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Resolution # Oconto #1

Wisconsin deer hunting has been the center of controversy during the last year.

Over the last couple years deer hunters have voiced their displeasure with the direction deer hunting has taken in Wisconsin. Things like October T-Zones, Earn-A-Buck and reduced deer numbers in many areas have threatened the traditions and enjoyment long associated with the sport.

The DNR listened and with qualifications, worked out a plan with the major deer hunting groups that many expected would reverse this trend. At least for a 2-year trial period, it removed T-Zones and improved Earn-A-Buck by allowing hunters to "earn" their buck anytime during the previous year. Because the DNR is required to keep the deer herd under control, other measures, like a more acceptable and effective mid-December antlerless hunt was part of the plan.

There was genuine enthusiasm that if hunters did their part under this plan by removing enough antlerless deer, Wisconsin had taken real steps to improve the quality of our deer hunting experience.

Many hunters know what happened next. The Wisconsin Association of Snowmobile Clubs decided that they didn't want deer hunters to have the opportunity to gun hunt in mid-December, because in their mind it was incompatible with snowmobiling. Hunters came to a hearing in Madison and completely dispelled that myth, but because of their political clout, snowmobilers were able to persuade the legislative Joint Committee on Natural Resources to reject the hunting season package. The repercussions of that action have been reverberating around the state ever since. Because the DNR and deer hunting groups wouldn't adjust hunting seasons to meet their demands, one legislator even introduced legislation to take over deer management himself.

For the moment, deer hunting is back to square one. The rule package has now been turned over to the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules. That committee has now scheduled a hearing at the Capitol on the morning of April 18th to determine if the comprehensive plan to improve deer hunting will go forward.

In consideration of this situation, we would like your input on the following resolution:

Whereas deer hunting is a large part of Wisconsin's heritage and economy,

and, Whereas deer hunting is best protected and regulated by a science-based approach that provides a quality hunting experience to all the various user groups,

And, Whereas we, as deer hunters, object to the denial of viable hunting opportunity based on the whims of non-hunting groups,

Therefore, be it resolved that we respectfully request that the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules promptly approve the comprehensive deer hunting package advanced for approval by the Board of Natural Resources.

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