was ordered to serve 720 days in jail with 700 days suspended. His hunting and fishing privileges were suspended for nine years. On December 20, the second suspect reached a plea agreement with the Uinta County Attorney's Office. He pled no contest to taking big game without a license, waste of a big game animal and hunting while intoxicated. He was ordered to pay \$165 in fines with \$1,000 in fines suspended and sentenced to 360 days of jail with 254 days suspended and 106 days credit served. His fishing privileges were suspended for four years and his hunting privileges were suspended for six years.

