

DMAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

8/26/2014 – Mead Wildlife Area, Milladore

Introductions:

Bob Nack who is the committee chair and DMAP coordinator for the DNR provided a welcome for the morning. The Membership from agencies and organizations in attendance included: DNR Forest Wildlife Specialist, US Forest Service, DNR Wildlife Biologists, Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, Wisconsin Consulting Foresters, Ruffed Grouse Society, Whitetails Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, DNR Wildlife Area Supervisor, Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, DNR Private Lands Biologist, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, WI Bear Hunters Association, and Wisconsin County Forest Association. Those who were not in attendance included the Quality Deer Management Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, DNR - Forestry, Safari Club International, Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association, Hunters Rights Coalition, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, and My WI Woods.

DMAP progress update:

Bob provided an update on the 2014 status of DMAP enrollment this year. This information included how many applications were accepted, how many have been received, and what we have learned so far that we would likely improve upon next year. Things learned included the ability to sign a landowner agreement before a site visit can occur and ensuring that landowners provide accurate information on their applications.

- Updates have also been sent out to current enrollees on a biweekly basis. Information in these updates includes publications of interest and other relevant materials.
- Private consultants may be an option when carrying out in depth management actions and in the plan writing phase.
- Landowner workshops within other programs similar to DMAP have been very successful with getting information across to interested people.
- If there are programs that DMAP landowners may benefit from, committee members should provide that information.
- ***DMAP antlerless tags in non-quota units:***
 - In 2014, the department decided not to issue DMAP antlerless tags in units with zero antlerless quota. This is a topic of interest and the department wanted time to more fully develop DMAP field protocols, train staff, and educate the public about the program.
 - One cooperative was very upset when they found out they would be in county that would not receive DMAP tags this year. Bob would like to work with the committee to provide more guidance on issuing antlerless tags in zero quota units.
- ***DMAP permanent deer biologist positions:***
 - The department plans to request five permanent deer biologist positions. One will be located in Central Office in Madison with a large portion of their duties to be coordinating the CDAC activities. The other four positions will be located in the

four district areas and will be assisting with deer tasks as needed, including DMAP.

- These positions are being funded through the Pittman-Robertson Act.
- ***Natural Resources Board Emergency Rule:***
 - The NRB voted to approve the Emergency Rule that allowed DMAP tag transfer between DMAP enrollees and hunters.
 - The primary intention of this rule was to allow Primary Contact's in DMAP Cooperatives to recoup the cost of the tags they paid for when initially purchasing them. In addition, it will simplify the tag handling process for DNR staff and landowners.
 - The NRB also approved that a DMAP enrollee may have a seat on County Deer Advisory Councils.
- ***DNR staff update on DMAP site visits:***
 - Enrollees seem very pleased and appreciative of getting to walk around with DNR staff on their properties.
 - Landowners had aerial photos for Biologists and are already trying to map their own property. Some landowners are already doing the right things for deer management.
 - With logistics involved it was difficult to meet an August 15th deadline for meeting with landowners. Staff is meeting with landowners as soon as possible.
 - Some landowners need to create more emphasis on doe harvest on their properties.
 - Prescribed fire and invasive species management seems to be one thing landowners are not already doing and may need assistance with.

Deer Trustee permanent rule discussion:

Scott Loomans who is the Rules and Regulations Specialist for the DNR provided background information on the DTR Emergency Rule and what may go in to the permanent rule specifically pertaining to DMAP. We're not just developing rules; we're developing a culture on what this program may be. We're also developing guidance on this program.

- The emergency rule hasn't been on the books for one year yet. This emergency rule is expected to expire in June so it may be short turn around for when the permanent rule is expected to be developed.
- We don't have to know everything this year, rules are an ongoing process so this will not be set in stone forever, however it is an opportunity to do the best job we can and minimize future difficulty.
- If we think guidance will impact the public, we will go through a 21 day review process where people can sign up and receive an email message notifying them of their ability to provide comment.
- The permanent rule should include language on what the penalty may be for misusing issued DMAP antlerless tags.
- We should not lose sight of maintaining flexibility with program goals and requirements.
- ***Current language in DTR emergency rule:***
 - We should include directives on deer management and other wildlife management.

- Definitions we're looked at and considered including acreage requirements and groupings for enrollment.
- Offerings at each level were looked at and considered.
- We should place a describing word in front of DMAP cooperative.
- Level one: We could provide guidance on staff site visits on level one property's as time and interest allows. This may allow for consistency statewide.
- Level two: we are currently meeting the expectations for level two rule language. Before antlerless tags can be issued, an on-site consultation will need to be completed.
- Level three:
 - Number three: Where it starts with assistance, it is getting moved to level one.
 - Habitat evaluations get removed from level three because it is assumed.
 - Deleting number two and three from level three
- Harvest reports and biological data collection:
 - We should provide more stringent language on requested biological data collection from DMAP enrollees rather than simply providing it as a suggestion.
 - The current emergency rule does currently give us the authority to require biological data collection.
 - The permanent currently requires harvest reports and includes language on the department possibly asking for additional biological data to be collected as needed.
- Public land DMAP:
 - Allow DMAP on public lands where public access to hunting is already available. DMAP doesn't have the authority to open access to public hunting on its own.
 - Would we incorporate DMAP into stewardship purchased properties? They are open to public land hunting.
 - Managers can enroll public DMAP properties and recommend (rather than set) harvest quotas which would go to a local public input session? Need to decide the role of the public input sessions in deer harvest recommendations.
- Fees: The department will waive the fee for government organizations and other entities that are open to public hunting. The department received specific fee authority in the authorizing legislation.

Policy discussion:

Bob provided some background information on policy concerns that have been expressed by multiple constituents including the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation.

- ***Issuing antlerless tags in non-quota areas:***
 - The committee supported issuing antlerless tags to landowners that may be located in deer management units that do not have an antlerless quota in the

future. This decision was delayed in 2014 to allow for program development, staff training, and public information exchange.

- WI Wildlife Federation and WI Conservation Congress representatives did not support issuing antlerless tags in non-quota deer management units.
 - Guidelines should be developed so the issuance of tags is scientifically defensible.
 - The overarching theme in this discussion was the idea that deer are not evenly distributed across a landscape. The fact that one property may experience lower deer numbers does not mean another property may not need assistance in the form of DMAP antlerless tags. The focus should be on improving habitat for deer and other wildlife.
 - Deer Management Units have been broadened by going to county lines so DMAP will be a way to address the higher variation in habitat types and larger scale.
 - Aside from a browse survey there are other tools to be used for documenting need for tags. This would include a Wisconsin Habitat Typing manual.
- ***Wisconsin Wildlife Federation proposal:*** WWF presented concerns with program development and the privatization of wildlife to the Natural Resources Board and the DMAP advisory committee. Proposed recommendations that were brought forward include:
 - **DMAP landowners would not be allowed to lease deer hunting rights on the enrolled property.**
 - Properties may be a tax burden for landowners so leasing may be a more feasible option for maintaining a property.
 - From a resource standpoint there should be more concern with responsibly managing the property rather than whether or not it's leased.
 - **Aside from the Conservation Congress and WWF, the committee supported allowing leased properties to enroll in DMAP.**
 - **Baiting and feeding of deer on DMAP lands where antlerless deer permits are issued should not be allowed. Baiting and feeding will draw deer away from other people's lands taking away from their abilities to harvest antlerless deer.**
 - Some committee members were supportive of baiting and feeding and felt that it wouldn't be realistic to implement this rule because it would have the potential to lose DMAP enrollments.
 - If they hunt over bait on their property they should not be eligible for DMAP antlerless tags. Landowners should not be able to attract deer by baiting or feeding, then be issued tags due to browse impacts on vegetation. One obvious solution is to stop baiting and feeding.
 - Baiting and feeding of deer may not support the "healthy deer" philosophy of DMAP.
 - **The committee unanimously supported this recommendation.**
 - **Rules should establish a transparent system in which DMAP properties are issued DMAP antlerless permits.**
 - This would be a significant deterrent for applicants.
 - Rather than make it a requirement, we could ask DMAP enrollees if they would like to share their antlerless tag information with others.

- We could work with DMAP cooperators and see if they're interested in opening up an opportunity for mentored hunting programs.
- We could put together a curriculum for promoting and respecting landowners that hunters would have to complete before they would get access to participating landowner's information.
- **The committee did not support having complete transparency but in favor of asking DMAP enrolled landowners if they would like their information made public. It would be voluntary for DMAP cooperators.**
- **DMAP antlerless tag issuance should be taken into account when determining county quotas.**
 - If you're going to have CDACs who are going to be getting information from the local manager, you must take that in to account. Let the CDACs have a go at this.
 - This would defeat the department's ability to manage the herd on a site-specific basis.
 - Let's play it out for a few years and see how it goes before we make a final decision.
 - You can harvest enough deer to reduce damage on a property, but you cannot harvest enough deer to affect statewide harvest numbers.
 - **The committee did not support this recommendation, but did suggest continuing to monitor this for future consideration.**

Next DMAP meeting:

Conference call at 8:30 September 25th.