



Wisconsin Conservation Congress  
 BEAR COMMITTEE  
 Meeting Minutes

**WCC Meeting Minutes**  
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<b>ORDER OF BUSINESS</b>	12/02/2023	9:00 AM	Mead Visitors Center
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**I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by	Mike Rogers at 9:10 AM
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**B. ROLL CALL**

ATTENDEES	Dave Mabie, Al Lobner, Mike Rogers, Pat Quaintance, Gary Mabie, Dennis Jones, Brian Haydin, David Lois, Hunter Denison, Curt Loew, Connie Polzin, Jeff Thums, Morgan Francis, Arlen Heistad, Perry Hurlburt, Daniel Hayden, Steve Wickman, Todd Schultz, Brenna Roshell, Bob Knorr, Scott Strook, Lauren Vransy, Trevor Hubbs, Chris Wegner, Chucker Dreher, Mike Murphy, Rick Knutson, Randy Johnson, Jennifer Price-Tack, Aaron Koshatka, Kari Lee- Zimmerman, Cody Gadow
EXCUSED	Jim Young
UNEXCUSED	
GUESTS	Cynthia Samels, Amy Mueller, Linda Henrichs, Linda Deppe, Mary Scheffler, Danny Spatchek, Rob Bohman, Jean Voss, Lois Lehman, Kendal Durham, Dave Polzin, Arlyn Splitt, Tyler Munsch, Todd Coombs, Justin Jeske, Travis Matter, Dorene Matter, Randy Matter, Ken Bruesiewitz, Scott Guldan, Cole Babcock, AJ Becker, Trevor Gray.

**C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR**

DISCUSSION	Agenda was approved as written.
ACTION	

**D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT**

DISCUSSION	Mission Statement approved with no changes.
ACTION	

**E. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

DISCUSSION	Cynthia Samels spoke briefly about trying to make some changes in the regulations regarding bait stations and asked that the committee consider some of the resolutions. Amy Mueller also asked that the committee consider some changes to give the public a better vision of what bear hunters are. Linda Henrichs asked that chocolate be banned and that the season be shortened. She also feels bait stations need more regulation. Laurie Groskoph spoke about there being plenty of bears in Zone B and asked that the committee consider the quota be raised.
ACTION	none

**II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Amend Black Bear Bait Regs. #040123**

Cynthia Samels

DISCUSSION	Chair Rogers read the resolution. Cynthia feels the baiting season is too long and leaves too much bait for bears and habituates them to people. Her feelings are 30 days is a long enough season. She would like to see bait stations be registered with the DNR Law Enforcement. Dave Mabie spoke with regard to the reality of the proposed resolution. The number of baits being putout are less than what is being proposed and the amount of bait being put out is far less that the resolution suggests. Pat Quaintance spoke on this issue and his experiences while he was in law enforcement.
ACTION	Motion made to reject by Mike Murphy 2nd by Chris Wegner. Motion carried unanimously.
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

**B. Chocolate Bear Bait Education Initiative #130323**

Jean Voss

DISCUSSION	Chair Rogers again read the resolution. Jean Voss feels that the DNR should put out more information regarding the use of chocolate in bait. She feels that the collateral damage from the use of chocolate should be looked into. Randy Johnson informed us that the DNR is working on revising their information center and updating on their information.
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	Randy explained some of the variables and what is being said about that in the Bear Management Program. There is some work also being done in regard to the research.
<b>ACTION</b>	Motion to reject by Mike Murphy 2nd by Connie Polzin. Motion carried
<b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>

C. Ban the use of Chocolate in Bear Bait #210123 Barbara Voigtman

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	Mike Rogers again read the resolution. Barbara was concerned of the effect of chocolate on other species not just on bears. She also stated that there is a lot of activity in the national forest.
<b>ACTION</b>	Motion to reject by Chris Wegner, 2nd by Dave Mabie. Motion carried with Mike Murphy abstaining
<b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>

D. Prohibit use of chocolate bear bait #130823 Jean Voss

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	Mike Rogers again read the resolution. Jean Voss spoke regarding the chances of chocolate killing bears and other animals if used in bait. Jean also feels although we spend time in the woods animals will seek out places to die where we would not be able to find them. The question was asked how many bears are killed by vehicles and to the best of Randy Johnson's knowledge there were about 100 bears killed by vehicles in 2022 significantly more than suggested by chocolate.
<b>ACTION</b>	Motion to reject by Mike Murphy, 2nd by Chris Wegner. Motion passed unanimously.
<b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>

E. Adjust time period for bear baiting #680123 Linda Hiller-Deppe

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	This resolution was read by the author. Linda explained what she is looking for with regards to her resolution. Committee members explained what the reasoning was for our current situation and why many of the regulations regarding baiting, training, and hunting are the way they are.
<b>ACTION</b>	Motion to reject by Mike Murphy, 2nd by Connie Polzin. Motion carried.
<b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>

F. Reduce the hound training season #131023 Lois Lehman

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	This resolution was read by the author. Lois informed us that she does a lot of reading and found out that bears don't like honey and she is a member of a bear hunting family but she does not hunt. A lot of her information comes from Dr. Lynn Rogers, Phd. Founder, of the North American Bear Center. Again many members of the committee tried to explain the reasoning behind what the regulations are trying to accomplish. The committee in general felt this resolution did not consider the welfare of the dogs and bear to warrant passage.
<b>ACTION</b>	Motion to reject by Mike Murphy, 2nd by Scott Strook. Motion passed unanimously.
<b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>

G. Department Information and Updates by Jennifer Price-Tack, Randy Johnson, and Aaron Koshatka

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	Jennifer Price-Tack started her presentation with results of the hair snare study. She stated that the results of the study this time just do not make sense. At this time they are going over what the issue is that precipitated these conclusions. She informed the committee that they will no longer be using this contractor. How it will affect the damage program study is up in the air. They will be using aerial studies in conjunction with other viable portions of the bear research program to come up with some positive information in the program. Jenn also stated that there were a significant
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	<p>number of bears taken out of the program this year so if anyone has a location of a denned bear they would sure like to get some collars on some sows to study.</p> <p>Randy Johnson again reiterated the importance of letting the team know where there are any denned bears. The ag damage program report was the next topic and it appears that the damages are trending to be more apiary than agriculture as they have been in the past. Complaints have been way down this year and technical services have been able to resolve most of these complaints. Last year 342 bears were relocated and most came from ag complaints and over half came from corn fields. Most of these were in the NW. We are moving in a positive direction from 600+ from over 856 complaints in the past. Generally bears do not get trapped until technical service recommendations have been followed. Bears are moved on the average of 30 miles with a normal of 20-60 miles. Tagging of bears has been all but eliminated due to the complexities of tagging such as sedating the animals.</p> <p>Applications were again up this year. Of these applicants about 30,000 apply for a tag to harvest. Zone A is generally a 9 year waiting period for tags and Zone B is about 11 years. All other zones appear to be 1-2 yrs. Success rates do not appear to be changing in any zones. Historically this year was the lowest harvest since 2008. Harvest quotas were all close to expected except C &amp; D they were a little low. Generally when hound hunters go first the harvest is down so they will have 1 more year to determine if bait sitters will bring it back up. Acorns may have been the reason for the drop. There was a lengthy discussion on what is happening in zone D and the northern part of zone A specifically Douglas and Bayfield counties. Pat feels the population of bear in those two counties are growing and it is affecting the deer population. The bear hunters survey is another piece of the puzzle the they use to set harvest quotas. Randy did speak on this and relayed some findings. Although there was some discontent with the season the majority of hunters had a good season and were satisfied with the hunt. Success seemed to be achieved if the hunter had an opportunity to harvest a bear or see a bear. Overall there was a recommended drop in quota and little change in the number of permits. The following discussion centered around the zone structure and some suggested we might need to make the zones smaller so that the harvest can be directed to the specific area that needs to have the harvest increased. There is one caveat to changing zones and that is it takes 2-3 years to get this accomplished via the administrative rule. The committee asked that the DLC consider requesting a split in Zone A with the DNR.</p> <p>Next up was the suggested quotas of the DNR Bear Advisory Committee. The thoughts of some WCC felt they should be increased in some zones. Here are those WCC Bear Comm. suggestions.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">ZONE</th> <th style="text-align: left;">PERMITS</th> <th style="text-align: left;">QUOTA</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>2010</td> <td>1250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>1690</td> <td>950</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>3250</td> <td>600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>3005</td> <td>1100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>1750</td> <td>175</td> </tr> <tr> <td>F</td> <td>500</td> <td>50</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Aaron Koshatka warden in Polk county gave the LE report. Aaron reported there were 21 recruits in training at this time. There were 10 at this time last year with 6-7 that were hired. He reported the season was slow but right after their cameras lit up and there were bears everywhere. One problem that stuck out is that baits were not being covered and hunters want the class B tag back. Rusk county is currently without a warden Other wardens are trying to help out for now but it is expected to be 2025 before they can get one. Tom Heisler is now down in northern Price county. There seems to be a lot of movement around the force. Aaron also reported that some guys need to clean up their bait stations. It isn't happening often but this kind od stuff needs to be cleaned up. How can people respect bear hunters when they don't respect the forest. Overcrowding continues to be a problem with/for hound hunters. Some committee members feel that problems with wolves precipitate some of these complaints.</p>	ZONE	PERMITS	QUOTA	A	2010	1250	B	1690	950	C	3250	600	D	3005	1100	E	1750	175	F	500	50
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<b>ACTION</b>	There was a motion to go over the proposed harvest proposal zone by zone by Mike Murphy, 2nd by Connie Polzin. Motion carried.																					
<b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>																						
<b>DEADLINE</b>																						

**III. MEMBERS MATTERS**

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	Mike Murphy requested that there be an adhoc committee to help move forward with Zone Reconstruction Process. The preference points system was discussed. The question of shot in bears prevalence was brought up but so far it has not gone anywhere. Dave Mabie brought up that he would not be able to take the LTH Bear permit and was hoping someone would step up and take this individual out. Pat acknowledged the acceptance of people that really don't understand bear hunting by the committee it does make for better relations. Mike thanked everyone for attending.
<b>ACTION</b>	A motion was made by Mike Murphy to include more information about more chocolate in the regulations. 2nd by Dave Mabie.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

<b>MEETING ADJOURNED</b>	<b>12:55 pm</b>
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b>	<b>Al Lobner</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>12/10/2023</b>