

DMAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

9/25/2014 – Conference Call, 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: DNR Area Supervisor, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Wisconsin Consulting Foresters, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, DNR Wildlife Biologists, Pheasants Forever, DNR Bureau of Science Services, DNR Forester, Wisconsin County Forest Association, 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, My Wisconsin Woods, Wisconsin Hunters Rights Coalition and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Any additional items that people would like to add to the agenda at this time? No additional agenda items were mentioned.

DTR/DMAP permanent rule:

The department is going to work on the permanent rule starting in October for the DTR package which includes DMAP. This committee reviewed current rule language at the previous meeting and provided recommendations to consider for the rule and DMAP guidance. Rule language will be drafted in October along with the other recommendations. The permanent rule package and corresponding DNR staff guidance will be out for public review.

- ***Timeline for rule and staff guidance documents:***
 - Scott Loomans is working on the DMAP rule language; Bob is working on the guidance, both of which will go before the wildlife policy team. Before that happens, they will be circulated through the committee for feedback.
- ***WWF provisions for DMAP enrollment:***
 - Bob Nack asked for clarification on a WWF recommendation that was previously approved by the committee to not provide DMAP antlerless tags to landowners that bait or feed deer. The WWF representative stated that it should specify that no year-round baiting or feeding should occur.
 - Although this provision would be difficult to enforce, baiting and feeding deer seems to be counterintuitive to the ideals of DMAP. Baiting is an artificial way to attract deer to the property. Rather, the program focuses on habitat improvements to improve the property for deer. In addition, baiting and feeding may not support the goal of a healthy deer herd as disease spread may be linked to deer contacts at feed sites.
 - The Conservation Congress and GLIFWC agree with the WWF view on this.
 - Especially in the north, these tags are going to be issued to individual landowners who have documented deer impacts to vegetation on their property so it would be counterintuitive if they are using bait to bring deer in and exacerbating the issue.

- If there is a violation to this provision? What is the penalty? Would this result in program removal? The recommendation was made by the WWF that it should result in removal from the program.
- This needs to be clearly defined on the application for future applicants. This rule would not apply to people who have been accepted in 2014 because this rule was not in place when they signed up.
- Discretion needs to be used in enforcement of this program rule.
- If people are removed from the program for violating, they may reapply after serving the required time out.
- A DNR biologist suggested that DMAP is a voluntary program, so if this baiting and feeding ban is implemented and the owners decide to bait, they should not be penalized for the full enrollment, but only for a season and be given the chance to change the use of bait the next period for which the department has determined that tags are appropriate. The US Forest Service representative agreed with this statement via email response.
- Hunters bait for different reasons whether it is to attract and hold deer on their property or get deer in an effective range for an ethical kill. Just because someone is baiting does not mean they will not engage in habitat management as well.
- DMAP could potentially be used as a tool to educate landowners that baiting although legal is not a necessary tactic for deer hunting. We should not be restricting DMAP enrollees from an activity that is otherwise legal.

Future plans for DMAP development:

- One thought is to host field days on properties and the topics could be varied from land management to deer management.
- We could provide a more intensive landowner training opportunity similar to the WI Coverts Program or simply direct DMAP cooperators to participate in that program.
- Asking partner organizations to financially support these landowner training opportunities seems like a good way to show support and advertise for the organization and program.

Committee agenda items:

- *5 new deer biologist positions:*
 - A letter of support for these positions has been circulated to all the conservation organizations on the DMAP advisory committee for their signature. The letter will be sent to the Governor's office urging them to approve filling these new biologist positions for the deer management program.

Next DMAP meeting:

- Much of the work of this committee has been to establish a strong DMAP in WI. Thank you for your time and efforts. The program structure and guidance will now be in place, removing the need to meet on a regular basis. This committee will meet annually or more frequently as needed. No meeting has been scheduled.