

Committee Staff Summary for May 14, 2026 WRC

4. Private Lands Management Program**Today's Item**Information Action

Initial vetting and discussion for recommended amendments to regulations for the Department Private Lands Management Program.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Today's initial vetting | May 14, 2026; WRC |
| • Discussion and potential recommendations | September 10, 2026; WRC |
| • Present recommendations to the Commission | October 14-15, 2025 |

Background

The Private Lands Management (PLM) Program, administered by the Department, encourages private property owners within California to develop and implement wildlife habitat enhancement and management plans that actively encourage the propagation, conservation and wise use of the fish and wildlife species on their property, as well as to protect and enhance wildlife habitat.

Pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 3400 et seq, and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 601, applicants develop a management plan that is reviewed and approved by the Department, after which the Commission may approve the plan and grant a license for a period of five years. Each licensee is required to submit an annual report to the Department documenting that various requirements have been met, after which the Department provides the Commission with a recommendation for each license and whether it should be continued.

The PLM Program protects over one-million acres of habitat statewide.

Today's Meeting

Today, the Department will present several concepts for amendments to the regulations governing the PLM Program (Exhibit 1), for discussion. There will be another opportunity for discussion at the next meeting in September 2026, when the Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC) may develop a recommendation for Commission consideration.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [Department presentation](#)

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)



PRIVATE LAND MANAGEMENT

Regulatory Concepts for Consideration

PRESENTED BY: VICTORIA BARR

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Background

- Habitat loss in California
- 1979 Feasibility of private land management
- 1983 Authority to conduct the Private Land Management Program long-term



Intent of the Program

- To encourage private property owners to protect and enhance habitat and manage native wildlife on their lands
- 5-Year Management Plan
- Annual PLM License Agreement
- Updated PLM Handbook



A pond with livestock exclusion fencing at Stewart Ranch.

PLM Program Overview

124 PROPERTIES
ACROSS **26** COUNTIES

OVER **1,285,000** ACRES
OF WILDLIFE HABITAT

LARGEST PROPERTY

270,000 ACRES



SMALLEST PROPERTY

375 ACRES



Table 1. 2025 PLM Authorized Harvest by Species

Species	Authorized Harvest
Deer	1298
Elk	268
Antelope	17
Black Bear	19
Quail	475
Turkey	49

Table 2. 2025 Authorized Harvest by Region

Region	Authorized Harvest
1	935
2	419
3	13
4	564
5	200
6	13
Total	2126

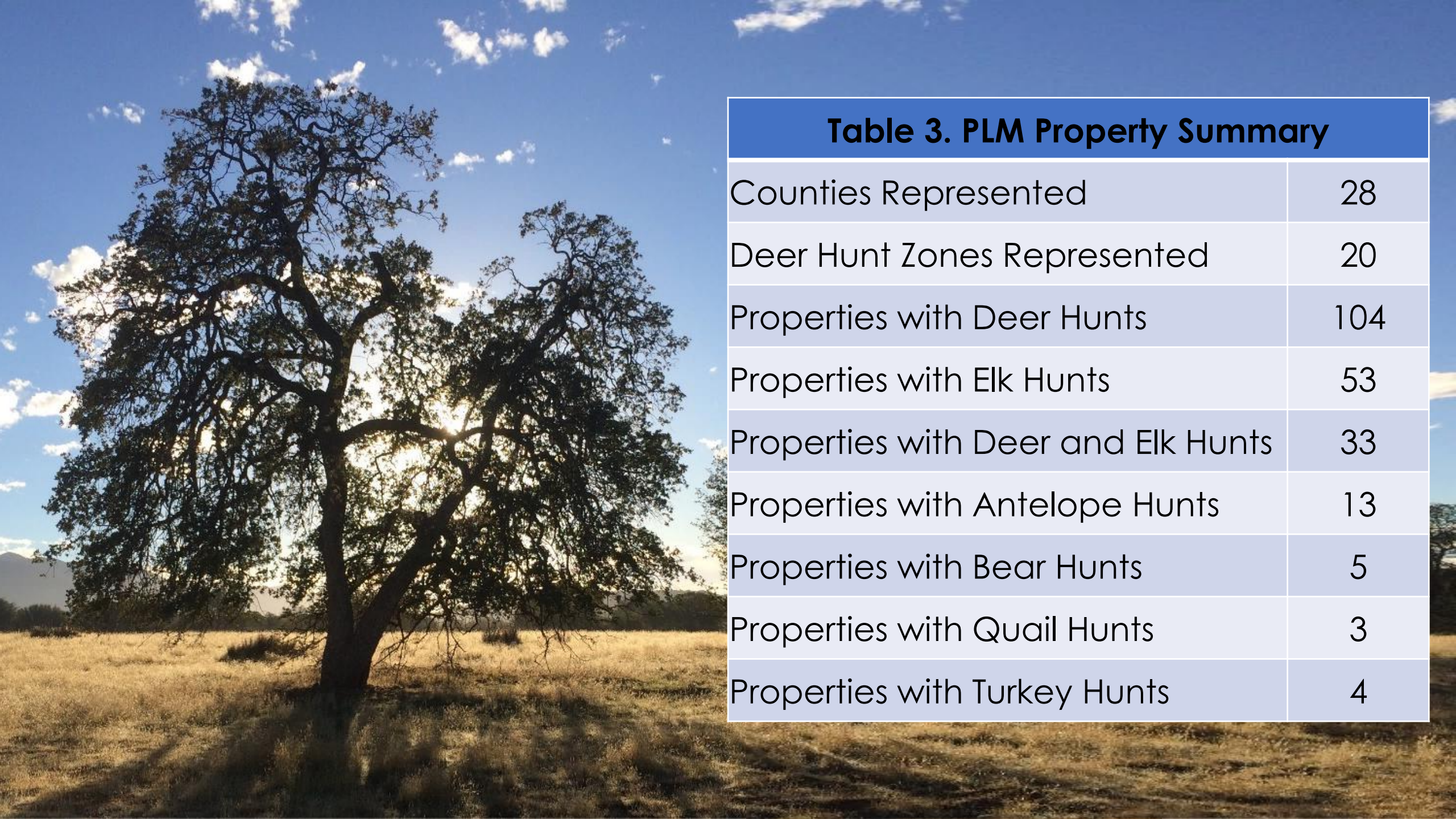


Table 3. PLM Property Summary

Counties Represented	28
Deer Hunt Zones Represented	20
Properties with Deer Hunts	104
Properties with Elk Hunts	53
Properties with Deer and Elk Hunts	33
Properties with Antelope Hunts	13
Properties with Bear Hunts	5
Properties with Quail Hunts	3
Properties with Turkey Hunts	4

Program Success

- Department and private property partnership
- Increased landowner participation
- Over 1.2 million acres
- Varied habitat restoration



A solar powered guzzler at R Wild Horse Ranch.

Department Access to PLM Properties



A wood duck box at 360 Ranch.

Challenge

Data gaps due to inaccessible lands.

Regulatory Concept

Allow access to Department staff as a condition of participation, especially for surveys of game animals taken under the PLM's plan.

Considerations

Limit to scheduled visits and known frequency.

Ability to adjust quotas and seasons based on science.

Agreement on activities and surveys permitted (species, locations etc.)

Public Access to PLM Properties



Turkeys at Bardin Ranch.

Challenge

Improve public access where hunting participation is limited due to high fees.

Regulatory Concept

Incorporate some form of public access as a condition of participation.

Considerations

Explore a ratio of PLM tags between private and public access PLM tags.

Removal From the PLM Program



Guzzler at 360 Ranch.

Challenge

Withdrawing a PLM operator by the Department may require a Fish and Game Code or Title 14 regulation violation conviction.

Regulatory Concept

Reasons for removal from the program may include:

- Not meeting stipulations put forth in license agreement
- Not being a good partner (e.g. not reporting tags, chronically late on deadlines, non-responsive, not completing work in management plan, not providing access, etc.)

5-Year renewals at the Department's discretion, not automatic.

Elk Tag Eligibility



Current Environment

Only one elk tag per person per license year under 364, 364.1, 555 and 555.1 as adopted at the April 16, 2026 Commission meeting.

Regulatory Concept

Include PLM tags in the one elk tag per license year.

Considerations

Bring regulation in line with April 2026 rulemaking decision.

A group of bull elk at Indian Valley Cattle Company.

Disease Testing



Hernandez Reservoir - Lewis Ranch

Current environment

Currently not a requirement to submit samples to the Department.

Regulatory Concept

Add requirement to send samples when requested to the Department for disease monitoring.

Tidy-up Regulations

- Remove unneeded requirement for USGS quadrangle maps
- Update, remove the Department's address



Questions

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