

**Wisconsin Conservation Congress  
Big Game Study Committee Meeting Minutes  
Mead Wildlife Area Visitor Center Milladore, WI  
Saturday March 17, 2012**

**1. Organization Matters**

**Meeting called to order** by Chairmen Mark Noll & Al Phelan at 9:05 AM.

**Members Present:**

Mark Noll Chairman, Al Phelan Chairman, Tony Janecek Secretary, Arold Ninneman, Larrie Hazen, Allen Jacobson, Gary Schenck, Steve Klicko, Jerry Aulik, Larry Bonde, Stan Brownell, Roger Sabota, Norman Blohm, David Hraychuck, Martin Hass, Charlie Brown, Alan Gerber, Mike Riggle, Marlin Laidlaw

**Members Excused:** Jerry Merryfield, Gary Severson, Wright Allen

**DNR Liaison Present:**

Kevin Wallenfang, Kevin Mickelberg, Mike Zeckmeister

**Members Absent:**

Paul Shaurette, Douglas Williams

**Study Committee Mission Statement**

Mark Noll read the mission statement “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.”

Chairman Noll asked & received no changes to the mission statement

**Chairman Noll ask for public comments** – Ralph Fritsch stated he will present his comment later in the meeting.

**2. Department Informational Items – Kevin Wallenfang, Big Game Ecologist, WDNR**

**A. 2011 Deer Season Overview**

Kevin began by stating it was a new era for him & his was glad to be back. His comments were:

- Wisconsin was the leading deer trophy state
- Results of the helicopter deer survey in 2011 showed high deer density variation
- 2011 weather in the north had hunters leaving their stands early
- 60% of people in the state did not shoot a buck
- 88% of hunters shot one deer or less
- archery registrations were up & gun registrations were down
- Deer Donation Program shows 3.5 million pounds & \$10,000 donated in the past 12 years
- Kevin recommended putting something in the Regulation Booklet on what condition deer need to be in when donating to food pantry butcher shops
- Disabled Hunting Season continues to grow with 99 sponsors & 64,230 acres in 2011

**B. Elk Reintroduction to Jackson County Update**

Kevin noted there were various things happening:

- Elk bill to bring more elk into the state did not make it through the legislature
- Management Plan
  - presently at 160 Elk
  - wolves, bear & car accidents are why herd has not grown
  - need 200 Elk to have a hunt
  - using assisted dispersal to help Elk move, generally Elk have not been spreading out
  - did move a dozen Elk to Moose Lake Area to better aspen browse
  - aspen logging has not been done in the present Elk area
  - plan to modify Elk range to good logging area
  - bear killing of Elk young was a learned experience
  - National Forest do very little cutting thus providing poor habitat
  - want hunting system as soon as possible
  - presently writing rule proposals to expand
  - thinks it will be 3 years before getting any new Elk
  - hope to bring in 250 Elk to two different locations over 5 year period
  - hunting system will bring in needed dollars
- Discussed visit to Kentucky donor Elk state
- Planning for a hunt in 2013
  - when above 200 animals
  - 5 tags to a lottery system
  - setting up rules – no non resident until 600 tags available
  - tribes get half of quota

### **C. CWD Update**

Kevin presented the following info:

- in CWD Zone sampled 4849 with 236 positives in 2011
- overall have sampled 123,054 with 1806 positives in the CWD Zone
- outside of CWD Zone have developed taxidermist pilot sample program with 439 deer analyzed with zero positives
- total samples analyzes outside CWD Zone 48,500 deer with zero positives
- CWD prevalence rate continuing to increase
- appears the disease is creeping at one mile per year
- Web site for more info – [www.KnowCWD.com](http://www.KnowCWD.com)
- race car driver Matt Kenseth providing TV CWD info at no cost to the state
- showed & discussed a CWD in Wisconsin Poster
- Almond farm was purchased April 13, 2011 & is presently getting ready for second external fence construction
- looking to fill CWD Coordinator position
- land owners in CWD area were the major issue, education is needed
- in high concentration deer numbers not seeing dead deer
- talked about using oral vaccine in effected game farms

### **Kevin Mickelberg, WDNR Law Enforcement**

Kevin noted in 2011 there were no fatalities, 7 shooting incidents, 12% increase in mentor licenses, hunting tactics continuing to change, arrests down 22%, baiting & feeding down 15% and saw a increase in road hunting citations. He also discussed the uncase gun law & allowing loaded hand

guns in vehicles.

**D. Deer Research Project Review, Chris Jacques, Natural Research Scientist, WDNR and Mike Riggle, WCC**

Chris Jacques presented the following information:

- two projects – buck mortality & fawn recruitment
- buck mortality (what is the buck recovery rate)
  - need cost effective measurement
  - influence of predation
  - other environmental influences
  - study objectives – establish buck harvest rate & buck recovery rate in two different areas of the state, north & east central
  - methods
    - radio telemetry 2010 – 2014 (some hunters not shooting radio collar bucks causing bias in estimates)
    - helicopter net gunning (not being used now)
    - box traps
    - netted cage traps
    - drop nets
    - dart guns & chemical immobilization
  - monitor survival & movement once per week
  - mark recapture
    - capture & maintain greater than 100 ear tagged bucks
    - obtain annual survival estimates
- Fawn Recruitment - what factors are limiting fawn production such as pregnancy, survival, influence of predators & other environmental influences
  - methods
    - field ultra sound & radio collaring of 40 adult females during late winter
    - fawn captures during May & early June
    - 40 captured fawns will be fitted with radio collars
    - will find average doe pregnancy
    - assess doe body condition
    - assess habitat suitability
    - winter severity data collection
- Expected End Results
  - direct measurement of annual, seasonal & cause specific rates
  - direct estimates of buck recovery rates
  - a citizen based framework for on going research
  - updated pregnancy rates & winter severity measures
  - greater understanding of factors influencing fawn survival & recruitment rates including specific predation, winter weather, habitat quality & health of pregnant does
- 2010 - 2011 Capture Results
  - see web site for detail capture results- <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/wildlife/deer/>
- Pilot Program now setup to do citizen based research

**3. Discussion & Action Items**

**A. 2012 Proposed Deer Season Structure (Kevin Wallenfang)**

Kevin presented the following info:

- quota setting timetable
- DNR web site – where you can look at your unit
- DNR deer forum results
- recommending no buck only units for simplicity, can still have herd growth & get aging study
- discussed buck plus quota season statewide
- winter always effect deer numbers in the north
- CWD Zone Season Framework
  - 4 day antlerless October hunt by emergency rule (*Al Phelan noted that killing the additional 2000 deer was not worth the negative public relations from the hunters in the CWD zone.*)
  - holiday hunt in CWD units only
- Statewide Season Framework
  - 9 day season
    - buck plus quota ( possibility buck only in some units )
    - herd control
    - CWD Zone
  - 2 day youth hunt
  - 4 day December statewide antlerless hunt
  - archery season unchanged
  - muzzleloader season unchanged
- New Rules
  - bow or crossbow allowed during any season when hunting deer with firearm using gun deer license & gun deer carcass tags
  - CWD register day closures
  - Copper Falls State Park open to gun deer hunting

A group discussion was held noting deer numbers are only as good as the accuracy of the deer range numbers which most likely was taken in late 1980's or early 1990's.

Motion by Larry Bonde with second by Marlin Laidlaw “ the Big Game Committee support buck plus quota system for any unit than can get same antlerless harvest”. Committee passed the motion unanimously.

Motion by Arold Ninneman with second by Roger Sabota “the department establish buck plus quota in the north with no islands”. Note this motion was made by delegates from north zero quota areas. Committee passed motion unanimously.

- B. **Deer season antlerless quota setting - Kevin Wallenfang / Mike Zeckmeister**  
Talked about returning deer quota setting to the spring hearing process however the Dept. will not change at this time (no action taken)
- C. **Additional funding for citizen based research projects – Mike Riggle**  
Mike stated they still have a need for deer research by putting money in the deer research fund. Mike recommended the Congress Big Game Committee members cover this need with Dr. Kroll
- D. **Brief comments from individuals on deer management issues**

At this time Ralph Fritsch chose to make his public comment. Ralph stated he does not want doe harvest in north DMUnits, he wants less antlerless harvest permits. Example given was unit 44 where 4500 permits were issued which he said should be only 2000. He stated DNR is not listening to us. (*DNR's Mike Zeckmeister said they would be conservative on quotas in 2012.*)

\*\*\*\* Mike Riggle made a motion with second by Roger Sabota that the Big Game Committee support the idea of establishing a citizen based deer research & department fund in Wisconsin for fawn research study. He wanted this motion to go to the Executive Council. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **E. Other Business**

Dr Kroll meetings are April 16<sup>th</sup> at Appleton North High School, April 17<sup>th</sup> at Rhinelander High School, April 18<sup>th</sup> at Hayward Intermediate School, April 19<sup>th</sup> at Black River Falls Middle School, April 20<sup>th</sup> at Mount Herb High School **all at 7 to 10 PM**

At Milwaukee Youth Center Wisconsin State Fair Park **at 10 AM to 1PM**  
Congress to assist at these meetings

#### **4. Member Matters**

- Martin Hass - no funding for CWD testing outside CWD Zone
- Stan Brownell – hunters not being listen to relative to deer numbers
- Roger Sabota – recommends committee read “On The Hunt “ by Robert Willging
- Larry Bonde – need estimate of coyote predation & track / coyote populations
- Mike Riggle – hopes all go to a Dr. Kroll meeting
- Gary Severson – need solid proof that CWD will pass to sheep & cows
- Steve Klicko – discussed deer density issues
- Kevin Mickelberg – DNR will hire 11 new warden recruits. He also discuss warden business cards, wants feed back on warden card for accountability & noted the DNR is being asked to be held to higher standards
- Tony Janecek – discussed the importance of recalculating “deer range” to improve accuracy of deer per sq. mile estimates
- Kevin Marquette (District 4 Chair) – feels we need estimates of coyote populations; he said Menominee County is keeping track of coyotes during their tracking of wolves, etc.
- Mark Noll – stated we had a good meeting today
- Al Phalen – good cooperation in meeting

Meeting adjourned 3:25 PM.

Tony Janecek, Big Game Committee Secretary