

Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Upland Game

Meeting Minutes



ORDER OF BUSINESS	9-26-2012	7:00 p.m.	Conference Call
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY	Chairman Ken Risley at 7:00 p.m.
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B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	Al Marotz (Secretary), Edgar Anderson, Otto Bowe, Dan Donahue, Doug Duhr, Dale Ebert, Gene Knoll, David Miller (Vice Chair), Roger Reas, Kenneth Risley (Chair), Martin Sands, Leon Schroeder, Michael Sovich, Dan Tyrolt, Ronald VanderLoop, Kenneth Verstein, Robert Wilberscheid, Jason Wood, Carl Mesman (DNR Liaison) Scott Walter (DNR Liaison)
EXCUSED	David Andraschko, Alan Schimelpfenig, Lawrence Peterson
UNEXCUSED	Jody Bigalke, James Burmeister, Steven Washkuhn, Curtis Youngbauer
GUESTS	NA

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	None
ACTION	NA

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

DISCUSSION	Mission statement read by Vice Chair David Miller as follows: <i>The mission of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Upland Game Committee is to represent the stakeholders of Wisconsin by working with the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin concerns as it relates to all upland game for the present and future generations to enjoy.</i>
ACTION	A vote to accept the mission statement as is was unanimous

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	None
ACTION	NA

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. CHANGE THE OPENING OF PHEASANT SEASON TO 9:00A.M. #14-01-12

HAROLD DRAKE

DISCUSSION	<p>The author was contacted by Chairman Risley</p> <p>The resolution was read. Dave Miller moved, and Ron VanderLoop 2nd to move the resolution forward to the Executive Committee. A discussion followed:</p> <p>Nobody could remember why the season opener was at noon. Someone thought it may have been</p>
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	<p>because more people used to work to noon on Saturdays. It was also agreed that using dogs was better in the morning than at noon, especially as dry as it has been.</p> <p>Scott Walter, DNR Liaison and upland wildlife ecologist, said he would consult with other DNR employees including law enforcement on this matter. He thought that a nine a.m. opener would be more consistent with other opening times, such as waterfowl.</p> <p>Al Marotz, formally of the Migratory Game Committee, stated that nine a.m. opener was acceptable and working well with the Wisconsin hunters and law enforcement.</p> <p>Dave Miller moved to amend the motion from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Ron VanderLoop also agreed to amend. A discussion was called to make the 9:00 a.m. and change from the earlier opening time. The original author had stated that a time change was needed, and it could be different than what he had written on his resolution.</p> <p>The vote was called for. Chairman Risley asked for those in support of the resolution with time change inserted to 9:00 a.m.</p>
ACTION	<p>Majority yea Three nays Motion passed *Revised resolution at end of minutes</p>
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

B. DEPARTMENT INFORMATION & UPDATES

DNR LIAISON SCOTT WALTER

DISCUSSION	<p>Discussion as follows</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wisconsin Conservation Congress Upland Game Study Committee Background Information for Agenda Items IIB, 1-4. Prepared by: Scott Walter, WDNR Upland Wildlife Ecologist</p> <p>IIB. Department Information & Updates 1. Sharp-tailed grouse population update Once widely distributed throughout Wisconsin, sharp-tailed grouse have experienced long-term declines in the state as a result of intensive agricultural development in the south and reforestation of barrens habitats in the north. Though small populations of grouse still occur in the north-central and west-central parts of the state, current management efforts focus on the largest population segment in the Northwest Sands Ecoregion in Douglas, Bayfield, and Burnett Counties.</p> <p>Annual surveys on nine managed properties are used to index sharp-tailed grouse populations in northwest Wisconsin and identify trends in population size. The total number of dancing males observed on these grounds increased from 108 in 2011 to 131 in 2012 (+21%; Figure 1). Based on survey results, the WDNR Sharp-tailed Grouse Committee recommended an open season for 2012 in both DMU 2 (200 permits) and DMU 8 (35 permits). All permits were issued, and 211 hunters (some with two permits) will take part in the season, which runs from 20 October – 11 November.</p> <p>The Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan was approved by the NRB in 2011, and an addendum to that plan approved in 2012. Currently, efforts to conserve sharp-tailed grouse in the state focus on implementing the habitat objectives of the plan, and WDNR staff are working with partner groups to promote and implement forest management strategies that will increase the amount of habitat available to grouse in the Northwest Sands. The July 2011 blowdown event, which damaged >130,000 acres of timber in the region, has reset succession and produced the landscape-scale disturbance conducive to discussions of barrens management. Given recent gains in our knowledge of Wisconsin's sharp-tailed grouse resource, and current habitat implementation efforts, there is reason for optimism regarding this species' future as a part of our natural landscape.</p>
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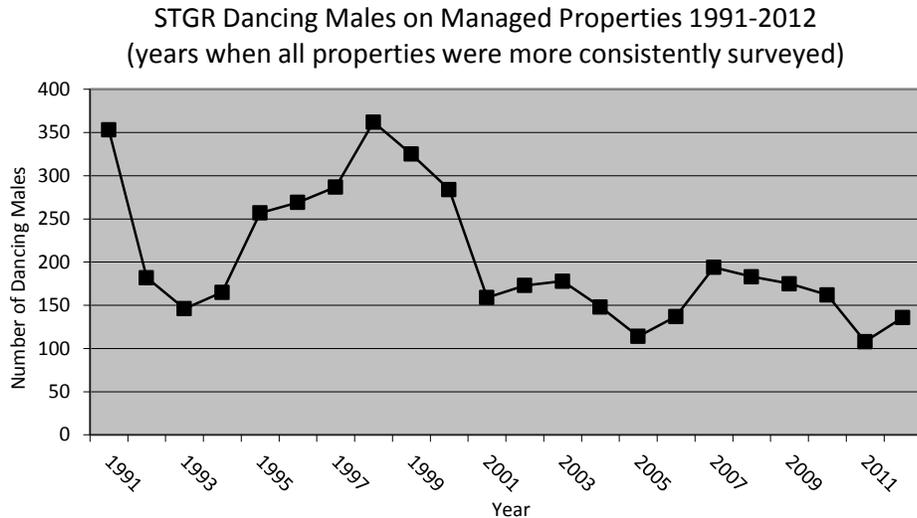
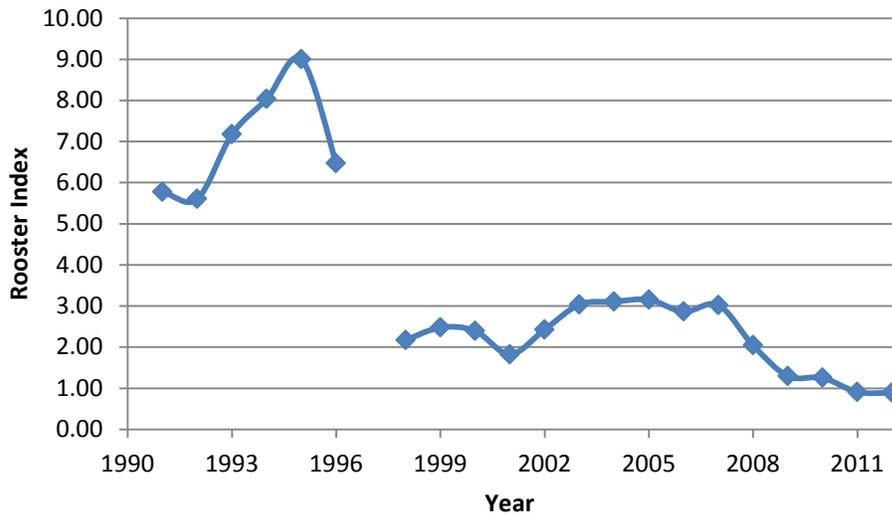


Figure 1. The number of dancing male sharp-tailed grouse observed on nine managed properties in northwest Wisconsin, 1991 – 2012.

Pheasant status update

Spring crow counts are used to provide an annual index to, and identify trends in, Wisconsin’s wild pheasant population. The number of roosters per square mile was similar in 2012 (0.89) to that observed in 2011 (0.91), but was well below the number observed in recent years (Figure 2). Long-term, pheasant population size reflects the quantity and quality of habitat available, and numbers also fluctuate annually in response to weather conditions during the winter months and spring brood-rearing period. Wet springs and hard winters from 2008 – 2010 had a negative impact on our pheasant population, but a very mild winter in 2011 – 2012 and mild, early spring in 2012 provided conditions for good winter survival and spring reproduction. Brood surveys suggest very good levels of production for all upland game birds in the state.



Populations of pheasants and other grassland-dependent wildlife species ebb and flow in response to the availability of grassland habitat in agricultural areas of the state. Recent increases in crop prices (corn >\$8/bu; soybeans >\$17/bu) have provided strong incentives for landowners to return idle lands to production, and this has dramatically reduced the amount of quality pheasant habitat in the state. For example, Wisconsin has seen a dramatic decline in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enrollment, from 719,000 acres to ~340,000 today. Further, >264,000 acres are set to expire over the next 6 years and, with continued high commodity prices many of these acres will also be returned to row crops. This dramatic loss of upland nesting, brood-rearing, and winter cover dampens hope for a rebound to 1990s-level pheasant numbers. Historically, pheasant numbers in Wisconsin have tracked CRP acreage well, both using state survey and Breeding Bird Survey data (Figure 3 a and b). Maximizing usable space for pheasants will require new, focused efforts to maintain and restore habitat; NRCS and DNR staff will work with other partners to develop delivery strategies to achieve maximal benefit for pheasants, but with strong economic incentives to return lands to row crops, it will be extremely difficult to counter the loss of CRP acres on our landscape.

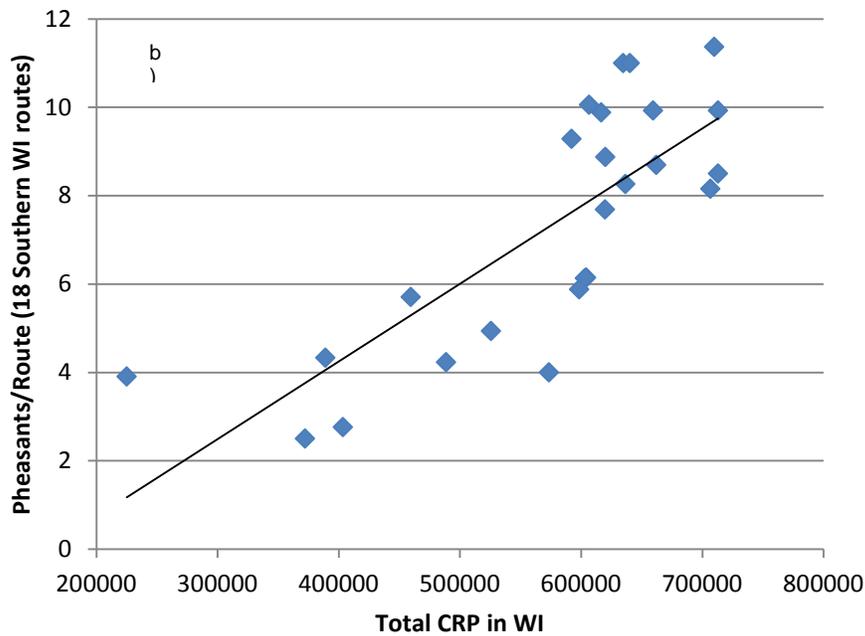
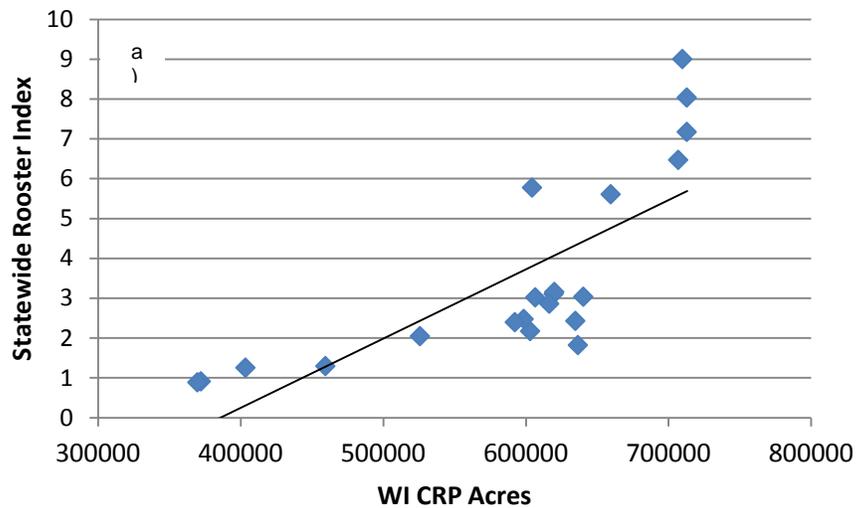


Figure 3. Relation between CRP acreage in Wisconsin and WDNR spring rooster surveys (a) and the number of pheasants observed per BBS route for 18 routes in southern WI (b).

ACTION	NA
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

C. WOLF CONFLICTS WITH UPLAND GAME

[PRESENTER]

DISCUSSION	Upland hunters worry that their dog will get into a wolf trap. The wolf season is new and scary to some hunters. Many hunters will not take their dogs into known "wolf ranges."
ACTION	None
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	<p>The following questions and answers took place between members and DNR Liaison Scott Walter:</p> <p>Q. What do you do if you can't control your dog and it is running at large on private and posted property? A. Call the warden or sheriff's department of help. Use an electronic collar and call landowner for permission to retrieve your dog. Also, put your shotgun down and go get your dog.</p> <p>Q. Whatever happened to the Hungarian partridge and bobwhite quail? A. They (Hungarian partridge) like small farms and open country where there are oats and other agricultural grains. Their population is down. Bobwhite quail is all but gone. The decline is nationwide along with the habitat they need.</p> <p>Q. Why are woodchucks protected as they do damage to buildings and horse pastures? A. Landowners can remove them.</p> <p>Other comments:</p> <p>The next farm bill will have some habitat for game4 incentives, like GPS-driven farm implements that know which acreage won't produce well. These acres may be used to plant for coverage. Also, look for new incentives for landowners to allow hunting on their property, as well as incentives for MFL and CRP land.</p> <p>Seven hunting dogs were killed last year by wolves.</p>
ACTION	NA

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	8:05 by Chairman Risely
SUBMITTED BY	Al Marotz
DATE	10-16-2012

~~07-14-12~~
14-01-12

PHEASANT SEASON OPENING

PROBLEM:

Current regulations open the pheasant hunting season at 12:00 noon the 3rd Saturday of October.

As a life long pheasant hunter I have long been opposed to the mid-day opening. Weather conditions are often dry with mid-day temperatures of 60 degrees or better. Habitat and conditions often make for a very miserable opening day experience for both hunters and their dogs.

I believe that the noon opening rule CAN and SHOULD be changed. I propose a uniform state wide opening of 9:00A.M. on the 3rd Saturday of October. This would allow for hunting during hours of cooler temperatures and wetter conditions without compromising hunter safety.

Be it resolved that the Conservation Congress, at it's annual meeting, held in Dodge County, on April 9th 2012 recommends that the Conservation Congress work with the Department Of Natural Resources to take action to change the state wide pheasant hunting season opening from 12:00 noon to 9:00A.M.

AUTHOR:

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Introduced in Dodge County

*REVISED RESOLUTION