

**Wisconsin Conservation Congress  
Big Game Meeting Minutes  
Mead Wildlife Area Visitor Center, Milladore WI  
Saturday, March 28, 2009**

**Meeting called to order** by chairmen Mark Noll & Al Phelan at 9:00 AM

**Members Present:**

Mark Noll Chairman, Al Phelan Chairman, Tony Janecek Secretary, Wright Allen, Norman Blohm, Robert Bohmann, Stan Brownell, Michael Demaster, Alan Gerber, Larrie Hazen, Mark Houslet, David Hraychuck, Allen Jacobson, Steve Klicko, Maynard Kuehl, Marlin Laidlaw, Arold Ninneman, Mike Riggle, Roger Sabota, Gary Schenck & Gary Severson

**Members Excused:** Jerry Aulik, Gerald Merryfield, Richard Mihalek & Douglas Williams

**Members Absent:** None

**DNR Liaison Present:**

Keith Warnke, Mark Burmesch, Kevin Mickelberg, Bill Vander Zouwen, Kurt Thiede Conservation Congress Liaison

**Also Present:** Ed Harvey, Chair WCC, Richard Kirchmeyer, Secretary WCC

**Meeting Agenda Revised**

Guest speaker Ed Harvey, Chair Wisconsin Conservation Congress to follow Tom Hauge's DNR's Proposed CWD 10 Year Management Plan Presentation followed by guest speaker Ann Hraychuck, Chair, Assembly Committee on Fish & Wildlife.

**Tom Hauge, WDNR**

**Develop Committee Position on Proposed DNR CWD 10 Year Mgmt. Plan**

Tom presented a CWD slide presentation which he plans to take to the Natural Resource Board in June 2009. His fundamental assumption was CWD is a threat to Wisconsin's white-tail deer population and culture of deer hunting. He stated most states are doing some CWD surveillance. He showed & discussed positive CWD locations in Wisconsin & Illinois. He stated deer sampled in the Wisconsin's Northern Region showed **NO** cases of CWD. In 2008 the DNR found 181 positives all in the CWD MZ. He also noted during the seven years of CWD sampling results show a total of 1172 CWD positives from the 152,092 deer sampled.

Tom noted deer hunting in Wisconsin has a huge effect on Wisconsin's economy. He noted consequences of inaction will increase CWD in prevalence & distribution, that there is no scientific evidence that CWD will burn itself out if left alone and that models suggest a moderate to substantial long-term reduction in deer population density. He briefly discussed recent findings in Wyoming that the data suggested CWD is a major cause of WTD mortality & may limit WTD population growth. The findings in Boulder Colorado showed prion infection dramatically lowered survival of adult mule deer. Tom discussed agriculture shooting permits in the CWD MZ & in DMU 70A.

Tom presented the following CWD Management Plan noting they want to minimize the area in Wisconsin where CWD occurs and the number of infected deer in the state.

The plan objectives were:

- prevent new introductions of CWD
- respond to new disease outbreaks
- control distribution & intensity of CWD
- increase public recognition & understanding of CWD risks
- address the needs of customers
- enhance the scientific information

He noted the following key actions:

- same season structure for 5 years
- landowner permits January – March
- sharpshooting along the leading edge
- continue funding pantry program
- statewide ban on baiting & feeding
- surveillance every 5 years
- continue working jointly with DATCP on captive cervid farms
- support research
- continue public outreach & education

He stated the next surveillance reviews were plan for 2012 and there is no specific plan for captive CWD deer & elk farms. He noted the Stan Hall farm had a CWD infection rate of 80% & that now there was a agreement with Stan Hall to have the fence up for 5 years with no deer in it. There was some discuss, with no resolution, to the question if this agreement can be enforced if he sells the farm.

Robert Bohmann, member of the Congress CWD Committee, said he thought the plan of 10 years was to long. He stated he would like to see the Big Game Committee oppose it to let it go back to his committee for recommended modifications. Rob said sharpshooting by DNR was not supported by his committee. Al Phelan stated sharpshooting with bait is a big concern with hunters. It was noted CWD stakeholders did not support sharpshooting. Ed Harvey asked the plan to be delayed so it could go back to the Big Game Committee and then the Executive council

***Motion made by Robert Bohmann, second by Marlin Lai law to not support a 10 year DNR CWD plan requesting the DNR to discuss with the CWD Congress Committee to come up with a compromise.*** Kurt Thiede stated the action taken today is one of the two actions (Big Game Committee & CWD Committee ) to be considered at the upcoming Executive Council meeting. Al Gerber stated he believes we should do something & did not want to wait to take action. ***Motion was voted on and FAILED.***

***New motion by Mark Houslet, second by Allen Jacobson to support the departments CWD Plan.*** Gary Severson stated we should not support with the considerations we are concerned with. Marlin Laidlaw said there are still issues if we do support. Al Phelan said using bait to shoot in the core area is the concern not sharpshooting on the “edges”. He said address “edge” concerns not in middle of core area. Al Gerber said 3 year review is better than 5 year review. ***Motion was voted on and FAILED.***

***Motion made by Mike Riggle, second by Roger Sabota to approve plan with the caveat the DNR work with the CWD Congress Committee and the Big Game Committee to modify the concerning points like sharpshooting, length of review, etc.*** ***Motion was voted on and PASSED.***

### **Guest Speaker Ed Harvey**

Ed stated his marching orders come from the Big Game Committee. He said he has been getting a lot of emails on the multiple deer issues. Ed passed out a handout showing DNR predicted 2008 prehunt population as compared to modeled prehunt population SAK. The error difference between the numbers varied from deer management units with 2 units having a positive variance and 65 units with a negative variance. The DMU averaged error per computation was 29% negative. Ed stated we do not know the cause of these errors and thus do not know the deer numbers to establish the 2009 deer season structure. Ed stated he felt the October hunt was not as important as the DNR thought. He also stated we clearly need to do something on the CWD plan. Ed recommended no EAB's and no October hunts outside of the CWD units.

### **Guest Speaker Ann Hraychuck**

Ann stated our work here on the Congress does matter. She thanked the group for their volunteer work. She stated decisions made at the capital made long before taking a vote. She said it was important for the Congress to stay in touch with the legislatures. She noted it was important to get people to join with our efforts & the more united we are the better. She just authored a youth mentoring bill for age 10 & above. She said the DNR secretary bill will go through both houses but she feels the Governor will likely veto.

She thought it should have gone through last time. She noted in the give & take budget process you never know what may happen. On gun registration fee she said “who knows” where it will go. Ann will be holding meetings around the state to hear sportsmen & women concerns. She said people are upset about the deer population and they should be heard. She stated she will sit down and make a decision on how to correct the deer population issues. She noted that she has had conversations with Matt Frank about the deer counts. She also noted she was arguing with a senator to get rid of EAB in balance of the state. She noted the expense for these meetings were coming out of her personal pocket not from state funds.

### **Keith Warnke, WDNR**

#### **2008 Final Deer Harvest Summary & Report**

Keith stated he had a good time hunting with family and that his crew did not see many deer during the season. Keith discuss the 2008 deer kill numbers. He stated Wisconsin’s deer harvest was down overall 13%. The graphs he presented showed the 2008 gun buck kill was the lowest since 1983. He stated the buck kill dropped more than anticipated, winter severity had a greater impact and the late cold wet spring gave poor fawn production. The preliminary 2009 season structure was presented as 49 EAB’s units, 19 units with herd control, 55 units with buck plus quota and a plan October hunt in three CF units. Bill Vander Zouwen, DNR, stated EAB is needed as a last resort and that herd control is needed in some units. Ed Harvey stated he is not suggesting we throw everything out but something happened last fall and feels we need to take this year off of EAB because we do not know why. He feels EAB units should go to herd control units & herd control units to stay as herd control units. Keith said if we back off we will be losing gains. Robert Bohmann said that was the same story you gave us last year i.e. if we don’t have these EAB units we will have more next year. Tony Janecek noted the gun buck kill was the lowest since sometime in the mid 1980’s and since the SAK numbers rely heavily on the buck kill the projected 2009 deer numbers should be substantially lower than the past years. Mark Noll stated this is not the first time we had deer number problems & a lot of complaining. He said look what happened for the next 10 years. Marlin Laidlaw said people make decisions on their property in that it is simpler to have extra tags with no October hunts & no EAB hunts. Arold Ninneman stated the 1990 season had one buck plus hunters choice and sold 695,000 licenses & harvested 350,000 deer. In 1991 674,000 licenses were sold & 352,500 deer were harvested with 9 day gun season and 9 day antlerless extension.

Mark Noll suggested we go around the table asking the Big Game Committee Members to state how this past deer hunting season looked to them:

Mark Houslet – unit 64A; in EAB forever with frustrated hunters sick of EAB

Wright Allen – unit 66; hunters unhappy & are going to shut down land & not buy licenses

Mike Demaster – unit 69; on own little island basically without herd control & never in EAB, thus they do not have the issues the surrounding EAB units have

Roger Sabota – Oneida County; a lot of hunters attended his DMU meeting & stated they do not want antlerless seasons, no October & December antlerless hunts

Mike Riggle – units 25 & 26; public land decimated, if hunters have permits they will fill; DNR has a PR problem, recommends backing off

Norman Blohm – Outagamie County; do not trust the DNR numbers

Allen Jacobson – 59C; have been 3 years of EAB, unit just doesn’t have the deer

Marlin Laidlaw – units 57B & 55; deer camera pictures do not show there are deer out there

Gary Schenck – people are not happy

Gary Severson – local biologist did not believe there unit needs EAB but Madison does

Tony Janecek – 51B; unit had a reduction in gun buck kill of 31%, a reduction in bow buck kill of 18%, a reduction of antlerless gun & bow yet the DNR estimates the number of deer in this unit is 7% higher than the previous year; hunters just don’t believe that

Arold Ninneman – units 39, 40 & 50; feels all units in this area should be in zero quota for this coming season

Robert Bohmann – Racine County; received 157 emails all negative comments on not accepting deer season structures; back off, give a break

David Hraychuck – Spooner 10,11,12 & 16; glad there in a regular season, major concern is public land being pounded

Steve Klicko – units 56 & 54B; third year for unit 54B in EAB, deer numbers are down & hunters are complaining, had deer winter kill last year, give people a break from EAB  
Stan Brownell – Monroe County units 72 & 59C; a lot of Federal land in unit, EAB in 59C with hunters not looking forward to hunt, people are getting more angry, everyone in area wants to get rid of EAB  
Maynard Kuehl – 150 plus attended his DMU review meeting, oppose to EAB, deer acreage went down therefore deer numbers went up, take consideration of input of review meetings before putting together season structure  
Larrie Hazen – unit 73, Miss / WI River; hunters hot at recent DMU Review meeting, landowners do not like October hunt & have closed their land  
Rich Kirchmeyer – have lake effect snows, units 14 & 29A is all national forest; in units 15 & 25 SAK doesn't work, wants no herd control or EAB  
Mark Noll – unit 61; recreational land buyers changing hunting environment, mix on EAB, thinks we have the worse distribution of deer ever, people over harvest in some EAB areas, feels hunters are not the problem, how do we get private land owners to manage deer? some only hunt first weekend  
Al Phelan – hunts Madison area metro deer & saw a lot less deer, they just were not there, in 73D found some dead deer in previous year, this winter was not as severe, there are far fewer deer in his 73D property

### **Al Phelan**

#### **Update: 2010 DMU Boundary and Goal Review Process**

His committee has had two meetings noting nothing was solidified. He talked about a two book system of keeping track of deer numbers in the “old existing” units and in the “new proposed” combine deer units. Concerns were heard about units close to goal being combined with unit way over goal causing EAB for new unit. He asked why in farm land are goals different, 20 to 25, from south to east? Next committee meeting is scheduled for April 25, 2009 where they will review information from recent open house DMU Review meetings.

#### **Committee Member Matters**

Robert Bohmann – hammered deer, can't find does to shoot  
Roger Sabota – are we raising expectations with 1.7 million deer  
Arold Ninneman – it's a whole different culture, are we going to a European type hunt?  
Gary S. - EAB rewards the wrong hunters, EAB kills a lot of young bucks & thus we do not see bucks because they were used to fill EAB requirements, were just not seeing deer, numbers are not there  
Mark Noll – has EAB swayed deer numbers in some areas by wrongful multiple registration of the same antlerless deer to meet EAB?  
Stan Brownell – hunters looking at the Big Game Committee to help  
Mike Riggle – we penalize hunters on public land with EAB  
Keith Warnke – (reply from a question) several years of EAB shows a decrease of yearling bucks but show more 2 ½ year bucks, at some level you will see reduce level of bucks

***Motion made by Mike Riggle, second by Marlin Laidlaw to have a one year moratorium on EAB statewide, not including CWD areas, with those EAB units going from EAB to herd control. Motion voted on & PASSED.***

Allen Jacobson – a lot of people like October hunt  
Stan Brownell – is there any way to make private land antlerless tags?

***Motion Mark Houslet, second Robert Bohmann to have a one year moratorium on October antlerless hunt. Motion was voted on & FAILED.***

### **Mark Noll**

Mark expressed concern about his Spring Hearing Congress Advisory question #57 which he said was

modified & sent out as a alert from Ron Kulas who stated bow hunters would only get a limited number of days to hunt bucks. Mark asked Ron why this was done? Mark asked Ron to be more positive & not attack those people who have created new ideas. Mark said he hopes Ron would pull in his reins.

### **Other Business**

Robert Bohmann asked if we could hand out a survey at the Spring DNR Congress Meeting asking if the they supported the preliminary DNR deer season structure in your unit?, in the state? etc.

*A motion was made by Gary Severson, second by Mark Houslet to make this survey & have it presented at the upcoming Spring Meeting with Congress County Chairs turning in completed forms going to Robert Bohmann. Motion was voted on & PASSED.*

Kurt Thiede said he will work on. He noted he will try to provide one copy of survey to each Congress County Chair with instructions needed. To make this happen Kurt said the Congress County Chairs will need to make copies of the survey, pass out at hearing, gather back in, etc. & send to Robert Bohmann.

*Motion to adjourn by Mark Houslet, second by Gary Severson, Passed.*

Meeting adjourned 2:40 PM

Tony Janecek, Big Game Committee Secretary