DMAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

5/20/2014 – GEF II, Madison

Introductions:

Bob Nack who is the committee chair and DMAP coordinator for the DNR provided a welcome for the morning and facilitated introductions. The great majority of committee members in attendance tuned in via conference call. Membership from agencies and organizations in attendance included: Safari Club International, DNR Area Supervisor, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Pheasants Forever, DNR Bureau of Science Services, DNR Forester, DNR Forest Wildlife Specialist, Whitetails Unlimited and Ruffed Grouse Society. Membership organizations not in attendance included: US Forest Service, National Wild Turkey Federation, Quality Deer Management Association, Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association, Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association, Wisconsin County Forest Association, Wisconsin Consulting Foresters, DNR Wildlife Biologists, My Wisconsin Woods, Wisconsin Hunters Rights Coalition and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Bob took a moment to introduce Meredith Penthorn who is a newly appointed communications specialist within the Deer Program and has already been working on DTR and DMAP related communications items. Also in attendance via conference call were Steve Ninneman and Doug Seidel from the Wisconsin Conservation Congress who were members of the original DMAP Action Team during the DTR implementation process. Natural Resources Board member, Greg Kazmierski, was in attendance. Any additional items that people would like to add to the agenda at this time? No additional agenda items were mentioned.

Human dimensions survey: This topic was discussed very briefly at the last meeting. Essentially, a big part of any program is to know you're being successful and meeting the needs of any customers. This year when people are accepted into the program, they'll receive a congratulatory email and access to a link to where they can go and complete the survey. When their 3-year enrollment is up they would be sent another survey to gauge their thoughts and opinions and their general experience with the program.

- Bob Nack opened it up for Bob Holsman who is a committee member and Social Scientist in charge of the survey to provide any further information. Bob Holsman said the basic concept is that enrollees will take a questionnaire at the time of enrollment. This could be done online and incorporated into previous information we already have about the enrollee.
    - Basically from the survey we'd like to know who they are and what their perceptions are, and at the end of the 3-year enrollment have them take a similar survey in order to assess change. The idea is to key in on measuring the extent of which the positive changes occurred.
- One comment from the group was that on questions on both pre and post surveys regarding deer harvest the survey should say "all gun seasons" in order to successfully capture all seasons rather than just the 9-day gun deer season.

- GLIFWC: This survey is appropriate, but is there any intent or interest in doing a similar survey with the public land portion of DMAP?
    - Is this going to be issued to people at all three levels? And is it going to be optional or mandatory? Initial thoughts were to provide it to people at all levels. There were some initial thoughts on making it a requirement for people at the higher levels.
    - If you're going to participate in the program, you should have to complete this survey.
    - If you force people to answer a question who don't want to answer it then the reliability of their answers is questionable.
- Would defer to Bob Holsman in that the risk of making it voluntary is you have a harder time interpreting the results because you are only getting it from a certain subset or respondents.
- Do you anticipate anyone enrolling in DMAP that also is enrolled in Agricultural Damage system? If that is captured on the original application it probably doesn't need to be captured on the questionnaire.
- One goal is to strengthen the relationship that we talked about. Could we still have a good relationship but not share similar values? There may be some other parts that we'll want to measure there.
- Should we provide people with a good reference point to get an idea of deer density on their property? However, not leading them with x number of deer per acre. Could we simply put it as how many deer would you expect to see on your property?
- Should we include a question on what other wildlife species there is an interest in on their property?
- Need to include a question regarding having deer in balance with habitat on the property.

Antlerless tag allocation: In the case for issuing antlerless tags we wanted to give our biologists some sort of structure to use as a starting point to begin those discussions. Part of the site visit is going to include a browse survey. Brad Hutnik and Dustin Bronson are working on putting together a very basic browse survey that foresters will do when they visit the property to give an indication of deer impacts.

- Tied to habitat and not specifically perception of the landowner. Is defensible against people who may be criticizing the DMAP program for issuing antlerless tags.
- Looking for a way to determine at a broad level when a population would increase, stabilize, or decrease. This is a starting point for those discussions and if there are other factors in play that may lead the biologist to alter their recommendations for antlerless harvest.
- This is similar to other states because we have discussed with them how they issue antlerless tags, but we believe our method is improved from that.

- GLIFWC: Browse survey will almost be a deterministic thing in order to indicate whether there is a need for increased antlerless harvest on the property. The point of this program is to improve relations between DNR and landowners
    - The survey was going to determine whether the objective was to increase, stabilize or decrease. It needs to be much more flexible and interactive between the data and the landowner's objectives. It will more play the role in being a starting point with setting objectives for the land.
    - Success rate should be built into this program at some point. Numbers don't take into account winter severity. Numbers should be re-looked at.
- From a Forestry point of view, we won't be making people buy these tags and kill these deer it will simply be a recommendation. We may have a situation where Foresters will see significant browse damage and there will be conversation about what quality habitat means.
- What we're looking at is antlerless harvest, and not necessarily doe harvest. This as well as success rates should be a consideration when providing antlerless tags.
- Each case will have to be looked at individually and a decision made by the biologist, forester and the landowner.
- Also the cost should be considered when providing these tags.
- We're looking at harvest as the tool to bring the balance. Overall, that is the mistake that we have done for a long time that has created walls and divides. Another alternative is to artificially create more browse and provide supplemental food plots. The DMAP customer needs to have both options at their disposal.

DMAP numbers update: See attached tables.

- Largest application so far is 7500 acres which would be a great opportunity to get some good results.
- Open period for applications in levels 2 and 3 is up until May 30th.
- Hearing back from folks that have been responding to Young Forest mailing and have been giving them information on DMAP in case they are confusing the two programs. Young Forest has a lot of similar qualities with DMAP but not all DMAP interested landowners may not be a good fit for the Young Forest Initiative.

Outreach materials: Bob Nack raised the question of whether or not committee members would like anything specific to provide for their membership and help get the word out about DMAP. Suggestions included a couple of one-page handouts, a banner and a brochure and a placard to help draw people's attention to the handouts.

DMAP staffing: The DMAP program is a high priority for the Secretary's office. We briefed them a couple of weeks ago and they are very excited about the specific components of the program.

Public comment: Members of the original DMAP Action Team during the DTR process were complimentary in saying "keep up the good work". There are going to be challenges that will need to be worked out along the line but things are looking good.

Next meeting date: The next meeting will be on June 27th at a location to be determined. The landowner agreement and DMAP management plan will be main topics of discussion.