

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Turkey Committee Meeting Minutes



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| ORDER OF BUSINESS | Thursday, December 13, 2012 | 7:00 pm | Conference Call |
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

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| MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY | The meeting was called to order at 7:02 by Chairman Mike Rogers. |
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B. ROLL CALL

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| ATTENDEES | Members Present: Leroy Wiesner, Jay Koenig, Jeremy Sarauer, Marcell Wieloch, John Hoeffs, Jake Walcisak, James Thompson, Darold Brathol, David Zielke, Roger Greenwood, Clarence Koch, Walter Seibel, Arlyn Splitt, Donald Anderson, Rick Fruit, Mike Rogers, Al Phelan, Jeff Winn and Mike La Rose. |
| EXCUSED | Members Excused: Steve Klicko. |
| UNEXCUSED | Members Absent: Robby Yost, Mark Weber, Thomas Roskopf and Paul Mau. |
| GUESTS | DNR Liaison attending: Dr. Scott Walter and Matt Meade. Conservation Congress Vice-Chairman Larry Bonde. |

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

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| DISCUSSION | |
| ACTION | The agenda was approved |

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

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| DISCUSSION | The mission of the Turkey Committee of the Conservation Congress is to ensure the continued success of the Wild Turkey program in Wisconsin. Ensure that future generations have the ability to enjoy spring and fall turkey hunting. Promote expanded harvest opportunities based on sound science. Work with the department to review management objectives. Encourage the participation of youth in turkey hunting. Promote sound conservation practices and habitat management for turkeys. |
| ACTION | no changes were proposed. |

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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| DISCUSSION | There were no public comments or resolutions to consider. |
| ACTION | |

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. LAW ENFORCEMENT

MATT MEADE

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| DISCUSSION | Matt Meade from law enforcement had no report as he was just assigned to this committee. | | |
| ACTION | | | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | | | DEADLINE |
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B. TURKEY PROGRAM STATUS

SCOTT WALTER

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| DISCUSSION | <p>Scott Walter stated that the 2012 spring turkey production is through the roof. Brood surveys are the highest that they have been since 1987. Favorable weather conditions are the reason for this great recruitment. He reported on the 2011 fall season: The fall harvest is trending down, 2011 permit sales are down from 80 thousand to 55 thousand. The harvest is 5,433 birds for a success rate of 9.9%. Leroy Wiesner questioned the selling of fall permits without a drawing. Scott stated that elimination was being considered for possible implementation in 2015. Discussion was on how many permits could be purchased. If more than one, this could be accomplished by limiting the number of permits available or implementing a bag limit. Minnesota has eliminated the drawing for fall permits so we can watch the consequences of that program.</p> <p>Scott reported on the 2012 spring season: There was a small 6 percent increase over the 2011 spring season with 42,549 turkeys harvested. Some hunters advocate for a reduction in permits issued if the harvest is down. Weather, not harvest is what controls turkey harvest and numbers. The turkey population will rebound when favorable spring weather returns. David Zielke and Jeff Winn stated that they had witnessed population recovery after conditions improved.</p> <p>Don Anderson questioned an earlier opening for the "Learn to Hunt" season. Scott reported that surveys show the hunters want the season to remain as is.</p> <p>Walter Seibel asked if the turn out for the public hearings was good. A total of only seventy seven attended the ten meetings, but the online survey was well supported with over two thousand responding.</p> <p>Clarence Koch stated that hunters are satisfied with the season as it is structured. We must keep turkey hunting elite hunt unlike other upland game.</p> <p>The spring 2013 permit levels will remain exactly the same with the exception of zone 2 which will have 1,200 additional permits (200 per time period). Crowding in national forests is becoming an issue.</p> <p>The 1996 Turkey Management Plan contained twelve pages of goals and challenges. A new approximately fifty page plan is in the drafting stages. The plan will include restoration, a history of harvest, the development of zones, consolidation of zones and all data to the current time. This new plan should be easy to read and understand and should be finished by the first of March. The plan could be used as an outreach to inform hunters.</p> <p>The allocation priorities of turkey stamp monies are changing. Turkey numbers in southern zones cannot be improved as habitat is already optimal. The priority will be on improving hunter access. Approximately 25% of the stamp money will be spent for access. This will probably be used primarily in the VPA (Voluntary Public Access) program. In the northern zones mowing, seeding, establishing openings, keeping and maintaining openings, trail maintenance and establishing grasslands will be the emphasis.</p> <p>Dave Zielke questioned the problem of what to do with Metro turkeys. Scott stated that translocation has not been favored.</p> <p>A discussion on nesting and optimal turkey habitat ensued. Woods are the favored nesting locations with 14% of early nests in grasslands. Nesting cover is not a limiting factor but brood rearing cover could be limiting. Scott stated that turkeys behave differently in forested landscape as opposed to open areas. Hen survival and poult survival was about half as great in forested as compared to open areas. This is probably due to predation in forest areas. Turkey abundance is greatest with 30% to 70% forest cover. Some of this information is from preliminary population models being built by the Science Services Center.</p> <p>Clarence Koch suggested that stamp money could be used to encourage hunters and landowners to trap turkey nest predators (raccoon, opossum and skunk). Mike Rogers stated that dry weather and distemper have reduced the numbers of raccoons.</p> <p>Wally Seibold states that many turkeys especially poults, or hens if the nest is close to hatching are killed in hayfields during hay cutting.</p> <p>Jeff Winn said emphasis should be on having landowners voluntarily open their land for turkey hunting only. This will work better in the spring season as it will not interfere with hunting of other species. There are 42 thousand acres of VPA land available to hunt. Larry Bonde stated that hunters need to find and use the public land.</p> | |
| ACTION | | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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III. MEMBERS MATTERS

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| DISCUSSION | <p>Leroy Wiesner told of problems with turkey damage permits with 2 hunters killing all the birds. Larry Bonde stated that that program needs to be reviewed and revamped.</p> <p>Arlyn Splitt described problems with permit applications when using landowner preference and landowner transfer. Wally Seibold said we should keep the turkey stamp money for use on turkeys.</p> <p>Larry Bonde commented that VPA land should be researched and advertised for use by the hunters. Hunters lost a lot in the action taken by the NRB on hunting on state park land.</p> <p>The general consensus was that the present system is working well.</p> | |
| ACTION | | |

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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| MEETING ADJOURNED | Motion to adjourn, Seibold, second Winn, the meeting adjourned at 8:37PM |
| SUBMITTED BY | Clarence Koch, Secretary |
| DATE | 12-18-2012 |