

Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday May 5th, 2016

9:00 a.m.

Izaak Walton League Conservation Center - Stevens Point, WI

Committee members in attendance:

Bob Nack – *WDNR (DMAP coordinator & committee chair)*
Dan Goltz – *WDNR (SOD representative)*
Jake Walcisak – *County Forest Association*
Robert Holsman – *WDNR (Science Services)*
Rachel Brookins – *WDNR (NED representative)*
Mark Rasmussen – *WDNR (WCD representative)*
Scott Anderson – *US Forest Service (filling in for Dan Eckland)*

Al Lobner – *Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association*
Bill McCrary – *Wisconsin Bowhunters Association*
Darcy Kind – *WDNR (Natural Heritage Conservation)*
James Lanier – *Quality Deer Management Association*
Jeremy Holtz – *WDNR (NOD representative)*
Mike Spors – *Whitetails Unlimited*
Dan Dessecker – *Ruffed Grouse Society*
Brad Hutnik – *WDNR (Division of Forestry)*

Guests:

Derek Johnson – *WDNR (Assistant DMAP Coordinator)*
Curt Rollman – *WDNR (Young Forest Partnership)*
Loren Hanson

Not in attendance:

Marlin Laidlaw – *Wisconsin Conservation Congress*
Mike Pjevach – *Safari Club International*
Tom Fisher – *Hunters Rights Coalition*
Jonathan Gilbert – *Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission*
Steve Swenson – *My Wisconsin Woods*

Doug Fendry – *Pheasants Forever*
Rick Horton – *National Wild Turkey Federation*
Ralph Fritsch – *Wisconsin Wildlife Federation*
Steve Gress – *Wisconsin Consulting Foresters Association*
Kurt Waterstradt – *US Fish & Wildlife Service*

Agenda was approved as written.

Review of 2016 and total DMAP enrollment numbers

The committee reviewed the prior year in DMAP, enrollment and acreage numbers, and applications received each year. 2014 was a pilot year with a one month open enrollment period and 2015 was the first full year of enrollment. From 2015 to 2016, level 1 applications dropped about 30, but level 2 & 3 applications increased about 14. There were 3 - 4 DMAP cooperators that upgraded from level 1 to levels 2 or 3 (if eligible). They have the option to upgrade before the March 1st deadline.

The committee discussed the map of the total enrolled DMAP acreage by county. In year one the Northcentral part of the state (Price, Taylor, and Oneida) was the busy area. In year two (2015) there continued to be interest in the north, with additional interest in west-central WI (Monroe, Jackson) and southern Wisconsin. In year three (2016), a few counties stood out (Marinette, Iowa, and Outagamie) with an increase in applications from the previous year.

Advertising DMAP

The DNR has used the following to advertise the program: news releases, gov. delivery emails, chats, cooperator recommendations, Facebook, deer regulations booklet, CDAC meetings, etc. The program was heavily advertised in late winter to get more people signed up before the deadline and it worked well.

DMAP Workload

Each wildlife district representative was asked to give an update on the DMAP workload in their area.

Southern District (SOD) – The workload has been manageable with a couple Level 2 or 3 enrollments in a county; but if it ever got to 5+, it would be hard to keep up and do a good/quality job.

Northeastern District (NED) –It is getting busy with adjacent county biologists and technicians assisting with site visits and management plans. Everyone wants to do a good job and make a quality product/experience; it just takes time to get there. Some NED staff would like the management plan as a word document template that could be filled in with their own content. They don't like the 'canned' appearance of the plan. Some staff in the WCD is saying the same.

West-central District (WCD) –The workload in this district is maxed out. It doesn't look as bad this year, but last year biologists and technicians were assisting across county lines.

Northern District (NOD) –This district has a high number of enrollees and workload each year is anticipated to increase as we have new and re-enrollees at the same time. Some staff in this district has noted that there isn't enough time to create a quality product. The staff acknowledges that this is an important program, but sees areas where it's creating unsatisfactory results.

All district representatives concurred that a lot of landowners are enrolling and are very enthusiastic about the site visit, but drop out of touch after receiving the management plan. They also like the resources page and many like the updates every other week.

Review of 2015/2016 workshops and future plans

In 2015 staff held 4 workshops in areas of high enrollment numbers, but still spread out geographically. There were an average of 20 attendees, of which could've included members or their neighbors/family members. One comment that came out of those was to increase talk on deer biology and ecology.

DMAP staff planned for two workshops in March/April 2016, one at Treehaven near Tomahawk and another at Upham Woods, near Wisconsin Dells. The Treehaven workshop was cancelled due to low attendance. The April 9th workshop at Upham Woods in the Wisconsin Dells was sponsored by QDMA and WTU. We had 63 in attendance, including 8 DNR staff/speakers.

For the 2016 summer we are planning 5 workshops. We are currently nailing down the locations and logistics for them, but right now we are thinking there will be workshops in these counties: Sawyer, Marinette, Jefferson, Buffalo and Juneau. We are also going to try some different formats; some will include an indoor morning with talks and a property visit in the afternoon, others will be all outdoors.

Update on deer biologist positions

The committee discussed the recent announcement to hire 2 permanent deer biologists, who are intended to reduce the increased workload put on local field staff. Two positions were recently advertised and 45 applications were received through the open recruitment process. Staff suggested the new deer biologists to get more in depth training on deer management, especially new techniques. This way they can be an internal resource for other DMAP staff and landowners. The Wildlife Policy Team asked to have the new deer biologists coordinate these trainings.

DMAP promo video

The committee discussed the details of a DMAP promo video that is under production. Footage and cooperator interviews were collected at the Upham Woods DMAP workshop.

UW-SP & DMAP conservation corps proposal

We are working with UW-SP to get a work crew assembled that would assist landowners. They would implement DMAP recommendations from their management plans. It wouldn't be free to the landowner, but cheaper than some other options and it would be good experience for the students.

Update on DMAP mentored hunting/trapping program

The program pairs landowners with mentoring groups to provide mentored hunting and trapping opportunities. In 2015, there were 2 landowners and 4 organizations interested in the program. One additional landowner has been added in 2016.

Work with NRCS on management plans

DNR field staff suggested creating DMAP plans that would qualify landowners for cost-share programs. The DNR is working with the NRCS to incorporate the minimum requirements for certain management practices. At this time we are focusing on two common management practices, brush management and early successional habitat work.

Annual Harvest Reports – add CWD/EHD/sick deer information

The committee covered the current content of the Annual Harvest Report. It was noted that this report is a great way to get the news out to cooperators about CWD news, CDAC seats, etc. Staff stated that it should be more graphical, which should increase use of data entry and report.

DMAP after year 3

The committee discussed potential program ideas, while keeping the following goals in mind. We want landowners to stay involved and be engaged, conduct habitat work, get a wildlife return on investment from their work, and recruit new enrollees.

Committee recommendation: After year 3, allow the landowner to: 1) re-enroll at level 1 with no additional cost, 2) re-enroll at level 2 or 3 (if eligible) and pay the fee to receive a site visit from the wildlife biologist, or 3) quit the program. The involvement of the forester would be optional, and at the request of the biologist depending on the habitat project and landowner interest.

The second site visit would include revisiting the forest assessment points to collect browse survey info, but not include taking photos of the understory. The biologist will review the management plan with the landowner and provide any new recommendations using the MyDMAP database.

DMAP tag sales for private landowners

Some industrial landowners and non-profit organization landowners expressed interest in not having to sell tags themselves, but would be interested if the DNR would sell DMAP tags for them through GoWILD. The committee reviewed the discussion on what would be considered private and public land for DMAP purposes. The committee discussed the pro's and con's to doing this, including providing increased harvest opportunities, addressing tree regeneration concerns, and site specific deer management.

Committee recommendation: Move forward to look into adjusting administrative rule language to allow the department to sell DMAP private land tags at the request of the landowner. Landowners that choose this option should be charged a handling/processing fee.

DMAP on public land

The committee discussed interest received from Bayfield and Marinette counties to enroll public land in DMAP. Discussion occurred if there should be an educational component with DMAP that might generate more support for the program. Committee members suggested putting together a toolbox or checklist for public land managers to follow as they prepare to submit an application for approval from county forest committees.

DMAP enrollment fees

The committee discussed ideas for how the DMAP enrollment fees collected by the DNR could be spent.

Committee recommendation: Consider the following are options for spending this money 1) Develop a grant program to support habitat work on DMAP properties, 2) Create and provide DMAP property signs, 3) Purchase deer exclosure materials for landowners. All recommendations will undergo legal review.

Public comments

Bob read public comments submitted by Greg Wurz. No comments or action suggested by the committee.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 2:30 P.M.