

Final guidance for administration and implementation of the deer management assistance program

The Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) provides habitat and herd management assistance to landowners interested in managing their property for wildlife. The program is identified and defined under Wis. Stat. § 29.020 and Wis. Admin. Code NR § 10.70. This finalized guidance would establish practices related to basic program information, the application process and timeline, private and publicly enrolled lands, landowner workshops, and a voluntary mentored hunting and trapping program.

This guidance was developed by department staff and we solicited comments on it from August 26 through September 16. All comments were considered and the final guidance is being made available to internal and external stakeholders. The department received 12 comments, mostly from individuals but also including comments from the WI County Forest Association and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. Many comments were supportive in nature. The department responded to questions contained in some comments and the original email/comments and responses are contained in the supporting documents for this guidance. Certain comments, such as ones relating to modifying deer management unit boundaries or the fees for antlerless permits under the DMAP program, were outside the scope of this guidance but the department will consider those in the future. No significant changes were made following the comment period.

- MORE -

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 8:36 PM
To: Wetzel, John
Cc: Wetzel, John
Subject: RE: DMAP

Hi John

I appreciate your comments and support for DMAP. I agree, it has a lot of potential to do good things for the wildlife resources in the state. We will see if interest in the program continues to grow...like you, I think that is a good problem to have. The number of applications we received increased from 2014 to 2015; however, the average size of the properties decreased. We do offer and promote group cooperatives that encourages landowners to work together. That is an area that I intend to spend more of my time working on. We will continue to learn from participants and adjust as needed. We received a 93% customer satisfaction rating from 2014 participants, which is great to know we are meeting expectations in the first year. Just need to keep the momentum and interest going. Thanks again for your thoughts.

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Bob Nack
Phone: (608) 264-6137
Robert.Nack@wisconsin.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: John Wetzel [<mailto:john769@centurytel.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 2:59 PM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Cc: Wetzel, John
Subject: DMAP

Comments: DMAP Guidance

A Great Program with a Lot of Potential!

I commend the DNR for initiating the DMAP Program. It can only promote better deer management and citizen cooperation in the state.

However, it may become so popular that specific DMAP specialist will need to be hired - but what a positive. DMAP has a lot of potential but the DNR needs to continually look ahead and consult with participants regarding potential improvements.

I'm also sure that you realize that Level 2 and in most cases level 3 are not adequate to independently manage a deer herd. Along with habitat management advise and help with antlerless harvests, this fact has to be clearly spelled out.

I envision that there will be some larger landowners enter the Program (3-5,00 Plus Acres). Will you need another Level for such landowners as more work will be required and probably more stringent rules for minimum antler less harvests and habitat improvement projects?

To: Kurt Thiede
Tom Hauge
Kevin Wallenfang

June 22, 2015

From: John Wetzel (608-526-4238)

Subject: Strengthening and Better Coordination of Deer Management, Especially in Northern Wisconsin

I have felt for some time that the Department does not place enough emphasis, resources or coordination toward deer management (disregarding CWD) considering the importance of deer from a host of standpoints - hunter interest, state and Dept. economics, politics, etc. Perhaps there is now a window to improve this situation with cuts to the research wing and discussion of incorporating researchers into the management bureaus.

I would propose that two Deer Units be set up in Northern Wisconsin (and perhaps one in the central forest). These Units would be attached to the Bureau of Wildlife Management with responsibilities of coordinating management, conducting research and disseminating information on deer while actively engaging and working with other agencies, conservation groups, CDACs, Conservation Congress, hunters and the general public as well as the media to provide information and a better understanding of the deer resources in their area. Each Unit could consist of researchers and biologists. (Ideally, a forester would also be a permanent member.) Local DNR wildlife biologists and carnivore specialists would also be automatic members. Local DNR foresters, county foresters, Forest Service wildlife biologists and foresters would also be invited to join.

It would be the Units responsibility to undertake habitat assessments for deer for various sections/counties in their area, determine carrying capacities, determine/research problem areas, provide coordinated management plans and goals to improve habitat and populations, and review and document progress. The Unit would also design and carry out a whole range of needed research. In all instances this work would be discussed, coordinated and hopefully assisted by local groups as mentioned above.

The above is a proposal to strengthen deer management, especially in the north, provide a better avenue to engage and inform the public, and provide local wildlife biologist the opportunity to concentrate on land management objectives by relieving them of some of their current day-to-day responsibilities for public contacts regarding deer. If they should want to stay closely engaged with the public they would be better able to do so as members and in coordination with the Deer Units.

I am sure you can improve upon and expand the above idea but the objective of placing greater emphasis and resources on deer management definitely needs to be undertaken by the

Department and Bureau of Wildlife Management. I believe you have a unique opportunity to take this step today!

The Best -

John Wetzel

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Sent: Friday, September 04, 2015 10:01 AM
To: Brian Bashynski
Subject: RE: Deer MAP

Hi Brian

I appreciate you taking the time to review the document and to share your thoughts. DMAP services is available for public land as well to improve habitat for deer and other wildlife and to provide hunting opportunities. Public land was first allowed to enroll in 2015 and there was little interest from property managers. That may change as the program develops. The public and our wildlife benefit from proper habitat management on private and public lands. In some cases, harvesting deer is necessary to provide quality habitat for deer and other species. I appreciate your comments.

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Bob Nack

Phone: (608) 264-6137

Robert.Nack@wisconsin.gov

From: Brian Bashynski [<mailto:bbashy0813@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Thursday, September 03, 2015 9:52 AM

To: Nack, Robert R - DNR

Subject: Deer MAP

I think the DNR needs to quickly move away from any suggestions made by Dr Kroll. Most of his suggestions are not based on science. And none of his experience are based on Wisconsin natural resource experience.

This MAP program seems to be perilously leaning toward European hunting, where private landowners get perks and benefits the public does not.

Brian Bashynski
Muskego, WI
414-422-4782

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2015 8:32 AM
To: Gregory Wurz
Subject: RE: Proposed guidance DMAP ~ Public Comments

Hi Greg –

Thanks for submitting your comments on the program. Your suggestion below was considered and discussed by the DMAP advisory committee and the department. As you know, DMAP focuses on improving habitat for deer and other wildlife, which may include the need to harvest antlerless deer. The committee and department felt that publically announcing landowners that receive tags would reduce interest in program participation and that many of the landowners may not need assistance harvesting deer.

We did develop a voluntary mentored hunting and trapping program for DMAP landowners to participate in. Interested landowners will submit an application and they will be paired with organizations that provide mentor hunting and trapping opportunities. This program may help landowners with property goals and promote hunting and trapping to future generations.

Again, thank you for your comments and let me know if you have any additional questions.

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Bob Nack

Phone: (608) 264-6137

Robert.Nack@wisconsin.gov

From: Gregory Wurz [<mailto:maawurz@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2015 4:54 PM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: Proposed guidance DMAP ~ Public Comments

Good Afternoon Mr. Nack,

The only thing I would like to see added to the DMAP program is when property owners are issued antlerless deer kill tags, their information would be posted on the WI-DNR website. This way if the DMAP property owner is looking for assistance in harvesting some antlerless deer off their property, deer hunters could call the DMAP property owner so they can help each other out.

This could be almost set up like the Ag Crop Damage page on the WI-DNR website.

Thank you:
Greg Wurz

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 9:08 PM
To: Williquette, Mark
Subject: RE: Program Guidance Comment-DMAP

Hi Mark

Thanks for reviewing the DMAP guidelines and for sharing your thoughts. We do have the links in the document now working. I addressed your questions in the paragraph below. Thank you again.

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Visit our survey at <http://dnr.wi.gov/customersurvey> to evaluate how I did.

Bob Nack
Phone: (608) 264-6137
Robert.Nack@wisconsin.gov

From: Williquette, Mark [mailto:MWilliquette@chw.org]
Sent: Tuesday, September 01, 2015 12:04 PM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: Program Guidance Comment-DMAP

Hello Mr. Nack,

With regard to the Proposed Guidance Document for the Administration and Implementation of DMAP, you may not be aware that the links to the "Online Application System", "paper copy" and "application Instructions" and others to review information are not working within the .pdf document, therefore it is hard to review this information. I was able to get to this information from the DMAP webpage however.

That said, I do have a few questions with regard to a level 1 participant. Has there been any discussion or are there any plans now or in the future to force a landowner who is enrolled in the program to open their land to the public especially in the case of Closed Managed Forest? **This was discussed by the DMAP advisory committee, which consists of DNR staff and representatives from 16 conservation organizations or agencies. They felt that requiring public access would significantly reduce participation in the program and the overall intent is to promote sound habitat management. The Department's Natural Resources Board supported this decision.**

Secondly, In terms of land that is the MFL program, where there is already in place a forest management plan that needs to be approved by the DNR, can adjustments be made to that plan based on recommendations that may come out of a DMAP improvement plan and would any wildlife (deer) improvements jeopardize the MFL plan? I would think that the department would allow for certain changes to increase wildlife populations within reason and still meet the requirements of MFL? **Yes, MFL plans can be amended to account for wildlife habitat recommendations. This can be accomplished with support from the forester assigned to the property.**

Lastly, It appears to me that the emphasis on getting assistance from a DNR Forester to work with landowners is shifting to private foresters, who often charge consulting fees etc, where a few years ago, it was relatively simple to meet with a DNR forester and discuss forest management for a particular property. At least that has been our experience in Florence County where my family owns land. With the implementation of DMAP at level 1, if what I am reading is true, a landowner is pointed towards informational resources and not necessarily hands on, boots on the ground assistance. Level 2 and 3 members will get site visits as part of membership. Won't that put extra strain on already limited resources

of DNR forestry staff? How then does the department intend to assist land owners in a timely manner? Great points. You are correct about forestry involvement at levels 2 and 3. We attempt to keep the forester involvement to a minimum, asking them to assist with site visits and review of management plans. Wildlife Management staff are charged with coordinating the site visit, gathering background information, and writing the management plan and property reports. In the first two years of this program, we have been able to address the workload with existing wildlife and forestry staff. If the program continues to grow each year, then we will have to look at different avenues to get the work done in a timely manner. As the program continues to grow, that will be a good challenge to have.

Thank you in advance for your assistance answering these questions. I believe that the DMAP program will be of benefit to the members who want to be active participants in the management of both the forest and its wildlife on their properties, It should also help both sides break down the "US VS. THEM" mentality in terms of deer management and hunting in our great state. I agree Mark. I do not personally own land, but I share the excitement of landowners that want to do good things for the wildlife on their property. I've found that many landowners enrolled in DMAP are very willing to share their experiences with others. It's a great opportunity to learn together. Thanks again for your comments and interest in the program.

I appreciate your input.

Mark Williquette
S73W14966 Candlewood Lane
Muskego, WI 53150

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Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2015 9:22 AM
To: Gilbert, Jonathan
Subject: RE: DMAP guidance public review

Hi Jonathan

Thanks for your comments on the DMAP guidelines. I addressed them below. Take care.

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Bob Nack

Phone: (608) 264-6137

Robert.Nack@wisconsin.gov

From: Jonathan Gilbert [<mailto:jjgilbert@qlifwc.org>]
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2015 9:59 AM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: RE: DMAP guidance public review

Bob

I have looked over the guidance. Thanks for the notice and opportunity.

A couple of quick observations.

None of the links to report forms or data collection instructions seemed to work for me. **We will look into this. Thanks.** I would like to see some of those. **Let me know which ones and I will send them to you.**

I have questions about data collected under this program, both on public and private land. Some of the sections mention that summaries of data will be available in reports, but not all data have this language. Particularly the section on the forest assessment including browse survey did not talk about the availability of data. **We currently provide this information in the property management plans for private landowners. However, we need to work on a simple report that summarizes this information for public land as well. We will need to work on that and bring it up for discussion at our DMAP committee meeting.** To what extent will the data collected under DMAP be available either to resource managers or to the public. And would this answer vary depending on the land ownership (private, MFL, public). **All the data is subject to open records requests...private or public ownership.**

I will be interested to see how the enforcement of property boundaries goes in the future. Taking deer off of adjacent land may be an issue, especially if that adjacent land is public.

Thanks again. Hope all is going well with you.

jon

Jonathan Gilbert Ph.D.
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September 17, 2015

Bob Nack
Section Chief, Big Game Management
WDNR Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Regarding: administration and implementation of DMAP

Dear Bob,

Please accept these comments from Wisconsin County Forests Association regarding proposed program guidance for administration and implementation of DMAP. As you are aware, WCFA represents the interests of 29 county forests established under state statutes §28.10 and §28.11. Collectively our member counties manage nearly 2.4 million acres of forests, the largest public ownership in the state.

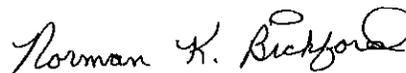
Over the past several years, members of our organization have served on various groups and advisory committees focused on deer issues in general and recently, more specifically on DMAP. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in these efforts.

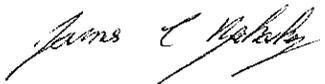
We also appreciate the work done to date enabling DMAP to move forward in Wisconsin both on private and public lands.

At this time, we have no real issues with the program guidance as presented. We hope to continue involvement with this program and other deer management related issues as Wisconsin moves forward with implementation of programs and polices resulting from the Deer Trustee Report (TDR).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input, if we can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,


Norman K. Bickford, President
Wisconsin County Forests Association


James C. Zahasky, President
Wisconsin County Forest Administrators

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: corkyhilary <corkyhilary@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Saturday, September 05, 2015 7:12 PM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: Comments

This program is great. I am finding the resources to be very helpful (e.g. building the deer fence). Janet Brehm in Wausaukee has been very helpful, going above and beyond in getting me information and answering my questions.

You all are really doing a great job.

Corky Schnadt

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE smartphone

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: McCaffery, Keith R - DNR
Sent: Thursday, September 03, 2015 9:00 AM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: DMAP Guidance

Dear Bob,

A few nits and ticks of no substance:

1. On p.6 #5 the diameter of the plot shown (11.78 ft) is for 0.01 acre, not a milacre which is 3.72 ft in diameter.
2. On p.9 #2.5.4 para 2 line 4: ...complete a forest habitat... (typo)
3. On p.10 para 1: Public properties are limited to showing boundaries by physical features while all private properties are allowed to use invisible survey lines. Hmmm? Private in-holdings will also complicate public land administration.
4. Good luck!

Keith McCaffery
Science Services, emeritus
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Rhineland WI 54501
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Keith.McCaffery@Wisconsin.gov



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Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Gerry Mich <gerry.mich@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 03, 2015 2:21 PM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: DMAP public comment

Wildlife Administration and Implementation of the Deer Management Assistance Program
Management (DMAP)
September 3, 2015

Hi Bob,

I have reviewed the proposed program guidance open for public comment. I would like to suggest that the cost for antlerless tags be reduced to \$2 which is closer to what I understand is the actual cost of making and printing the tag instead of \$6. When the tag system is updated soon, the tag cost should reflect that true cost.

My rationale is that for someone who is trying to run a tree farm as a business the inflated cost is an unnecessary expense. I heard that the price was set so as to not "diminish the value of the resource." The DNR wildlife biologist and forester have already determined that my farm is overpopulated with deer and would be more in balance with the carrying capacity if the numbers were decreased. I would say that their opinion reflects the true value of the resource. The price of the tag is mostly an accounting issue.

I understand that the DNR faces the middle management position of having to listen to those above and those below. I get it. You don't want the program to face criticism for making it too easy to take out more deer when many think there are never enough. When they stop eating my oak plantation, killing motorcyclists or causing car collisions I will relax.

That is my opinion.

Gerry Mich

9636 Lois Lane

Appleton WI 54914

920-750-8284

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Rick Yedica <rayedica@outlook.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 9:56 PM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: Dmap

Reviewed the Dmap report and found the info very interesting. As the program increases it will be interesting to see how the data changes. As a type two member I found the info interesting, helpful and in some cases eye opening!, The staff in the Wausaukee area are top notch and very helpful in helping us manage our land! The only fact that's a little misleading are the %noted because of the small number of active sites in the Dmap program. As more sites come onboard the % could change considerably, but that's a fact that's driven by the baseline number of sites. keep the great info coming!!

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Charles Ziegler <whitetails33@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 9:10 AM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: DMAP Public Comment

Bob,

My property in Monroe County is a 2015 DMAP enrollment property. My co-owner established a level 3 co-op with neighbors. So far we've had 2 co-op meetings (one in which the DNR forester and Wildlife Biologist attended), attended the DMAP workshop in Monroe County and our property site visit with the forester and biologist.

I think this program has excellent potential for educating the public regarding wildlife management (especially white tailed deer). I believe educating the public will help the DNR gain more public trust which will help manage the deer herd more efficiently.

The public has a lot of misconceptions about deer and deer management.

I am a natural resources professional; so I thought some of the information presented at the DMAP workshop wasn't real informative. The DMAP property visits were interesting.

Chad Ziegler

Loomans, Scott D - DNR

From: Dennis Kuen <drkuen2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 9:11 PM
To: Nack, Robert R - DNR
Subject: Re: DMAP cooperators update - #2

Bob,

The DMAP document refers to a 11.8 foot radius as 1/1000th of an acre. I believe it should say 1/100th of an acre. They told me there wasn't going to be any math!

Dennis Kuen

On Wed, Sep 2, 2015 at 2:49 PM, <Robert.Nack@wisconsin.gov> wrote:
DMAP Cooperators –

I forgot to share this in my previous update. The department is required to provide a 21-day public comment period on staff guidance documents. We have completed this guidance for the DMAP program and I would encourage you to review the document at the link below. Any comments you would like to share should be directed to me by September 16. Thank you.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/news/input/Guidance.html>

I also wanted to share a comment I received from a DMAP cooperator in response to the apple tree project in my previous update. I'm sharing this purely for your information. Have a great rest of the day. Bob Nack, DMAP Coordinator.

"Thank you for the update. I have several apple trees what you could consider a mini orchard , and the pictures I capture on my field camera show plenty of deer enjoying the apples . I've had multiple bucks on pictures. I planted several food plots for the deer, it included a verity of plants two other plots were just buckwheat. I was surprised to see little if any deer feeding from these plots. Only conclusion I have is there is an abundance of food sources to choose from other than my food plots."