

DMAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

6/27/2014 – Boston School Forest, Plover

Introductions:

Bob Nack who is the committee chair and DMAP coordinator for the DNR provided a welcome for the morning. Membership from agencies and organizations in attendance included: DNR Wildlife Biologists, US Forest Service, DNR Area Supervisor, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin County Forest Association, Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association, Pheasants Forever, Whitetails Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and Hunters Rights Coalition. Membership organizations not in attendance included: Ruffed Grouse Society, Safari Club International, Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Quality Deer Management Association, Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, DNR Forester, My Wisconsin Woods, Wisconsin Consulting Foresters and DNR Bureau of Science Services. One member from the Conservation Congress who sat on the original DMAP Action Team committee during the Deer Trustee Report process was in attendance as a guest. These are public meetings so anyone who wants to attend and engage in the discussion is welcome.

DNR staff training summary: Bob went through with the committee the DNR staff training that was done earlier in the month (for an overview of the presentation see attached).

- ***Landowner agreement:***
 - How many hard copy applications were received with our suite of total applications? We had less than 10 hard copy applications submitted.
 - Once a landowner agreement is filled out electronically can it be printed out? Yes.
 - How are you answering the question, “why would a landowner quit after three years?” Three years was selected during the Action Team process as a time limit because it seemed like an appropriate commitment period.
 - Just make sure this landowner agreement is not extremely broad so it wouldn’t be incorrectly interpreted.
 - The agreement should maintain that a site visit should typically be completed by appointment with required 72 hours’ notice or at a mutually agreed time.
 - Need to clarify wording in the agreement to ensure that it gives the impression to the landowner that this is a partnership and not one sided with DMAP enrollees doing everything for the DNR.
 - Try to use a different word than “sold” when referring to the DMAP intention of allowing transfer of antlerless tags. We’ll need to be very clear with this because it already seems to be a point of contention with some landowners/hunters.
 - Data collected through DMAP is subject to open records requests, except for information collected on endangered and threatened species.
 - Could a landowner join a cooperative after the rest of the members have already signed a landowner agreement and enrolled in the program? We should be cautious about this but at the same time shouldn’t discourage people from joining a cooperative.
 - We should include a stipulation on sale of the enrolled property and their participation in the program.

- ***DMAP antlerless tags:*** Bob posed the question to the group as to whether or not we should give out DMAP antlerless tags to northern landowners this year even though there would be no county quotas.
 - Committee members recognized the differences between the biology and social implications of this decision.
 - The number of deer harvested on DMAP tags in these areas would be minimal relative to the population; however, the committee was aware of the perception issues this may create with hunters and landowners not enrolled in DMAP.
 - DMAP is intended to provide site-specific management recommendations, regardless if in a quota unit or not. The program should provide assistance to landowners that want to manage their forests by reducing deer numbers.
 - WI Wildlife Federation was against issuing antlerless tags in no-quota zones because it would create unrest with a majority of hunters and landowners in the state. WI Conservation Congress rep shared the same concern.
 - DNR staff supported issuing tags because that is the purpose and intention of the program.
 - The committee recommended holding off on issuing these tags in the first year to allow the public to get more familiar with the program and to allow DNR staff to work on field techniques to appropriately identify situations when tags should be issued. Allow staff to get a year of experience.
 - The committee did recognize that the intention of the program is to provide site specific habitat and deer management support, and would recommend issuing tags in no-quota units in the future.
- ***Management plans:***
 - DNR is working on the MyDMAP database to collect information that will be included in property management plans.
- ***2014 DMAP staff workload***
 - The committee supported the DNR trying to enroll 100% of applications received by the May 30, 2014 deadline.
 - DNR was able to accept 112 applications. Two applications were not accepted due to staff vacancies in Forest county and due to a large interest from landowners in Taylor county.
- ***Browse survey:***
 - The forestry program developed a simple browse survey that will be used to index the impacts of browse on vegetation found on the property.
 - What are the preferred browse species for the property? This is all woody stem driven and it doesn't account for herbaceous forage.
 - The landowners are going to be involved in doing this browse survey.
 - This would be another tool in the toolbox.
- ***DMAP data collection:***
 - We may not need to require landowners to collect observation data but it would be good because it may help people hone in on their deer hunting skills.
 - What is mandatory and what isn't? We should treat it as what we absolutely need for the DNR.

- DNR staff should bring cameras on site visits so everyone can educate people about site-specific deer issues that may be important to county deer advisory councils.
- Even though there is a real mix of variables in DMAP we should still make sure that the science is involved.
- Would DMAP landowners benefit from receiving a hardcopy updated publication of a Wisconsin landowners guide for forest management? The committee felt that landowners will be interested in any information we can provide.

DMAP discussion items:

- ***County Deer Advisory Councils:*** It was included in the scope statement that a DMAP landowner may have a seat on the county advisory councils.
- ***Cooperator and equipment list:*** We have been working with Ben Meadows to provide a list that could be used in a “landowner deer management package” which would be given at discounts to DMAP landowners. DNR needs to check with legal staff to make sure this is acceptable.
- ***Mentored hunting opportunities:*** For those folks that may not necessarily hunt but could use some help to fill DMAP tags, we are going to see if there may be an opportunity to have mentored hunting groups on properties that agree. We are also looking into having these mentored hunting groups give back to those landowners by doing some sort of habitat improvement projects.
- ***Wisconsin Wildlife Federation:*** As expressed through the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation member on the DMAP committee, there are some concerns that their membership has expressed.
 - They don’t want DMAP tags to be construed as privatization of the deer herd.
 - They don’t want DMAP landowners to be allowed to bait and feed on their properties because that would be construed as taking the deer off surrounding properties.
 - Will or will DMAP tags not affect the overall count for county harvest quotas? Right now the county quotas will not be adjusted to account for DMAP tags.
 - Could DMAP landowners lease their land? This was addressed early-on in the process and the consensus was that we didn’t want to exclude anyone. However, given the negative consequences that could arise from this it would certainly be addressed in the permanent rule.
 - This will be discussed in more detail prior to the adopting of the permanent DTR rule this fall.
- ***Public lands on DMAP in Wisconsin:***
 - What is an update on public land in Wisconsin? If we’re not collecting biological data on public land properties what would be the reasoning behind enrolling a public property in DMAP? We would be collecting data on the habitat on those lands.
 - Some public land properties that had been restrictive of deer hunting may be more apt to allow deer hunting if they are enrolled in DMAP.
 - Also urban-deer issues may be addressed through DMAP as well.

Public comment:

- How much information on DMAP is going to be available to the County Deer Advisory Councils by the time they start meeting this fall? A summary of county-wide DMAP information will be made available to CDACs. The councils will have more discussion on public lands enrolled in DMAP.

Next meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for August 26th with location TBD. Items of discussion will include language for DMAP that will go into the permanent DTR rule when it is finalized this fall.