

2013.05.22 Pheasant Advisory Committee Meeting

Stevens Point, WI

Attendees

- Scott Walter, Chair (WDNR Wildlife Management)
- Krista McGinley, Assistant (WDNR Wildlife Management)
- Brian Buenzow (WDNR Wildlife Management, SOD)
- Michelle Carlisle (WDNR Wildlife Management, NOD)
- Jess Carstens (WDNR Wildlife Management, WCD)
- Bryan Woodbury (WDNR Wildlife Management, NED)
- Bob Nack (WDNR Wildlife Management, Game Farm)
- Matt Zine (WDNR Endangered Resources)
- Scott Hull (WDNR Science Services)
- Jim Rieser (Friends of Poynette Game Farm)
- Burt Bushke (Wings Over Wisconsin)

Review of New Committee Role & Structure

- Goal: clarity, consistency, efficiency, transparency
- Purpose: develop science-based recommendations for WPT that recognize social and economic factors
- May be responsible for annual work plans & reporting
- Structure:
 - o Sponsor (Ecology Section Chief, Bill Vander Zouwen)
 - o Chair (staff specialist, Scott Walter)
 - o Members
 - 1 DNR rep/district (exceptions for species with local restrictions)
 - Relevant DNR bureaus
 - Key agencies or stakeholder groups
 - Tribal representation
 - No membership for UW staff or retirees
 - Individuals may be invited
 - Non-member participation limited to statements during allotted time

FY14-15 Pheasant Stamp Project Proposal Review

- The committee would like to stipulate that COOP4's project manager cannot use any of the awarded Pheasant Stamp dollars on equipment repair
- Discussion regarding the value of funding the Farm Bill Biologist program
 - o How much of a benefit are we getting for our state's pheasants from the FBBs?
 - o We need a wildlife biologist in the county FSA offices to develop relationships with NRCS, soils staff, FSA contract staff, etc.
 - o Wisconsin has not invested as much as other states have in private lands conservation. Iowa's program started in 1999, and they figured out that the #1 need was to put staff in the USDA offices. These staff would need a wildlife background, communication skills, etc. To gain/preserve acres, you need folks in local offices, which is what the FBBs give us. The Iowa DNR believes so strongly in the program that they pay 100% for 10 FBBs (in contrast to WDNR's contribution of 30%), and they have separate DNR private lands staff (although they do have a Habitat Stamp to help cover costs).
 - o Will funding the FBBs result in an increase in CRP acres? Maybe not, but the Farm Bill programs are what help us protect grass. Better to make the decline less steep than allow it to continue unchecked.

- We need to find a more permanent method of funding the FBB program that doesn't rely entirely on the Pheasant Stamp. To that end, we'll need to work with administration to find a permanent source of funds.
- The committee would like it on the record that while they are recommending we use the Pheasant Stamp to fund the FBB program for FY14-15, it is vital to find an alternate funding source for the future.
- Unanimous vote to approve Pheasant Stamp funding recommendations as shown in the spreadsheet.

North American Pheasant Plan Update

- The MAFWA National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan is complete (August 2012). It's been approved by the Midwest directors and has been given to the Bird Conservation Committee at the AFWA level. The plan contains information, models suggesting how much CRP individual states need to reach particular harvest goals, and guidance/goals for implementing the plan nationwide. The approach is identical to the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, which developed a plan and then hired a national coordinator to liaise with FSA and other Farm Bill programs. They hired a science director, too, and this is what folks would like to do for the Pheasant Plan. The NBCI coordinator has been very effective at inserting himself into various policy meetings, the media, etc. A few publications/initiatives have been discussed pretty intensely at the national level. We don't know yet if the Pheasant Plan will have that sort of influence. A PDF copy of the draft plan can be found online at <http://www.fishwildlife.org/files/NationalWildPheasantConservationPlan.pdf>.

CRP / Farm Bill Re-authorization Update

- Bill currently on floor of Senate
 - "Compromise" stance on conservation compliance
 - CRP cap of 25 million acres (down from 32 million)
 - Program consolidation, etc. (WRP, GRP, FRPP would all fall under same program with less Federal cost-share)
 - Sodsaver provision
- House initiating mark-up today
 - May reduce CRP cap to 24 million acres (attempt at "pseudo-savings")
 - Pressing Ribble to cosponsor Sodsaver and support compliance compromise
- Versions may be conferenced in ~September

Partner Updates, Announcements, Public Input

None.