

**Wisconsin Conservation Congress
Big Game Meeting Minutes
Ramada Inn, Stevens Point
Friday December 19, 2008**

Meeting called to order by chairmen Mark Noll & Al Phelan at 4:00 PM.

Members Present:

Mark Noll Chairman, Al Phelan Chairman, Tony Janecek Secretary, Wright Allen, Jerry Aulik, Norman Blohm, Stan Brownell, Joseph Caputo, Michael Demaster, Alan Gerber, Larrie Hazen, Mark Houslet, David Hraychuck, Allen Jacobson, Steve Klicko, Marlin Laidlaw, Gerald Merryfield, Arold Ninneman, Mike Riggle, Roger Sabota, Gary Schenck, Gary Severson & Douglas Williams

Members Excused: Robert Bohmann & Maynard Kuehl **Members Absent:** Richard Mihalek

DNR Liaison Present:

Keith Warnke, Mark Burmesch & DNR Conservation Congress Liaison Kurt Thiede

Others Present:

Ed Harvey, Chair Wisconsin Conservation Congress & approximately 60 citizens

Discussion and Approval of Committee Mission Statement

The Big Game Committee discussed at length the mission statement that all congress committees must develop. A motion was made by Jerry Merryfield and second by Al Gerber to have the mission statement read as follows:

“The Mission of the Big Game Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by blending the social and biological concerns of hunters, citizens and the Department of Natural Resources to provide successful management of Wisconsin’s big game animals which addresses the interests of all parties.”

Motion passed

Meeting Agenda Revised

Chairman Noll suggested the meeting agenda be revised to handle resolutions now for authors present, so that these citizens who came to present their resolution, would not have to wait to near the end of the meeting. Resolutions for authors not present, at this time, would be handled per original agenda spot. Agenda revision was approved by committee members.

Resolutions

050108 Collect Buck Fawn Data - Al Phelan presented resolution. Motion by Al Gerber & second by Larrie Hazen to accept. Motion passed unanimously.

060108 Private Land Only, Antlerless-Only Deer Seasons – Author Mark Noll spoke. Motion by Mike Riggle & second by Al Jacobson to accept. Motion passed “in concept”, 13 in favor and 8 opposed.

080108 Eliminate EAB and October Gun Hunt Statewide – Citizen Lyle Lenz spoke. Motion by Marlin Laidlaw and second by Al Gerber to accept. Motion passed, 12 in favor and 9 opposed.

100208 Move Muzzleloader Season to Late December – Author Dale Petkovsek spoke. Motion by Marlin Laidlaw & second by Joe Caputo to accept. Motion passed, 12 in favor and 9 opposed.

110508 Implement a Later and Longer Muzzleloader Season – Author Ryan Cook spoke. Motion by Marlin Laidlaw and second by Doug Williams to accept. Motion to accept passed.

190308 Limit EAB to no more than 3 Consecutive Years / 520508 Limit EAB to no more than 2 Consecutive Years - Arold Ninneman spoke. Motion by Mark Houslet and second by Steve Klicko to combine & accept using the max consecutive of 2 years for no EAB. Motion passed, 17 in favor and 3 opposed.

270108 More Age/Sex Info. On Harvested Deer – Author Jim Johnson spoke. Motion by Joe Caputo and second by Gary Severson to accept. Motion to accept passed unanimously.

420108 Buck Tag for Muzzleloader Season – Author not present. Motion by Joe Caputo and second by Steve Klicko to reject. Motion to reject was passed. Resolution rejected.

520608 16 Day Gun Deer Season – Author not present. Motion by Marlin Laidlaw and second by Allen Jacobson to reject. Motion to reject was passed. Resolution rejected.

630208 Express Deer Population in Terms of Deer Per Square Mile – Author Gary Dillabper spoke. Motion by Marlin Laidlaw and second by Jerry Merryfield to accept. Motion to accept passed, 12 in favor and 5 opposed.

680108 Eliminate Oct. Gun Hunt and EAB Statewide – Author not present. Motion by Mark Houslet and second by Marlin Laidlaw to table. Motion to table passed unanimously.

680608. Allow Bow Hunting During the 9 Day Gun Season - Author not present. Resolution amended with clarification to handle by extension of the archery season to include the gun season. Motion by Mark Houslet and second by Jerry Aulik to accept with clarification. Motion to accept passed, 11 in favor and 9 opposed.

Department Informational Items

A. Alan Crossley, Wildlife Management

Alan past out an Executive Summary on CWD. He asked the group who cares about CWD & should we be trying to do something to prevent from getting worse. By a show of hands most showed they do care & want to prevent from getting worse. He said we likely can not eliminate CWD but we can manage by learning more about CWD, minimize the area, prevent new introductions of disease, increase public knowledge & evaluate in 10 years

He said the DNR's Plan is to have a consistent deer season framework for 5 years, issue landowner permits for Jan. – March (if they want), use sharp shooting, continue to provide hunter CWD testing, strive for a state wide ban on baiting & feeding and plan review at 5 years.

Alan also talked about the season framework in CWD Zone & incineration of deer seized in CWD Zone. He noted that it is a cost issue on giving to the pantry, testing, etc.

B. Keith Warnke, Big Game Specialist, WDNR

Keith passed out handouts of the 2008 Deer Season Report and invite letter to the Deer Management Stakeholder Advisory Panel from Tom Hauge He said all deer numbers are early results with final numbers to come first quarter of 2009. He stated in 2008 we had 57 EAB Units and 56 Herd Control Units. Keith said the weather conditions during the 9 day gun season did nothing to impact hunter success. He said preliminary deer totals in the West Central were down -16%, North East were down -25% and Northern were down -30%. He said the buck harvest was the lowest in at least 15 years, the early archery season was down and the doe fawn ratio was the lowest since 1996. Presently the DNR staff is entering data from deer registration stubs.

Committee questions & other discussion included deer severity consideration in southern Wisconsin, multiple tagging of antlerless deer to get EAB effecting DNR'S deer numbers, reports of many deer found dead in the woods, excessive predator killing of fawns by bear & wolves and the issue of so many hunters not seeing deer. When asked about 2009 EAB units Keith said there probably will be less.

* **Meetings**

Keith stated the herd status meetings will be March 11 – 25, 2009. He also noted another Big Game Meeting will be needed in late March. Keith talked about the Deer Management Stakeholder Advisory Panel to review Deer Management Unit's. (see handout)

* **Baiting & Feeding**

Keith talked about baiting & feeding noting the DNR made a video on baiting & feeding. Copies of this video were passed out to Big Game Committee members. He said the DNR's next step was to find a legislature to sponsor a bill.

* **Lead In Venison**

Keith gave a summary of what is now known about lead in venison. Per a recent study he said lead was found in 8% of deer in homes & 15% in commercial processed deer. He noted that lead bullets fragment & deposit these fragments in and around the gun shot area. Keith noted lead is toxic especially for women & children. The best thing to do is to take lead out of the environment. The recommended way to avoid is to use copper bullets. A "Lead In Venison Video" made by the Minnesota DNR was shown.

* **Open Discussion With Public**

Keith was asked questions by the public present. How much does a farmer get for shooting a deer? Why trying to lower deer numbers to such a low level? How much bogus registration (multiple registrations of the same antlerless deer for EAB) is figured in DNR deer numbers?

C. Mark Burmesch, WDNR Law Enforcement

Mark stated there were 9 accidents and one fatality with the trend being safer than previous years. He stated hunting patterns have changed with fewer people doing deer drives, smaller tracks of land & sitting all day although he did say these factors may not have made a difference in the kill. He also said land ownership patterns & access to land have changed causing private refuges.

Baiting & feeding citations were reported down from last year. He noted defensive baiting is going on.

He briefly discussed warden mileage being down about 20% fewer miles.

Other Business

A. Upland Game Committee Position on the Date of the Oct. Antlerless Hunt

Motion by Joe Caputo and second By Jerry Merryfield to reject Upland Game Committee's position and include a statement that upland game hunters need to follow blaze orange requirements along with using blaze orange for their dogs. Motion to reject passed. Big Game Committee recommendation to the Executive Council is to have no changes to the deer hunting seasons.

B. Disposition of 2008 WCC Advisory Questions

Handout was discussed. Department recommendations shown below for Conservation Congress statewide questions:

- Use of archery gear in gun deer season – *Not Advanced*
- Either sex carcass tag for youth hunters – *Not Advanced*
- Crossbows for nonresidents 65 and over – *Advanced as Legislature Request*
- Transfer of EAB stickers to youth – *Advanced as Legislature Request*
- Quartering of deer before transportation – *Not Advanced*
- Ban deer feeding & baiting statewide – *Advance as legislature Request*
- Volunteer sharpshooter program – *Not Advanced*
- Prohibit shining from public roads – *Not Advanced*
- Legalize colony traps – *Tabled for research*
- Bobcat season structure – *Not Advanced, seeking alternative approaches*
- Protect private property on public lands – *Consider during wolf Mgt. plan update fall 08*
- Review urban deer shooting permit procedures – *Staff will review*
- Nonresident student turkey license – *Advance as legislature request*

- Phone in turkey registration – *Seek authority by rule through spring hearing*
- Wolf management – *Consider during wolf Mgt. Plan update, fall 08*

Department recommendations for Conservation Congress local questions:

- Rifles for deer hunting in Shawano County – *Advanced to Spring Hearing*
- Rifles for deer hunting in Dunn County – *Advanced to Spring Hearing*
- Change DMU boundaries, 47 & 51B – *Consider during DMU review*

C. Proposed Resolution Re: Future of Northern Forest Deer Herd

Resolution presented by Jerry Merryfield. After a lengthy discussion Jerry with drew his resolution.

D. 2008 Deer Survey

A deer survey sheet was passed out for committee members to fill out & turn in at meeting end or by mail.

Committees Member Matters

Al Gerber – disappointed with northern deer hunt

Stan Brownell – communication is important

David Hraychuck – deer season had a high negative impact on north businesses

Larrie Hazen – poaching fines to low, need no EAB & Oct. gun season

Arold Ninneman – very disappointing season

Roger Sabota – concern population is so low, can we rebuild?

Mike Demaster – more needs to be done, need research

Marlin Laidlaw – illegal multiple antlerless registration is a system showing a policy failure were people who would never violate feel force to do because they are unable to shoot a doe

Gary Severson – west central area did not do good

Joe Caputo – had a good season with young hunters, had fun

Tony Janecek – concern with continued escapes of farm fence deer, inadequate deer farm fence inspection frequencies & minimum fines/penalties for not reporting escape deer by operators

Doug Williams – per Bill Murphy “it is better to be defeated on principle than to win on lies”

Mike Riggle – deer numbers are not everything, sometimes we are not keeping in touch with what the hunt is all about

Norman Blohm – with the history of the deer herd, it will come back

Jerry Aulik – predatory population is taking a major toll on deer, bears are out of hand taking to many deer

Jerry Merryfield – believes in sticking up for the people in your area, working with the DNR, listening to the people & participating

Mark Houslet – happy committee voted for 2 year moratorium on EAB, wolves effecting over winter goals

Wright Allen – hunted in Missouri with wife on public hunting grounds & saw a lot of deer & bucks

Allen Jacobson – harvest in his area was down, may have turned the corner on deer numbers, predation by bears & wolves is very high, need more accurate preseason deer numbers

Gary Schenck - didn't see a lot of deer

Steve Klicko – his area had the most complaints, deer numbers are down, deer are not there, has a concern about the starvation of deer & the disregarding of public comments; deer population estimates are incorrect

Mark Noll – told a story about tradition & generations in his hunting camp, took picture of 37 hunters & 3 kids with wooden guns; feels there is a uneven distribution of deer even in the same unit & baiting and feeding are effecting things

Al Phelan – responsibility is 50/50 deal, managing people & managing the deer, need to balance things

Keith Warnke – thank you to the Big Game for their commitment, beliefs & abilities; lucky to work with this committee

Meeting adjourned 10:20 PM

Tony Janecek, Big Game Committee Secretary