

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

Saturday March 20, 2010

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, Jerry Aulik, Norman Blohm, Robert Bohmann, Charlie Brown, Stan Brownell, Michael Demaster, David Hraychuck, Allen Jacobson, Steve Klicko, Marlin Laidlaw, Arold Ninneman, Mike Riggle, Roger Sabota, Gary Schenck, Gary Severson, Paul Shaurette & Douglas Williams

Members Excused: Wright Allen, Alan Gerber, Larrie Hazen, Mark Houslet, Maynard Kuehl & Gerald Merryfield

DNR Liaison Present:

Keith Warnke, Mark Burmesch & Kevin Mickelberg

Others Present:

Ed Harvey, Chair Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Rich Kirchmeyer Secretary WCC, Kari Lee – Zimmermann WCC Coordinator & WCC delegate John Obernberger

Study Committee Mission Statement Read & Reviewed

“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 to leave as is by Al Phelan & second by Charlie Brown. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Noll ask for public comments with none being given

Department Informational Items

A. Keith Warnke, Big Game Specialist, WDNR

Keith passed out a handout of the 2009 Deer Hunter Wildlife Survey & booklet Investing in Wisconsin Whitetails. He said the total buck harvest was down 9% in the Northern Forest, down 25% in the Central Forest & no change in the farm land. He noted the gun buck harvest was down in all regions & it was the lowest buck harvest since approximately 1980, yet the statewide archery buck harvest was the fourth biggest in Wisconsin history. The total deer harvest for 2009 was 329, 103 with break down as follows:

- early archery 78,511

- youth gun hunt 6,997
- October antlerless 15,011
- 9 – day gun 201,994
- muzzle loader 5,668
- late archery 8,730
- December antlerless 7,567
- CWD holiday hunt 4,625.

Keith discussed the new & improved deer registration stub. Approximately 72,000 stubs gave data on various aspects of the 2009 deer season. Info from registration stubs showed 110 buck fawns harvested per 100 doe fawns. Keith also talked about the new Deer Hunter Web Page Survey noting the value of deer observation info is for the long term.

Keith reviewed the 2010 antlerless quota & season structure. He noted the Department proposal to the Board was to make 41 increases in deer management unit goals & 2 reductions. Specific discussion was held on DMU's 74A, 72 & 59C with concern by the Big Game Committee members that the goals were not right. Motion made by Rob Bohmann & second by Norm Blohm to support the DNR's position per the 2010 Deer Season Structure Proposal. Motion passed 11 in favor & 6 opposed.

Keith discussed Investing in Wisconsin Whitetails research projects.

- buck mortality study (hunting, predation, weather – radio collars & ear tags)
- fawn predation study – what & who impacts fawn survival; will track first 6 months of life & noted they will need Congress help
- sustainable goals – impacts of deer at various densities on a variety of sites
- hunter retention – strategies to keep hunters hunting
- survey techniques
- predation impacts

Motion by Mike Riggle & second by Rob Bohmann to have the Congress Big Game and Deer 2000 Adhoc Committees form a sub committee & offer to be the coordinators for volunteers supporting the up coming DNR research projects. Motion to support passed unanimously. Mark Noll said the Congress should take the lead. Mike Riggle said the more stakeholders involved the better it is.

Keith noted no quota DMU's will not permit harvest of antlerless deer with gun or bow per Hunting Regulation Booklet.

Big Game Committee members asked Keith what the DNR's plan was for updating deer range which was thought to be 10 to 20 years old. Keith stated there was no plan to update deer range. Committee members were disappointed in no planned deer range update & noted without accurate deer range numbers there will not likely be accurate deer estimates per square mile of deer range.

Marlin Laidlow noted to Keith that the selling of extra antlerless permits needs to be changed from the early first come first serve to a later date near the deer season when most hunters are thinking about extra permits. Keith said he would review.

Al Phelan noted a hunter can only put daily input of data on the DNR's web page and thus can not put multiple days in at one time. This restricts a hunter from putting in data when he is not available to do daily. Keith said he would look into

NRB response to WCC request to open the archery season during the 9 – day gun hunt.

Al Phelan discussed noting this request passed through the Congress process three times. Ed Harvey asked the Board to put on this springs questionnaire. The DNR Board voted 4 to 3 against putting on the questionnaire. It was pointed out the DNR Department did support this Congress request. A committee discussion was held on various ways to address this issue. A motion was made by Rob Bohmann & second by Marlin Laidlaw to send back to the Department's Rules Committee & also to introduce from the floor on Saturday of this years Annual Convention in May 2010. Motion passed unanimously.

Senate Bill 222: Transportation of Uncased Long Guns and One Hour to Tag a Deer

The bill pasted the Senate on a voice vote with Assembly Hearing to be held March 31, 2010 in Room 417 Gar Hall, Madison. Per DNR's Kevin Mickelberg the bill relaxes case law & has law enforcement concerns for public safety, officer security, makes it easier for illegal road hunting & changes positive image for Wisconsin non hunters.

Per Kevin the one hour to tag deer does not include archery. He said the bill will be difficult to enforce, degrade the tagging system (integrity issues) & needs just a phone call to get someone to tag a deer.

A motion by Arold Ninneman & second by Rob Bohmann to state the Big Game Committee does not stand in favor of Bill 222. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Arold Ninnemann & second by Marlin Laidlaw to notify the Congress Executive Committee the Big Game Committee unanimously does not stand in favor of Bill 222 & request the Executive Committee relate to the Legislature Assembly Committee.

Other Business

Question was asked if baiting was eliminated can tribes can bait? Per DNR's Mark Burmesch yes they can bait, but has some restrictions in their code.

Mark Noll asked if Senate Bill #558 was a proposal to limit baiting or feeding? Bill is to restrict feeding with no hearing held or schedule at this time. Motion made by Doug Williams & second by Marlin Laidlaw to table discussion to support. Motion to table passed unanimously.

Lead in Venison Report – Robert Thiboldeaux, Toxicologist, Wisconsin Division of Public Health & Marissa Scalia Sucusky, Epidemiologist, CDC

Lead shot accumulates in the appendix. Lead was found in 15% of 200 samples on commercial processed venison & in 8% of 98 samples by hunter processed. Per FDA food product division standard permissible amount of lead is 0.05 mg/kg however it is thought there is no safe level of minimum lead. They noted slugs do not fragment & thus

contaminate the venison less.

Committee asked what does this group want the Big Game Committee to do? Marissa replied that in 2011 they will need blood samples drawn from deer hunters before, during & after the deer gun hunting season. They will also need ammunition samples from blood donors & are looking for approximately 100 non eating deer participants & 200 deer consuming participants divided between muzzle loaders, rifle, etc.

Member Matters

Stan Brownell – thinks some things are going to happen (deer research projects) & we are heading in the right direction on deer matters

Marlin Laidlaw – supported Stan Brownell comments on heading in the right direction on deer matters

David Hraychuck – said Senate Bill #222 is going to cause major problems & recommends sending email to bury bill.

Mike Riggle – recommended everyone go to Hunting Heritage Youth Conference

Roger Sabota – said he was enthused with the study on predators

Gary Severson – asked what are we going to do 10 years from now? & should write it down now

Mike Demaster – said it was good we go over the mission statement every meeting

Rich Kirchmeyer – noted the 1st annual Hunting Heritage Youth Conference was very good; upcoming predator study is good & on Bill 222 we should call Senators and Assembly to stop bill.

Rob Bohmann – noted we will have a WCC booth at the Wisconsin Deer Classic Show in April at Madison & also noted to send him now gift for Kurt Thiede.

Mark Noll – discussed down deer populations, noted how complex it is to manage deer, feels things are changing for the better, department is listening & people are more aware

Al Phelan – thinks DNR Question # 9 (concerning normal agricultural or gardening practices for purposes of enforcing prohibitions of baiting wild animals) on the upcoming Spring Hearing should be withdrawn.

DNR's Mark Burmesch said the question will be pulled.

Motion by Rob Bohmann & second by Gary Severson to adjourn meeting passed.

Meeting adjourned 3 PM

Tony Janecek, Big Game Committee Secretary

