State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Matthew J. Frank, Secretary

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Assembly Committee on Fish & Wildlife
August 5, 2009

Chair Hraychuck and committee members:

The department recommends the following provisions which are part of the 2009 wildlife management spring hearing proposal. Parenthesis indicate the year the proposal would become effective.

Statewide Questions

28. Clarify the definition of "open water hunting" for waterfowl (2009)
    - The minimum amount of concealment that must be provided by natural vegetation must be 50 % when viewed from at least one direction from a height of 3 feet.
    - The vegetation must extend above the water's surface to a height at or above the sides of the boat.
    - The boat or blind must be within 3 feet of the vegetation providing the concealment.
    - Relaxes the rules/*expands opportunity* for most hunters because concealment "within" vegetation is no longer required, boat blinds would be legal in more situations.
    - 56% approving.
    - Congress had concerns at statewide meeting but the proposal does not represent a change to current rule regarding LE's interpretation of what concealment is.

29. Extend the fall turkey season. (2009)
    - Extends the turkey season to include the Monday following the 9-day gun deer season through December 31 in turkey management zones 1 – 5 for two years (Zones 6 and 7 would be excluded).
    - Subject of NRB advisory question last year with broad support.
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30. Registration of wild turkeys. (2011)
    - Currently turkeys must be registered in person at a department registration station but the department is researching whether less expensive registration methods, that would be more convenient for hunters, can be utilized.
    - Telephone registration is primary option but on-line technology may be a component.
    - New registration methods would be implemented no earlier than spring 2011.
    - 85% approving.

31. and 32. Modify the bobcat hunting and trapping seasons. (2010)
    - Create two bobcat permit periods (third Sat. in Oct – Dec. 25 and Dec. 26 – Jan. 31), limit hunters and trappers to one period, and require 24 hour harvest reporting to monitor progress toward the bobcat harvest quota.
    - Emergency closure already exists.
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    - Allow the use of cable restraints as part of the proposed new bobcat season structure (Dec. and January portions of the season).

- 61% approving, season and cable restraints.

33. Clarify the definition of legal gun types for hunting. (2010)
    - Require that legal firearm types include compressed air or gunpowder as part of their design and function.
    - Question has come up related to "rail guns" and coil guns.
    - Requires evaluation by the department, Conservation Congress, and this public rules process before new technology could be used.
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34. Issuance of left-over turkey hunting permits. (2009)
    - Removes the first-come, first-served requirement so that in an emergency the department has the flexibility to issue permits by another method.
    - Current rules do not provide the flexibility to issue permits by another method in case of an equipment failure or other unforeseen problem.
    - Other means could include a second drawing.
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35 and 36. Turkey hunting by disabled permit holders. (2009)
    - Electronic calls are currently prohibited in all turkey hunting situations but allowing the use of electronic calls may increase the ability of some people with disabilities to participate in the turkey hunt with less assistance than is currently required.
    - Only the disabled permit holder would be able to kill a turkey when an electronic call is possessed, assistant could not hunt.
    - People who possess long-term Class B disabled hunting permits that authorize hunting from a vehicle are also allowed to participate in the gun deer hunts but not the special turkey hunts for people with disabilities. This proposal would make the rules for these special deer and turkey hunts consistent.
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37. Require the registration of harvested sharp-tailed grouse. ***(Not recommended as part of this rule)***
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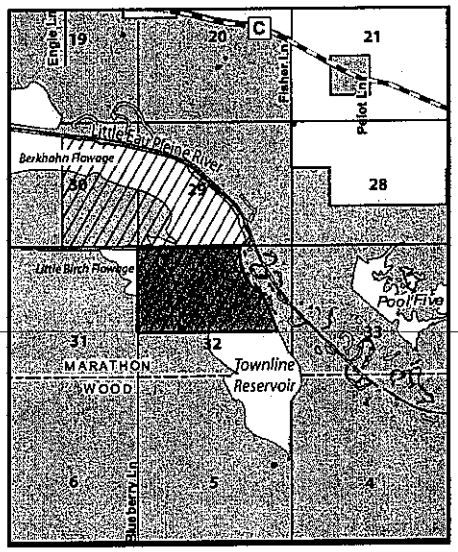
How will we assure that our success rates are right and that we won't overharvest?
    - We will continue to encourage people to submit registrations, will estimate compliance by comparing with the hunter survey.
    - Our ability to set permit levels accurately is hindered by variability in compliance.
    - Compliance has ranged from 70% - 95%
    - The population is not in peril.
    - Given that the population is low overall, we do want to be as accurate as possible.
    - Harvest has ranged from 40 – 50 in the last couple years.
    - 695 permits issued in '07 and 875 issued in '08.

38, 39, 40 & 41. Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead Wildlife Management Area, Wood, Marathon, and Portage Counties. (2010)
    - The 30,000 acre Mead Wildlife Area, located in central Wisconsin, is a premier waterfowl hunting destination of statewide significance with intense hunting pressure. Working with local waterfowl hunters, a number of proposals have been developed which are designed to improve the quality of the hunt by holding more ducks in the area for a longer period of time.
    - Close hunting hours at 1:00 p.m. during the first 16 days of the duck season after opening weekend (this provision would sunset after three years). **51% approving.**

- Close the Mead Wildlife Management Area to all waterfowl hunting prior to the opening of the duck season, except that duck hunting would be allowed on the youth hunt weekend. **51% approving.**
- Increase the size of the Townline Reservoir/Berkhahn Flowage. **61% approving.**

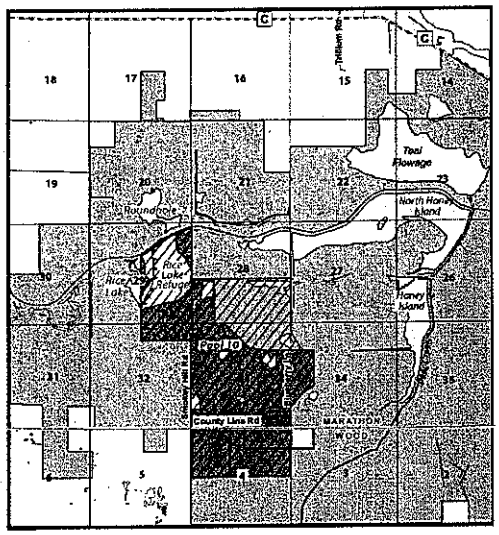
Townline Reservoir/Berkhahn Flowage Refuge



Existing Townline Reservoir Refuge
Proposed Towline Reservoir/Berkhahn Flowage Refuge
Mead Wildlife Management Area
Dike

- Increase the size of the Rice Lake/Pool 10 Flowage refuge at Mead Wildlife Management Area. **60% approving.**

Proposed Rice Lake/Pool 10 Refuge



Existing Rice Lake Refuge
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    - Lost in 38 counties, won in 33 counties, earned 48% approval; and is recommended by the department.
    - Fall turkey hunting with the aid of dogs has been allowed in nine southwest Wisconsin counties for nearly two full seasons. Following each season, hunters have been surveyed in order to identify if there were conflicts with turkey hunters who were using dogs. Additionally, law enforcement and wildlife management staff have been consulted. Participation by turkey hunters using dogs has been minimal and no conflicts have been identified.
    - Cons. Congress also recommended against at statewide meeting, DNR still recommends because hunting opportunity can be provided with no known interference or management problems.

Local Questions

43. Allow the harvest of stocked hen pheasants at Sand Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County. (2010)
    - Surplus hen pheasants produced at the state game farm in Poynette are currently stocked for hunters at several properties that do not have natural reproduction of pheasants.
    - The 680 acre Sand Creek Fishery Area has farm fields that have recently been converted to warm season grasses and prairie species that will be excellent habitat for pheasant hunting.
    - 83% approval in Monroe County.

44. Allow the use of rifles for firearm deer hunting in Dunn County. (2009)
    - Effective date changed to 2009 instead of 2010.
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45. Eliminate the Nelson-Trevino Mississippi River closed area in Buffalo County. (2009)
    - The US Fish & Wildlife Service has proposed eliminating the 3,773 acre Nelson Trevino closed area on the federal Upper Mississippi River Fish & Wildlife Refuge after evaluation through the agency's Comprehensive Conservation Plan.
    - This rule change proposal would make Wisconsin and federal regulations consistent by eliminating the same closed area in our state regulations.
    - Hunting would be allowed in this area under both state and federal regulations.
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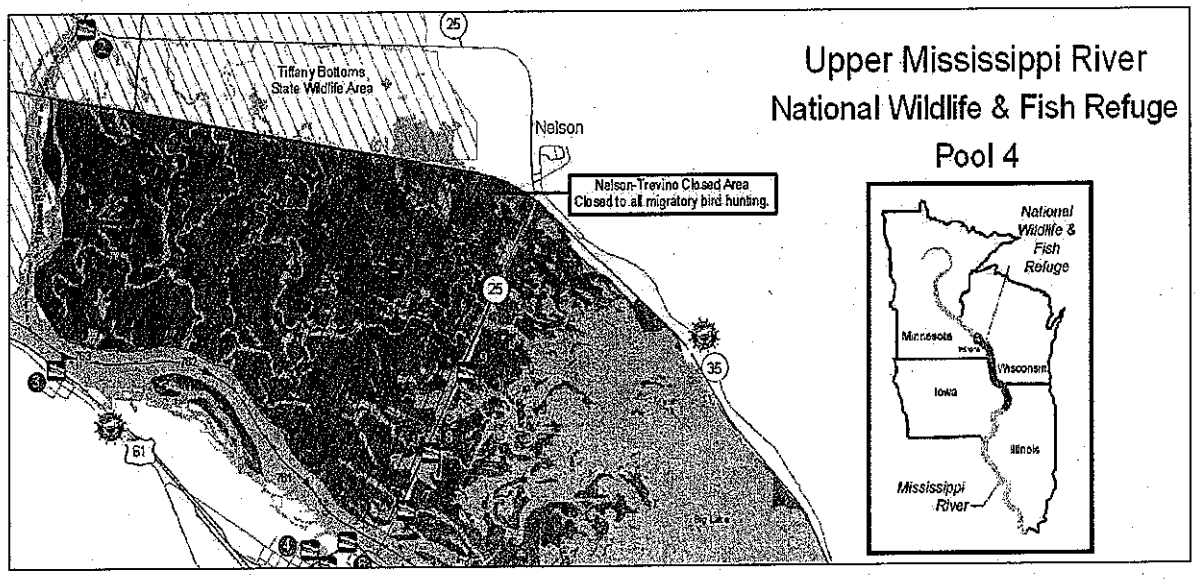


46. Allow the use of rifles for firearm deer hunting in Shawano County, south of 29 and west of J. (2009)
- Originally proposed for 2010 to coordinate regulation pamphlet printing and the rules process. *Several individuals have requested a 2009 effective date so it will be effective this fall.* If the rule making process is not complete when regulations go to the printer, the regulations will contain a notice that rifles may be allowed in these areas (also Dunn Co.) and a recommendation that hunters contact the DNR or watch for media releases.
- 79% approval in Shawano County.

47. Allow firearm deer hunting at Whitefish Dunes state park, Door County. (2010)
- Traditional nine-day season.
- Deer hunting has never been allowed at Whitefish Dunes.
- Controls deer numbers and creates hunting opportunities.
- 84% approval in Door County.

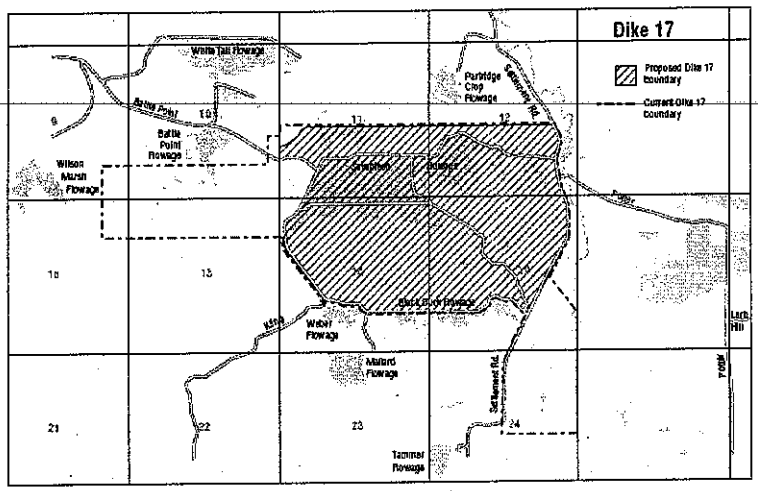
48. Establish an antlerless-only deer season with occasional buck seasons at Wildcat Mountain State Park, Vernon County (2010)
- Wildcat Mountain currently has a 19 day muzzleloader-only season and late archery hunting. Approximately 300 access permits are issued for the muzzleloader hunt annually. The muzzleloader season has been antlerless-only during most seasons but buck harvest is allowed during the archery seasons.
- To help control deer populations, this proposal would make the base archery and muzzleloader season antlerless-only during most years. Under this proposal, buck harvest could be allowed during certain years. Local park staff have proposed allowing buck harvest every fifth year.
- 45% approval in Vernon and 53% in Monroe. The department is recommending this proposal because similar hunts at the park in the past have drawn hunters from around the state. Hunters have said that the muzzleloader and antlerless only regulations provide a high quality hunt and managers observe that the seasons take the number of antlerless deer that is desired for herd management.

49. Eliminate the state park deer hunting season framework at Cadiz Spring State Park and Recreation Area, allow hunting during all normal deer seasons on this recreation area, Green County. (2010)
- Cadiz Springs State Park is an 18 acre park where hunting has not been allowed.
- The surrounding public lands have been open to deer hunting with the same seasons as other state parks that are open to hunting in the CWD Management Zone.
- The result would be an increase in deer hunting opportunities including all-day hunting during the October firearm season and early archery hunting which have not been allowed in the past.
- Hunting would continue to not be allowed on the 18 acres of state park which are improved for day use and contain structures and facilities.
- 78% approval in Green County.

50. Eliminate the late season archery deer hunt at Brunet Island State Park, Chippewa County. ***(Not recommended as part of this rule)***
- Brunet Island State Park has a 9-day shotgun only season for antlerless deer and is open during the late archery season.
- Participation in the late hunt is minimal, typically one to two hunters per season, and offers no assistance with herd control.
- Neighboring Lake Wissota State Park does not have an archery season and park managers would like both parks in this work unit to have consistent seasons.
- 41% approval in Chippewa County.

51. Reduce the size of Dike 17 waterfowl refuge and allow trapping and firearm deer hunting, Jackson County. (2010)

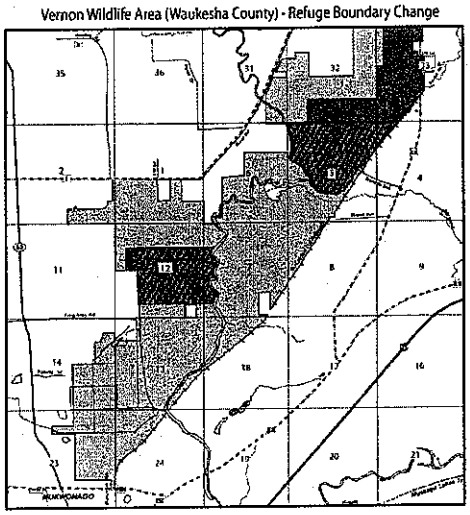
- Dike 17 Wildlife Area is a 3,100 acre property located within the Black River State Forest. The property has a 2,170 acre waterfowl refuge that receives limited use by waterfowl and is larger than needed.
- This proposal would reduce the size of the refuge by 800 acres and allow all trapping and hunting in the non-refuge area.
- In the remaining refuge area, deer hunting would be expanded to include the archery as well as the firearm and muzzleloader deer seasons and trapping would be allowed with no special permission needed from the manager.
- 70% approval in Jackson County.



52. Reduce the size of Vernon Marsh waterfowl refuge, Waukesha County. (2010)

- Vernon Wildlife Area is a 4,655 acre property (4,154 acres owned, 501 acres leased) in Waukesha County. The property contains 740 acres of refuge.
- This proposal would eliminate 395 acres of refuge on the north side of the property, opening it to hunting.
- Was traditionally an upland goose refuge, use is limited and goose refuges no longer needed in this area.
- 94% approval in Waukesha County.

Vernon Wildlife Area (Waukesha County) - Refuge Boundary Change



53. 1:00 p.m. closure of migratory bird hunting, Zeloski Unit of Lake Mills Wildlife Area, Jefferson County. (2010).

- The Zeloski Marsh Wildlife Area is a newly expanded, very popular, property where there is an opportunity to initiate special migratory bird hunting regulations designed to improve the quality of the hunt.
- Would establish a 1:00 p.m. closure of migratory bird hunting, including waterfowl and mourning doves, beginning on Sept. 1 and continuing through the 16th day after the opening weekend of the duck season on the entire property. Hunting would be allowed all day on the opening weekend of the duck season.
- Similar regulations in other states have been shown to provide good hunting across an entire property rather than just near refuges, hold ducks in an area for a longer period of time, and provide excellent shooting opportunities at the opening of shooting hours and again before the 1:00 p.m. closure. This regulation would sunset after 3 years and, if there continues to be support, would need to be reauthorized.
- Applies to the Zeloski Unit (2,000 acres) of the Lake Mills Wildlife Area only, Lake Mills Unit (1,300 acres) has some private land, regulation may not be as effective there as the rule was originally drafted.
- 63% approval in Jefferson/Dane counties.

54. Allow firearm deer hunting at Potawatomi State Park, Door County. (2010)

- Traditional nine-day season.
- Twelve letters of opposition were received - authors generally expressed concern for the safety of homes which are adjacent to the property, concern for other users of the property, skepticism about high deer numbers, or requested "buffer areas" where hunting would not be allowed. The department response is that the situation surrounding Potawatomi state park is similar, both in landscape and the level of human development, to other properties where hunting is allowed. We have not experienced problems in similar situations in the region. Hunting and no-hunting areas will be posted and maps will be available. Non-hunting park visitors will be informed that hunting is occurring and advised of those areas. There is a non-hunting area along a portion of the southeast park boundary due to the close proximity of dwellings. In response to comments received, another area in the northwest quadrant may be added as a no-hunting area. Rule making is not needed to establish areas that are closed to hunting in a state park. The decision to allow hunting only during the traditional nine-day firearm deer season in November was made to minimize impact to park users. This is not a time of year when significant user conflicts are anticipated. Park staff people, including credentialed law enforcement officers, will be on duty in the park during hunting season. Local staff remain concerned that, if the deer herd is not controlled, forest regeneration will be severely limited or non-existent.
- 73% approval in Door County.

55. Allow rifles for deer hunting on all of Hartman Creek State Park, Waupaca/Portage Counties. (2010)

- Waupaca is a shotgun deer season county and rifles are allowed in Portage County. The park straddles the county line.
- Makes this regulation consistent over the entire property.
- 69% approval.

2009 Spring Hearings - Results of Wildlife Management Proposals

Question Number	Question Description	Yes Votes	No Votes	Statewide Vote	County Vote (Yes/No/Tie)	Local Vote (Yes / No)	Department Recommendation
Statewide Department Questions							
28	Definition of "open water hunting" for waterfowl	3,133	2,424	Yes	54 / 17 / 1		Advance
29	Extend the fall turkey season through December 31	4,607	2,142	Yes	62 / 10		Advance
30	Registration of wild turkeys	5,743	1,051	Yes	72 / 0		Advance
31	Modify the bobcat hunting and trapping seasons, two time periods	3,447	1,851	Yes	62 / 10		Advance
32	Modify the bobcat hunting and trapping seasons, cable restraints	3,061	2,071	Yes	58 / 12 / 2		Advance
33	Clarify types of guns allowed for hunting	3,956	2,156	Yes	63 / 8 / 1		Advance
34	Issuance of left-over turkey hunting permits	3,639	2,753	Yes	57 / 14 / 1		Advance
35	Turkey hunting by disabled permit holders, electronic calls	4,290	1,918	Yes	70 / 0 / 2		Advance
36	Turkey hunting by disabled permit holders, special turkey hunts	4,745	1,426	Yes	72		Advance
37	Registration of sharp-tailed grouse	2,500	3,208	No	20 / 50 / 2		Not Advance
38	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead, 1:00 p.m. closure	2,107	2,046	Yes	36 / 33 / 3	Mar./Port./Wood Co's.* 263 / 135	Advance
39	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead, early season closed area	2,086	2,006	Yes	36 / 32 / 4	Mar./Port./Wood Co's.* 254 / 143	Advance
40	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead, Townline Reservoir	2,280	1,484	Yes	58 / 9 / 5	Mar./Port./Wood Co's.* 247 / 135	Advance
41	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead, Rice Lake	2,269	1,505	Yes	57 / 12 / 3	Mar./Port./Wood Co's.* 248 / 132	Advance
42	Fall turkey hunting with dogs, statewide	3,168	3,398	No	33 / 38 / 1		Advance

* Proposal was approved in each directly affected county

Question Number	Question Description	Yes Votes	No Votes	Statewide Vote	County Vote (Yes/No/Tie)	Local Vote (Yes / No)	Department Recommendation
				Local Department Questions			
43	Stocked hen pheasant hunting at Sand Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County	2,629	1,200	Yes	67 / 4 / 1	66 / 14	Advance
44	Rifles for deer hunting in Dunn County	3,532	836	Yes	71 / 0 / 1	63 / 16	Advance
45	Eliminate Nelson-Trevino Mississippi River closed area, Buffalo County	2,969	1,068	Yes	66 / 5 / 1	52 / 13	Advance
46	Rifles for firearm deer hunting in SW Shawano County	3,667	959	Yes	71 / 0 / 1	172 / 47	Advance
47	Whitefish Dunes S.P. deer season, Door	3,464	667	Yes	72/0	190 / 37	Advance
48	Antlerless-only with periodical buck harvest, Wildcat Mountain S.P., Vernon Co	1,949	1,922	Yes	34 / 32 / 6	Vernon, 18 / 22 Monroe, 42 / 37	Advance
49	Eliminate S.P. deer season framework at Cadiz Spring Rec. Area, Green Co.	2,805	786	Yes	71 / 1	54 / 15	Advance
50	Eliminate the late archery deer hunt at Brunet Island Park, Chippewa County	1,401	2,965	No	4 / 68	38 / 55	Not Advance
51	Reduce Dike 17 waterfowl refuge, Jackson	2,625	982	Yes	68 / 2 / 2	31 / 13	Advance
52	Reduce Vernon Marsh refuge, Waukesha	3,039	622	Yes	72 / 0	194 / 12	Advance
53	1:00 p.m. closure of migratory bird hunting, Lake Mills Wildlife Area, Jefferson	1,649	1,633	Yes	39 / 31 / 2	Jefferson / Dane* 191 / 113	Advance
54	Potawatomi state park deer season, Door	3,622	622	Yes	72 / 0	115 / 42	Advance
55	Rifles for deer hunting in all of Hartman Creek state park, Waupaca/Portage co's.	3,260	926	Yes	71 / 0 / 1	Waupaca / Portage* 226 / 101	Advance

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Statewide attendance – 7,939

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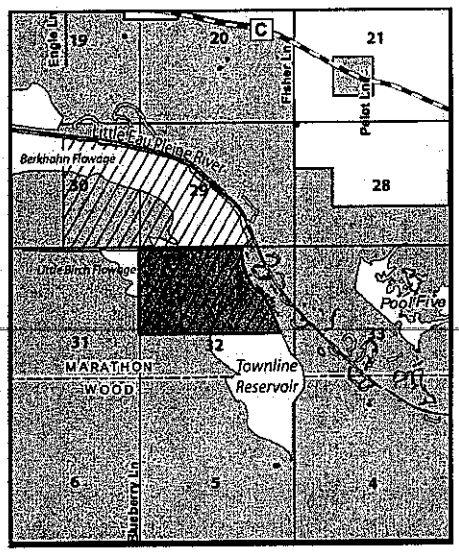

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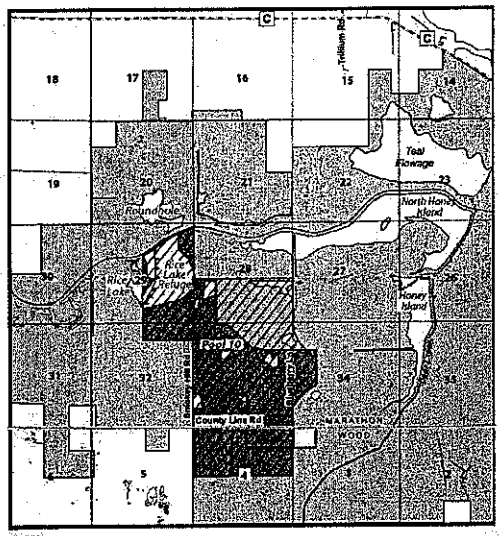

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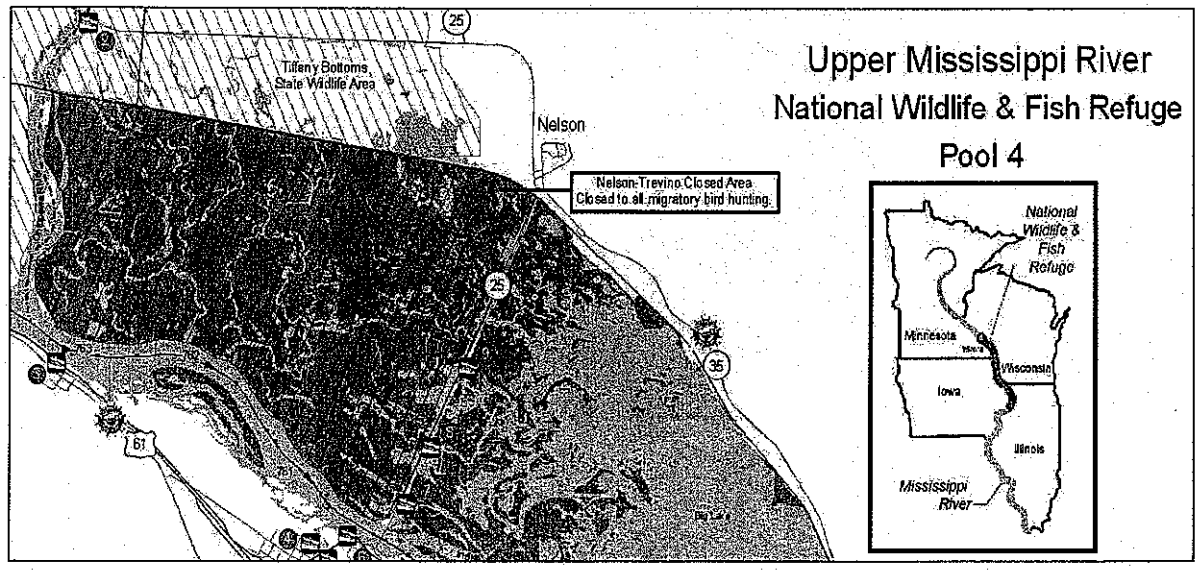

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- Originally proposed for 2010 to coordinate regulation pamphlet printing and the rules process. *Several individuals have requested a 2009 effective date so it will be effective this fall.* If the rule making process is not complete when regulations go to the printer, the regulations will contain a notice that rifles may be allowed in these areas (also Dunn Co.) and a recommendation that hunters contact the DNR or watch for media releases.
- 79% approval in Shawano County.

47. Allow firearm deer hunting at Whitefish Dunes state park, Door County. (2010)
- Traditional nine-day season.
- Deer hunting has never been allowed at Whitefish Dunes.
- Controls deer numbers and creates hunting opportunities.
- 84% approval in Door County.

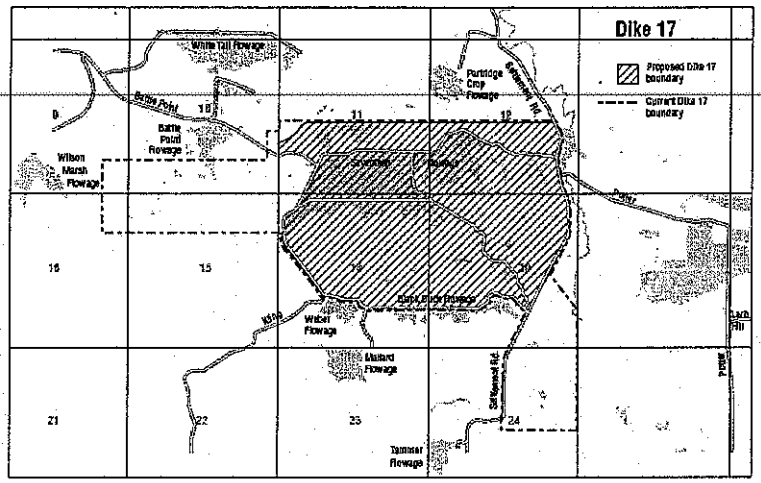
48. Establish an antlerless-only deer season with occasional buck seasons at Wildcat Mountain State Park, Vernon County (2010)
- Wildcat Mountain currently has a 19 day muzzleloader-only season and late archery hunting. Approximately 300 access permits are issued for the muzzleloader hunt annually. The muzzleloader season has been antlerless-only during most seasons but buck harvest is allowed during the archery seasons.
- To help control deer populations, this proposal would make the base archery and muzzleloader season antlerless-only during most years. Under this proposal, buck harvest could be allowed during certain years. Local park staff have proposed allowing buck harvest every fifth year.
- 45% approval in Vernon and 53% in Monroe. The department is recommending this proposal because similar hunts at the park in the past have drawn hunters from around the state. Hunters have said that the muzzleloader and antlerless only regulations provide a high quality hunt and managers observe that the seasons take the number of antlerless deer that is desired for herd management.

49. Eliminate the state park deer hunting season framework at Cadiz Spring State Park and Recreation Area, allow hunting during all normal deer seasons on this recreation area, Green County. (2010)
- Cadiz Springs State Park is an 18 acre park where hunting has not been allowed.
- The surrounding public lands have been open to deer hunting with the same seasons as other state parks that are open to hunting in the CWD Management Zone.
- The result would be an increase in deer hunting opportunities including all-day hunting during the October firearm season and early archery hunting which have not been allowed in the past.
- Hunting would continue to not be allowed on the 18 acres of state park which are improved for day use and contain structures and facilities.
- 78% approval in Green County.

50. Eliminate the late season archery deer hunt at Brunet Island State Park, Chippewa County. ***(Not recommended as part of this rule)***
- Brunet Island State Park has a 9-day shotgun only season for antlerless deer and is open during the late archery season.
- Participation in the late hunt is minimal, typically one to two hunters per season, and offers no assistance with herd control.
- Neighboring Lake Wissota State Park does not have an archery season and park managers would like both parks in this work unit to have consistent seasons.
- 41% approval in Chippewa County.

51. Reduce the size of Dike 17 waterfowl refuge and allow trapping and firearm deer hunting, Jackson County. (2010)

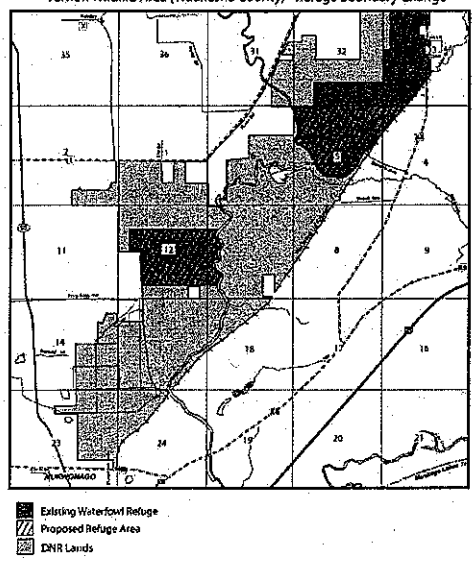
- Dike 17 Wildlife Area is a 3,100 acre property located within the Black River State Forest. The property has a 2,170 acre waterfowl refuge that receives limited use by waterfowl and is larger than needed.
- This proposal would reduce the size of the refuge by 800 acres and allow all trapping and hunting in the non-refuge area.
- In the remaining refuge area, deer hunting would be expanded to include the archery as well as the firearm and muzzleloader deer seasons and trapping would be allowed with no special permission needed from the manager.
- 70% approval in Jackson County.



52. Reduce the size of Vernon Marsh waterfowl refuge, Waukesha County. (2010)

- Vernon Wildlife Area is a 4,655 acre property (4,154 acres owned, 501 acres leased) in Waukesha County. The property contains 740 acres of refuge.
- This proposal would eliminate 395 acres of refuge on the north side of the property, opening it to hunting.
- Was traditionally an upland goose refuge, use is limited and goose refuges no longer needed in this area.
- 94% approval in Waukesha County.

Vernon Wildlife Area (Waukesha County) - Refuge Boundary Change



53. 1:00 p.m. closure of migratory bird hunting, Zeloski Unit of Lake Mills Wildlife Area, Jefferson County. (2010).

- The Zeloski Marsh Wildlife Area is a newly expanded, very popular, property where there is an opportunity to initiate special migratory bird hunting regulations designed to improve the quality of the hunt.
- Would establish a 1:00 p.m. closure of migratory bird hunting, including waterfowl and mourning doves, beginning on Sept. 1 and continuing through the 16th day after the opening weekend of the duck season on the entire property. Hunting would be allowed all day on the opening weekend of the duck season.
- Similar regulations in other states have been shown to provide good hunting across an entire property rather than just near refuges, hold ducks in an area for a longer period of time, and provide excellent shooting opportunities at the opening of shooting hours and again before the 1:00 p.m. closure. This regulation would sunset after 3 years and, if there continues to be support, would need to be reauthorized.
- Applies to the Zeloski Unit (2,000 acres) of the Lake Mills Wildlife Area only, Lake Mills Unit (1,300 acres) has some private land, regulation may not be as effective there as the rule was originally drafted.
- 63% approval in Jefferson/Dane counties.

54. Allow firearm deer hunting at Potawatomi State Park, Door County. (2010)

- Traditional nine-day season.
- Twelve letters of opposition were received - authors generally expressed concern for the safety of homes which are adjacent to the property, concern for other users of the property, skepticism about high deer numbers, or requested "buffer areas" where hunting would not be allowed. The department response is that the situation surrounding Potawatomi state park is similar, both in landscape and the level of human development, to other properties where hunting is allowed. We have not experienced problems in similar situations in the region. Hunting and no-hunting areas will be posted and maps will be available. Non-hunting park visitors will be informed that hunting is occurring and advised of those areas. There is a non-hunting area along a portion of the southeast park boundary due to the close proximity of dwellings. In response to comments received, another area in the northwest quadrant may be added as a no-hunting area. Rule making is not needed to establish areas that are closed to hunting in a state park. The decision to allow hunting only during the traditional nine-day firearm deer season in November was made to minimize impact to park users. This is not a time of year when significant user conflicts are anticipated. Park staff people, including credentialed law enforcement officers, will be on duty in the park during hunting season. Local staff remain concerned that, if the deer herd is not controlled, forest regeneration will be severely limited or non-existent.
- 73% approval in Door County.

55. Allow rifles for deer hunting on all of Hartman Creek State Park, Waupaca/Portage Counties. (2010)

- Waupaca is a shotgun deer season county and rifles are allowed in Portage County. The park straddles the county line.
- Makes this regulation consistent over the entire property.
- 69% approval.

2009 Spring Hearings - Results of Wildlife Management Proposals

Question Number	Question Description	Yes Votes	No Votes	Statewide Vote	County Vote (Yes/No/Tie)	Local Vote (Yes / No)	Department Recommendation
Statewide Department Questions							
28	Definition of "open water hunting" for waterfowl	3,133	2,424	Yes	54 / 17 / 1		Advance
29	Extend the fall turkey season through December 31	4,607	2,142	Yes	62 / 10		Advance
30	Registration of wild turkeys	5,743	1,051	Yes	72 / 0		Advance
31	Modify the bobcat hunting and trapping seasons, two time periods	3,447	1,851	Yes	72 / 0		Advance
32	Modify the bobcat hunting and trapping seasons, cable restraints	3,061	2,071	Yes	58 / 12 / 2		Advance
33	Clarify types of guns allowed for hunting	3,956	2,156	Yes	63 / 8 / 1		Advance
34	Issuance of left-over turkey hunting permits	3,639	2,753	Yes	57 / 14 / 1		Advance
35	Turkey hunting by disabled permit holders, electronic calls	4,290	1,918	Yes	70 / 0 / 2		Advance
36	Turkey hunting by disabled permit holders, special turkey hunts	4,745	1,426	Yes	72		Advance
37	Registration of sharp-tailed grouse	2,500	3,208	No	20 / 50 / 2		Not Advance
38	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead, 1:00 p.m. closure	2,107	2,046	Yes	36 / 33 / 3	Mar./Port./Wood Co's.* 263 / 135	Advance
39	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead, early season closed area	2,086	2,006	Yes	36 / 32 / 4	Mar./Port./Wood Co's.* 254 / 143	Advance
40	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead, Townline Reservoir	2,280	1,484	Yes	58 / 9 / 5	Mar./Port./Wood Co's.* 247 / 135	Advance
41	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead, Rice Lake	2,269	1,505	Yes	57 / 12 / 3	Mar./Port./Wood Co's.* 248 / 132	Advance
42	Fall turkey hunting with dogs, statewide	3,168	3,398	No	33 / 38 / 1		Advance

* Proposal was approved in each directly affected county

Question Number	Question Description	Yes Votes	No Votes	Statewide Vote	County Vote (Yes/No/Tie)	Local Vote (Yes / No)	Department Recommendation
				Local Department Questions			
43	Stocked hen pheasant hunting at Sand Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County	2,629	1,200	Yes	67 / 4 / 1	66 / 14	Advance
44	Rifles for deer hunting in Dunn County	3,532	836	Yes	71 / 0 / 1	63 / 16	Advance
45	Eliminate Nelson-Trevino Mississippi River closed area, Buffalo County	2,969	1,068	Yes	66 / 5 / 1	52 / 13	Advance
46	Rifles for firearm deer hunting in SW Shawano County	3,667	959	Yes	71 / 0 / 1	172 / 47	Advance
47	Whitefish Dunes S.P. deer season, Door	3,464	667	Yes	72/0	190 / 37	Advance
48	Antlerless-only with periodical buck harvest, Wildcat Mountain S.P., Vernon Co	1,949	1,922	Yes	34 / 32 / 6	Vernon, 18 / 22 Monroe, 42 / 37	Advance
49	Eliminate S.P. deer season framework at Cadiz Spring Rec. Area, Green Co.	2,805	786	Yes	71 / 1	54 / 15	Advance
50	Eliminate the late archery deer hunt at Brunet Island Park, Chippewa County	1,401	2,965	No	4 / 68	38 / 55	Not Advance
51	Reduce Dike 17 waterfowl refuge, Jackson	2,625	982	Yes	68 / 2 / 2	31 / 13	Advance
52	Reduce Vernon Marsh refuge, Waukesha	3,039	622	Yes	72 / 0	194 / 12	Advance
53	1:00 p.m. closure of migratory bird hunting, Lake Mills Wildlife Area, Jefferson	1,649	1,633	Yes	39 / 31 / 2	Jefferson / Dane* 191 / 113	Advance
54	Potawatomi state park deer season, Door	3,622	622	Yes	72 / 0	115 / 42	Advance
55	Rifles for deer hunting in all of Hartman Creek state park, Waupaca/Portage co's.	3,260	926	Yes	71 / 0 / 1	Waupaca / Portage* 226 / 101	Advance

* Proposal was approved in each directly affected county

Statewide attendance – 7,939

Bobcat Harvest Management

Meeting of DNR biologists and Bobcat Hunter/Trapper Stakeholders

Ramada Inn, Stevens Point

November 14, 2008

Present: Those who wrote their name on an attendance list included John Olson (DNR Wildlife), John Welke (DNR Law Enforcement), Robert Rolley (DNR Research), Bill Vander Zouwen (DNR Wildlife; facilitator), Steve Hoffman (DNR Wildlife), Eric Anderson (University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point), Leslie Adams (UWSP), Ed Harvey (Conservation Congress), Scott McAuley (Wisconsin Trappers Association; CC), Lee Sillars (WTA, CC), Ralph Fritsch (Wisconsin Wildlife Federation), George Meyer (WWF), Dick Baudhuin (WWF, CC), Joan Baudhuin, Scott Zimmerman (CC), Fred Wiesman (Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association), Larry Vanderhoef (WTA), Paul Wait (Wisconsin Outdoor News), Al Lobner (CC, WBHA), Bob Welch (WBHA), Rich Kirchmeyer (trapper).

Purpose: This meeting was called by DNR to work with stakeholders to discuss the status of bobcat management and options for changing harvest management. A 2008 Conservation Congress spring hearing question proposed significant changes to the bobcat harvest management system. This proposal had a positive public vote. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss interests and concerns of trappers, hunters and wildlife biologists with the idea that there may be some common ground where meeting participants could agree to suggest changes for the future. (Note: any changes would require consultation with the Chippewa Tribes)

Populations: Robert Rolley presented information on population status, distribution, and trends. Population estimates are developed using models that incorporate data on survival and reproduction. Some of this data is provided through carcass collections from harvested bobcats. The model is calibrated to winter track survey data. There are 34 track transect surveys run in the north by DNR staff. Additional transects have been added recently in central Wisconsin. Staffing and suitable snow conditions are usually the limiting factor on how many surveys can be run in a winter. Low bobcat track detection rates on transects result in the need to have a large number of transects to detect changes in population levels. The bobcat population grew in the 1990s and has been stable or slightly decreasing since. It is above but close to the population goal of 2,500. DNR records staff observations of bobcats, of which 5% have been south of state highway 64. Incidental captures and road kills are also tracked, of which 20% have been south of state highway 64.

Harvest Management: John Olson presented information on bobcat management issues. John recalled a court case that challenged bobcat harvest management and called for listing them as threatened in Wisconsin. The court found in favor of the Department and this finding was upheld by the State Supreme Court. The number of bobcat applications have been increasing, now at over 12,000 per year. Success rates for permit holders have increased from around 5% to 25-40%. Higher success rates have meant lower permit levels, with permit levels based on harvest quotas and the highest success

rate in the last 3 years. Harvests have been above or below quotas each year, with higher harvests often associated with good snow conditions in December. High daily harvests have been common during the last week of December. Five to 16% of the bobcat population is harvested each year, and 53% of the harvest consists of adult bobcats. Recent harvests have been around 500 bobcats. In recent years, hunters typically take 60-70% of the harvest bobcats, while trappers typically take about 30%. Ninety-three percent of bobcats are kept by the trapper or hunter rather than sold.

Distribution Research: Eric Anderson and Leslie Adams presented information from research on modeling of bobcat habitat parameters and assessment methods for bobcat distribution in Wisconsin. They developed a bobcat habitat model based on radio-marked bobcats in northern Wisconsin and then applied it to southern Wisconsin to see where there might be suitable habitat. They also used detector dogs and hair snares along several transects to either calibrate the winter track surveys or find areas with bobcats. The presented findings are incomplete, preliminary, and not yet peer reviewed. Although this research will provide needed insights to bobcat distribution, additional research is needed to determine the range and abundance of bobcats in southern Wisconsin.

Conservation Congress Proposal: The 2008 spring hearing question included the following components:
Season Length: Extend hunting and trapping closure date from December 31 to January 31.
Permits and Zones: Establish 6 zones for bobcat permits including all of the state compared to the current single zone north of state highway 64.
Harvest Reporting and Zone Closures: Trappers and hunters would have 48 hours to report their bobcat harvest. Once a quota was reached in a zone, the bobcat season would be closed there. Trappers and hunters would have a 48-hour grace period for enforcement of the closure.
Fees: A $15 harvest permit fee would be established to support the system.

Stakeholder Interests: The spring hearing proposal reflected stakeholder interests in:
a) allowing bobcat harvest beyond the current zone.
b) splitting the state into several zones to encourage more harvest in some areas and reduce harvest in others.
c) providing a way to promptly report harvest and close the season when the harvest quota is reached in each zone of harvest.
d) providing trapping and hunting opportunities through January when there is likely to be good snow conditions valued for hunting, at a time when deer hunting seasons are not open.
e) providing funds for needed research and harvest monitoring.
f) providing a system that gives hunters and trappers adequate opportunity to hunt and trap, considering how long they have to wait to get a permit, rather than seeing seasons close before permit holders have a chance to pursue bobcats.
g) having a harvest management system that is fair to both trappers and hunters, which does not result in conflicts and divisiveness between these user groups.

h) providing optimal opportunities for all users, preventing overharvest of bobcats, and managing for a sustainable population within 20% of the goal of 2,500 bobcat north of state highway 64.

Wildlife Biologist Interests: Biologists were most interested in:
a) science-based management…having adequate data to base management decisions on.
b) opening new areas of the state to bobcat harvest only after adequate data is available to suggest that a conservative harvest quota can be sustained in a particular area.
c) having large enough zones to have enough track surveys with enough bobcat detected on them to track population changes in a zone.
d) consistency in survey methodology across time and space to allow for conclusions.
e) sufficient funding for bobcat research and harvest monitoring.
f) providing a way to promptly report harvest and close the season if and when the harvest quota is reached in each zone of harvest.
g) providing a system that gives hunters and trappers adequate opportunity to hunt and trap, considering how long they have to wait to get a permit, rather than seeing seasons close before permit holders have a chance to pursue bobcats.
h) providing optimal opportunities for all users, preventing overharvest of bobcats and managing for a sustainable population within 20% of the goal of 2,500 bobcat north of state highway 64.
i) having a harvest management system that is fair to both trappers and hunters, which does not result in conflicts and divisiveness between these user groups.

Suggested Compromise:

There was substantial overlap in interests among biologists and stakeholders. However, there were differences of opinion on how much data was needed to manage bobcat harvest, how soon new areas of the state should be open to bobcat harvest, what new areas of the state should be open to bobcat harvest, and how many zones there should be in the north and south. After hours of discussion about interests, concerns, and alternatives, the following compromise was suggested. It seeks to address stakeholder interests while preserving science-based management for this valuable species. Stakeholders clearly made concessions to attempt to reach a compromise that most could live with. There was substantial agreement among stakeholders on the suggested compromise. Biologists were much more comfortable with this compromise than with the original proposal; however, concerns remained about:

- having enough data for bobcats south of Highway 64 to open this area to hunting and trapping in 4 years;
- having enough funding and staffing to collect such data;
- deciding how the quota might be split among the 2 time periods;
- deciding what success rates to use to set permit levels in these 2 new time periods;
- having less permits to offer if success rates increase substantially with a January season;
- having the potential for high daily success rates in January with snow that might result in harvests over quotas with a system that includes a 24-hour reporting period, secretary closure announcement, and 48-hour grace period;

- having very unhappy customers who don't hunt or trap a bobcat before their permit period closes after waiting years for a permit; and
- creating the possibility of a rift between trappers and hunters who might tend to select first and second periods, respectively.
- having higher success rates with a longer season and more days with snow that will result in fewer permits and applicants waiting more years for a permit.

The suggested compromise is as follows:

Zones:
-Keep 1 zone north of Highway 64, same as now
-Add a new zone south of 64 with options being a) fisher zone E, b) fisher zone E and area between highways 64 and 10 to the east; or c) area between 64 and 10 across state
-New zone would open in 4 years with conservative permit levels after we have a chance to do more evaluation of the bobcat population there; reserve the option to not open if information suggests bobcat can't sustain harvest there

Season:
-Extend bobcat season to January 31 from current closure of December 31 to allow hunting during a prime period with snow and no deer seasons; both trapping and hunting would be open during January

Time Periods:
-Split the season into two permit periods with Christmas as the last day of the first period
-Hunters and trappers would select one of the two periods on their application for a permit
-Quotas and permits would be divided among the 2 periods, and each period would not close until the respective quota was expected to be reached. This allotment of permits would allow a later, longer season, valued by hunters.

Season Closure:
-Each season period would close if and when the quota for that period was reached
-Closure would occur by secretary order
-Closure notice would be posted on internet and in media and could be determined by calling the DNR phone line
-A 48-hour grace period would occur from secretary order date to season closure date

Mandatory Call-In Registration:
-bobcat harvest would have to be reported on the phone within 24 hours (perhaps by the end of the day after harvest occurs).
(Note: Compliance should be very high because all trappers and hunters have to check their bobcat with a warden later in the season to get a CITES tag and wardens would know if the bobcat was registered by phone)

Fees:

-Add $2-5 to the bobcat permit application fee and have it ear-marked for bobcat research/management (this alternative would raise more revenue with 12,000 applications vs. $15 with each of 500 licenses)
-Stakeholder groups recognized that they would have to be the ones pushing for this in the next budget

Next Steps: Bill Vander Zouwen will bring the suggested compromise back to the DNR Wildlife Bureau Director and Administrators. They will decide what to do with the suggested compromise once they get feedback from the DNR Furbearer Advisory Committee and the Conservation Congress Fur Harvest Committee (meets December 5).

Submitted by Bill Vander Zouwen, Chief of Wildlife Ecology Section, DNR

American Wild Turkey Hunting Dog Association
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

Chair Hraychuck and Members of the Assembly Fish and Wildlife Committee:

The American Wild Turkey Hunting Dog Association and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation are asking that you support that portion of DNR Rule 09-915 that establishes a statewide fall turkey hunting with dog season. hunting statewide starting in 2010.

The use of a dog during fall turkey hunting is a long-standing tradition in many other states in the country. Twenty-nine of the forty-four states in the country that allow fall turkey hunting allow a hunter to use a dog during the hunt. The neighboring states of Michigan and Iowa all allow fall turkey hunting with dogs. The practice involves the hunter and his or her dog sitting in a solitary location, the dog being sent out to break up a flock of turkeys, the dog returns to the hunter and remains motionless and then the huntercalls in a turkey for a shot similar to spring turkey hunting.

The practice of fall turkey hunting with dogs was allowed on a trial basis in nine counties for the last two years. The counties were Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Sauk, Vernon, and Wood. The trial period went by with no hunter conflict and no biological or safety problems at all.

The American Wild Turkey Hunting Dog Association and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation respectfully request your support for this rule change so that this new hunting opportunity can be implemented in the fall of 2010.

Thank you for your consideration.

Submitted on behalf of American Turkey Hunting with Dogs Association and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation by:

George Meyer, Executive Director
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

"Dedicated to the Conservation of
Wisconsin's Waterfowl and Wetland Resources"

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8-5-2009
Rep. Ann Hraychuck
Assembly Committee on Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, Wi 53708

Dear Rep. Hraychuck and Committee Members,

RE: Clearinghouse Rule 09-015 Relating to hunting and trapping regulations, closed areas and game refuges.

On behalf of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association I would like to make the following comments regarding the rules before you.

Sections 12, 27, 29, and 30 establish a special migratory bird hunt with a 1:00pm closure, regulations and modify refuges at Mead wildlife area, Wood, Portage and Marathon Counties and Lake Mills wildlife area, Jefferson County.

These rules have a sunset provision that will allow evaluation after a test period. We are in support of these modifications to the extent that they may possibly result in more and better quality hunting opportunities for the public. We are willing to keep an open mind.

However we have long maintained and have concurrence from both DNR and user groups
that increased for various reasons including funding issues the habitat value on public lands could be easily increased through a more effective restoration and management program on State owned lands. If this program were undertaken it would provide more opportunity over a larger area while increasing viable habitat for both game and non-game species. If it is determined that after the test period these modifications are in fact an attempt to manage hunters and ignore habitat we will vigorously oppose continuing or adding any areas that are restricted in this manner.

Section 1- clarifies the definition of "open water hunting" for waterfowl

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A rule modification /clarification has been badly needed regarding open water hunting. The existing rule is very hard to understand and has resulted in many unintentional violations by hunters. In addition it has been such a point of confusion that wardens have used great discretion and are reluctant to cite people in most cases.

The proposed rule change is a step in the right direction but does very little to solve the ongoing problem.

The rule in front of you reads.

NR 10.001 (20) "Open water" means any portion of a navigable water body which does not contain a naturally occurring growth of emergent vegetation rooted to the bottom that provides all of the following, except that naturally occurring dead stumps or trees, or vegetation placed in the bottom by a person, do not constitute a natural growth of vegetation.

I have discussed the following options with DNR they have agreed to revisit this rule and try to make it easier to understand.

Option one

NR 10.001 (20) "Open water" means any portion of a navigable water body which does not contain a naturally occurring growth of rooted wetland vegetation that provides all of the following, except that naturally occurring dead stumps or trees, or vegetation placed in the bottom by a person, do not constitute a natural growth of vegetation.

Option two

NR10.001 (20) "Open water" means any portion of a navigable water body which does not contain a naturally occurring growth of rooted wetland vegetation or inundated upland vegetation that provides all of the following, except that naturally occurring dead stumps or trees, vegetation placed in the bottom by a person, do not constitute a natural growth of vegetation.

Option three

Nr10.001(20) "Open water" means hunting on a navigable water body more than three feet from shore.

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It is our intent to work with DNR to develop a rule that more effectively addresses the issue. We would then bring the new rule forward in hopes of having it in place for the 2010 waterfowl season.

We support the rule as written providing there is an agreement to go forward and make the needed changes.

I also have one question of the Committee and their counsel. If this rule is passed how will it affect current regulations. The one that has been brought up is regarding the Mississippi River where you are currently not considered open water hunting if you are within 100 feet of the shore.

Jeff Nania
Executive Director
Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Cell 608-697-7002