

# Wisconsin Deer Management Assistance Program Overview

The Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) provides habitat and herd management assistance to landowners interested in managing their property for wildlife. The program is identified and defined under Wis. Stat. § 29.020 and Wis. Admin. Code NR § 10.70. This overview will provide basic program information for interested landowners. Additional program information and application materials can be found at [www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov), keyword: DMAP.

## **Program Objectives**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) set the following DMAP objectives:

- promote sound land stewardship practices;
- provide outreach and educational information to landowners about wildlife habitat management practices;
- provide a means for site-specific deer management;
- improve relationships.

## **Definitions**

- 1) Individual property** – A stand-alone piece of real estate that may or may not have multiple owners.
- 2) Group cooperative** – An association of individual property owners or their representatives who are not organized as a business entity but are organized for the purpose of managing deer and other wildlife resources and whose members have agreed to participate in DMAP. Each property enrolled in the group cooperative must be within one –half mile of another property in the cooperative.
- 3) Public land** – National, state, county or municipally owned land for which public access is available through DMAP. Properties enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) and Forest Crop Law (FCL) programs are considered private properties for DMAP purposes.
- 4) Primary contact** – The primary point of contact for a property or group cooperative enrolled in DMAP. Responsibilities include:
  - complete and submit DMAP enrollment application for individuals or group cooperative;
  - share information with other landowners or their authorized representative(s) participating in group cooperatives;
  - schedule meetings and site visits between landowners enrolled in a group cooperative and department staff;

- attend workshops and meetings as a representative of the DMAP enrolled property(s); and
- submit enrollment fees.

**5) Authorized representative** – An individual who has received permission from a landowner to act and make decisions on the landowner’s behalf concerning DMAP, including granting access to the landowner’s property by department staff for DMAP purposes.

**Enrollment**

Interested individuals may enroll in DMAP through the MyDMAP online application system or by mailing a paper copy of the application to the DMAP coordinator. MyDMAP is an electronic database that will be used to collect and store landowner application information, management plans, harvest data, trail camera photos, harvest reports and educational resources. Landowners will be able to access their information through a secure password connection. Application instructions can be found on the DMAP web page ([www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov); keyword: DMAP). All landowners will be asked to review and approve a landowner agreement to confirm their approval of DMAP participation.

The application deadline for enrollment in a given year is March 1 of that year. Applications received after March 1 will be considered for enrollment in the following year. The agreement will terminate on February 28, three years following the year of enrollment.

Example:

<b>Application date</b>	<b>Termination date</b>
March 1, 2015	February 28, 2018
March 2, 2015 (enrolled in 2016)	February 28, 2019

**Participation levels**

The following benefits will be given to landowners based on the DMAP level.

**Level 1 (no minimum acreage requirement)**

- DMAP educational resources.
- Technical assistance from department employees including wildlife biologists and foresters.
- Annual program reports.
- An opportunity to attend annual workshops organized by the department or its partners.

- Assistance with individual projects that have scientific value.
- Information on forming program cooperatives.

**Level 2 (160 acre minimum)**

Level two landowners will receive all the benefits of level one. The department may require that participants provide harvest reports and attendance at an annual meeting or workshop sponsored by the department or its partners.

- One on-site consultation visit by a wildlife biologist and/or a forester.
- A management plan with habitat and harvest recommendations developed individually for the enrolled property or cooperative.
- Reduced price antlerless tags (if applicable to management goals).
- Property specific harvest reports.

**Level 3 (640 acre minimum)**

Level three landowners will receive all the benefits of levels one and two. The department may require that participants provide harvest reports and attendance at an annual meeting or workshop sponsored by the department or its partners.

- Assistance with deer population monitoring.
- Habitat evaluations.
- Assistance with enrollment in other conservation programs.
- Technical assistance and design for habitat and property management activities.
- Additional site visits when needed and detailed management recommendations.

**Fees**

The department may wave the fee for participation by governmental organizations or owners of other lands that the department determines are open to the public for hunting. The following are fees for DMAP participation and antlerless tags.

- Level 1 . . . . . \$0
- Level 2 . . . . . \$75
- Level 3 . . . . . \$150
- Antlerless tags . . . . . \$6 each (level two and three only)

**Site visits**

Properties enrolled in DMAP at levels two and three will be eligible for site visits from a professional wildlife biologist and/or forester. The landowner or designated representative for an individual property or group cooperative must be present for the initial site visit. The site visit will allow department staff to learn property boundaries, evaluate habitat quality and deer densities, discuss and establish property goals and interact with the landowner(s).

Level two landowners are eligible for one site visit and regular communication with department staff as needed. Level three landowners are eligible for multiple site visits, depending on the size of the property(s). The number of visits will be based on the amount of time needed to fully evaluate the entire enrolled property(s). Department staff will give notice to the landowner, authorized representative or primary contact before accessing the enrolled property(s).

### **Management plans**

The department will provide property management plans to properties enrolled at levels two and three. If the property(s) already has a management plan in place (MFL, Forest Stewardship plan, master plans, etc.), the DMAP management plan will provide more detail on any wildlife objectives in the existing plans for the property(s). Staff from the department will work with the landowner to develop realistic goals for the property(s). Management plans will provide recommendations to find a balance between habitat quality and deer density, which may include habitat improvements and deer harvest strategies. The management plan will include an aerial photo of the property and possible information on cost-share programs available to the landowner. Department staff will have management plans available within a reasonable time after the final site visit to the property. Management plans will be made available to landowners via their MyDMAP account or hard copies will be sent to those without computer access. There are no penalties for landowners that do not follow management plan recommendations.

### **Data and harvest reports**

Landowners enrolled at levels two and three or their authorized representatives will be asked to collect data on the deer they harvest or observe. This data may include:

- deer age (jawbone collection);
- antler dimensions;
- lactation status;
- weight;
- summer deer observations;
- wildlife observation journal;
- trail camera photo interpretation; and
- assistance with tissue sample collection (when requested).

This data will be summarized in annual harvest reports that will be provided to participants. Trends in this data will be used to determine if management plan recommendations are supporting the deer management goals for the property. Harvest reports will consist of data in tabular and chart format that will allow the landowner to easily follow data on the deer they harvest over time.

## **Group cooperatives**

Group cooperatives (defined above) may be formed by landowners to meet the minimum acreage requirements for a particular DMAP level of participation. Group cooperatives provide a number of benefits, including:

- large-scale habitat management opportunities;
- reduced habitat management costs;
- increased acreage for deer management goals;
- improved neighbor relations; and
- the ability to share data and information.

Staff from the department will be available to provide technical assistance and information on forming group cooperatives. There is no limit to the number of landowners in a group cooperative. Group cooperative landowners are responsible for habitat and deer management objectives for the enrolled property. The cooperative will be asked to identify a “primary contact” (defined above) as the main point of contact with department staff. Properties may be added or removed from a group cooperative; however, the termination date for the DMAP cooperative agreement will not change.

## **Regional workshops and training opportunities**

The department and conservation partners will host regional workshops for DMAP participants to attend. The workshops will provide information on habitat management techniques, program opportunities and first-hand landowner experience. Invited speakers will cover a suite of topics that will be of interest to landowners and hunters alike. The workshops will be a great opportunity for DMAP participants to interact and network. Workshops will include a site visit of a DMAP property and DMAP updates. Participants will be informed of “citizen science” opportunities in their area and additional training opportunities with partner agencies and organizations.

## **DMAP on public lands**

Wisconsin DMAP is not intended to be a private land only program. The department may cooperate with the managers of national, state, county or municipally owned land for which public access is available through DMAP. The DMAP coordinator, biologist and forester can work together with public land managers, tribes and the public to enroll public properties. There are two primary opportunities that exist for enrollment of public land in DMAP.

- Provide management options to help address deer management concerns and reach habitat objectives.

- Promote wildlife habitat improvement projects on public properties where quality habitat is limited. This includes the formation of groups to support habitat projects through financial donations and volunteer time.

Local public input sessions can be used to identify site-specific management concerns and to set antlerless harvest quotas for public properties. The application of DMAP on public properties will be a discussion item for the county deer advisory committees.

## **Partnership**

The current framework for Wisconsin DMAP was created by a citizen action team consisting of citizens and conservation leaders. Program details are being developed with the advice and support from a number of conservation partners. The DMAP advisory committee consists of 25 representatives from 19 organizations and agencies. These partners will play a key role in the future success of the program through DMAP promotion and participation. Committee meeting minutes and agendas are available on the DMAP advisory committee web page.

