

SUBJECT: Congress Matters: Wisconsin Conservation Congress 2009 Spring Hearing Advisory Questions

FOR: JANUARY 2009 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Ed Harvey, Wisconsin Conservation Congress Chair

SUMMARY:

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress will present their 2009 Advisory Questions to the Natural Resources Board. The questions have been approved by the Congress Executive Council for inclusion on the Statewide Spring Hearing Questionnaire and will be presented to the public at the joint DNR Spring Hearings and Conservation Congress County Meetings on Monday, April 13, 2009.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

- No Fiscal Estimate Required
- No Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required
- No Background Memo

- Yes Attached
- Yes Attached
- Yes Attached

APPROVED:


 Bureau Director, Michael Lutz

1-13-09
 Date

 Administrator,

 Secretary, Matt Frank

 Date
1/13/09
 Date

- cc: Laurie J. Ross - AD/8
- Kurt Thiede - LS/8
- Scott Loomans - WM/6
- Joe Hennessy - FH/4
- Mike Staggs - FH/4

- Tom Hauge - WM/6
- Tim Andryk - LS/8
- Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8
- Todd Ambs - AD/8
- Randy Stark - LE/8

- Tom Van Haren - LE/8
- Laurel Steffes - AD/8
- Signe Holtz - ER/6
- Dan Schuller - PR/6
- Kari Lee-Zimmermann - LS/8

2009 Wisconsin Conservation Congress Advisory Questions

Executive Council:

WCC1. An EAB Alternative

The use of the Earn-a-Buck deer season in Wisconsin has been controversial, unpopular, and seemingly unfair to many hunters since its inception. Yet, EAB has proven to be effective at reducing high deer populations. It accomplishes this by tying the ability, opportunity, and desire for harvesting a buck with the biological necessity of harvesting antlerless deer. Sadly, EAB does this on an individual hunter basis where one hunter may be able to hunt bucks for over 100 days, while another hunter may never have even one day's chance.

Another way of utilizing the same "ability, opportunity, and desire for harvesting a buck" would be to implement a full-length antlerless season with a shortened buck harvest period. Season opening weekends (and perhaps a two or three week rutting period) would always be open for buck harvest so everyone in the DMU has the same chance at that time for a buck every year that the program is in effect. Antlerless harvest would be spurred on during the rest of the season by the desire to return to a full-season buck hunting opportunity again. Specific time periods and trigger points for the implementation of such a management tool could be developed cooperatively with the DNR. All hunters under this system would *and should* be treated equally.

In areas or DMUs of high over-goal deer populations *and* in an effort to provide equal buck-hunting opportunity to all hunters in those units, would you prefer the concept of shortening buck hunting opportunity by limiting the buck harvest equally for all hunters on a seasonal basis instead of limiting individual opportunity through the use of EAB?

WCC2. Turkey Hunting with Dogs Regulations

Fall turkey hunting with the use of dogs is currently allowed in portions of Wisconsin, and may be proposed for implementation across the state. Fall turkey hunting with dogs primarily utilize the traditional "scatter and call back" method of hunting, where dogs are used to scatter the flock and the hunter calls the turkeys back together for the harvest. However, some hunters are concerned that allowing fall turkey hunting with dogs may encourage upland game bird hunters to try to shoot a flushing turkey. Shooting at flying turkeys with upland game bird shot can cause undue wounding and loss. While shooting at a flying turkey is not illegal, considering the increased risk of wounding a bird, it should also not be promoted or encouraged. For this reason, some hunters feel that the only method for fall turkey hunting with dogs that should be legal is the "scatter and call back" method.

To enforce such a requirement, specific regulations would be necessary, such as requiring those who hunt turkeys using dogs would be required to possess a dog hiding bag or blind, and any hunter harvesting and in possession of a fall turkey may not possess any upland game bird until that turkey has been registered.

Do you support rules that would require anyone hunting fall turkeys with the aid of dogs to possess a dog hiding blind or bag, and prohibit a hunter from possessing any upland game bird, while in the possession of a turkey, until the turkey is registered?

Big Game Study Committee:

WCC3. Buck Fawn Identification Information

Hunting regulations define an antlerless deer as any deer without antlers or with both antlers less than 3 inches in height. Under this definition, a buck fawn would be considered an antlerless deer. Some hunters would prefer not to shoot a buck fawn when harvesting an antlerless deer. The DNR could include a section in the deer regulations on "*How to identify a buck fawn*". This information may assist hunters, who do not want to shoot buck fawns, in identifying buck fawns while in the field.

Would you support the DNR providing information about buck fawn identification in the deer regulations?

WCC4. Private Land-only, Antlerless-only Deer Season

In an attempt to control high deer populations in some areas of the state, the Wisconsin DNR has held special 4-day antlerless-only deer seasons, usually called T-Zone seasons, in October and/or December for the last several years. Because deer hunters with antlerless tags flow to the areas with the least resistance to access, there is a wide-spread perception in many Deer Management Units that public land in those DMU's with antlerless hunts are being over-harvested while the privately controlled land holds the actual over-population of deer in that unit.

Creating a private land-only, antlerless-only deer season might better focus antlerless harvest efforts where the actual population problem exists and could help address the concerns of over-harvesting public land.

Would you support the concept of some type of private land-only, antlerless-only deer season as a more focused and precise tool for deer population management?

WCC5. Eliminate Earn-A-Buck (EAB) and October Antlerless Deer Hunts

Wisconsin's deer hunting heritage and tradition is protected by a Constitutional right to hunt. Some hunters feel the current EAB and October special antlerless hunts are unreasonable in that they negatively impact hunting traditions and deny hunters the right to hunt bucks.

Would you support the DNR eliminating Earn-a-Buck and special October antlerless deer hunts?

WCC6 and 7. Later Muzzleloader Deer Seasons

The current 10-day muzzleloader deer season starts immediately after the close of the regular 9-day firearm deer season. Some hunters feel that it would be beneficial to have a later-opening muzzleloader season. More hunting opportunities could be realized during the holiday season and deer would have a few weeks to settle back into normal patterns again.

If either one or both of these questions receive positive support, the one with the greatest support will be advanced to the DNR.

WCC6. Would you support a 10-day muzzleloader deer season opening on December 22nd, no matter what day of the week, running through December 31st?

WCC7. Would you support a 16-day muzzleloader deer season opening the Saturday before Christmas, and continuing through the Sunday following New Years Day? (Example: 12/19/2009 until 1/3/2010)

WCC8. Maximum of Two Consecutive Years for a Deer Management Unit to be designated as an Earn-a-Buck (EAB) unit

Earn-a-Buck regulations are very unpopular with hunters and may have led to an over harvest of antlerless deer in some areas of the state. To control deer populations in the state there needs to be a partnership between the hunters and the DNR. To build that partnership there needs to be a balance between the use of strict harvest regulations and the desires of the deer hunters.

Would you support a rule change that would prohibit EAB seasons from being held for more than two consecutive years within the same unit, and would require a one year break from EAB, before a unit could be redesignated as an EAB unit?

WCC9. Deer Registration Information

The current deer registration stub does not provide for detailed information on sex or age of deer harvested. The DNR is encouraging harvest of antlerless deer by antlerless only and earn-a-buck seasons. More detailed information will not only provide better harvest information to the public, but will also give the DNR more information to make future management decisions.

Would you support the DNR changing the deer registration stubs to indicate adult antlered, adult antlerless, buck fawn or doe fawn and that this recorded information be available with the annual deer harvest summary?

WCC10. Allow Bow Hunting During the 9-Day Deer Gun Season

Currently, the DNR allows bow hunting for deer during the October and December antlerless gun seasons, the muzzleloader season, and all firearm seasons in the CWD zone. There are areas within the state that do not allow use of firearms and there are some hunters who only hunt with a bow. The 9-day traditional gun season is the only season closed to bow hunting and if opened could provide additional harvest in firearm restricted areas and additional recreational opportunities for bow only hunters.

Would you support bow hunting during the 9-day traditional gun season using a bow license?

CWD Ad-hoc Study Committee:

WCC11. Magnifying Scopes on Muzzleloaders

The original muzzleloader deer hunt began in 1992 as an opportunity for hunters to use a more primitive weapon to harvest a deer during a 7-day season that was separate from the 9-day firearm deer season. The traditional muzzleloader hunt is now 10 days long; however some question whether it is still truly "traditional" due to the evolution of the muzzleloader. Modern in-line muzzleloaders are capable of shooting accurately for distances up to and exceeding 200 yards.

Currently, use of magnifying scopes on muzzleloaders, during the 10-day season is illegal. However, over the last number of years, numerous citizen resolutions have been introduced at the Spring Hearings that request the laws prohibiting magnifying scopes on muzzleloaders during the 10-day muzzleloader deer season be repealed. In addition, in 2008, the CWD Stakeholders Advisory Group recommended that the restrictions on magnifying scopes during the 10-day season be removed to provide additional deer hunting opportunities and to help to reduce the deer population with improved accuracy and efficiency. Currently, a hunter can use a magnifying scope on a muzzleloader during any of the other firearm deer seasons.

Another argument for lifting the prohibition is that a 1x (power) scope is not adequate for many hunters to make the ethical and accurate shot that is needed to harvest a deer. In addition, proponents of allowing magnifying scopes have indicated that there is a safety issue, that a hunter's ability to know their target and what is beyond would be enhanced if magnifying scopes were allowed.

Would you support allowing magnifying scopes (greater than 1x or power) be allowed on muzzleloaders during the 10-day muzzleloader deer hunting season?

Endangered Resources and Law Enforcement Study Committee:

WCC12. Prohibit the Shooting of Antlered Deer in the CWD Zone Under Agricultural Shooting Permits

Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP) shooting permits are issued to farmers to help control damage to agriculture crops caused by deer. Statewide, unless otherwise written on the farmer's permit, only antlerless deer may be shot under the authority of the permit. However, in the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Zone antlered deer may be harvested using WDACP shooting permits and there is a perception that trophy hunting for antlered deer is taking place. Prohibiting the issuance of shooting permits for antlered deer would stop this practice.

Do you support prohibiting the issuance of WDACP shooting permits for antlered deer in the CWD Management Zone?

WCC13. Remove Woodchucks from the List of Protected Species

Woodchucks are currently listed as a protected species in the State of Wisconsin. However, there is no biological or resource management related evidence that supports the listing of woodchucks as a protected species. The designation of "protected" means that a person may not take, attempt to take, transport or possess a woodchuck with a few exceptions. This designation is typically reserved for species in need of protection for social or biological reasons. Some other species currently listed as protected include lynx, badgers, moose, albino deer and birds of prey.

Currently, there is an exemption in state statute that allows landowners in Wisconsin, without a small game license and subject to all other restrictions except seasons, to hunt or trap on their property for woodchucks year-round. Landowners are also allowed to give others permission to hunt or trap woodchucks that are causing damage.

Removing woodchucks from the list of protected species would still allow landowners to hunt or trap woodchucks without a license on their property, but it would also allow non-landowners to hunt or trap woodchucks under the authority of a small game license.

Would you support removing woodchucks from the list of protected species?

Forestry, Parks and Recreation Study Committee:

WCC14. Treestands on State Lands

Currently, hunters are prohibited from leaving tree stands on state lands overnight. Wisconsin administrative rules allow the use of portable tree stands that do not damage the tree, but require the removal of such tree stands from state owned land at the end of hunting hours each day. This restriction reduces the likelihood that the stand is later abandoned by the owner. In addition, the placement of semi-permanent blinds or tree stand on department lands may give the owner the false belief that they then have exclusive use of that particular area, and other hunters may not feel they should hunt that area. However, this requirement results in hunters having to erect and remove stands in the dark. Statistically, most tree stand accidents occur when erecting and removing stands, and conducting these activities in the dark further increases the risk of injury. This law for state lands is not consistent with rules on the National Forest and many county forests. On the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, portable tree stands used by hunters can be left in the woods until the last day of the hunting season.

Would you support rules that would allow the overnight placement of properly marked, portable, non-damaging tree stands on state owned land open to hunting as long as the stand is being actively hunted?

Fur Harvest Study Committee:

WCC15. Bobcat Permit Application Fee Increase

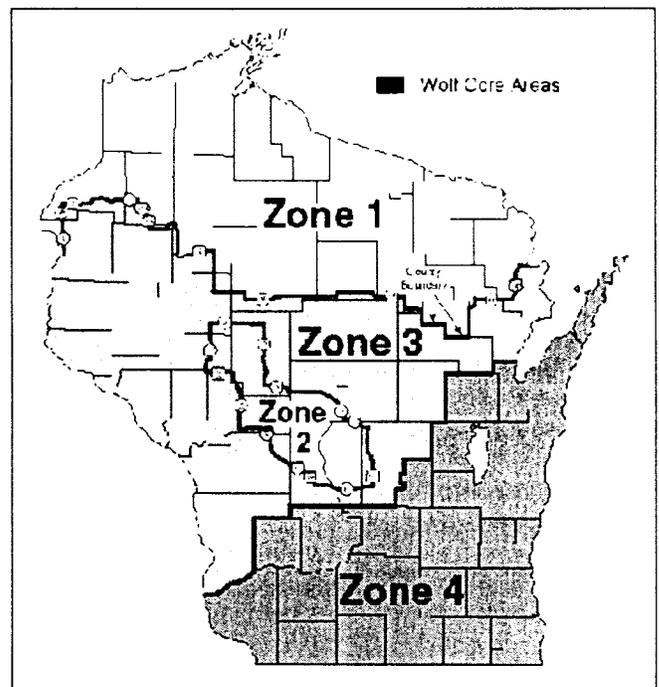
In 2008, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress proposed a multi-faceted proposal for the restructuring of the bobcat season framework in Wisconsin. This past fall a reasonable compromise was reached, with details included in the Department's Spring Hearing Rule Question # _____, which is found on page _____ of this questionnaire. What is still needed is a funding source for the research, management and administration of this new system. To generate the necessary funds for the adequate funding of this initiative, the Conservation Congress recommends increasing the fee for a bobcat application by \$3. With this modest fee increase, applicants are expected to remain around 10,000 annually. With this increase earmarked for research and management, the department would have the funds to determine the range and abundance of bobcats in central and southern Wisconsin, critical in opening new regions to harvest. These funds would also allow assessment of population trends through annual surveys.

Would you support legislation adding \$3 to the bobcat permit application fee and have it ear-marked for bobcat research and management?

WCC16. Statewide Coyote Hunting Season Year Round

The coyote season in Wolf Management Zone 1 (see map) is currently closed during the deer gun season. Coyote season in this area has been closed during the deer gun season since 2000 as recommended in the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan to avoid the accidental harvest of wolves. However, wolves currently exist in the zones outside of Zone 1 where the coyote season is open during the deer gun season, and the accidental harvest of wolves has been virtually non-existent with only a couple of documented cases.

Continued closure of this season in Zone 1 could lead to an over population of the species in this area leading to reduced populations of ruffed grouse, cottontail rabbits, snowshoe hares, and other small game. Additionally, allowing coyote hunting during the deer gun season in this Zone will create more hunting opportunity for the gun deer hunter as well as the small game hunter.



Would you support opening the coyote season in Wolf Management Zone 1 in northern Wisconsin?

WCC17. Extend Trap Check Times

Weasels are typically harvested in winter by trappers. However, most trappers do not actively pursue weasels because of the cost and time required to return to check their traps each day as required under current law. Current rules require that all traps set on land must be checked on a daily basis.

This proposal would allow for an extended trap check time of once every 4 days on traps set for weasels in enclosed boxes. The trap would have to be fully enclosed and any opening(s) in the enclosure could be no greater than 2 inches, with the trap pan or trigger no closer than 4 inches from the outside of the opening. Legal dry land traps set in this manner would be species specific to weasels and the animals will be quickly dispatched when captured, and totally concealed, eliminating the need for daily checks. With the fully enclosed box, the 2 inch opening(s) and the 4" recess to the trap pan or trigger incidental, non-target species catches will be virtually eliminated. This would allow trappers greater flexibility in harvesting an abundant furbearer and would allow increased recreational opportunities for trappers.

Would you support the extension of the trap check requirement for weasel traps from once a day, to once every 4 days for legal dry land traps set in an enclosure that is constructed so that the trap opening(s) are no greater than 2 inches and the trap pan or trigger is no closer than 4 inches to the outside of the enclosures opening?

WCC18. Allow Trappers to Use Bait and Lures Prior to the Trapping Season

Bobcat hunters that use hounds to pursue bear and bobcat are allowed to train their dogs prior to the season to improve the efficiency of their hounds. However, trappers can not place bait, lures or use visual stimuli prior to the opening of bobcat season. Considering that a trapper currently only draws a tag for a bobcat once every five or six years, and notification of winning a permit only comes six weeks prior to the season opener, it puts trappers at a disadvantage.

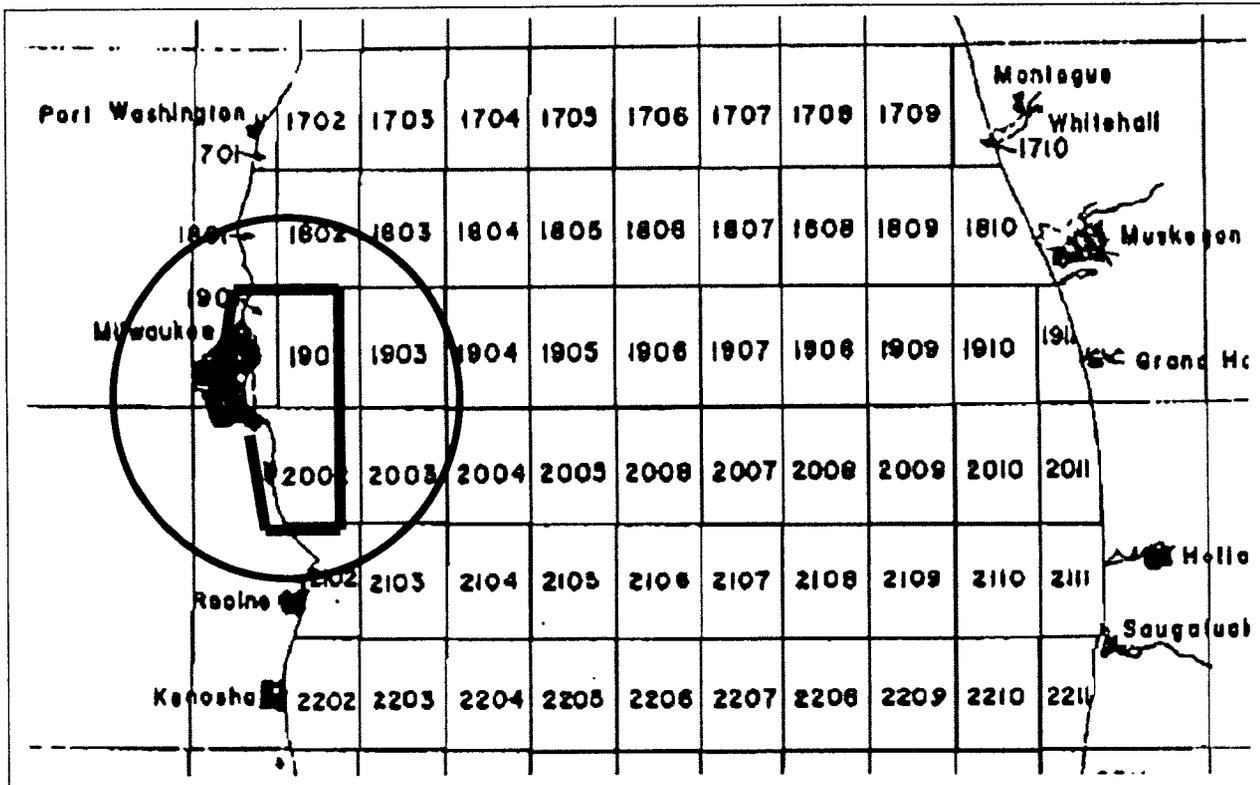
Currently, bear hunters are allowed to bait before the bear harvest season in part to select the best bear to hunt. Similarly, trappers should be allowed to bait, lure and use visual stimuli prior to the opening of the bobcat season. Baiting and photographing the site prior to the bobcat season would increase a trapper's chances of successfully harvesting a bobcat.

Would you support allowing trappers to bait, lure and use visual stimuli prior to the opening of the bobcat season?

Great Lakes Study Committee:

WCC19. Restrict Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Harvest in Select Grids

There have been documented examples of significant incidental harvest of yellow perch by commercial fishers targeting other legal species in areas identified to be critical to the recovery efforts of Lake Michigan Yellow Perch. Of specific concern are areas adjacent to the Green Can Reef (Grids 1901, 1902 and 2002) where the perch are most vulnerable. As the Lake Michigan yellow perch population is considered to be a fragile fishery, it has been suggested that these areas should be closed to commercial harvest to avoid incidental take of yellow perch.



Would you support recommending that the Department of Natural Resources take action to protect yellow perch by prohibiting all commercial fishing in grids 1901, 1902 and 2002 as identified in the map?

Legislative Study Committee:

WCC20. Allow Elderly Persons the Use of All Terrain Vehicles while Hunting

Currently, elderly people who don't have severe physical disabilities, but who need help in walking in hunting terrain, are unable to use ATVs. This limits their ability to participate in the hunt. ATV use permits are given to individuals with disabilities, but not to elderly persons that just need a little help. If a permit were available that would allow elder people to use ATV while hunting, more hunters over the age of 65 could continue to participate in deer and bear hunting on state land. ATVs would be required to stay on vehicle trails.

Would you be in favor of seniors 65 years old or older, or hunters with a disabled hunting permit, to have the opportunity to purchase a \$5.00 permit to be able to utilize an ATV or similar vehicle to travel to and travel from a hunting location and harvest deer, bear or other big game animals on already established vehicle trails (other than gated or sensitive areas) on state land?

WCC21. Change in the Minimum Age for Sturgeon Spearing

Currently, youth ages 12 and 13 are able to participate in hunting, trapping and fishing in Wisconsin. However, a youth must be 14 years of age to participate in sturgeon spearing. This rule is in place as a safety precaution. Due to the size and power of the fish, and the large opening in the ice, there were concerns that a 12 or 13 year old may not be capable of controlling the fish and could fall into the water and would be at risk for more serious injury.

To allow 12 and 13 year olds to participate, and to also take into account the safety concerns, it is proposed that a parent or legal guardian at least 18 years of age must accompany the 12 or 13 year old sturgeon spearer. Accompany means that the parent or guardian must physically be in the shanty with the 12 or 13 year old.

Would you support a statute change to allow a 12 or 13 year old to sturgeon spear provided they were accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, who was at least 18 years of age?

WCC22. Prohibit Legislation Regarding Wildlife and Fisheries Management without Public Hearings or DNR input

In the previous state budget a legislator inserted a provision pertaining to wildlife management without input or support from the DNR, the Conservation Congress, the Natural Resources Board, or the general public through the annual Spring Hearings. Fish and game decisions should be made by and in cooperation with trained professional resource managers and the public. Rule changes should go through the DNR rule making process and the Conservation Congress Spring Hearings to gauge public sentiment. Legislative changes involving fish and game, without input from the DNR and the public is not in the best interest of wildlife nor the public.

Would you support legislation that would prohibit legislators from making fish and wildlife regulation changes without first having public hearings and input from the DNR?

Outdoor Heritage and Education Study Committee:

WCC23. Winter Free Fishing Weekend

Wisconsin currently holds a successful summer Free Fishing Weekend each June. It allows a person to try the great sport of fishing without having to invest in the required licenses. It also allows existing anglers the chance to mentor and recruits others to the sport. If Wisconsin was to hold a winter Free Fishing Weekend anglers would be able to mentor and recruit new fishermen to the different types of fishing opportunities available in the winter months.

Would you favor the Wisconsin DNR taking action to implement a winter Free Fishing Weekend in Wisconsin?

WCC24. Include 16 & 17 Year Olds in the Youth Hunts

Currently Wisconsin holds special 2-day youth hunts for turkey, deer and waterfowl. These highly participated hunts are designed to allow 12-15 year olds being supervised by an adult an opportunity to hunt before the regular season opens. This allows the youth the full attention of the adult and increased opportunity when the game is plentiful. It also allows the adult a chance to mentor a youth who otherwise may not get the opportunity to try that species of hunting. If the age restrictions were increased to include 16 and 17 year olds the mentoring adult would be able to reach more youth who may not have been exposed to the great sport of hunting at an earlier age.

Would you favor the Wisconsin DNR to take appropriate action to allow adult supervised 16 and 17 year old youth hunters to participate in the Wisconsin Youth Hunts?

WCC25. Increased Youth Opportunity

The 12-19 year old Hunter Safety graduate is one of our safest groups of hunters according to accident data. Twelve and thirteen year old hunter safety grads must hunt in voice contact with an adult. Currently, a pre-twelve year old hunter safety grad, who turns 12 during a respective hunting season, must wait until they turn 12 to begin hunting. This means they lose the excitement of opening day anticipation and practice with older hunters. In the case of spring turkey this means they likely lose out on the youth hunt which is held the weekend before opening week. Allowing the pre-twelve year old youths to begin on opening day, if they turn twelve during the season, will not only allow them to experience the full excitement of the practice and opening day anticipation, but in the case of the fall hunts lets them begin when the weather is warmer and the game is the most plentiful. For example, currently our Whitetail Archery season is over 3 months long which means over 25% of our 12 year olds will have a birth date during the season.

Would you favor allowing youth who have attained their hunter safety certification to begin on opening day of their respective hunting season if they turn twelve during the respective season?

Upland Game Study Committee:

WCC26. Day Old Chick Program Requirements

The State Game Farm provides day-old pheasant chicks to conservation clubs enrolled in the Day-old Chick (DOC) program. Cooperating clubs sign an agreement which states they agree to provide all labor and costs for raising the birds and will release them on private land open to public hunting or on approved state-owned lands. DOC clubs have the option of a cost-share agreement which states they may release pheasants on private lands closed to public hunting, but they must return a percentage of the pheasants they raised back to the DNR. The DOC program currently involves 44 conservation clubs in 24 counties.

The current wording of one of the rules in the contract is as follows:

4. The club agrees to release all of the pheasants reared under this program on land open to public hunting. The club expressly agrees that no birds will be released on land that is posted against hunting on or land on which the occupant or owner restricts hunting.

The DNR currently interprets this rule in the contract for the DOC program to mean that "open to public hunting" means that no permission from the landowner was required for hunters to access the property where the DOC were released. Some program participants feel that this interpretation by the DNR does not respect the landowner's rights, and that hunting should be specific to pheasant hunting and exclude other forms of hunting. Therefore, it is recommended that the language in the DOC contract be modified to read as follows:

4. The club agrees to release all of the pheasants reared under this program on land open to pheasant hunting by permission. The club expressly agrees that no birds will be released on land that is posted against hunting on or land on which the occupant or owner restricts pheasant hunting.

Would you support this modification to the contract for the Day-Old-Chick program?

WCC27. Combine Pheasant and Turkey Stamps

Turkey Stamp funds have been providing opportunities for wild turkey management in Wisconsin since 1995. All turkey hunters are required to purchase the \$5.25 turkey stamp to legal hunt turkeys in Wisconsin. Sale of the turkey stamp currently generates over \$500,000 annual for habitat management and restoration projects, education, research, equipment, and for wild turkey management and hunting in Wisconsin.

Similarly, all pheasant hunters in Wisconsin are required to purchase the \$10 Pheasant Stamp. Revenue collected from sales of the pheasant stamp are put into a special designated account to be used specifically for wild pheasant restoration and the raising and releasing of put-and-take pheasants on public hunting grounds. More specifically, 40% of the revenue from the pheasant stamp is used for developing, managing, preserving, restoring and maintaining the wild pheasant population in the state. These funds affect thousands of acres of pheasant habitat every year benefiting not only pheasants, but many other grassland species as well. The other 60% of the funds are used for the raising and releasing of put-and-take pheasants on selected public hunting grounds.

While turkeys and pheasants have dedicated funding, numerous other upland game birds do not, including ruffed grouse, bobwhite quail, Hungarian (grey) partridge, woodcock and sharp-tailed grouse. Therefore it has been suggested that the Turkey and Pheasant Stamps be consolidated into a general Upland Habitat Stamp that would benefit all upland game bird species. Illinois and other states are already using a general habitat stamp with great success. Such a stamp would be required for anyone to hunt game birds in Wisconsin. However, prior to the implementation of such a proposal the Department would have to consider the cost of a new stamp, methods to assure adequate and continued funding for the pheasant stocking program as well as turkey and pheasant habitat projects.

Would you support having the DNR investigate the possibility of consolidating the Turkey and Pheasant Stamps into a single Upland Game Habitat Stamp that would cover all upland game bird species including turkey, pheasant, ruffed grouse, bobwhite quail, Hungarian (grey) partridge, sharp-tailed grouse, woodcock, provided it would provide a cost savings for hunters, and would not result in any reduction in revenue for the turkey and pheasant programs?

WCC28. Atlatl and Dart

The atlatl and dart, is the predecessor to the bow and arrow. It is a short-range weapon, similar in limitations to that of a traditional bow, but can deliver more kinetic energy than a traditional bow. Wisconsin hunting regulations presently do not allow the use of the atlatl and dart to be used for the taking of small game.

The atlatl has no advantage or disadvantage over archery; therefore, it would present no problem to the hunter during the regular small game season. The atlatl and dart should be permitted, and have similar regulations as are now enforced for hunting with the bow and arrow.

Would you support allowing the use of the atlatl and dart for small game animals during the normal small game seasons?

Warm Water Study Committee:

WCC29: Increased Size Limit on Muskellunge, Green Bay and Related Waters

The re-introduction of muskellunge into Green Bay has created a world class fishery. Natural reproduction has not yet been documented. The system is entirely dependant on stocking. Last year the department enacted rules pertaining to Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS). These rules have halted stocking, and has cast uncertainty onto the future of the fishery. Growth rates for muskies in these waters has been exceptional.

Along with it's reputation comes a significant increase in fishing pressure. While significantly benefiting the local economy, it may be short lived if more aggressive efforts aren't taken to protect this fragile and finite resource. The demise of the fishery will surely be escalated by over harvest.

Would you support increasing the size limit on muskellunge from 50 to 54 inches in the following waters: Lake Michigan north of Waldo Boulevard, Manitowoc, Sturgeon Bay, the waters of Green Bay proper, the Fox River upstream to the DePere dam, and the tributary streams considered outlying waters?

WCC30: Creating a Size Limit on Northern Pike in the Waters of Green Bay

Although good natural reproduction of northern pike in Green Bay continues in spite of recent low water levels, the decline in quality sized fish has been noted. Presently, there is no size limit on northern pike in Green Bay. Many pike are not reaching their large size potential.

Current regulations protect many other species of fish, including perch, walleye, and the recently introduced muskellunge with size limit restrictions. The northern pike fishery deserves the same protection.

Would you support creating a catch and release slot size of 30 inches to 40 inches on northern pike in the waters of Green Bay. The daily bag limit would remain 5 fish with only one fish allowed over 40 inches?

WCC31. The Great Northwest Bass Restoration Initiative

The bass fishery in Burnett County and northwest Wisconsin is facing a significant challenge. Bass are growing at much slower rates compared to historical standards.

Based on the 1990 DNR Fish Management Reference Book only 12% of lakes in NW Wisconsin did not meet minimum growth standards at the time size limits were adopted. Based on a random sample of 15% of the 215 lakes greater than 50 acres over the last three years, 61% of the largemouth bass lakes north of Highway 70, and 70% of the lakes south of Highway 70 in these counties do not meet the minimum growth standards. 19% of the sample populations could not reach preferred size (15 inches) within a normal 10 year life span while 97% reached or exceeded 15" by age 7 under pre-size limit conditions. Only 15% of present populations approach what was considered average in 1990. Fishing pressure is less than statewide or northern averages.

To correct this situation anglers in northwestern Wisconsin recommend a rule change to reduce the size limit on bass from 14" to zero" in Burnett County. The proposal would not affect the bag limit or bass management zone boundaries.

Would you support removing the size limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass in Burnett County?

WCC32. Chippewa Flowage Winter Bag Limit on Crappie

There is currently a zero bag limit for crappie on the Chippewa Flowage in Sawyer County during the winter months (December 1 to the first Sunday in March). Unstable lake levels were the main reason for the zero bag limit in order to protect vulnerable populations that would become confined in smaller pools. However, the flowage is not being lowered as in the past, and therefore is no longer a biological need for this regulation. In the summer the bag limit for crappie on the Chippewa Flowage is 15. In an effort to allow ice anglers to harvest crappies, local anglers have recommended that a bag limit of 2 crappies be allowed from December 1 to the first Sunday in March.

Would you support removing the zero bag limit on crappie on the Chippewa Flowage, and allow a daily bag limit of 2 crappies from December 1 to the first Sunday in March?

WCC33. Manage Smallmouth and Largemouth Bass as Separate Species

Bass fishing is the preference for the largest portion of the fishing fraternity, and the DNR does not differentiate between Largemouth and Smallmouth bass. These two species are very easy to differentiate. They differ ecologically, biologically, and sociologically. Separate management and regulation already exists for other species within the same family, such as trout.

Would you support separating Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass regulations and management, allowing them to be managed as two separate species?

WCC34. Size Limit on Bass in Washburn County

Bass in many Washburn County lakes have become overpopulated. This causes two problems. First, the bass outcompete and eat too many other fish in these lakes, thereby ruining the balance of fish in the lake. According to Washburn County anglers, bass seem to be especially impact the walleye in many of the backwoods lakes. Bass outcompete the walleye and eventually take over the lake. Secondly, the overpopulation of bass restrict the ability of bass to reach their growth potential and many lakes do not produce the bass that meets the 14" size limit required for legal harvest.

To correct this situation, it has been proposed that the bass size limit on Washburn County lakes be removed for 5 years until the overpopulation of bass in these lakes is resolved.

Would you support a rule change removing the size limit on bass in Washburn County for a 5 year period?

WCC35. Walleye Daily Bag Limit Change, Petenwell and Castle Rock Flowages

A daily bag limit of 5 walleye on Petenwell and Castle Rock Flowages has existed for many years. This is one of the few Wisconsin fisheries open on a year round basis. In 2001 a recommendation to change the bag limit to three was proposed along with a 15"-20" slot limit with one walleye over 28". The slot limit was implemented on a trial basis in an attempt to protect female spawning during the heavy spring fishing pressure. However, DNR creel census records did not indicate the need to change the bag limit; therefore the bag limit remained unchanged at 5. As a result anglers feel that the walleye populations are declining on these two flowages of the Wisconsin River.

In 2007 an estimated 9,363 anglers fished the northern part of the flowages from March 9th to April 27th during the spring walleye spawn. Many anglers continue to fish walleye on this stretch of river throughout the summer months and again during the fall migration. It is believed that most of the anglers are harvesting their daily limit of 5 walleyes during the spring spawning season. This removes many three to five year old fish from the river system, many of which are spawning females. Of added concern, the Wisconsin River Power Company (WRPC) rapidly raises the water in early spring for run off, which in turn flushes the river system. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) agreement requires the WRPC to perform a spawning survey to determine the impacts to the fishery and vegetation.

Given the high harvest pressure and impacts of the WRPC actions it is felt that reducing the bag limit from 5 to 3 walleyes would benefit the walleye population on the Petenwell and Castle Rock Flowages.

Would you support a rule change to reduce the daily bag limit on Walleye from 5 fish to 3 fish on the Wisconsin River Flowages of Castle Rock and Petenwell?