

December 17, 2009

Department of Natural Resources
Secretary Matt Frank remarks on
2009 Deer Season report and
deer population rule review

**Assembly Fish & Wildlife Committee and
Senate Transportation, Tourism, Forestry & Natural Resources Committee**

Good morning Chairs Hraychuck and Holperin and members of the Committees. I'm pleased to be here today to share with you a brief snapshot of Wisconsin's 158th deer hunt before we address the proposed deer management unit population goals for the next three years. The annual deer report is normally first delivered to the Natural Resources Board at its December meeting which this year was canceled due to a pretty good Wisconsin snowstorm. A copy of the report has been provided to the Board and has been provided to you as well.

I was out at deer registration stations on opening weekend and also got away a couple of days to hunt myself. Since the season closed we have heard from a lot of hunters who were frustrated with the hunt. We intend to be responsive to those concerns, but I would first like to make some general observations.

The Wisconsin hunting heritage is a powerful force in our state; for families, for hunters, our economy and our quality of life.

Consider these facts from the current season:

- The hunting tradition is strong and vibrant in Wisconsin. We have some of the best deer hunting opportunities in the nation. For the 2009 deer hunt season to date, we sold 638,040 gun licenses and 204,833 bow licenses. These figures are just slightly below the numbers for last season. While 94 percent of hunters were Wisconsin residents, hunters from all 50 states once again came to hunt in Wisconsin this year.
- Overall, the 2009 nine-day gun hunt was the fourth safest on record with no fatalities. There were seven nonfatal incidents.
- More than 10,000 10- and 11-year olds tried out deer hunting on the state's new mentored hunting licenses. I thank the Chairs, the members of these committees, and the legislature for passing the mentored hunting bill in this past year. Of the new youth, 20% were girls. There was not a single hunting incident involving these hunters.

- The October Youth hunt harvest increased by 50% to more than 6,000 deer on the youth hunt weekend.
- Wisconsin annually ranks nationally in the top 5 states in the number of deer hunting licenses sold. And we are in the top 3 in total expenditures for hunting. Deer hunting is a \$1 billion driver of our state economy.

We are one of the top 3 states in the nation for Boone and Crockett trophy whitetails, including a new state record buck taken by bow and arrow this fall.

While our hunting tradition is something we are both proud of and thankful for, of all the work done by the DNR, there is probably no subject that generates more controversy or criticism than deer herd management. That was true 50 years ago when the old Conservation Department was in charge, and it will probably be true 50 years from today. People are passionate about their opinions. Our challenge is to have a good system in place for public input, and to make the best science based decisions we can on how we manage the herd.

As we do so, a good dose of humility is always in order. White-tail deer have lived on Wisconsin's vast and varied landscape for thousands of years, long before any immigrants arrived. Understanding deer and how they interact with their ecosystem is a significant challenge. The ecosystem is constantly changing, and our understanding of the system is always evolving. For example, one of the areas we are focused on is the impact of natural predators in the ecosystem- wolves, bears and coyotes. We are taking steps to improve the S-A-K population estimate model. And, we are laying the groundwork to do significant research on the impact of deer browse on forest regeneration.

Our 2009 pre-season forecast anticipated a lower harvest primarily due to an expected reduction in antlerless harvest. This reduction was a response to population declines in the last two years which were a result of herd reductions efforts as well as below average fawn production. Statewide *preliminary* registration figures indicate the harvest during the 9-day gun season was down 29% from 2008 to 196,098. This includes 86,708 antlered bucks -- a 12% decrease -- and 109,390 antlerless deer -- a 39% decrease from 2008.

We know that the herd is smaller in some regions of the state which is why we took action to reduce the harvest in those areas. During this season, 13 deer management units had no bonus antlerless permits. 38 units were moved out herd control to regular season, and 29 units were moved out of earn-a-buck, all contributing to a decline in antlerless harvest. In all, the number of regular units increased from 21 in 2008 to 59 in 2009.

Following the 2008 season, hunters told us they wanted fewer antlerless deer harvested. As a result, we greatly reduced the number of antlerless permits available and antlerless harvest went down accordingly. In 2009 there were 78 units (of 132 statewide)

where we reduced antlerless deer hunting opportunity. This reduction in permits contributed to the decline in gun deer harvest.

In some areas of the state the deer population is below goal, and our efforts are focused on increasing the population. In other parts of the state, we are still above goal. For example, in the CWD zone in the southern part of the state, over-population has been a contributing factor to the increased prevalence of CWD in the deer herd, increasing the risk of spread of this disease.

Overall, fewer deer on the landscape equals fewer deer seen and fewer harvested. We must continue to manage toward a sustainable, healthy deer population.

Wisconsin's experience in 2009 is not unique. Our neighboring Great Lakes states and provinces also experienced harvest declines. Deer harvest is down 12% in Minnesota, 10-20% in Michigan, 20-30% in the UP, and 24% in Quebec.

Over the next few months, our staff will look carefully at the data hunters provided us on their registration stubs – data that is the foundation of our science-based management -- to determine where we now stand with respect to the size of the deer population. We know the state's herd varies by region and careful analysis is needed before we move ahead with future season recommendations.

We also will continue to seek input from the public on deer management objectives and policy. In addition to advisory groups, public meetings and hearings, hunters can now give us feedback through a modified deer registration stub and an online database where hunters can record field observations of weather conditions, hours hunted and number of deer seen.

Deer Management Units and Population Goals

This brings us to deer population goals and Deer Management Unit boundaries. The department remains committed to supporting Wisconsin's hunting traditions and managing for a healthy, sustainable and ecologically balanced deer population. In the early part of this decade, the deer population reached unsustainable levels in much of the state. It's the department's job to bring populations down to the population goals approved through an extensive public process with ultimate review by the legislature. It is also our job to use deer management tools to raise the deer population in regions where it is below goal.

The criteria we must follow to determine deer population goals come from laws passed by the legislature. These laws require the Department to manage the deer population for conservation of ecosystems and for future generations' use and enjoyment. They require the Department to keep agricultural and forestry damage to tolerable levels. Our administrative code further emphasizes the balance that deer goals must strike: NR 1.15 directs that the "department shall seek to maintain a deer herd in balance with its range

and at deer population goals reasonably compatible with social, economic and ecosystem objectives for each deer management unit.”

Unit boundaries and population goals are reviewed at approximately three year intervals. In 2005, this committee reviewed and approved the goals that are now in place. Today you are reviewing Natural Resources Board changes approved in October that will guide our herd management decisions for the next three years. As we have done before, we once again welcome input from your committees before these goals are finalized.

The changes before you were developed with extensive public involvement. Beginning in January 2009, a large stakeholder group made up of representatives of hunting groups, landowners, foresters, farmers and ecologists convened to lead this goal review. I would like to extend our gratitude to these hard working volunteers who take deer management very seriously.

The process for this goal review included the stakeholder panel, 40 public meetings to gather input, several web based surveys, eight public hearings across the state to review this rule, as well as Natural Resource Board review and approval.

There are many factors to consider when establishing deer goals -- preserving Wisconsin's great deer hunting tradition for future generations, forest impacts, agricultural impacts, public safety as measured by car-deer collisions, preventing animal disease transmission, and others.

Wisconsin's 16 million acres of forest land support great deer habitat as well other important economic and environmental values. When the deer population is too high the regeneration of our forests is put at risk, threatening deer habitat and future deer hunting opportunities as well as our forestry based economy. Wisconsin's paper and wood products industry is #1 in the country. Our forests are a tremendous natural resource that provide the foundation for 68,000 family-supporting jobs. Forestry related companies are the #1 employer in 23 Wisconsin counties.

Deer also impact another vitally important sector of Wisconsin's economy, agriculture. The year 2000 was a peak year in Wisconsin's deer hunt- over 615,000 deer were harvested. As we have moved closer to deer population goals over the last few years, agriculture impacts have been reduced. In 2000, over 15,000 acres were damaged by deer and 333,000 bushels of corn lost, as well as 70,000 bushels of soybeans lost. By comparison, in 2008, a little over 8,000 acres were damaged by deer, 172,000 bushels of corn lost, and 30,000 bushels of soybeans lost.

Public safety is another factor that the Department must consider in setting deer population goals. While most Wisconsin citizens expect that car-deer collisions are a part of living in Wisconsin, they expect the DNR to keep these collisions in an acceptable range. As we have moved closer to deer population goals over the past decade, the number of deer caused collisions have declined. DNR numbers for deer carcass removals from our highways declined from 48,000 in 2003 to 28,000 in 2008. The number of car-

deer collisions reported by police to DOT declined from over 20,000 in 2000, to just over 15,800 in 2008.

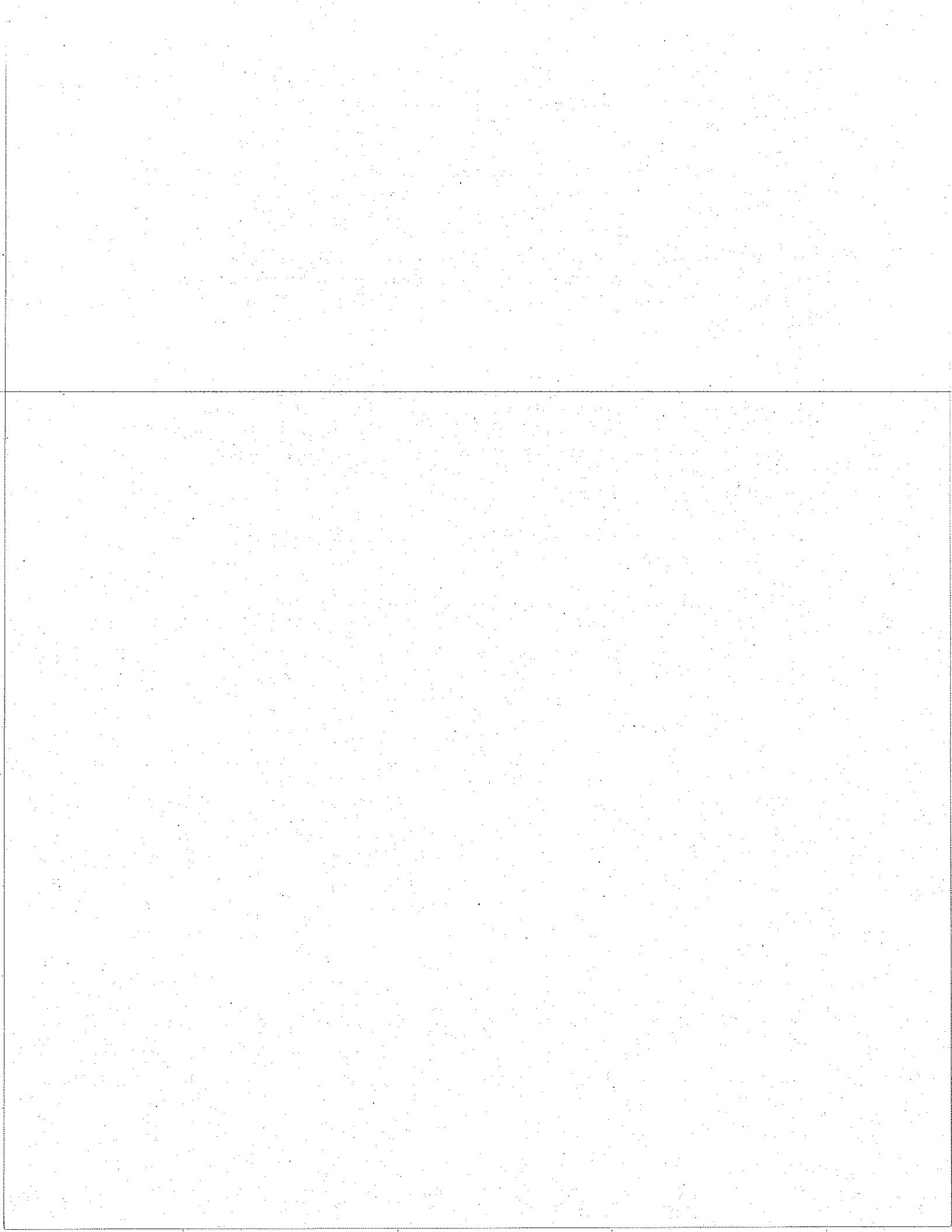
These numbers are not just statistics. 10 people died on our highways last year from car/deer collisions. In the 1990's, the trend was better, with fatalities from car-deer crashes averaging just over 5 per year, compared with 10 per year since 2000.

Disease management also remains a key concern. Chronic Wasting Disease poses a serious threat to a healthy, sustainable deer herd and our hunting heritage. Population goals inside and outside the CWD zone need to reflect our strongest efforts to slow disease spread.

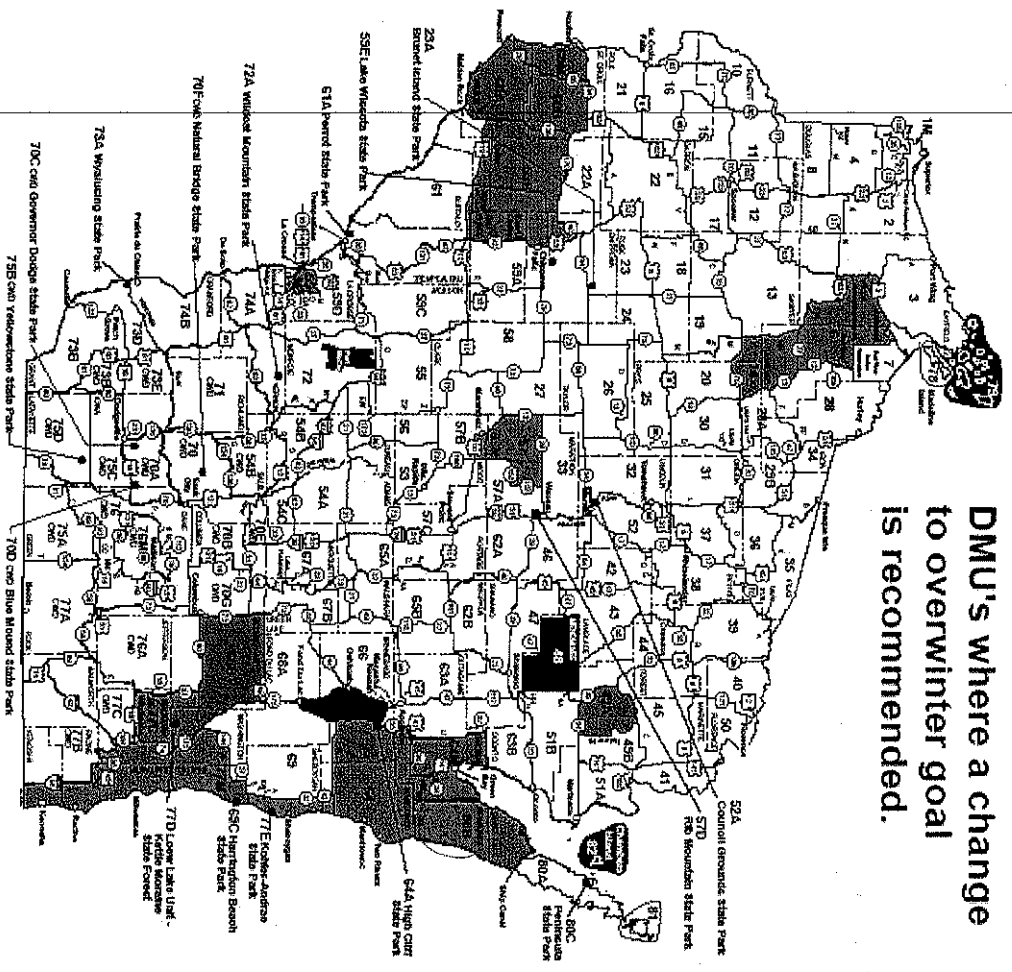
Balancing all of these goals is a challenging task. Our responsibility is to establish goals that will sustain our great hunting heritage, result in a healthy deer population that is sustainable on our landscape, and consider the impacts deer have on all facets of life in Wisconsin. The rule before you today follows the recommendations of the stakeholder group, with extensive public input. These rules represent our best efforts to strike an acceptable balance that will ensure ecosystem conservation and sustain our hunting heritage for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. We look forward to answering any questions you may have.

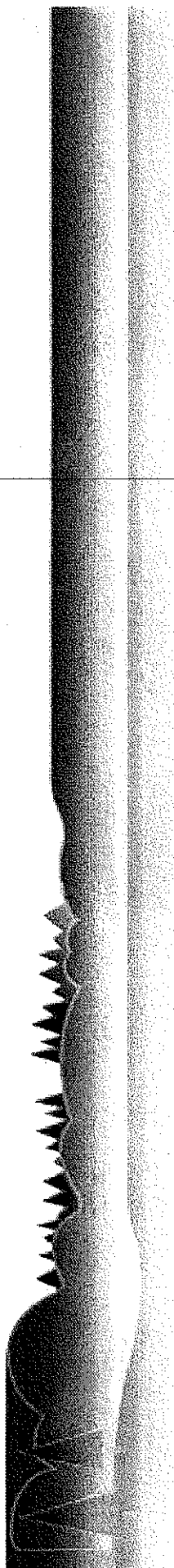
But before that, I would like to ask Keith Warnke to provide more detail about the proposed deer population goals.



DMU's where a change to overwinter goal is recommended.

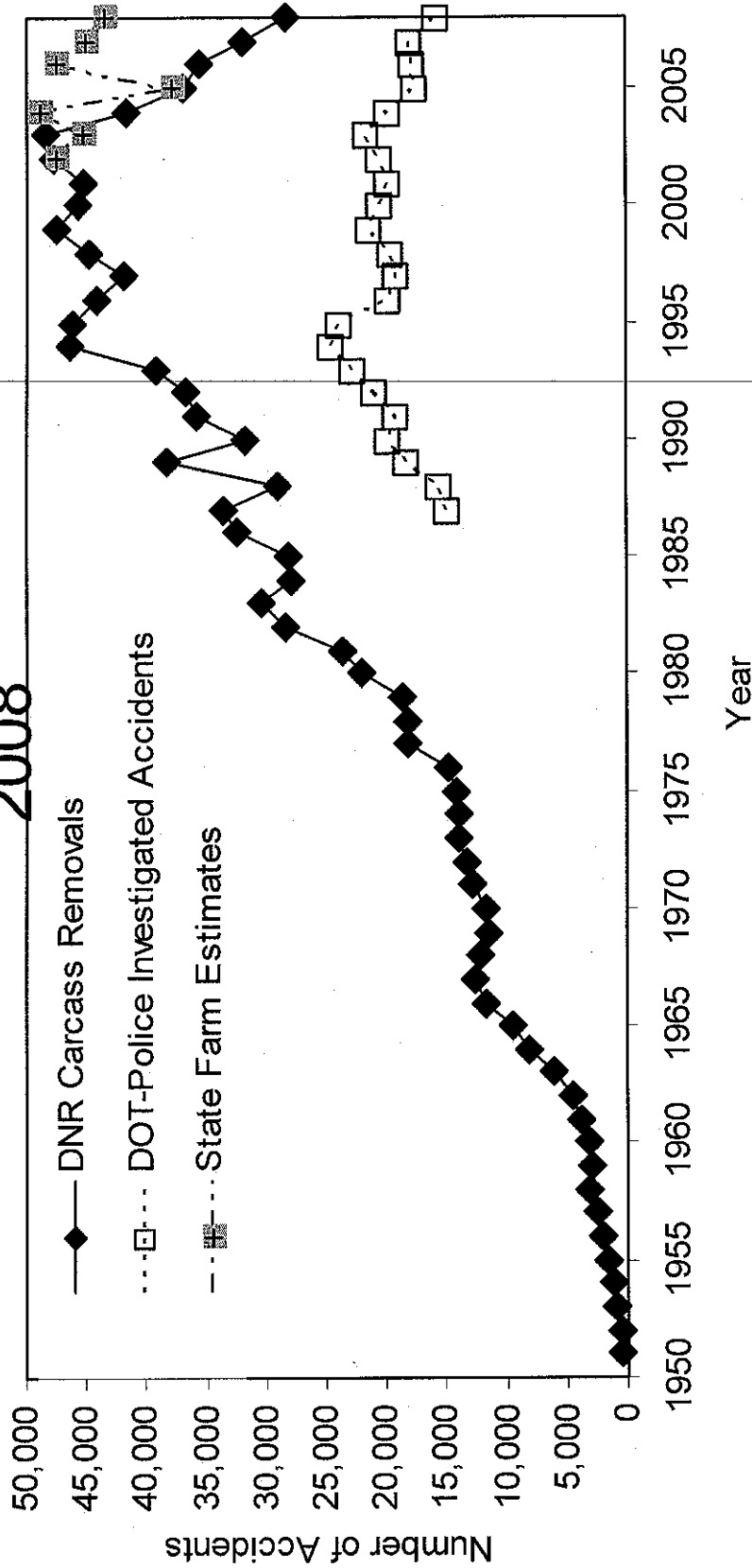


- Recommended for deer goal density decrease
- Recommended for deer goal density increase
- Non - Quota Area



Deer-Vehicle Accidents in Wisconsin, 1950-

2008





Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Deer Hunting in Wisconsin
Assembly Committee on Fish and Wildlife
Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry and Natural Resources
12/17/09**

Representative Jeffery Mursau

Representative Hraychuck, Senator Holperin and committee members:

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend this hearing in person. I would like to offer my written testimony to the committee.

This November I, like many others in this state, was shocked by the poor deer hunt. While my sons and I were successful during the hunt, many others were not. The deer harvest this season was the lowest in decades. It doesn't appear that this was for a lack of trying. Nearly as many hunters applied for licenses in 2009 as did in 2008.

Deer hunting is part of the fabric of our society in Wisconsin. I would like to thank Representative Hraychuck and Senator Holperin for holding this hearing, because I think the public has questions that need answering.

While I've heard from constituents from all over my district, there appear to be certain areas that are more impacted than others. In particular, I have heard complaints about the deer herd in Florence and Forest Counties as well as western Shawano County and eastern Langlade County.

A primary concern is the accuracy of the deer herd count. Hunters who are told that there are 20 deer per square mile simply are not seeing them. Updating the SAK model will go a long way towards improving the count and help the Department make more informed decisions related to herd management. A better count will also go a long way in restoring the faith of the hunting community in the DNR.

The inflated numbers have, I believe, led the DNR to pursue a course of action that over harvests the deer herd. Policies like Earn a Buck achieve their aim, which is to reduce the deer population. Unfortunately, I believe this has severely reduced the size of the deer herd in certain parts of the state.

We also need to keep an eye on the Wisconsin Damage and Abatement Claims Program. There is a concern that too many tags are being issued in areas with low deer populations.

We need to be mindful of the interrelationships between deer and predator species. Both black bears and coyotes are significant predators of deer fawns. Areas of the state with high black bear populations, such as Florence County, have also seen steep declines in the number of deer killed by hunters. A study in Pennsylvania conducted between 2000 and 2001 found that coyotes are one of the leading causes of fawn deaths. We have seen this play out in areas like Forest County, where it is suspected that high coyote populations have lead to reduced deer numbers. Better management of predator species, including additional hunting, will lead to better management of the deer herd.

Thank you again for holding this hearing into an issue near and dear to many residents of this state.

Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association - DMU Committee Final Report Statement

May 2009

Overview of Group or Community

The Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association (WDHA) was founded on the belief that all deer hunting related issues should be based science-based wildlife management principles and not personal or political agendas. We also believe in maintaining a healthy deer herd because we believe that what's best for the deer herd is what's best for the deer hunter.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

The WDHA's role on the panel was to ensure that the critical balance between the desires of deer hunters and the need to maintain healthy deer habitat was met. It became obvious there is a critical need to collect real data to determine where this balance lies. The currently process of setting goals involves discussions without any factual basis for knowing what the number should be. We also learned that higher goals do not always mean seeing more deer or reducing the need for controversial herd control seasons. In fact higher goals can be counter productive to hunting and the deer herd if habitat is destroyed or conflicts arise with other stakeholders.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

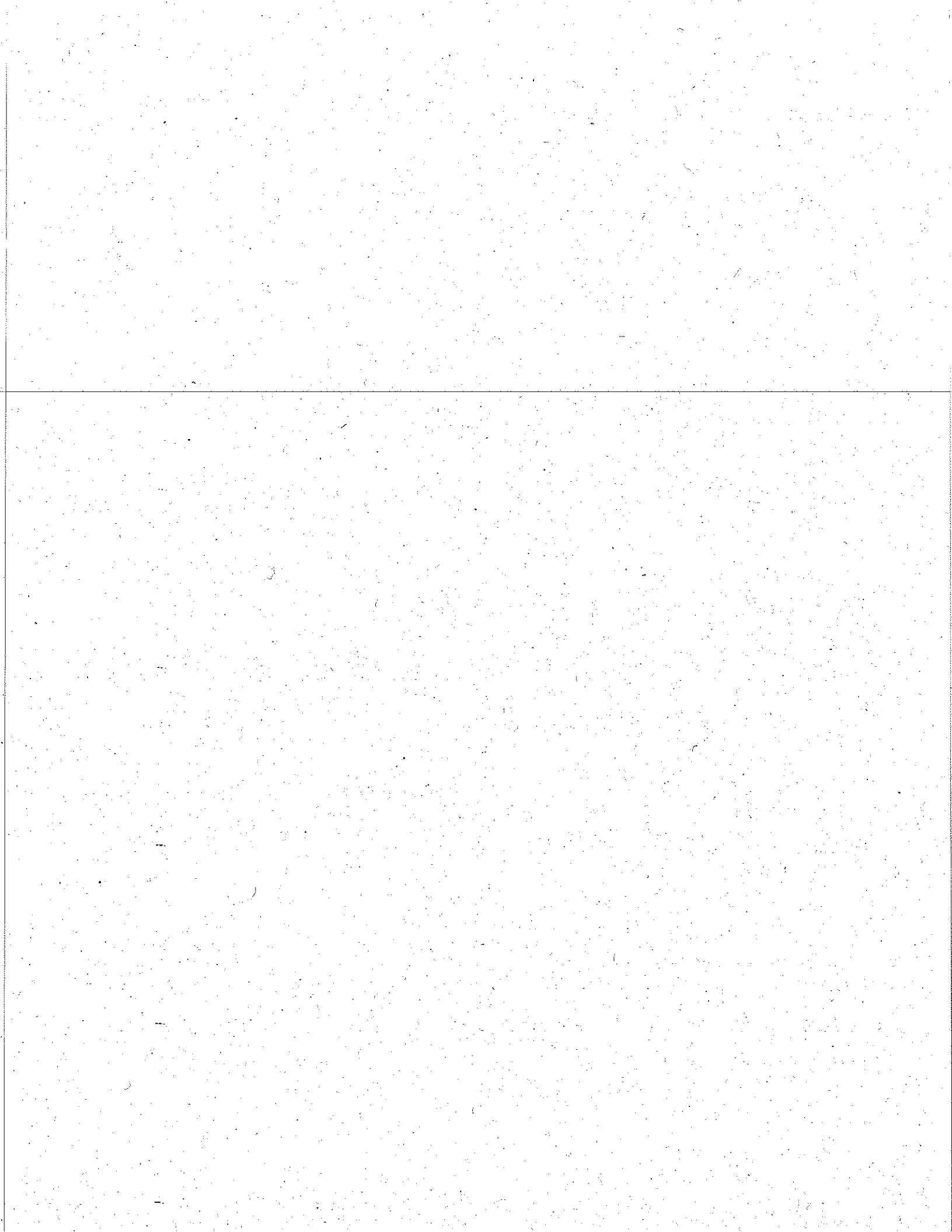
The WDHA believes there is insufficient data to recommend changes to the deer population goals at this time. Hopefully our recommendation to develop methods to collect actual data on agricultural, forestry and habitat (biodiversity) impacts will be available for the next 3 year review. Setting goals without objectively measuring deer impacts (or lack of) is impossible.

The WDHA also recognizes that accurate population estimates are critical and supports all efforts to improve the process. However we realize the relationship between deer population and the number of deer seen is lost as a direct result of deer baiting and feeding. While DNR management chose to exclude this from discussion it is important to understand that until hunters start seeing deer we will never reach consensus on population goals. It is disappointing that organizations very critical of DNR deer population methods continue supporting deer baiting while ceaselessly complaining about the lack of deer - even in years past with much higher populations. The real problem is we are not seeing deer, which will never be resolved until baiting and feeding are eliminated and deer resume their normal activities and are more distributed on the landscape.

The WDHA questions the purpose of having hunting groups not directly representing deer hunting on the committee. There was never a concern about deer goals on turkey or bear populations. Yet these non-deer groups exert political influence on deer hunting issues that prevent the elimination of deer baiting and feeding that a majority of deer hunters support. In our view this became another opportunity to push personal agendas without regard to what is best for the future of deer hunting, nor does this allow any real agreement on deer population goals.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

Our recommendations are to develop real measures of agricultural, forestry and habitat damages that can be tracked over time to set future deer population goals. We also support education efforts on the basic principles of wildlife management. We believe the simplest task to help resolve some of the major issues is to ban deer baiting and feeding statewide so hunters begin seeing more deer regardless of the population. Right now we are raising a generation who think deer hunting is walking 100 yards in the woods, dumping a pile of corn and then blaming the DNR when they don't see any deer. Until this cycle is broken there will never be enough deer in the eyes of many hunters who will never believe population estimates and demand higher goals, even to the detriment of the deer herd, other stakeholders and the future of the sport.



Deer Management Motion

Background. The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation has spent a great deal of time over the last year working on the issue of deer management in Wisconsin. Ralph Fritsch was appointed by the Natural Resources Board to be on an advisory committee to come up with an "alternative to Earn a Buck" as a herd reduction tool in Wisconsin. The Natural Resources Board had suspended the use of EAB for the 2009 and the 2010 session because of the strong concerns about the size of the deer herd and hunting success in the 2008 deer season.

The Department of Natural Resources sent out a proposed change in deer season framework for 2010 for public hearing. There was overwhelming opposition by a large majority of individuals attending the hearings or commenting on the rule. Before the hearing the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation worked closely with a coalition of hunter and other recreational groups in order to come up with an alternative to EAB that would best meet the needs of hunters in the state.

After the public hearings, the Department made relative few changes to the draft rule before they sent it to the Natural Board for adoption at the Board's December meeting. That was prior to the 2009 deer season.

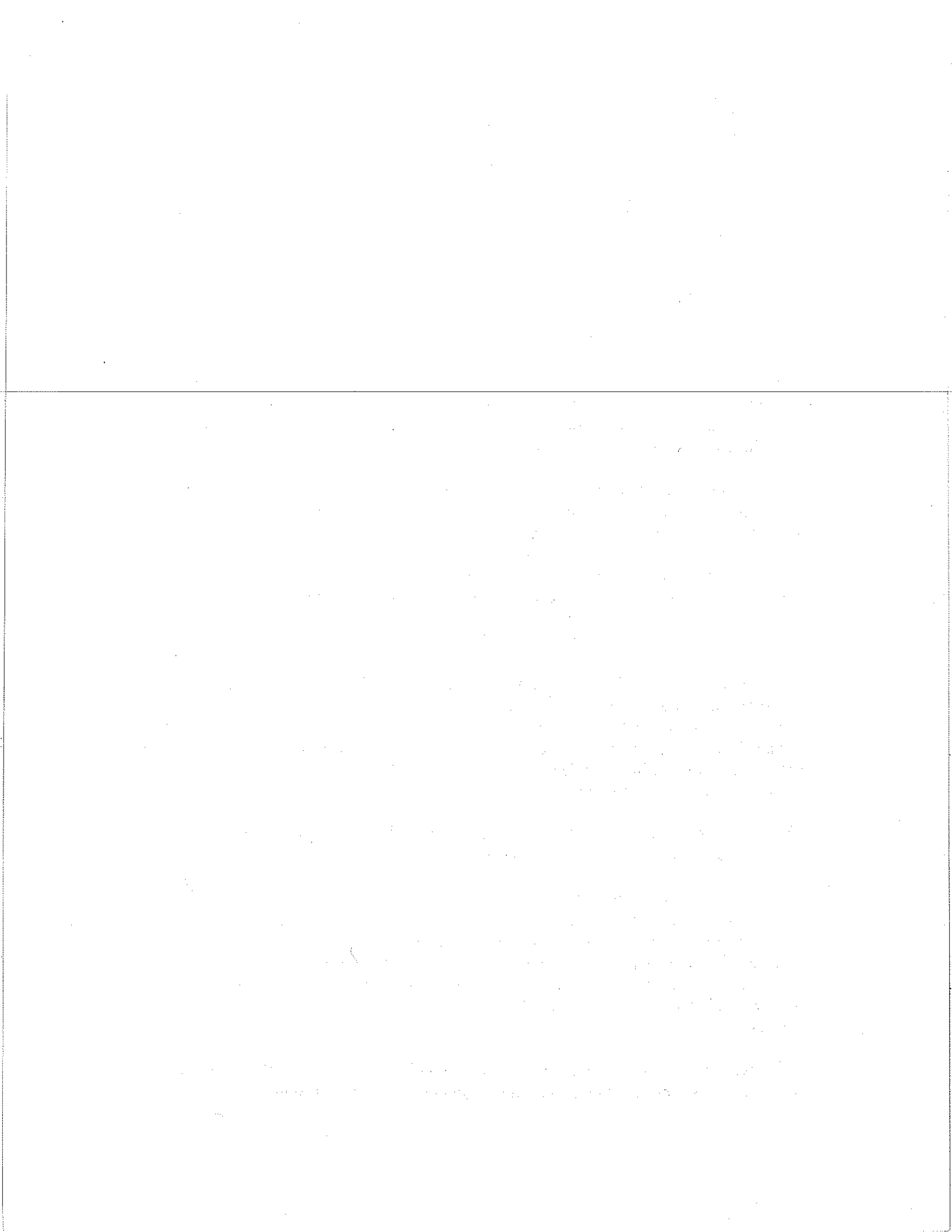
There was a very strong negative reaction from a large number of deer hunters to the 2009 deer season experience. Statewide, deer totals were down 29% from 2008 and 51% from 2007. One hundred and ninety-five thousand deer were harvested in the 2009 nine-day gun deer season in comparison to 401,000 in the 2007 season.

Based on the overwhelming negative hunter reaction to the 2009 season and the concerns raised by deer hunters both on the size of the deer harvest and the reduced sightings of deer, the Department withdrew their proposed 2010 season framework from the Board agenda. Due to weather reasons, the Board postponed any discussion of the deer situation until its January meeting. The Secretary has indicated that the Department will be formulating a new plan for the 2010 and beyond deer seasons.

There will also be a legislative hearing on December 17th regarding the over winter goals for deer in all of Wisconsin's deer management units.

There are some critical issues facing deer management in Wisconsin. First, there is the need to rebuild the deer herd in many units in northern Wisconsin. Second, there is a need to address the widespread lack of confidence by hunters in the Department's estimate of the deer population in Wisconsin. Third, the Department has seriously damaged its credibility with sportsmen and women by coming up with two deer season frameworks in the last three months, both of which had overwhelming opposition by hunters.

The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation should represent its many members that have serious concerns over the current deer management situation in the state. But the Federation



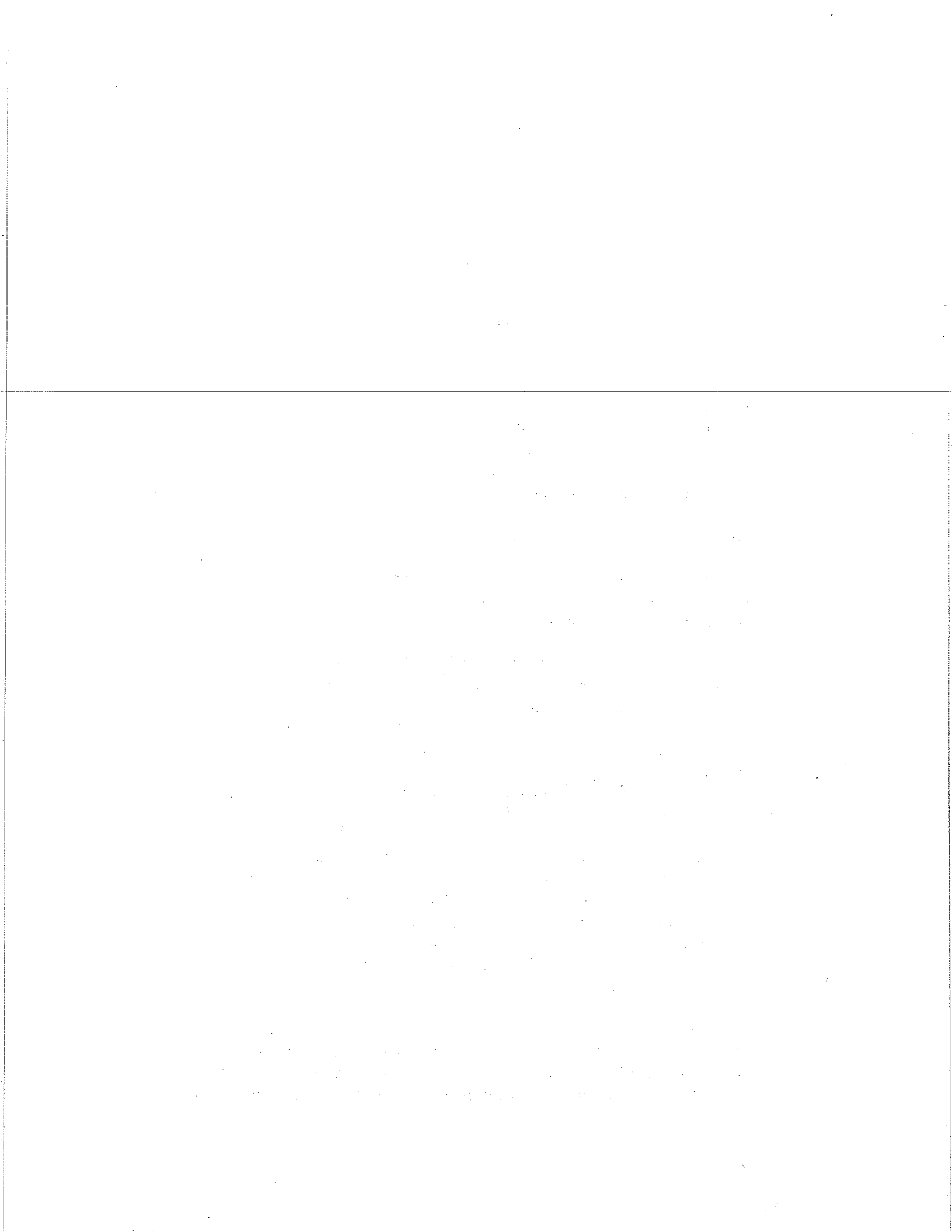
should do so in a manner that this is thoughtful and will assist in seeing that the answers to hunters concerns are done in a scientifically sound manner.

Suggested Actions for the WWF Board of Directors.

1. The WWF should appear at the December 17th legislative hearings on deer goals and report on the large number of dissatisfied hunters that the Federation has heard from about the 2009 deer season. It is recommended that the WWF request that the legislative committees send the over winter goals for deer back to the Natural Resources Board asking for changes in the rule.

One such recommended change should be to re-evaluate the number of acres of deer range assigned to individual deer units. This is having a major impact in actual deer goals in the state especially in the farmland region of the state. The Department should be directed by the legislature to work with sportsmen to make changes in the deer range calculation to better reflect deer range in the state. DNR biologists have indicated that there is a need to do this in the farmland units.

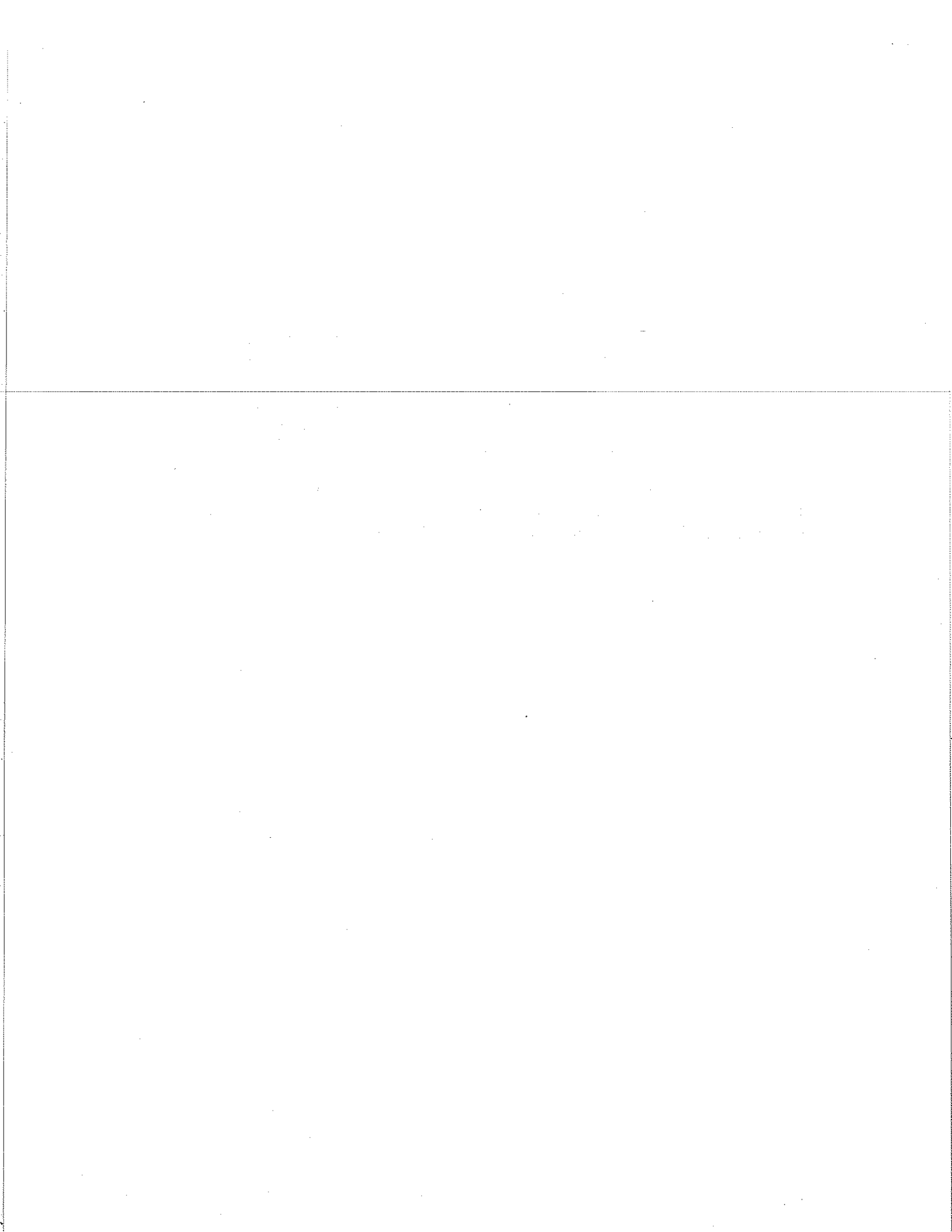
2. At the legislative hearings and at the January Natural Resources Board, the WWF should take the position that the current deer season framework be continued for 2010 with no expansions. There is a need to stabilize the situation and give the hunters and the Department an opportunity to rebuild public confidence in the fundamentals of deer management in Wisconsin.
3. The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation should call for the formation of a group to evaluate the Department's estimate of the current deer population in Wisconsin. This group should include deer experts from outside Wisconsin and representatives of deer hunters along with Department staff. The purpose of this group is to evaluate the process and assumptions that Wisconsin has used in setting the base estimate of deer populations in the state. The group should recommend changes to the system and issue an opinion on the accuracy of the Department's current estimate of the deer herd size.
4. After the completion of this outside group's work, the Natural Resources Board should, with the major involvement of sportsmen and women, direct the formulation of a deer season framework for 2011 and beyond, with a major focus on stabilizing the deer season framework for five years without the use of EAB so that an enhanced Sex-Age-Kill formula can be used to manage deer. This new season framework should be based on the new re-estimate of the deer population in the state developed by the outside group
5. It is recommended that for the 2010 season and beyond that the Department use free herd control tags for two years in any unit actually needing herd control before any other herd control measure is employed in those units. The tags should be allocated proportionately by acreage between private and public lands as



recommended by the EAB alternative recommendations.

6. In order to improve Wisconsin deer management process, the Department should immediately fund and conduct research on:
 - a. an estimation of the survival and cause-specific mortality of white-tailed deer bucks in Wisconsin,
 - b. a quantification of the impacts of predation, winter weather, and habitat on white-tailed deer fawn recruitment in Wisconsin.
 - c. an evaluation of ecological impacts of white-tailed deer on forest productivity, understory vegetation, mammals, birds, and ecosystem function in Wisconsin,
 - d. an evaluation of deer hunter demographics and the identification of strategies and tactics to slow down and reverse the impending decline in hunter numbers.

Unanimously adopted by the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Board of Directors at it December 12, 2009 Board of Directors meeting at Stevens Point, Wisconsin.



A.C. Grabski
5180 Ridge View Road
Blue Mounds, WI 53517
P (608) 924-9717
e-mail: tgrabski@sembabio.com

December 17, 2009

Dear Chairs Holperin, Hraychuck and Committee Members,

I am a Ph.D. Scientist, Hunter, and Landowner living near Blue Mounds in Iowa County. I am also a Delegate on the WI Conservation Congress, Secretary of the CWD Committee, and Served on the State's CWD Stakeholder Advisory panel. My statement today is made with this experience and is my own, and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of these groups.

Deer mis-management in WI is a train wreck. It started when CWD was discovered and has gotten worse every year since then. I grew up in North-Eastern WI in Florence County and now live in Iowa County. This past season I hunted both areas equally. Four days of hunting in Florence County I saw two deer, a doe and a fawn. Probably the only two deer left in that county. In Iowa County I saw more deer, but the EAB requirements and CWD hunting regulations destroyed my hunting experience there too. I am not sure what the deer managers in WI have tried to accomplish these past 8 years, but it has certainly not been to improve the quality of the hunt or deer herd for hunters. Hunters are referred to as "management tools" we are also sportsmen and women that love our sport. If deer hunting is considered a product, sold to hunters as a means to support the WDNR, that product must be improved. It is clear from these proceedings today and the uproar for changes these past two years that something must be done to improve the deer hunting product. Those improvements should certainly include changes to the season structure and the proposals of the Hunter's Rights Coalition for statewide elimination of special hunts, statewide ^{herd control} elimination of EAB, and statewide return to the traditional 9-day season ^{as} ~~are~~ overdue moves in the right direction. Finally, as called for by Senator Decker, replacement of DNR personnel in charge of deer management may be necessary in order to correct the serious problems with deer management in WI. ~~Employees can only fail for so long before they are replaced, and if our DNR deer managers are not part of a viable solution, then they are part of the problem.~~

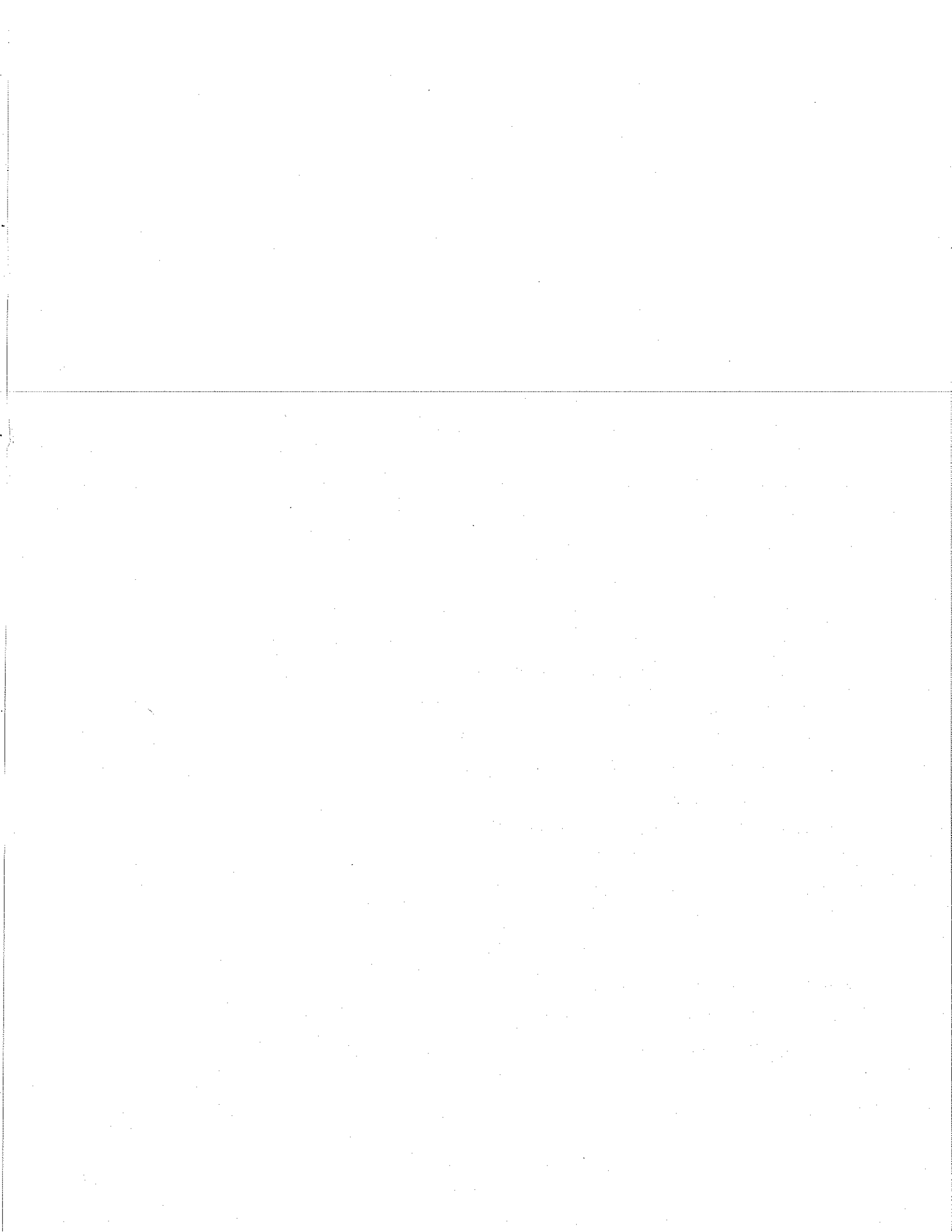
Thank you for your consideration,

Anthony C. Grabski, Ph.D.

CWD Stakeholder Advisory Group Member

WI Conservation Congress CWD Committee Secretary

Scientist, Hunter, Landowner, and Iowa County Conservation Congress Delegate



Good morning,

My name is Mike Brust. I drove down from Wausau this morning, and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

I've been involved, directly and indirectly, in Wisconsin deer management for over 30 years. I've served on the Wisconsin Conservation Congress for most of that time. I've been Secretary of the Congress and served on the Executive Council of the Congress for many years. I also chaired several study committees of the Congress including the big game committee, which handles deer management issues. I am currently Vice President of Wisconsin Bowhunters Association. Hopefully, I can provide some historical perspective.

Wisconsin's deer herd is arguably its most valuable natural resource. It is the cornerstone of a tourism industry that stimulates our economy and brings millions of dollars to our state each year. The Whitetail Deer defines Wisconsin. It is the Wisconsin State Wildlife Animal.

Besides the state, deer define many of our citizens as hunters. Deer are the centerpiece of our Wisconsin hunting heritage. In November, at least in the North, deer hunting receives more media attention than the Packers.

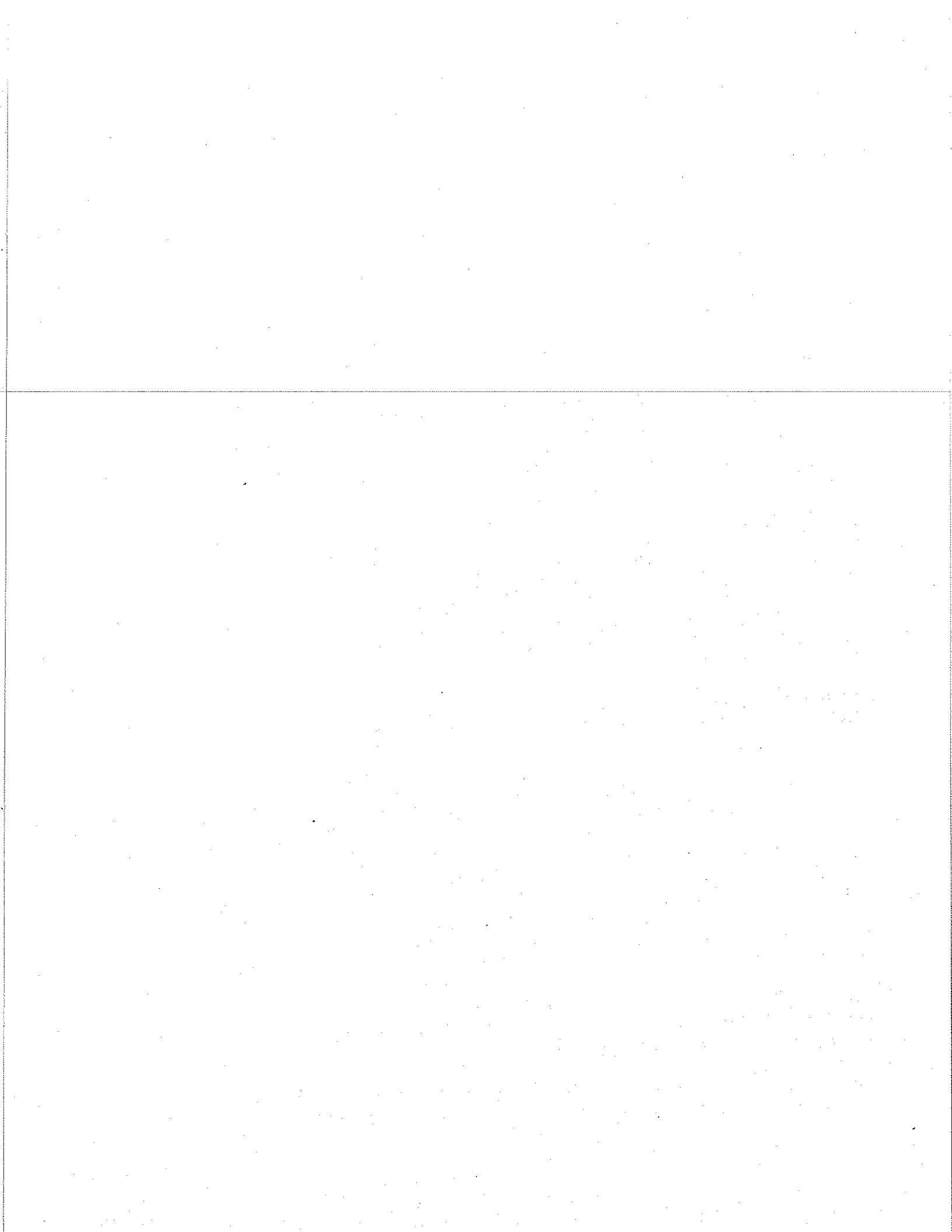
My greatest concern in recent years is that the attitude towards managing the herd has gone from one of protecting this valuable asset (and the hunters that actually manage it for them), to one of controlling and limiting deer as if they were a liability, (and treating hunters similarly). This is curious, given that revenue from deer provide the bulk of the funding to the DNR; but make no mistake, there is a concerted effort within the DNR to knock back the herd to a level that **they** deem is appropriate. Incredibly, there are areas of the state where they insist we haven't gone nearly far enough.

In years past, the unit population goals and hunting quotas were hammered out between the DNR and the Conservation Congress, the legislatively defined representative to advise the Board of Natural Resources on such matters. In the 90's that began to change and since then most of the process has been dictated by the Department, with little citizen input. In the interest of avoiding massive agricultural damage, stripping of the vegetative understory of our forests, and cars dodging deer all over the state, population goals were lowered and plans were developed to remove large numbers of antlerless deer to avert these impending catastrophes. Interestingly, two things *didn't* happen: the deer herd didn't drop off at that point, and much to their chagrin, the predicted biological and social disasters didn't occur either.

Instead, deer returned to huntable numbers the North, were relatively abundant in the South, and Wisconsin enjoyed several years of prosperity fueled by an adequate deer herd and a hunting culture that is critical to economic well-being of several parts of this state.

Undaunted, some people within the DNR felt compelled to step up their efforts to reduce the population anyway, and things like Earn-A-Buck, T Zones, special antlerless hunts, and almost limitless antlerless tags were implemented.

Those, combined with a rapidly expanding population of large predators, have taken their toll, and the herd has been decimated over the last few years, especially in the North.



I won't bore you with stories of not seeing deer in the woods or reports from northern resorts that have gone vacant in the last couple deer seasons, you will undoubtedly hear many of those from others, but the fact is that deer are almost gone in several parts of the North, and without a change in attitude by those responsible for managing them, I fear the herd won't be coming back soon.

I mentioned large predators, and I want to touch on that briefly because we have seen unprecedented growth in the population of wolves, coyotes, bobcats and bears in Wisconsin. Recent studies in Pennsylvania, Texas, Maine, South Carolina, South Dakota and others are showing that **just coyotes** may be taking over half of all fawn production. Wolves harvest adult deer all year long, almost at will in deep snow, where even those not killed outright are stressed to the point they often die anyway. Our actual wolf population is substantially higher than the wolf *count* we often hear.

We have found with our own elk herd that **bears** are a major predator of young ungulates. The WI elk population is struggling to maintain itself, in large part because **bears** are killing so many elk calves. We now find, thanks to an independent UW study, that instead of the 12,600 bears we were told we had in northern Wisconsin; we may have over 40,000.

While I was chairman of the wolf committee of the Congress I spoke to a biologist in Minnesota who noted that in some places in his state the deer herd was reduced to a point where, based on wolf predation of the few remaining deer, it would be almost impossible for the deer to come back. It's referred to as a "predator pit" by some biologists (outside WI); and it's pretty clear that some parts of our state are already there; and others will be shortly.

Wisconsin has spent well over a million dollars on restoring wolves, a species that after being introduced into the Yellowstone ecosystem in 1995 has reduced the largest migrating elk herd in the United States by 75%. But how much have we spent on predation studies on **our** main asset: Whitetail Deer? Other states have, and their solution for major predation is pretty simple: maintain an abundant supply of deer that can absorb those losses and still provide reasonable hunting opportunity.

Clearly, we are way behind, not only in understanding the extent of predation loss or adequately accounting for it, but more importantly, in not protecting our deer herd until we do. It keeps coming back to whether you consider our deer herd as an asset or a liability.

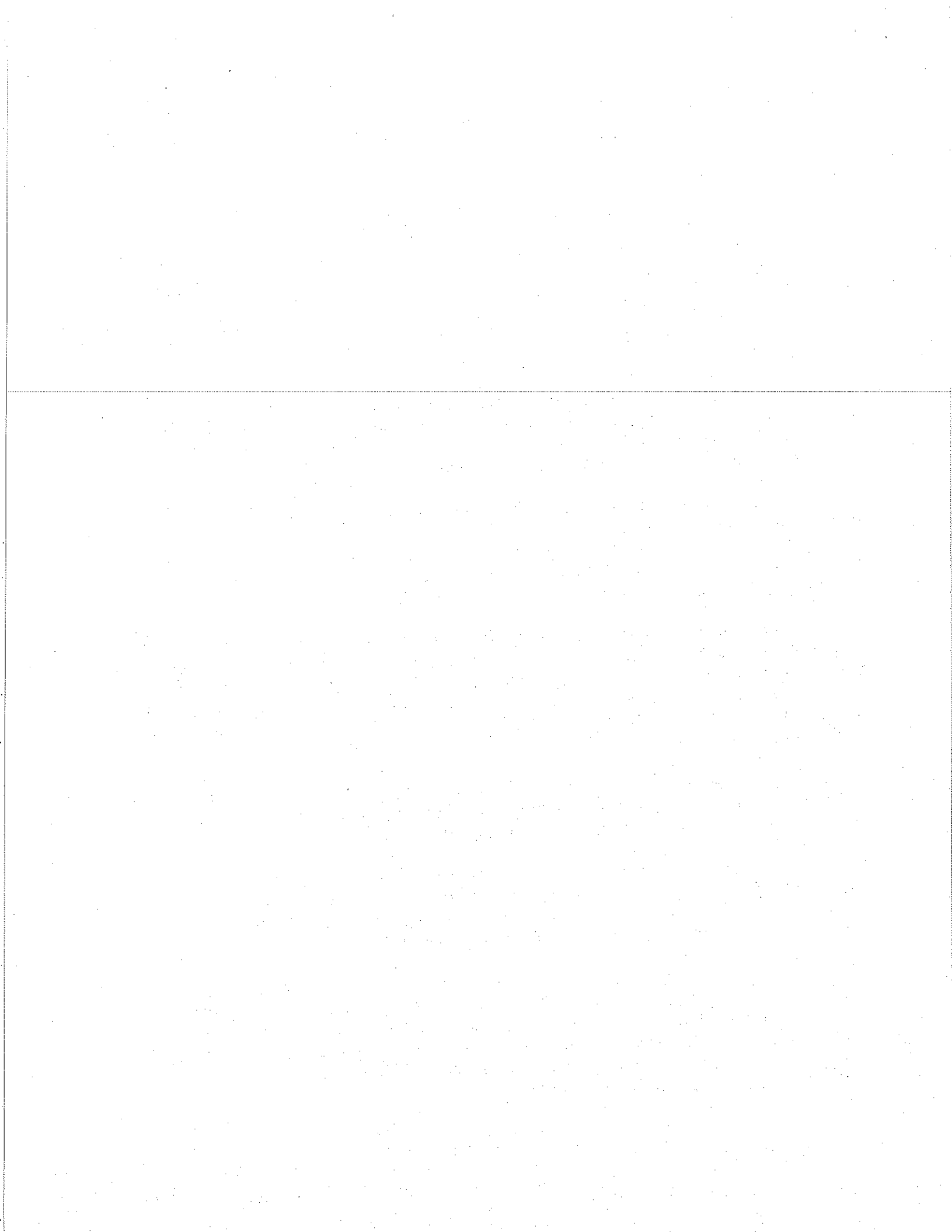
I have never been a fan of getting the legislature involved in game management and hunting and fishing issues. We have a good system and structure to handle those things that, in theory, insulates them from undue political influence. Unfortunately, for several reasons, that structure has broken down and needs your direction to get back on track.

The problem is really very simple. There are too few deer in many areas of the state to support satisfactory hunting experiences that will keep the sport viable. We can talk all day long about all the flaws in SAK, that over 70% of the harvest is antlerless, specific goal numbers, predation, or whatever. The bottom line however, is that this agency needs to be instructed to restore deer to higher levels across the state, not move to reduce them further, and to treat our deer herd as a valuable asset and protect it accordingly.

the deer
you
are the
steward

biodiversity

still have browse problems
localized



Dec. 17, 2009

Testimony of Greg Kazmierski, the deer spokesperson for the WI Hunters Rights Coalition and the Dairyland Committee Chair of the SCI Chapters of Wisconsin.

Preliminary numbers from this year's 9-day gun season show a 30% decline in overall harvest from last year, but even more troubling is the decline in buck harvest to the lowest level since 1980. The buck harvest is the best indicator of population trends. In 1980 the population estimate after the hunt was 565,255 deer, more than 23% below the current statewide goal of 733,000. In 1980 the antlerless harvest was only 70,000 deer, gun and bow combined, this year's antlerless harvest may well double that of 1980 making matters even worse for next year.

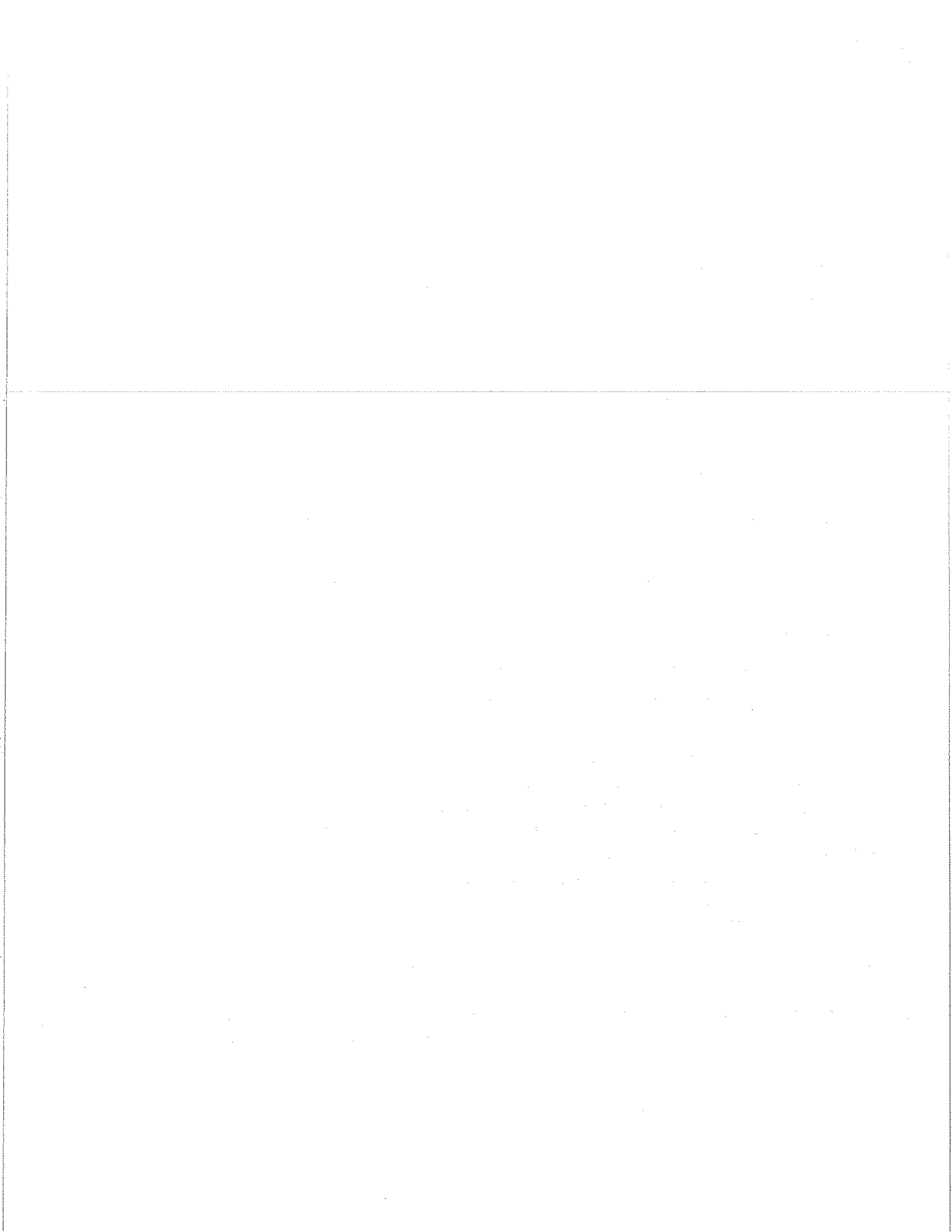
The SAK audit, hunter observations and car kill data predicted this collapse in the deer population. It was irresponsible of the Department and the NRB, not to err on the side of caution for the '09 season as hunters asked last April when hundreds gathered at the State Capitol. It is almost criminal though that they ignored the Legislature's request to suspend December hunts this year after the preliminary numbers were in. Preliminary harvest data last year compelled the HRC to call for a suspension of the December hunts in '08.

It may well take decades for deer populations to return especially in portions of the North where the state does not have the ability to manage wolf populations. This economic impact to a billion dollar industry will be felt for years to come.

Wisconsin's deer management program is like a three legged stool. To work it requires accurate population estimates, proper population goals and a season structure that works and is acceptable to hunters as well as other users and stakeholder groups. It is clear now all three legs are in need of repair.

Although it was not the choice of hunters to work on season structure first, the NRB chose to ignore the Legislature's request to address population goals and population estimates. The HRC and other groups though worked extremely hard on the Earn-a-Buck Alternative Committee to develop a season package that would be acceptable to all stakeholders. The Department thwarted those efforts by overreaching with a season proposal nothing like the packages put forth by the committee, knowing full well their proposal did not meet the NRB mandate of acceptable to hunters.

The game has changed; people are looking for accountability with calls to replace the deer management team. There is not a single region of the state that did not show an alarming decline in buck harvest including the CWD units. Preliminary buck harvest data indicates most of the state may be well below goal. For over a decade the Department insisted on unpopular herd control methods and seasons creating deep division among user groups, and now it's clear, the deer population problem could have been solved by simply issuing adequate antlerless tags as prescribed in NR10 of Administrative Code.



The WI Hunters Rights Coalition recommendations on goals

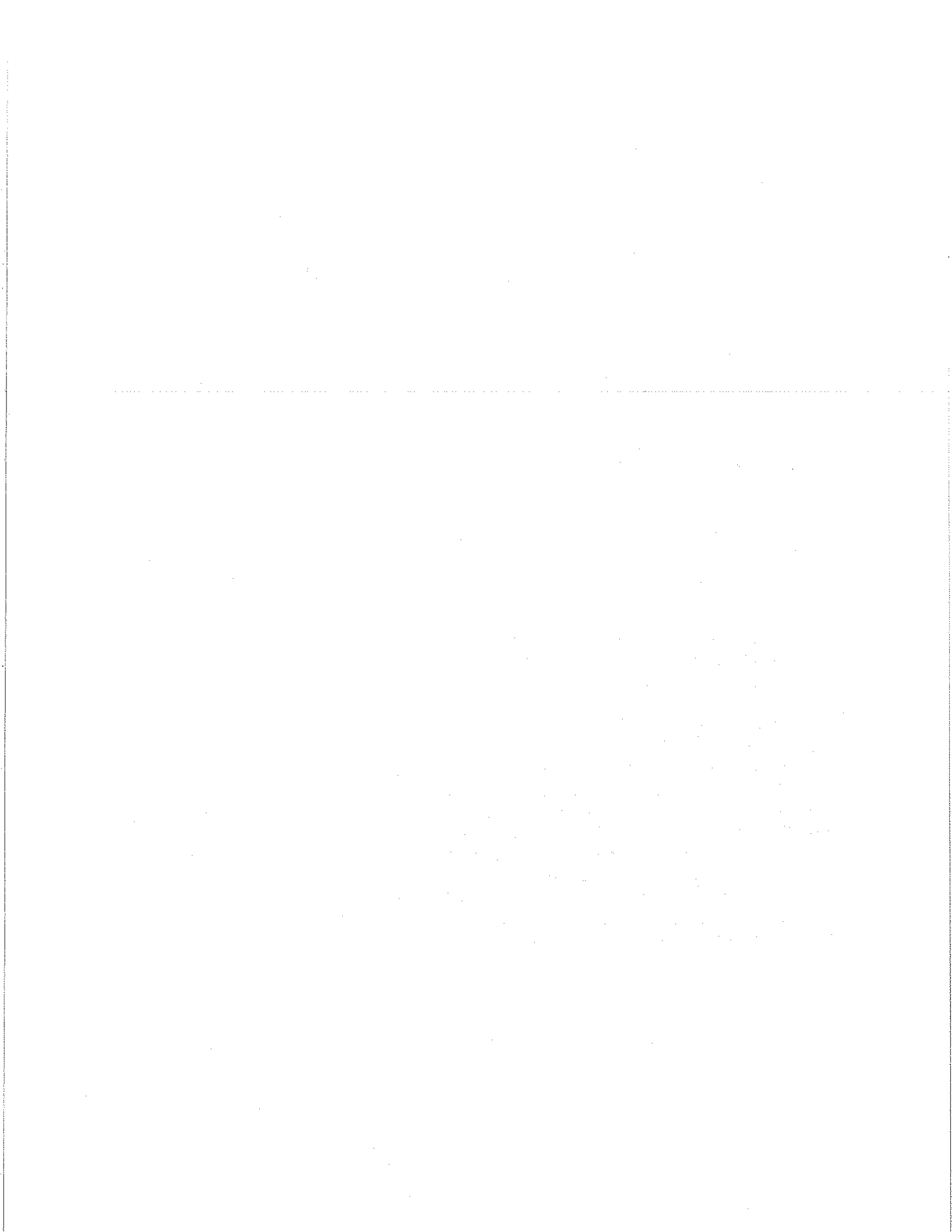
- 1. Determine deer goals for total square miles of area and not square miles of habitat.**

Most of the Deer Management units that are habitually over goal are units that have significant areas that are not currently defined as deer habitat. A timely example of non-habitat is corn fields. Yet, standing corn was one of the reasons stated for the harvest being down this year, the deer were in the corn. Many farmland areas have goals of 20 to 25 deer per sq. mile of defined habitat. If a unit is at 50% habitat it means that these units at goal should only have 10 to 12.5 deer per sq. mile of land area. Some units are only at 20% habitat or 4 to 5 deer per sq mile of land area. The biological carrying capacity of farmland areas is 80 to 100 deer per sq. mile. These goals are set at social carrying capacity, yet most farmers and landowners will never shoot their deer down to these low goals. A unit with a goal of 20 deer per sq. mi. of currently defined habitat and 50% deer habitat will produce at goal about 5 deer per year per square mile of total land area for harvest, or one deer for every 128 acres. If a land owner is paying recreational rate property taxes they expect to be able to harvest more than 1 deer per 128 acres. A simple solution to this would be to establish goals per sq. mi. of total land area, like virtually every other state, and the habitual over goal problem will be remedied.

- 2. Establish deer population goals at a level capable of sustaining an annual total hunter harvest (all seasons, gun, bow, tribal, crop damage, etc.) of 400,000 deer plus the 15% wounding loss and the non-harvest mortality.**

It has been stated by the DNR that at current goal, hunters are expected to harvest about 270,000 to 290,000 deer. Since 1990 hunters have harvested over 400,000 deer annually with the exception of 4 years including this year which may end up just shy of 300,000. It is clear that this year's level falls short of what hunters consider good deer hunting. Hunters have demonstrated they are capable of harvesting in excess of 600,000 when deer are plentiful. To sustain a harvest of 400,000 deer and account for non-harvest mortalities the over winter goal needs to be at least between 1,000,000 to 1,200,000 deer over winter or just under 25 deer per sq. mi. of total land area, well within the biological carrying capacity of most of the state. For the last 10 years, DNR's population estimates have been within that range while car deer collisions and crop damage complaints declined since their peak in the 90's.

We ask that the committee reject the rule and send it back to the NRB to include these modifications.



We also asks that the Committee take action on the following recommendations.

- 1. Bring in outside experts to recalculate current population estimates along with hunter and hunting group involvement.**

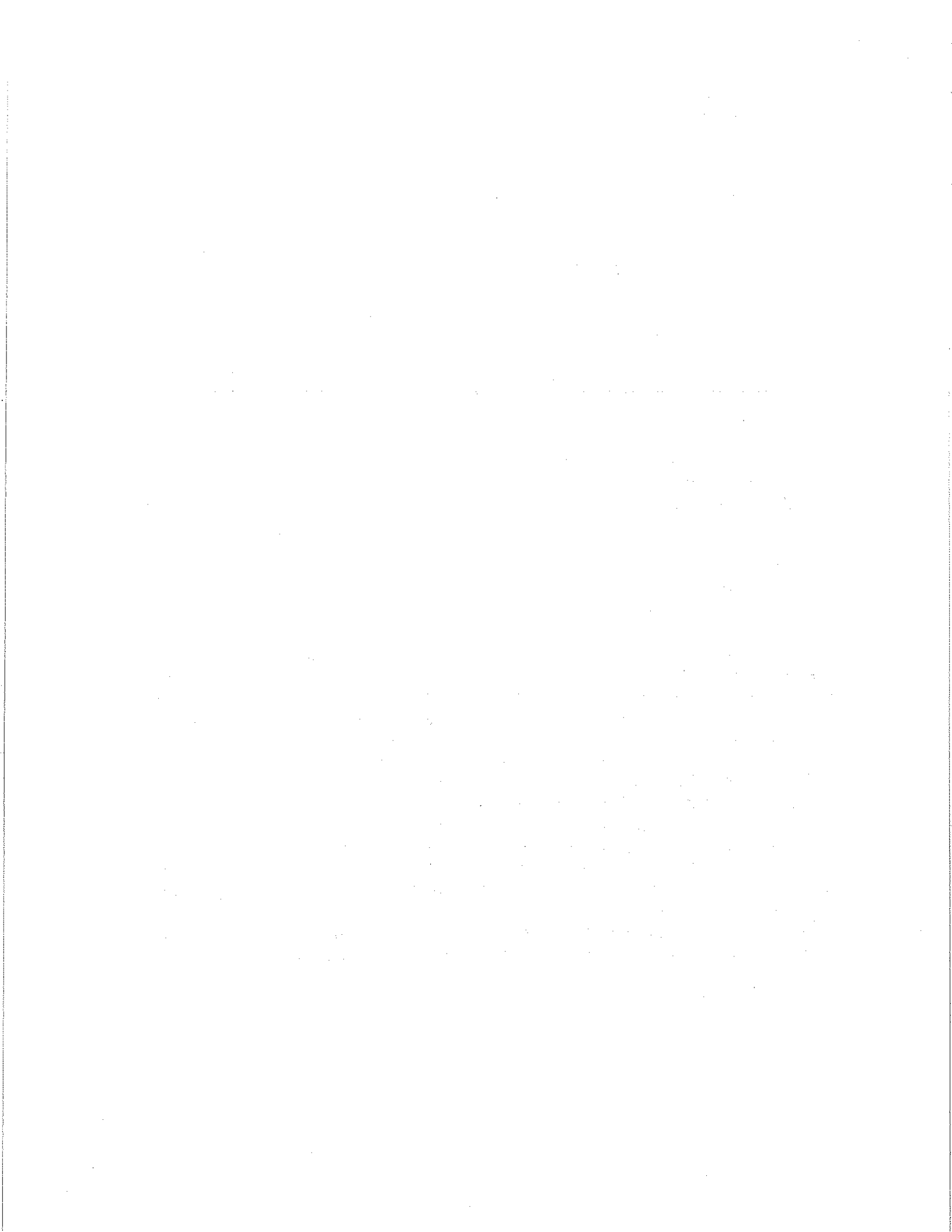
To gain credibility with hunters, this must be done in a similar fashion to the recently completed bear study. It must be conducted by experts from outside the state and include involvement from the hunting community. It must be ongoing for a period of several years. With the recent windfall in P/R funds available to the state, we would hope this project would take precedence over other proposed studies.

- 2. Require that calculated non-harvest related mortalities (predation, car kills, etc.) are subtracted from post-hunt calculations to determine final overwinter population.**

It was determined by the SAK audit that consistent over or underestimation of the percentage of non-harvest mortality could have long term consequences on the deer abundance estimates. Confidence in SAK outputs would greatly improve if non-harvest mortalities were transparent and also removed from overwinter population estimates.

- 3. Eliminate all additional Herd Control seasons and EAB and return to a 9-day gun season for a period of 5 years statewide, including CWD management zones, to allow the SAK formula the needed time to stabilize.**

Two consecutive years of dramatically falling buck harvest indicate population estimates are far below DNR estimates. The last year the gun season recorded a buck harvest of less than 90,000 deer was in 1980. The statewide post-hunt population in 1980 was 565,255 deer. This is 25% below current statewide population goals. SAK calculations require 5 year averages of consistent buck harvest. With inconsistent seasons and Earn-a-Buck, accurate population estimates are impossible. The dramatic decline in antlerless harvest in '09 indicates the deer aren't there and hunters are electing to forgo venison in the freezer and not shoot the few they see. This also led to the dismal Oct. harvest of 11,000 deer total including the CWD zones where hunters still had to qualify for a buck tag. This year's Oct. gun harvest was little more than archers harvested during the same 4-day period in '06 and '07. CWD units are also managed to goals and the dramatic decline in those units indicates the aerial survey model is also flawed and populations may already be at or below current goals. It is also demonstrated in historical harvest data that hunters can and will shoot adequate numbers of antlerless deer in a 9-day season if the deer are there and adequate tags are issued.

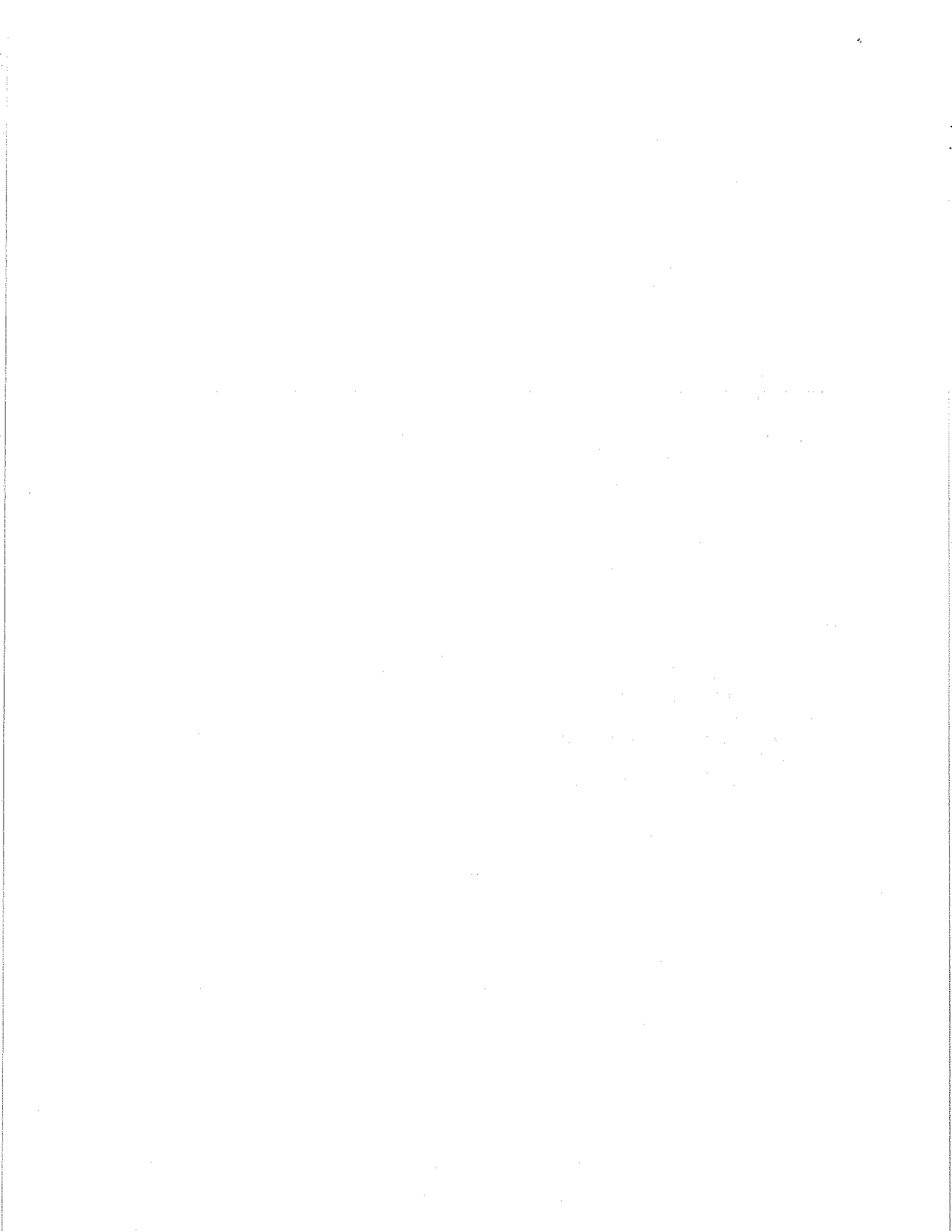


- 4. For the initial 5 years, if a tool is needed to reduce populations in units still determined to be more than 20% over goal, the Department should issue free and/or \$2 Herd Control tags, including the Public/Private land tag proposal from EAB Alternative rule to minimize the risk of overharvest on public land.**

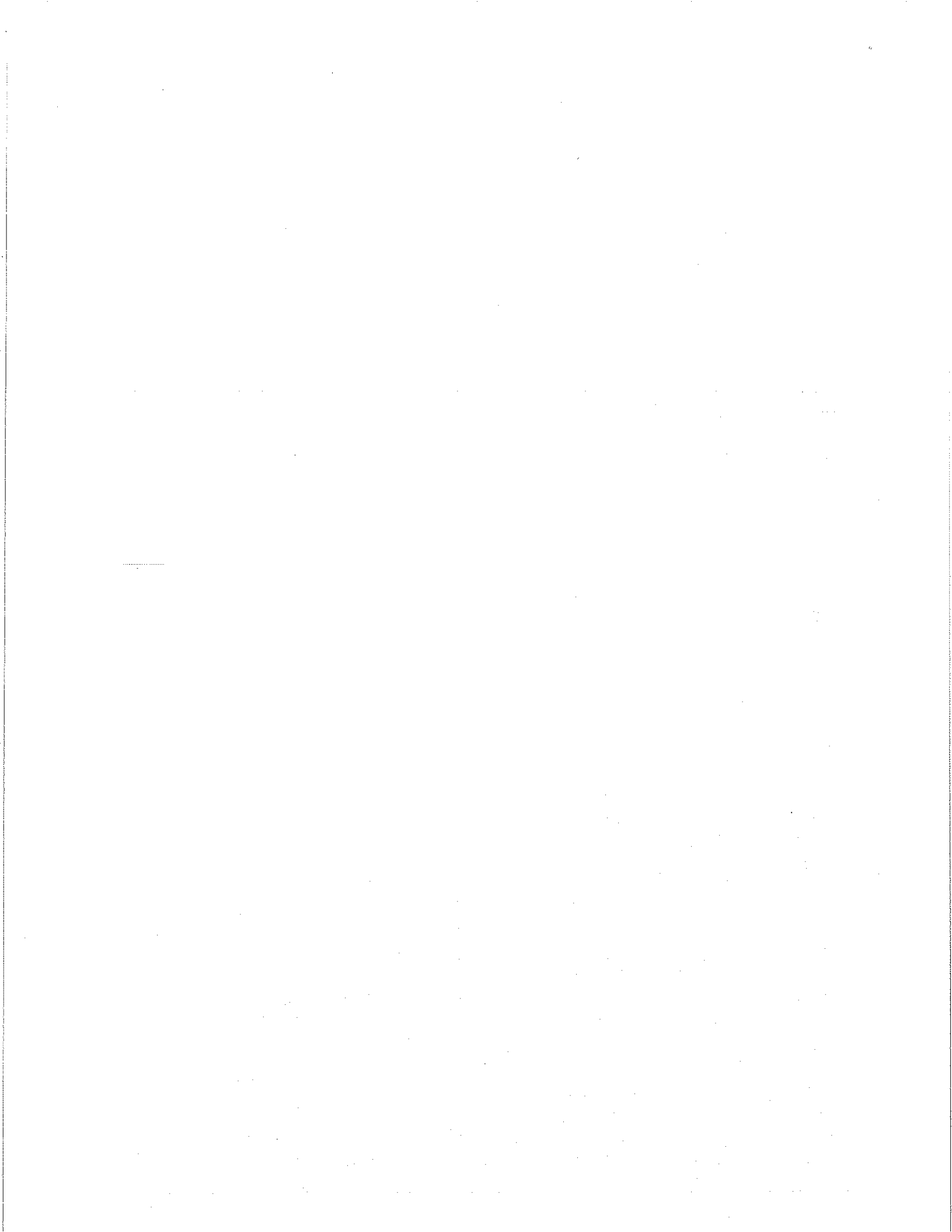
This provides hunters the tools to harvest antlerless deer where local populations may be abundant without forcing hunters to harvest antlerless deer in areas where local populations may be depleted. It will also limit tags on public land where hunters are less vested and less likely to make the assessment that populations are low. It is continually stated by the DNR that deer are not dispersed equally over the landscape so a one size fits all approach to address a few hot spot areas within a management unit also risks over harvest in many local areas where deer are less abundant. The key component of the record harvests of the last decade was the availability of free antlerless tags. The most successful harvest season was in 2000 when hunters were provided 2 free tags with the purchase of a license. With the 2 free tags, of the 528,494 deer harvested in the gun seasons, just fewer than 90% of them were harvested during the regular 9-day gun season.

- 5. If further Herd Control methods are needed at the end of the 5 year term, before Earn-a-Buck and Herd Control Hunts are implemented, we recommend the Department look to the 2009 EAB Alternative Committee's recommendations that could be supported by all stakeholders.**

There were many good recommendations that were developed by the Earn-a-Buck Alternative Committee. Underestimation of the dismal results of this year's deer harvest by the DNR and overreaching with a rule package that most on the committee knew would not have hunter support may result in the committees work being shelved for some time since herd control appears not to be the issue. If the DNR is diligent about correcting population estimates, establishing goals at a level to provide good hunting as required by law and issues antlerless tags appropriately, additional herd control measures should not be necessary.



Prehunt and Posthunt Deer Population Estimates and Harvests, 1960-2006						
Year	Total harvest (gun,bow,tribal)	Prehunt Population	Statewide Posthunt	Posthunt Goal	Fawn Recruitment	Expansion Rate %
1960	62,096	369,021	297,611			
1961	39,885	411,933	366,066		114,322	38.4
1962	47,448	462,129	407,564	441,863	96,064	26.2
1963	67,214	633,501	556,205	441,863	225,937	55.4
1964	96,609	709,698	598,597	441,863	153,493	27.6
1965	103,740	701,914	582,613	441,863	103,316	17.3
1966	116,048	695,656	562,201	441,863	113,044	19.4
1967	136,119	707,087	550,551	441,863	144,886	25.8
1968	126,920	623,801	477,843	583,663	73,250	13.3
1969	103,995	561,878	442,283	583,663	84,035	17.6
1970	79,364	535,047	443,778	583,663	92,763	21.0
1971	77,357	576,881	487,920	583,663	133,103	30.0
1972	81,914	513,727	419,526	583,663	25,807	5.3
1973	90,561	580,700	476,555	583,663	161,175	38.4
1974	112,919	662,420	532,563	583,663	185,864	39.0
1975	130,966	674,465	523,855	583,663	141,903	26.6
1976	136,145	668,614	512,047	583,663	144,760	27.6
1977	148,700	777,618	606,613	583,663	265,570	51.9
1978	168,958	853,833	659,531	583,663	247,220	40.8
1979	141,588	723,059	560,233	583,663	63,528	9.6
1980	160,578	749,920	565,255	583,663	189,687	33.9
1981	195,756	871,173	646,054	596,495	305,918	54.1
1982	213,565	848,668	603,068	596,435	202,614	31.4
1983	231,119	851,705	585,918	596,840	248,637	41.2
1984	295,305	1,048,083	708,482	595,075	462,165	78.9
1985	316,426	1,018,049	654,159	594,955	309,567	43.7
1986	301,875	1,023,246	676,090	657,935	369,087	56.4
1987	296,010	1,092,295	751,883	689,070	416,205	61.6
1988	309,187	1,193,082	837,517	689,070	441,199	58.7
1989	360,330	1,299,553	885,173	695,005	462,036	55.2
1990	403,173	1,362,348	898,699	698,055	477,175	53.9
1991	424,556	1,289,781	801,542	698,400	391,082	43.5
1992	351,838	1,095,748	691,134	718,230	294,206	36.7
1993	273,056	1,152,128	838,114	718,230	460,994	66.7
1994	377,520	1,383,001	948,853	718,230	544,887	65.0
1995	472,196	1,664,725	1,121,700	706,346	715,872	75.4
1996	465,079	1,423,441	888,600	704,256	301,741	26.9
1997	362,975	1,226,321	808,900	704,146	337,721	38.0
1998	411,519	1,494,247	1,021,000	704,000	685,347	84.7
1999	497,670	1,662,987	1,090,666	704,000	641,987	62.9
2000	618,274	1,818,015	1,107,000	704,000	727,349	66.7
2001	446,957	1,503,365	989,364	742,200	396,365	35.8
2002	373,926	1,344,904	914,889	708739	355,540	35.9
2003	485,965	1,663,485	1,106,036	702324	748,596	81.8
2004	517,366	1,643,082	1,047,525	692079	537,046	48.6
2005	465,760	1,623,736	1,088,720	706000	576,211	55.0
2006	507,224	1,809,400	1,224,470	701756	720,680	66.2
2007	518,573	1,816,288	1,216,680	701756	591,818	48.3
2008	453,000	1,523,800	1,005,006	733,000	307,120	25.2
					Average	43.0



FINAL 2001 SAK DEER POPULATION ESTIMATES
 These estimates reflect the decisions reached by the Deer Committee during the 2/15/2002 meeting

DMU	New Deer Goal Density	New Deer Range	Buck Kill	Total Deer Kill	5-yr Ave YB%	Buck Reco-very Rate	Buck Harvest Rate	Average YB%	Adult Sex Ratio	Fawns /100 Does	Prehunt Bucks	Prehunt Does	Prehunt Fawns	Pre-hunt Population	Posthunt		% over popul. goal	Non harvest mortalities from BRR	Pop. Density w/ non-harvest mortalities removed	Difference in Deer per ² mile
															Population	Density				
1	20	161	637	1612	60	75	0.450	60	2.27	68.8	1,416	3,217	2,213	6,846	4,992	31	55	1712	20	-11
01M	10	32	23	84	60	75	0.450	60	2.27	68.8	51	116	80	247	151	5	-53	62	3	-2
2	18	511	2436	6454	60	75	0.450	54	2.8	68.8	5,413	9,491	6,539	21,434	14,012	27	52	5358	17	-10
3	12	555	1999	4229	58	72	0.418	56	2.8	68.8	4,787	8,703	5,988	19,478	14,615	26	119	5454	17	-10
4	10	349	781	2034	53	65	0.345	48	2.5	68.8	2,267	3,957	2,722	8,947	6,607	19	89	3131	10	-8
5	20	226	1372	3986	58	72	0.418	50	2.7	68.8	3,285	5,531	3,805	12,822	8,038	36	78	3534	20	-16
6	12	436	1444	3263	58	72	0.418	50	2.7	75.8	3,458	5,821	4,413	13,692	9,939	23	90	3834	14	-9
7	15	189	283	360	51	62	0.316	51	2.7	75.8	895	1,537	1,165	3,597	3,183	17	12	1367	10	-7
8	20	370	1524	3255	64	79	0.506	55	2.6	82.6	3,014	5,797	4,788	13,599	9,856	27	33	2856	19	-8
9	20	438	2054	3602	62	77	0.477	57	3.0	82.6	4,302	7,432	6,138	17,872	13,730	31	57	4111	22	-9
10	25	345	1421	2776	70	83	0.581	66	3.0	82.6	2,446	4,892	4,040	11,378	8,186	24	-5	1934	18	-6
11	20	341	1771	3203	69	83	0.573	66	3.4	82.6	3,092	5,457	4,508	13,057	9,374	27	37	2220	21	-7
12	17	264	1207	1935	64	79	0.506	63	3.0	82.6	2,387	4,558	3,764	10,709	8,484	32	89	2249	24	-9
13	15	715	2290	6006	51	62	0.316	47	2.8	75.8	7,242	11,051	8,977	26,671	19,764	28	84	10135	13	-14
14	14	328	1075	2480	56	70	0.392	47	2.5	75.8	2,742	4,687	3,553	10,982	8,130	25	77	3295	15	-10
15	25	414	2366	4503	75	86	0.645	73	3.9	110	3,668	6,242	6,866	16,776	11,598	28	12	2349	22	-6
16	25	335	2082	5034	75	86	0.645	69	3.8	110	3,197	5,277	5,505	14,279	8,490	25	1	1999	19	-6
17	15	238	955	2540	70	83	0.581	63	3.4	82.6	1,644	2,769	2,287	6,700	3,779	16	6	1139	11	-5
18	20	368	1578	4771	62	77	0.477	60	2.8	73.8	3,305	6,439	4,752	14,497	9,010	24	22	3334	15	-9
19	20	403	1852	3763	53	65	0.345	50	2.5	73.8	5,376	9,774	7,213	22,364	18,036	45	124	7827	25	-9
20	18	378	1313	3208	56	70	0.392	50	2.7	73.8	3,363	5,639	4,161	13,161	9,461	25	39	3945	15	-10
21	25	225	1409	3005	71	84	0.596	71	3.7	110	2,720	4,121	4,533	11,017	7,562	34	34	1763	26	-8
22	20	349	1822	3550	77	87	0.670	77	4.0	110	2,805	4,765	5,241	12,715	8,621	25	24	1633	20	-5
22A	20	353	1673	3505	71	84	0.596	71	3.8	110	2,805	4,765	5,241	12,811	8,780	25	24	2050	19	-6
23	20	403	1761	5039	63	78	0.491	55	2.9	100	3,584	6,179	6,179	15,941	10,146	25	26	3507	16	-9
24	20	278	1284	2008	60	75	0.450	56	3.7	73.8	2,876	3,957	2,920	9,752	7,443	27	34	2438	18	-9
25	20	437	1765	4763	61	76	0.464	55	2.9	73.8	3,807	6,564	4,944	15,216	9,738	22	11	3652	14	-8
26	20	391	1443	4732	63	78	0.491	64	3.4	110	2,937	5,025	3,708	11,670	6,205	16	-21	2567	9	-7
27	20	248	1390	2472	64	79	0.506	64	4.2	120	2,749	3,808	4,570	11,128	8,285	33	67	2337	24	-9
28	11	656	1816	2892	56	70	0.392	51	2.9	75.8	4,633	7,406	5,614	17,653	14,557	22	102	5296	14	-8
29A	12	239	713	1920	53	65	0.345	46	3.1	75.8	2,070	2,792	2,116	6,978	4,770	20	66	2442	10	-10
29B	12	233	409	597	56	70	0.392	50	3.1	75.8	1,043	1,530	1,160	3,733	3,046	13	9	1120	8	-5
30	15	315	989	2161	61	76	0.464	48	2.5	73.8	2,090	3,648	2,892	8,431	5,946	19	26	2023	12	-6
31	20	414	1401	3706	59	74	0.437	48	2.3	73.8	3,209	6,088	4,493	13,790	9,528	23	15	3586	14	-9
32	21	487	1739	4921	60	75	0.450	54	3.3	73.8	3,864	5,748	4,243	13,866	8,197	17	-20	3464	10	-7
33	20	276	1570	4176	73	85	0.621	73	4.1	120	2,530	4,095	4,915	11,540	6,738	24	22	1731	18	-6
34	17	262	1090	1947	55	68	0.374	51	2.8	79.4	2,914	4,826	3,832	11,572	9,333	36	110	3703	21	-14
35	20	409	2004	3927	54	67	0.362	52	3.0	79.4	5,539	8,728	6,930	21,197	16,681	41	104	6995	24	-17
36	25	274	1928	6193	54	67	0.362	45	3.0	79.4	5,329	7,267	5,770	18,365	11,243	41	64	6061	19	-22
37	25	235	1442	3750	63	78	0.491	54	3.0	79.4	2,934	4,802	5,813	11,549	7,237	31	23	2541	20	-11
38	20	388	1427	3812	55	68	0.374	47	2.9	93.7	3,816	5,622	5,267	14,705	10,321	27	33	4705	14	-12
39	20	411	1063	1929	58	72	0.418	55	2.3	81.6	2,545	5,534	4,515	12,595	10,376	25	26	3527	17	-9

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the financial system and for the ability to detect and prevent fraud. The text notes that without reliable records, it would be difficult to verify the accuracy of financial statements and to identify any discrepancies or irregularities.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the role of internal controls in ensuring the reliability of financial information. It describes how internal controls are designed to prevent errors and to detect any unauthorized transactions. The text highlights that internal controls are a key component of an organization's risk management strategy and are essential for maintaining the trust of investors and other stakeholders.

3. The third part of the document discusses the importance of transparency and disclosure in financial reporting. It notes that providing clear and concise information about an organization's financial performance is crucial for making informed investment decisions. The text emphasizes that transparency is also essential for maintaining the credibility of the financial system and for preventing the spread of misinformation.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges of financial reporting in a complex and rapidly changing environment. It notes that the increasing complexity of financial instruments and the rapid pace of technological change have made it more difficult to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial information. The text suggests that organizations should focus on improving their internal controls and on providing more detailed disclosures to address these challenges.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the role of external auditors in providing independent assurance on the accuracy of financial statements. It notes that external auditors are essential for providing confidence to investors and other stakeholders that the financial statements are fair and accurate. The text emphasizes that external auditors should maintain their independence and objectivity to ensure the reliability of their audit opinions.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of regulatory oversight in ensuring the integrity of the financial system. It notes that regulatory bodies are essential for monitoring and enforcing the rules that govern financial reporting and for preventing the abuse of the financial system. The text suggests that regulatory bodies should continue to evolve to address the challenges of a rapidly changing financial system.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the role of the financial system in supporting economic growth and development. It notes that a well-functioning financial system is essential for providing the capital and liquidity needed for businesses to invest and for consumers to spend. The text emphasizes that the financial system should be designed to be efficient and to provide access to financial services for all members of the economy.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the importance of financial literacy and education in promoting the stability and integrity of the financial system. It notes that financial literacy is essential for making informed investment decisions and for understanding the risks associated with financial products. The text suggests that governments and financial institutions should work together to provide financial education and literacy programs to help individuals make better financial decisions.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the role of the financial system in promoting social and environmental responsibility. It notes that the financial system has a responsibility to consider the social and environmental impacts of its activities and to promote sustainable development. The text suggests that financial institutions should integrate social and environmental factors into their risk management and investment decisions.

10. The tenth part of the document discusses the future of the financial system and the challenges it will face. It notes that the financial system will continue to evolve and that there will be significant challenges ahead, including the impact of technological change and the need to address global financial stability. The text suggests that the financial system should focus on innovation and on providing better services to its users while maintaining its integrity and stability.

11. The eleventh part of the document discusses the importance of international cooperation in ensuring the integrity of the global financial system. It notes that the financial system is increasingly global and that there is a need for international standards and regulations to ensure consistency and to prevent the abuse of the system. The text suggests that international organizations should continue to work together to develop and enforce these standards and regulations.

12. The twelfth part of the document discusses the role of the financial system in promoting financial inclusion and access to financial services for all members of the economy. It notes that financial inclusion is essential for economic growth and development and that the financial system should be designed to provide access to financial services for all, including the underserved and unbanked populations. The text suggests that financial institutions should work together to develop innovative financial products and services that meet the needs of these populations.

13. The thirteenth part of the document discusses the importance of financial stability and the role of the financial system in maintaining it. It notes that financial stability is essential for the functioning of the financial system and for the overall health of the economy. The text suggests that the financial system should focus on identifying and addressing potential risks to financial stability and on developing strategies to prevent and mitigate these risks.

14. The fourteenth part of the document discusses the role of the financial system in promoting the well-being of the community and the environment. It notes that the financial system has a responsibility to consider the social and environmental impacts of its activities and to promote the well-being of the community and the environment. The text suggests that financial institutions should integrate social and environmental factors into their risk management and investment decisions.

15. The fifteenth part of the document discusses the future of the financial system and the challenges it will face. It notes that the financial system will continue to evolve and that there will be significant challenges ahead, including the impact of technological change and the need to address global financial stability. The text suggests that the financial system should focus on innovation and on providing better services to its users while maintaining its integrity and stability.

FINAL 2001 SAK DEER POPULATION ESTIMATES
 These estimates reflect the decisions reached by the Deer Committee during the 2/15/2002 meeting

DMU	New Deer Goal Density	New Deer Range	Buck Kill	Total Deer Kill	5-yr Ave YB%	Buck Reco-very Rate	Buck Harvest Rate	Average YB%	Adult Sex Ratio	Fawns / 100 Does	Prehunt Bucks	Prehunt Does	Prehunt Fawns	Pre-hunt Population	Posthunt Population	% over popul. goal	Non harvest mortalities from BRR	Pop. Density w/ non-harvest mortalities removed	Difference in Deer per ² mile	
40	20	328	1062	2849	67	81	0.543	63	37	1.55	81.6	1,957	3,029	2,472	7,458	4,422	13	1417	9	-4
41	25	195	1028	3343	67	81	0.543	67	28	2.18	79.1	1,894	4,121	3,259	9,274	5,430	28	1762	19	-9
42	20	327	1312	3571	60	75	0.450	56	30	1.70	93.7	2,916	4,948	4,636	12,499	8,392	26	3125	16	-10
43	15	408	1393	4156	65	80	0.520	64	33	1.76	93.7	2,679	4,723	4,425	11,827	7,048	17	2365	11	-6
44	17	466	1230	2001	62	77	0.477	62	31	1.82	93.7	2,576	4,684	4,389	11,650	9,349	20	2680	14	-6
45	20	593	1898	4090	69	83	0.573	69	29	2.16	79.1	3,314	7,168	5,670	16,153	11,449	19	2746	15	-5
46	25	321	2124	5583	74	86	0.636	74	36	1.87	110	3,338	6,237	6,860	16,435	10,014	31	2301	24	-7
47	25	269	2030	4513	74	86	0.636	74	35	1.92	110	3,190	6,131	6,744	16,065	10,875	40	2249	32	-8
49A	25	235	1070	2525	62	77	0.477	62	29	1.94	79.1	2,241	4,356	3,446	10,043	7,139	30	2310	21	-10
49B	25	182	1206	2186	73	85	0.621	73	32	2.07	79.1	1,944	4,031	3,188	9,163	6,649	37	1374	29	-8
50	20	334	1286	1942	69	83	0.573	69	30	2.09	81.6	2,246	4,695	3,631	10,772	8,654	26	1831	20	-5
51A	25	220	1809	4348	67	81	0.543	67	36	1.69	100	3,333	5,640	5,640	14,613	9,613	44	2776	31	-13
51B	25	389	3041	7481	75	86	0.645	75	37	1.84	110	4,715	8,688	9,557	22,960	14,357	37	3214	29	-8
52	20	304	1248	3404	60	75	0.450	54	30	1.64	93.7	2,773	4,538	4,262	11,564	7,649	25	2891	16	-10
53	25	461	2744	5088	62	77	0.477	53	38	1.27	78	5,748	7,288	5,685	18,720	12,869	28	4306	19	-9
54A	25	484	3208	11690	68	82	0.558	68	37	1.67	78	5,753	9,612	7,498	22,863	9,420	19	4115	11	-9
54B	25	389	2183	5944	71	84	0.596	71	37	1.74	110	3,660	6,385	7,024	17,069	10,234	26	2731	19	-7
54C	25	95	736	1303	73	85	0.621	73	42	1.58	120	1,186	1,874	2,249	5,309	3,236	34	796	26	-8
55	25	631	2828	6294	61	76	0.464	57	28	1.85	78	6,100	11,289	8,806	26,195	18,957	30	6287	20	-10
56	30	335	1416	3551	50	75	0.375	50	26	1.75	78	3,776	6,601	5,149	15,526	11,443	34	3882	23	-12
57	22	146	930	2686	77	87	0.670	77	40	1.75	120	1,388	2,429	2,915	6,733	3,644	25	875	19	-6
57A	25	238	1689	5429	74	86	0.636	74	36	1.87	110	2,654	4,959	5,455	13,089	6,826	29	1830	21	-8
57B	25	252	1606	4809	75	86	0.645	75	39	1.75	110	2,490	4,353	4,788	11,631	6,101	24	1628	18	-6
57C	30	266	1601	3631	69	83	0.573	63	36	1.59	100	2,796	4,447	4,447	11,690	7,515	28	1987	21	-7
58	25	506	3793	12393	70	83	0.581	70	38	1.67	78	6,528	10,933	8,528	25,989	11,737	23	4418	14	-9
59A	20	520	2389	7012	67	81	0.543	67	40	1.52	120	4,402	6,703	8,044	19,149	11,085	21	3638	14	-7
59B	15	687	2401	6851	69	83	0.573	69	40	1.57	120	4,192	6,574	7,869	18,656	10,778	16	3172	11	-5
59C	25	626	4091	8206	74	86	0.636	74	40	1.68	120	6,428	10,811	12,974	30,213	20,776	33	4250	26	-7
59D	20	384	1916	5134	61	76	0.464	61	39	1.42	110	4,133	5,877	6,464	16,474	10,570	28	3954	17	-10
59M	10	44	183	541	66	80	0.528	66	36	1.67	110	347	578	635	1,560	938	21	312	14	-7
60A	20	170	862	1898	75	86	0.645	75	45	1.52	120	1,336	2,025	2,430	5,791	3,609	21	811	16	-5
60B	20	83	475	867	80	89	0.712	80	45	1.62	120	667	1,078	1,294	3,039	2,042	25	384	21	-4
60M	10	80	419	1132	75	86	0.645	75	45	1.52	120	650	984	1,151	2,815	1,513	19	394	14	-5
61	15	958	4507	12287	63	78	0.491	63	40	1.43	120	9,172	13,132	15,759	38,063	23,933	25	8374	16	-9
62A	25	402	3250	6553	76	87	0.661	68	42	1.47	120	4,915	7,235	8,682	20,832	13,296	33	2798	26	-7
62B	25	363	4172	9943	76	87	0.661	76	40	1.73	120	6,310	10,895	13,078	30,287	18,852	52	3937	41	-11
63A	25	339	3512	8387	73	85	0.621	73	45	1.47	120	5,660	8,347	10,016	24,023	14,378	40	3604	32	-8
63B	25	252	2214	5229	76	87	0.661	76	42	1.65	120	2,777	4,566	5,481	12,826	8,140	33	2097	27	-7
64	20	243	1836	4075	76	87	0.661	76	42	1.65	120	2,076	1,711	2,054	4,841	3,099	38	1667	28	-10
64M	10	81	625	1515	70	83	0.581	70	40	1.59	120	1,076	1,711	2,054	4,841	3,099	38	823	26	-7
65A	30	172	1427	4314	79	88	0.695	79	36	1.99	110	2,053	4,095	4,504	10,652	5,691	33	1278	26	-7
65B	30	347	3123	7744	70	83	0.581	70	43	1.48	120	5,375	7,955	9,546	22,876	13,970	40	3889	29	-11

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent data collection procedures and the use of advanced analytical techniques to derive meaningful insights from the data.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of technology in enhancing data management and analysis. It discusses the benefits of using cloud-based storage solutions and data visualization tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the data analysis process.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges associated with data security and privacy. It provides guidance on implementing robust security measures to protect sensitive information and ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of data quality and the need for regular data audits. It emphasizes that high-quality data is crucial for making accurate and reliable decisions, and that regular audits help identify and address any data quality issues.

6. The sixth part of the document explores the role of data in driving innovation and growth. It highlights how data-driven insights can be used to identify new market opportunities, optimize existing products and services, and develop innovative solutions to complex problems.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of data literacy and the need for ongoing training and development. It emphasizes that data literacy is a key skill for employees in the modern workplace, and that ongoing training helps ensure that employees are equipped with the necessary skills to effectively use data in their work.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the importance of data governance and the need for clear policies and procedures. It emphasizes that data governance is essential for ensuring that data is used in a responsible and ethical manner, and that clear policies and procedures help define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in data management.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the importance of data collaboration and the need for effective communication and teamwork. It emphasizes that data collaboration is essential for maximizing the value of data, and that effective communication and teamwork help ensure that all stakeholders are aligned and working towards common goals.

10. The tenth part of the document discusses the importance of data ethics and the need for transparency and accountability. It emphasizes that data ethics is a critical consideration in the use of data, and that transparency and accountability help build trust and confidence in the organization's data practices.

11. The eleventh part of the document discusses the importance of data integration and the need for seamless data flow between different systems and departments. It emphasizes that data integration is essential for providing a holistic view of the organization's data and for enabling cross-departmental collaboration and decision-making.

12. The twelfth part of the document discusses the importance of data archiving and the need for long-term data retention. It emphasizes that data archiving is essential for preserving historical data and ensuring that it is available for future analysis and reporting.

13. The thirteenth part of the document discusses the importance of data backup and recovery and the need for robust disaster recovery plans. It emphasizes that data backup and recovery are essential for protecting the organization's data from loss and ensuring that it can be restored in the event of a disaster.

14. The fourteenth part of the document discusses the importance of data compliance and the need for staying up-to-date with relevant regulations and standards. It emphasizes that data compliance is essential for avoiding legal and financial penalties and for maintaining the organization's reputation.

15. The fifteenth part of the document discusses the importance of data innovation and the need for exploring new and emerging data technologies. It emphasizes that data innovation is essential for staying competitive in the market and for driving growth and innovation in the organization.

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 7, 2009
TO: Natural Resources Board
FROM: Matt Frank
SUBJECT: 2009 Deer Hunting Season Report

Deer hunting is one of the most anticipated events of the year for over 600,000 Wisconsin citizens. Each deer hunter and each deer season is unique and Wisconsin's 158th season is no different. Wisconsin is a state that is passionate about natural resources.

In our 2009 pre-season forecasts and outreach to hunters we expected and openly anticipated a lower total harvest due to below average fawn production in 2008 and, as a result, a season structure intended to reduce harvest pressure on antlerless deer in many areas of the state. In 2009 13 deer management units had no bonus antlerless permits in order to allow populations in those areas to increase, 38 units were moved out of herd control to regular season, and we moved 29 units out of Earn-a-Buck, all of which contributed to a substantial decline in antlerless harvest. In all, the number of regular units increased from 21 in 2008 to 59 in 2009.

We will know with greater accuracy how much and where the harvest decline is due to a reduced antlerless deer harvest once all seasons are completed. Analysis of the preliminary harvest figures from the 2009 nine-day gun hunt show that 85 percent of the decline in total harvest is in the antlerless deer kill. Overall, buck harvest declined about 12 percent statewide compared to 2008.

We will look carefully at the data to determine where we now stand with respect to the size of the deer population, which varies by region across the state. In many areas, there has been a significant decline in deer populations. For example, in the north and northeast, there are significant areas where the deer population is below goal. On the other hand, in the CWD zone in the southern part of the state, over-population has been a contributing factor to the increased prevalence of CWD in the deer herd, increasing the risk of spread. A full analysis of the 2009 harvest data will give us a better understanding of the size of the deer population as we make decisions for the 2010 hunt and future seasons.

Last week, the department announced that it was removing the 16-day deer season proposal from today's meeting agenda. Given the preliminary harvest numbers we believe it is appropriate to postpone consideration of alternative herd control measures until all seasons are completed and registration data can be analyzed.

Overall, the 2009 nine-day gun hunt was the fourth safest on record with no fatalities and seven nonfatal incidents. Consistent with past seasons, four of the seven nonfatal injuries were self-inflicted, two occurred on deer drives and one person was shot by another party who was unloading his firearm near the vehicle. The overall trend in hunting related shooting incidents is clearly downward, demonstrating hunting is a safe outdoor recreational activity and getting safer. I also am pleased to report that there wasn't a single hunting incident involving the 9,907 10- and 11-year old hunters in the field for their first deer hunt under the new Mentored Hunting program.

The hunting tradition is strong and vibrant in Wisconsin as evidenced by gun license sales which totaled 638,040 by the close of the season. Bow hunters have purchased 204,833 licenses to date. These sales figures represent less than one percent declines in both categories. All 50 states were represented and 94 percent of hunters were Wisconsin residents.

The department remains committed to supporting Wisconsin's hunting traditions and managing for a healthy, sustainable and ecologically balanced deer population. Deer registrations and hunter field observations

are important parts of this effort and to this end we created an online database where hunters could record field observations of 9 different wildlife species, number of days hunted, number of hours hunted and number of deer seen. Similar data were captured in registration stubs. These data, along with complete harvest reports will be available in late winter – early spring 2010 and will be part of the analysis in any future season structure proposals.

I am pleased to transmit the full report as follows prepared by Tom Hauge, Keith Warnke and Jason Fleener of the Bureau of Wildlife Management, Randy Stark of the Bureau of Law Enforcement and Diane Brookbank of the Bureau of Customer Service and Licensing.

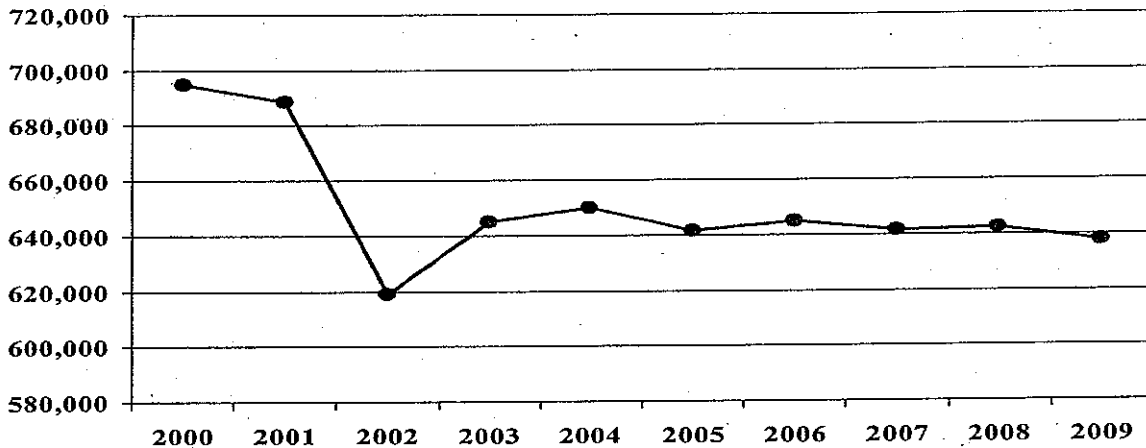
HUNTING LICENSE SALES

The rich tradition of hunting in Wisconsin continues to be strong. While license sales were down slightly from last year (within 1%), the new Hunting Mentorship Program proved to be very popular, bringing many new hunters into the woods. Hunters again waited until the last minute to purchase their license with over 82,000 gun deer licenses sold the Friday before the season opener. Sales peaked at 212 licenses per minute at 5:30 p.m. that day.

Gun Deer License Sales

At the close of the 2009 gun deer season, 638,040 gun deer licenses had been issued; down less than 1% from 2008. Of these, 11,636 licenses were issued during the open season. The 10-year history of Gun Deer sales shown below includes Conservation Patron license holders. A complete breakdown by license type is attached.

10-Year History of Gun Deer Sales
(includes Conservation Patron licenses)

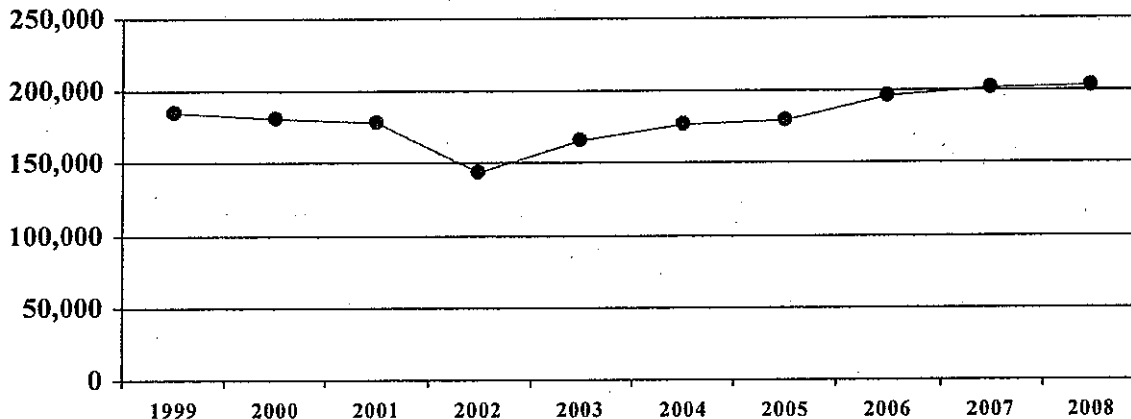


2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
694,712	688,540	618,945	644,818	649,955	641,771	644,906	641,432	642,419	638,040

Archery License Sales

There were 204,833 Archery licenses sold in 2009, up slightly from 2008. The 10-year history of Archery sales numbers does not include Conservation Patron licenses. Archery license sales continue through the late bow season. A complete breakdown by license type is attached.

10-Year History of Archery Sales
(does not include Conservation Patron licenses)



2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
180,559	178,269	144,162	165,122	177,159	179,853	196,726	201,224	203,675	204,833

Antlerless Deer Tags

One antlerless tag valid in any Herd Control Unit was included with every deer hunting license that was sold. In addition, hunters purchased over 188,211 antlerless deer tags. Of these, 50,177 were issued for Herd Control units. The remaining 138,034 antlerless tags were issued for regular deer management units. Antlerless permit sales will continue through the remaining deer hunting seasons.

Deer Gun License Sales History

License Type	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Res Conservation Patron	67,172	77,415	81,314	81,895	81,076	71,041	65,688	55,579	52,168	50,501	46,335
Res Jr Patron						3,386	4,165	4,338	4,391	4,658	4,411
Resident Sports	94,061	92,014	86,134	75,122	72,536	77,961	78,365	72,570	68,767	65,544	60,806
Res Junior Sports**						4,170	3,332	3,238	3,282	3,564	3,139
Resident Gun Deer	492,423	483,419	480,078	428,724	455,967	459,175	393,922	407,358	411,214	418,747	417,460
Res Military						81					
Res Jr Gun*						27	61,504	65,912	64,829	62,876	60,890
Resident Gun-Deer											
Totals	653,656	652,848	647,526	585,741	609,579	615,841	606,976	608,995	604,651	605,890	593,041
NR Conservation Patron	21	28	25	38	38	54	53	70	91	92	85
NR Jr Patron						339	495	790	858	839	910
NR Military Patron								2	4	2	5
NR Sports	130	232	279	277	313	325	384	437	469	490	478
NR Student Sports						10	20	18	27	25	20
NR Junior Sports							2,021	2,917	3,219	3,292	3,270
NR Military Sports						10	15	9	11	20	30
NR Gun Deer	36,387	41,604	40,710	32,889	34,888	33,214	31,498	31,298	31,681	31,430	29,963
NR Student Gun						85	170	226	280	198	194
NR Military Deer						77	137	113	125	118	110
NR WI Student Jr Gun							2	31	16	23	27
NR Gun-Deer Totals	36,538	41,864	41,014	33,204	35,239	34,114	34,795	35,911	36,781	36,529	35,092
Res & NR Gun Deer for 10 & 11 year olds****											9,907
Total	690,194	694,712	688,540	618,945	644,818	649,955	641,771	644,906	641,432	642,419	638,040

*Prior to 2005, numbers shown were for sales of gun licenses to customers turning 12 during the season.

**Prior to 2005, the same Junior Sports license was issued to both residents and nonresidents.

****New in 2009

DEER HUNTERS

Hunters from every state in the country and several foreign countries, ranging in age from 10 to 90+ bought a license to gun deer hunt in Wisconsin.

10 & 11 Year Old Hunters

The new Mentored Hunting Program introduced this year provided an opportunity for 10 & 11 year olds to participate in this year's hunt.

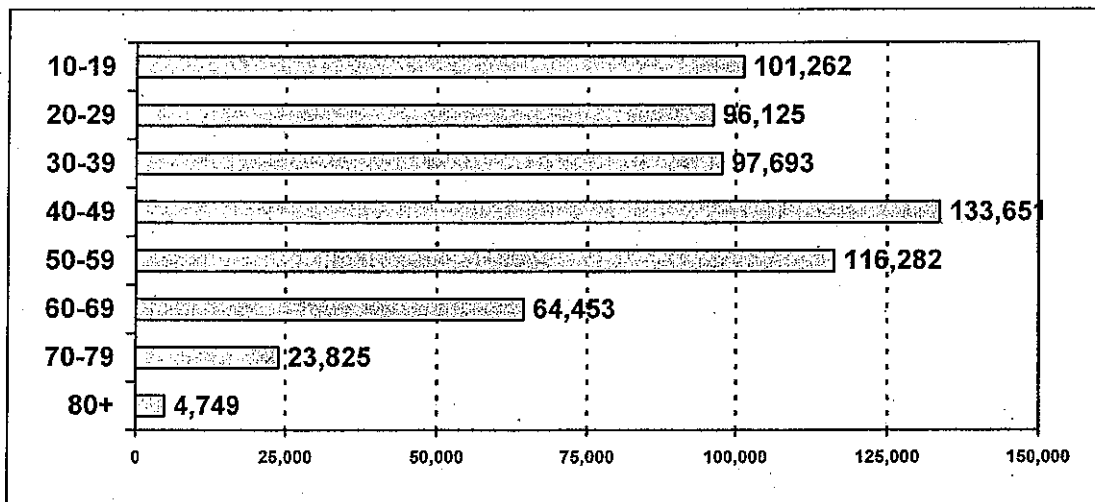
- 9,907 licenses purchased
- 97 percent (9,589) were residents; 318 nonresidents
- 20 percent were female

All Hunters

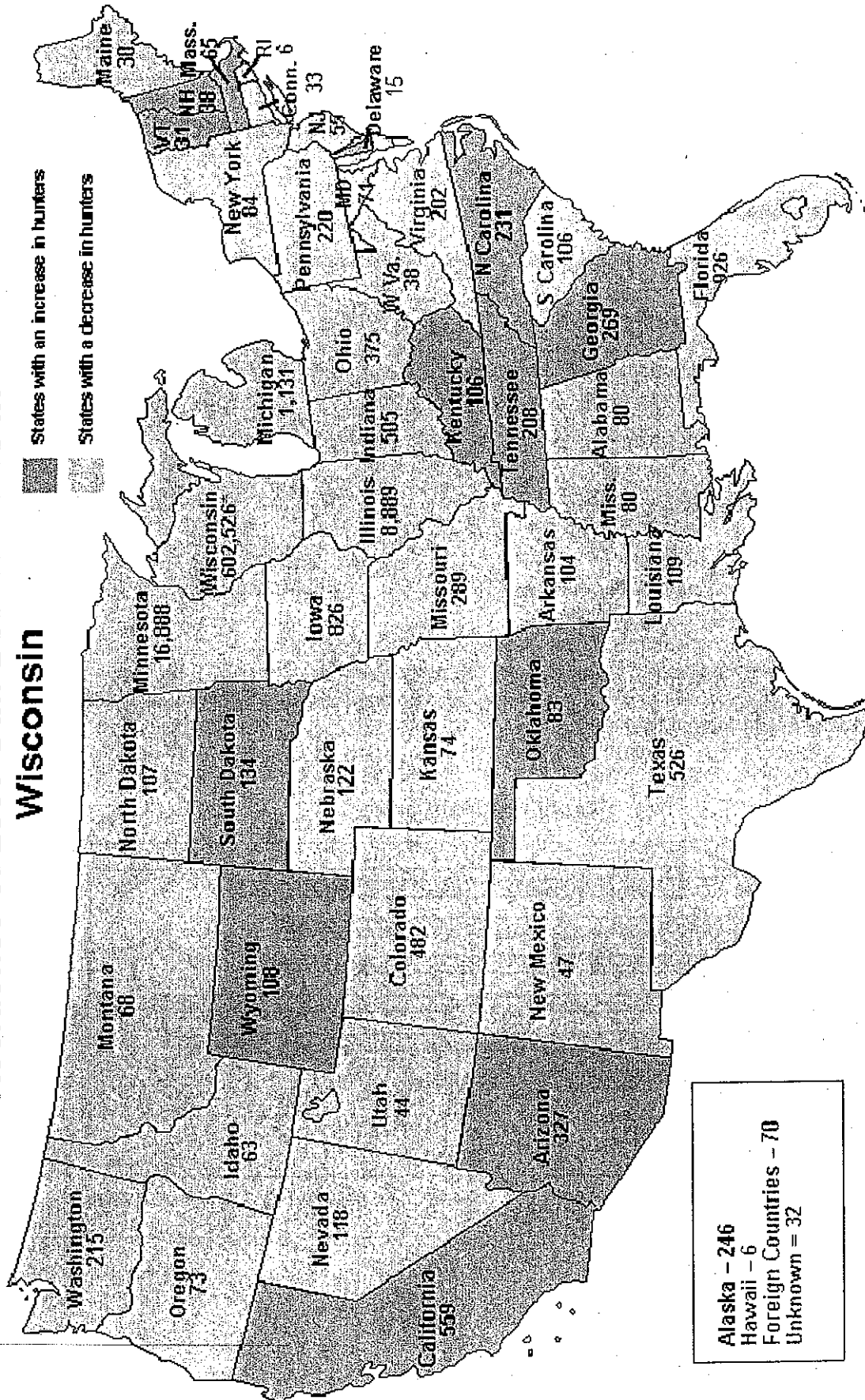
Of the 638,040 hunters this gun deer season:

- 94% were Wisconsin residents
- 80,760 or 13% were youth (under the age of 18)
- 8.5% or 54,721 of all hunters were female
- Nearly 61% of all female hunters are under the 30 years of age
- 54,574 or 8.5% were Senior Citizens (65 years of age and older)
- Nonresidents gun deer sales were down 4%; hunters were represented by every state in the United States and several foreign countries

Age of Deer Gun Hunters



Residence of 2009 Gun Deer Hunters in Wisconsin



*302 People who bought a NR license used a WI address.

OUTREACH SERVICES

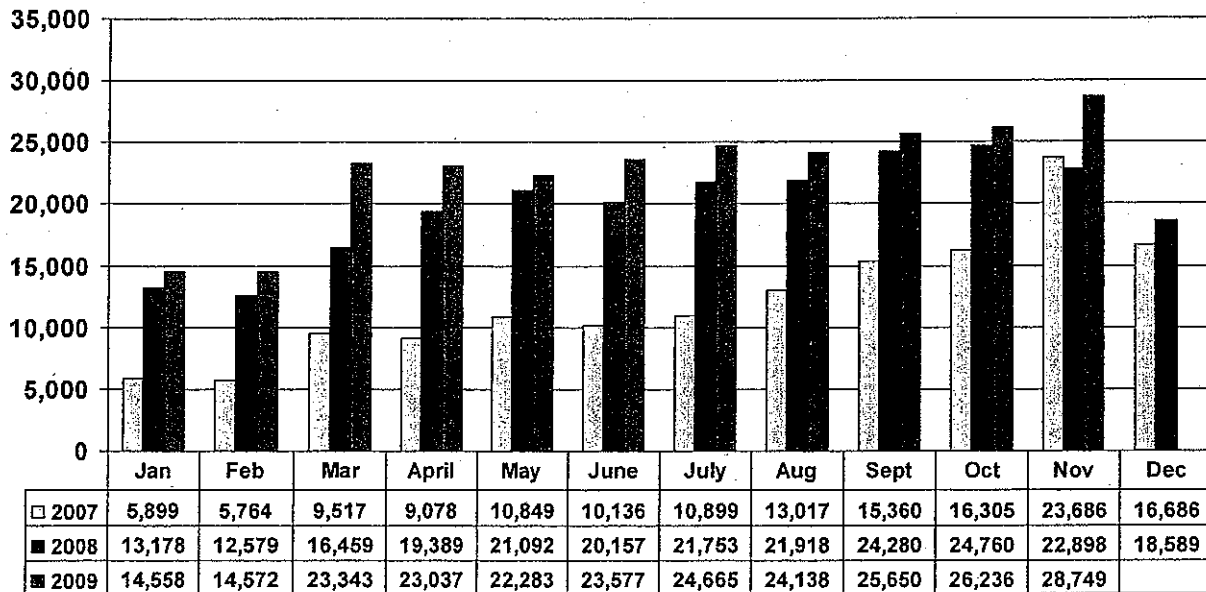
Over the past several years, DNR has implemented many innovative ways to reach its customers. The younger generations of hunters are technologically savvy and expect to obtain services and information utilizing these communication avenues such as internet chat, e-mail, text messaging, RSS feeds, and online services. It is important that we continue to grow with these evolving communication systems as these generations will be carrying on the great tradition of hunting in Wisconsin.

Call Center

DNR's Call Center, available 7 days per week, 15 hours per day continues to grow in popularity:

- 2,591 calls received on the Friday before the season opener – NEW 1 DAY RECORD!
- 10,140 calls and 588 internet chats received the week before deer season
- Operators began receiving calls at 7:00 a.m. opening morning from tree stands, deer camps and hunters afield; 759 calls were received on Saturday, November 21.
- Through the season, staff handled over 6,000 calls and 326 chats
- Through November - 250,808 calls have come into the call center this year (on pace for 270,000 calls for the year)
- 34 percent received on nights and weekends

**Call Center Calls
2007, 2008, & 2009**



Internet Sales

Interest in purchasing a gun deer license over the internet continues to increase in popularity. For 8 years straight, the Internet has been the highest selling sales location of gun deer licenses. This year, 21,071 licenses were issued online, representing 3.3% of all gun deer license sales.

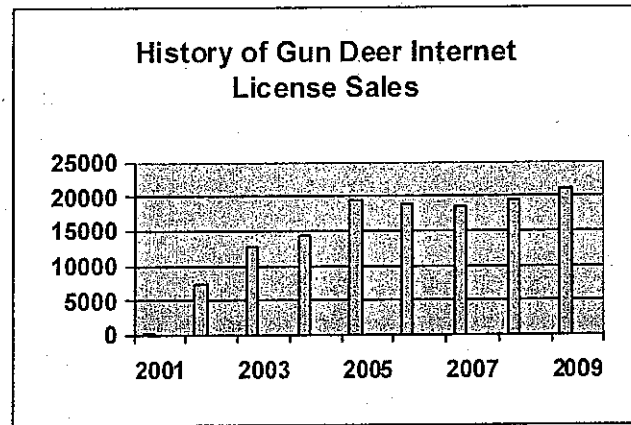
Digital Subscription Services

This year, a new digital subscription service was introduced which allowed customers to sign up to receive e-mail, text messages, or RSS feeds about specific DNR topics. To date, 19,137 people have signed up to receive information from DNR about "deer hunting." Information that has been shared this year includes:

- 2009 Deer Season Kick-off Message from Secretary Frank
- Deer registration information
- Deer donation program
- Youth mentor program
- Reminders about sales dates and season openers
- CWD registration and testing
- Regional deer hunting forecasts
- Transporting deer
- Invitations to take surveys
- Updates on new regulations

DNR Website

DNR is continually updating the information it provides to the public via the DNR web site. From June to November 2009, 302,157 visitors came to our web site looking for information about deer hunting. The large majority of these visitors were from the United States. In addition, we had several visitors from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, India and Ireland. Our website also tracked visitors interested in deer hunting from Iraq, South Korea and Germany; many whom we assume are military personnel still interested in hunting in Wisconsin.



HUNTING TRENDS AND ISSUES

Weather

Unseasonably warm weather was the norm from Bayfield County to Green County. This warm weather continued throughout the season, with a couple of days of rain mid-week.

There was no measureable snowfall covering the ground, and fields of standing corn due to ground too wet for tractors and high corn moisture content. None of the marshes or sedge meadows were frozen. A very dense fog reduced visibility in many parts of the state through the morning hours of opening day.

On the positive side, having the early fall conditions seemed to make it easy for a lot of young hunters or children accompanying hunters to sit out for long periods of time. Road hunting complaints were down, again likely due to hunters being able to sit in the woods longer in warm weather.

General Observations

Conservation wardens observed one of the quieter seasons that they had ever experienced based on observations of hunters seen and contacted, type and overall number of complaints received and feedback about the number of deer harvested. A prevalent observation across the state was good hunter pressure opening day and Sunday morning, little pressure Monday through Wednesday (periods of rain these days), and light pressure the remainder of the season.

During contacts in the field, hunters communicated a combination of concern, frustration, and disappointment over low deer numbers; often attributing the low numbers to issuing too many antlerless permits, earn a buck rules, and wolves, bear, and coyotes.

Sales of large holdings of paper company land fragmented into small private parcels are causing the permanent loss of yet more hunting opportunity. As paper company lands are being sold off to private individuals, this creates land access issues. When displaced hunters move to alternative nearby public land to hunt, they occasionally come into conflict with other hunters already on those properties. Some land is being withdrawn from the MFL-Open program when privately purchased.

Wardens in some parts of the state reported that public hunting grounds were crowded with hunters as urban sprawl is causing the loss of private hunting areas. This pressure has the potential to adversely affect the quality of the overall hunting experience on some state and federally owned properties.

Most hunters contacted in the field were aware of the changes proposed as earn a buck alternatives and wanted to discuss the deer management program in Wisconsin. The 16 day deer season was often a topic of discussion. The conversations were not unlike those that took place at the public hearings; generally hunters commented that they were not in favor of a 16 day season especially the gun hunters who were also bow hunters. As the season progressed, and fewer deer were being seen and taken by hunters, more hunters began to question the need for any change since in their view the deer population is already low. Some questioned the issuance of antlerless tags in the Deer Management Units they hunted when their perception is that the unit is below goal.

Wardens reported more sustained presence of hunters on public lands as compared to private lands.

Baiting and feeding continues to be a problem. Additional details in the Baiting and Feeding section.

Wardens continue to report a decrease in the use of traditional deer drives. Reasons cited for reduced driving of deer include the landscape being increasingly intertwined with fragmented privately owned parcels of property, inability to obtain permission to cross neighboring properties, the presence of subdivisions interspersed on the landscape, and the dwindling size of groups. The number of hunting related shooting incidents involving deer drives was also down.

Passing On the Tradition through the Mentored Hunting Program

Wardens heard numerous positive comments about the opportunities presented by new Mentored Hunting Program.

Wardens had contact with many young hunters in the field and at registration stations who had participated in a mentored hunt, the mentor most often being a parent or grandparent. Many mentored hunters had shot their first deer. There was considerable excitement, and many lasting memories were made.

There were no hunting related shooting incidents involving any individuals participating in the mentored hunting program. See addendum for mentored hunting stories.

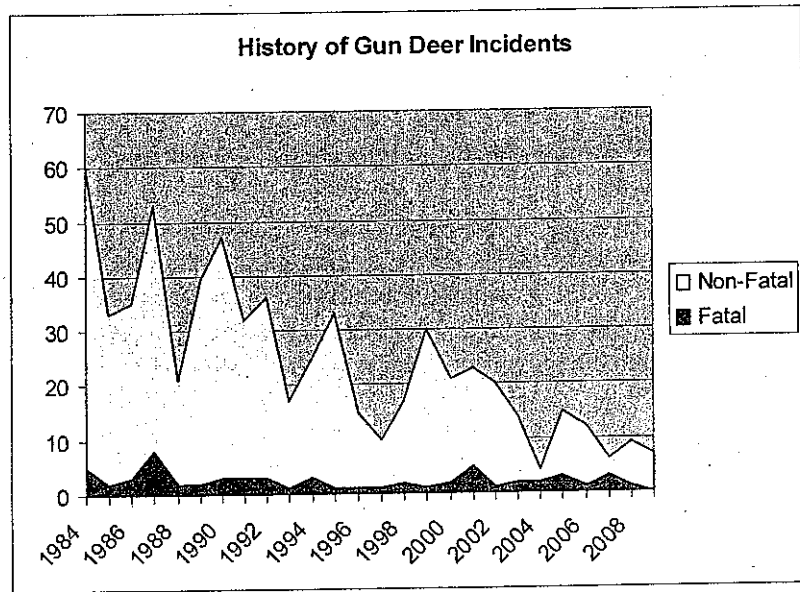
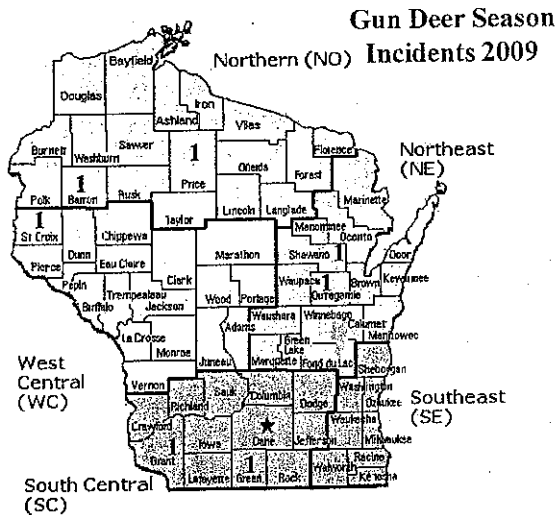
Hunting Related Shooting Incidents

On the statewide historical scale, **the 2009 Nine-Day Gun Deer Season was the fourth safest on record.** Our goal is to eliminate all injury and loss of life while hunting. We conduct thorough investigations to learn what happened in these incidents so we can work to prevent such incidents in the future.

There were a total of seven incidents, with no fatal incidents. **NOTE:** The investigation and Coroner's ruling of the death of a hunter in Rock County has not yet been completed. Investigators are awaiting reports from items submitted for analysis.

Deer drives contributed to 29% (2) of all of the incidents during the season.

Self inflicted injuries were involved in 57% (4) of the incidents this season. This was the fourth time in history that we've had a gun deer season with less than 10 incidents. The first season was in 2004 with only 5 incidents reported. The History of Gun Deer Incidents graph depicting the incidents for the gun deer season since 1984, which clearly shows hunting is a safe recreational activity and getting safer.



A positive downturn in trends was the number of incidents involving deer drives. Only 2 incidents occurred during deer drives.

The incident rate for this season was 1.11 incidents per 100,000 hunters, well below the national average of three (3) incidents per 100,000.

There were no incidents involving any of the 9,907 age 10 and 11 mentored hunters.

All of Dunn County allowed rifles for the first time this season and no rifle incidents were reported. The new rifle zone in southwest Shawano County was implemented with no rifle related incidents. This was the third year that rifles were allowed to be used in Kewaunee County without incident. For the second year, there were no incidents involving rifles in the combined CWD Zones. See addendum section for details on hunting related shooting incidents.

Convicted Felons And Intoxicated Hunters

One of the goals of the warden service is to create a safe and enjoyable outdoor recreational environment for everyone. To this end, wardens have placed emphasis on removing criminal offenders and intoxicated hunters from the outdoor recreational environment.

While it is currently not illegal for a person with a felony conviction to purchase a hunting license in Wisconsin, it is against state and federal law for felons to possess firearms or participate in group deer hunting. During the 2009 deer gun season, the hotline received 11 complaints of felons in possession of firearms and wardens arrested twenty nine (29) felons in possession of firearms in the field. This was a significant increase over 2008. Increased emphasis coupled with mobile data computing capacity in the field aids in detecting these offenders. This was the 12th most frequently encountered violation by wardens this past season.

Felons in Possession of a Firearm Cases 2003-2009

Year	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Number	29	9	16	9	3	10	14

Twelve subjects were arrested for going armed while intoxicated in the field during the season. Some of these subjects also had prior arrests for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated. See addendum for details.

Hunter/User Conflicts

Some conflict is inevitable when over 600,000 hunters and many other outdoor users hit the woods at the same time. Analyzing the sources of conflict can be instructive in terms of developing strategies to reduce conflicts in the field and create a safe and enjoyable outdoor recreational environment for everyone.

Wardens encountered a variety of user conflict during the 2009 deer gun season, some serious. An analysis of the conflicts wardens encountered reveal several reoccurring types of conflict: conflicts resulting from property line interactions on both public and private lands; conflicts due to territorial disputes over tree stand, blind, or bait placement on public lands; ATV/hunter conflicts; hunter/other user conflicts, over crowding on public lands, and hunting in the vicinity of residences.

Wardens reported that there were fewer trespass complaints coming into sheriff's offices this year. See addendum for details.

Hunter Harassment Complaints

While there were also fewer trespass complaints this year, wardens noted an increase in the number of conflicts and harassment complaints between hunters and landowners which leads to hunter harassment issues. There was a notable increase in hunter harassment complaints this year as compared to last year, going from four (4) hunter harassment complaints in 2008, to fifteen (15) this year.

Search and Rescue Efforts

Being ready to respond to emergencies to enhance public safety is a major goal of the warden service. The local warden's knowledge of the area coupled with equipment furnished by the Department enhances efficiency and effectiveness during search and rescue efforts. The use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS), computer mapping software, portable radios, cellular phones, Mobile Data Computers and ATV's were all used this deer season to locate and guide lost individuals out of the woods. Wardens responded to ten (10) requests for search and rescue and assisted numerous local municipalities and sheriff's departments in search and rescue efforts. See addendum for details.

Ground Blinds

Commercial camouflage ground blinds/tents continue to become more popular throughout the state, both on the ground and on elevated platforms. Wardens did observe a number of hunters using camouflage ground blinds on DNR land and found good compliance with the blaze orange marking rule.

Although not required, wardens did observe that some hunters on private property also displayed blaze orange on ground blinds

Some hunters questioned the reasoning for only requiring blaze orange on ground blinds located on state lands and not all lands when having a hunter completely camouflaged defeats the purpose of blaze orange clothing. We recognize their concerns, but the DNR does not currently have the authority to regulate the color of blinds used on private lands, but does have authority to do so on lands that the DNR owns, manages or controls. There is some hunter confusion on the requirement not applying to county or federally owned property.

Buildings Shot

Reported Incidents of Buildings Shot 2006-2009

Year	2009	2008	2007	2006
Number	10	25	19	15

Increasing rural residential development means more buildings on the landscape. Fortunately, this year there was a significant reduction in the number of buildings shot. There were a total of ten (10) homes and barns struck by bullets or slugs during the 2009 deer gun season. In 50% of the incidents, the identity of the shooter was determined.

Reported Incidents of Buildings Shot 2009

Region	Rifle	Shotgun	Unknown
Northern			
Northeast			
West Central	3	1	1
South Central	1	3	1
Southeast			

Arrests and Calls for Service

Top Ten Violations Encountered by Wardens during the 2009-2005 Deer Gun Season

2009 Rank	Violation	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	% Change
1	Illegal use of bait	334	308	331	254	221	8%
2	Trans. loaded gun in vehicle	88	129	120	106	102	-32%
3	Trans. uncased gun in vehicle	80	97	80	88	75	-18%
4	Hunt from an illegal elevated device	51	48	30	22	22	6%
5	Feeding wild animals violations	42	54	82	45	20	-22%
6	Failure to validate tag	35	72	65	48	67	-49%
7	Hunt without a license	35	17	27	32	23	106%
8	Hunt deer without backtag exposed	35	24	31	23	20	46%
9	Hunt w/in 50' of paved road center	25	53	62	44	51	-47%
10	Group deer hunt violation	35	29	30	14	19	21%

Summary of Total Violations by Year 2009- 2003

Summary by Year	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Total Number of Violations	1404	1400	1518	1394	1280	1156	1259
Juvenile	13	33	4	35	45	37	32
Adult	1391	1367	1514	1359	1235	1119	1227
Total Number of Seizures							
Illegal Deer	114	176	183	149	200	205	164
Illegal Bear	4	7	5	4	6	4	5
Other	105	106	144	89	99	72	76
Carkill Deer	10	12	9	13	21	17	20

- Total violations were essentially the same as 2008, with 1400 in 2008, and 1404 in 2009.
- The top violation in 2009 is illegal use of bait, 334 cases, an all time record number of illegal baiting cases.
- Overall, illegal baiting and feeding violations accounted for 27% of the total number of violations.
- Illegal feeding wild animal cases were the fifth most common violations with 42 violations, a decrease of 22% from 2008.
- Only 13 juveniles were cited for violations; a significant drop from 2008 (33), and a notable departure from the average of 31 juvenile violations over the past 7 years
- There was a notable drop in citations for loaded guns (-32%) and uncased guns (-18%) in vehicles.

- Hunting from within 50 feet of a roadway violations declined by 51% from 2008. This decline follows a prior 15% decline in 2008 over 2007.
- Hunting without a license jumped significantly (106%), from 17 in 2008 to 34 cases in 2009.
- There were 29 felon in possession of firearm cases made in the field, an all time record.
- The number of illegal deer seized by wardens dropped by 37%, from 176 in 2008 to 114 in 2009.

Calls to DNR Hotline- During the 2007- 2009 Nine Day Season

Type of call	2007	2008	2009
Found dead deer or other carcass	60	42	84
Baiting and feeding	39	27	48
Heard shots; believes poaching	26	17	23
Hunt within 50 feet of roadway center	27	37	20
Shoot from a vehicle	10	12	21
Hunt before or after hours	18	38	31
Possession of untagged deer	12	16	5
Possession of illegal deer	15	11	15
Miscellaneous	204	187	229
Total Hotlines	399	387	476
Calls to the Hotline not DNR violations or other calls for service/info	150	148	157
Total calls	549	535	633

The total number of calls handled by the Violation Hotline during the November 2009 9-day gun deer season was 633, an increase of over 18% from November 2008 (535).

There was an increased number of calls regarding deer carcasses being found by hunters or other members of the public on the sides of roads or in the woods (100% over 2008) and an increase in the number of complaints about illegal baiting and feeding (77% over 2008). There were also a number of calls regarding hunter harassment (15), felons in possession of firearms (11) and deer stands left on state property (16).

Not all the Hotline calls pertained to deer hunting during the 9-day deer season. Forty-four calls of the total hotline calls for 2009 pertained to ATV enforcement, trapping, illegal camping and environmental protection.

Illegal Baiting and Feeding Of Deer

Illegal baiting and feeding continues to be the most prevalent violation and problem encountered in the field. Wardens from all regions uniformly renewed their recommendations to eliminate baiting and feeding for deer and create stiffer penalties, including consideration of license revocation for violators. Wardens continue to express concerns regarding baiting and feeding for deer including the potential for disease transmission, altering natural deer movement patterns, influencing distribution of deer on the landscape, cabin shooting, and the conflict and hunter frustration that results from baiting and feeding. Wardens are also spending considerable amounts of time and operational funding to address baiting and feeding violations.

Arrests for illegal baiting and feeding deer

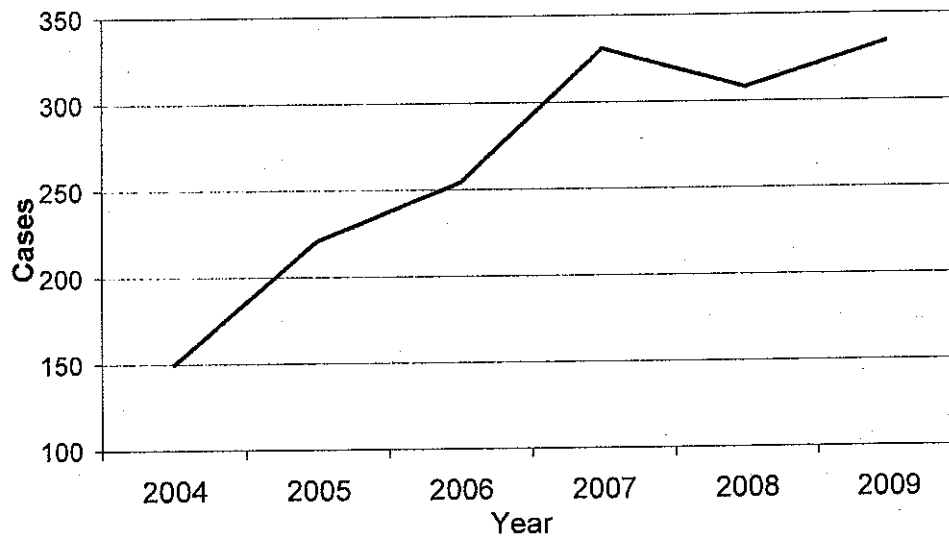
As noted earlier, illegal baiting and feeding was by far the most common violation encountered by wardens during the 2009 deer gun season, accounting for 27 percent of the enforcement actions. The number of illegal baiting violations was 334, which is an all time record number of baiting violations for any deer gun season. Baiting and feeding complaints called into the Hotline were up 77 percent.

The number of illegal feeding cases (42), decreased 22 percent from 2008 (54), and decreased 48 percent from 2007 (82).

2009 Deer Gun Season Baiting and Feeding Cases by Region

Region	Baiting Cases	Feeding Cases
West Central	114	14
Northern	106	17
Northeast	79	3
South Central	24	8
Southeast	11	0
Total	334	42

Number of Baiting Cases 2004 -2009 Deer Gun Seasons



Wolf Shootings

There were sixty-one (61) radio collared wolves on the air during the 2009 regular firearm season. A total of seven wolves, four of the collared wolves and three non-collared wolves were found dead during the 2009 9-day gun deer season.

The locations where these wolves were recovered included:

- Crex Meadows, Burnett County, 11/22/09
- Fort McCoy, Monroe County, 11/24/09 (but may have been killed prior to season)
- Lincoln Township, Bayfield County, 11/29/09
- Black River State Forest, Jackson County, 11/30/09
- Colburn Wildlife Area, Adams County, 11/30/09
- St. Croix River, Douglas County, 11/30/09
- Gordon Lake area, Ashland County, 11/30/09

In addition, two wolves were shot on the Lac du Flambeau and Stockbridge Reservations.

An additional mortality signal was detected on a wolf in Vilas County that had previously moved into Michigan, but no signals were detected in the field at the indicated mortality site.

There is a growing resentment toward wolves, as evidence by a flyer found posted at Clark County Forest campgrounds and parking areas. The flyer has a picture of a wolf in the cross hairs of scope, suggests wolves are the reason for hunters not seeing deer, and encourages hunters to "solve the problem."

Customer Service and Tagging System

Many wardens said that they received fewer complaints from hunters this year about tags and felt the current tags were easy to understand and working well. The bold print indicating which weapon the tag is to be used for and what type of deer it is valid for seems to have eliminated many of the tagging problems from the past. In past years, hunters were frustrated with the continual changes with the tagging and licensing system. Hunters appear to be becoming more comfortable with the deer tags and tagging requirements.

Wardens in the Northern Region, where most DMU's were regular units, reported Herd Control tags were the main area of confusion for some hunters. Some hunters still have the impression that they can use these free antlerless tags anywhere statewide since one is issued with every deer license. As the Herd Control units change each year, new people are affected. Some hunters who could not use them in the past now can due the unit designation, and others who have been able to use them for several years in their unit, no longer can.

While mistaken use of the Herd Control tags in regular DMU's was overall not a significant problem, there were still some antlerless deer killed and tagged with the Herd Control tags in regular deer management units. If the number of Herd Control Units continues to decline, wardens are suggesting that the license issuance system be designed to prompt/ask the purchaser at the time of sale if a Herd Control tag is desired. It would also force hunters to determine if the area they hunt is in Herd Control at time of sale and reduce the number of tagging mistakes happening later.

One area where tagging confusion does still appear to be somewhat of an issue, is where there are deer management units with different season structures in close proximately to other types of deer management units. Parts of Dodge County, for example, are covered by 3 different types of units (CWD

units, Herd Control units and a Regular unit), each having different tagging options and requirements. Wardens continue to contact hunters who are confused about what unit they are in and what tag to put on a deer in these areas.

In the CWD zone, wardens have encountered numerous EAB stickers that were issued without the hunter's customer ID numbers being printed on the sticker before giving it to the hunter who registered the antlerless deer. In addition, many hunters were contacted in the field hunting with the special free CWD Deer Carcass Tags that were blank and did not have either the hunter's name or customer ID number filled in. Frequently these blank tags were validated and attached to a deer. Better training of the employees at the registration stations handing out these tags might alleviate some of the problems.

Several wardens reported issues with registration stations selling buck stickers, giving out buck stickers to friends, or registering car killed deer for buck stickers. Some wardens also continue to receive complaints about hunters bringing in harvested antlerless deer from a non-CWD units and then registering that deer again for the second time in a CWD area to receive a buck sticker.

Several complaints were also received about first year hunter education graduates having to go to a DNR Service Center to pick up their free antlerless carcass tag. Many felt they should be issued this tag automatically when they purchase their license. There were also a few complaints of a resident Armed Forces members who could not get the antlerless deer carcass tag they are entitled to purchase for sold out units at any license vendor. In these cases, the hunters were told that they could get these carcass tags from the DNR Service Center. The hunters replied that they had difficulty finding times when a DNR office was open. These situations will only increase next season with reduced hours of operation at the Service Centers.

CWD Seasons

Hunters in the CWD zone were comfortable in understanding the season framework and tagging options since they have remained the same for a few years. Even though the same frustration was expressed by many hunters in the CWD zone about low deer numbers and they questioned the need for earn a buck, they were glad to be able to use a buck authorization from the previous year.

A new rule that restricted carcass transportation from the CWD zone went into effect on September 1, 2009. There were initially some issues for the registration stations along the border of the CWD and non-CWD areas, and questions from hunters about moving whole deer into adjacent areas.

Rifle use was allowed in all parts of the CWD zone in 2008. A number of towns in the Southeast and South Central Regions passed ordinances prohibiting rifles for deer hunting. This is a source of confusion for hunters, and creates some headaches for the county sheriff and local police departments who respond to complaints. When deer hunters rely on the state regulations pamphlet for rules, they might inadvertently violate local laws which are not so well publicized. It appears our hunters are making good choices on the use of rifles and shotguns for themselves, and no incidents related to rifle use were reported.

Thanks to all for helping us to again have a safe deer season, and for working hard to catch the violators who endanger others, or take game illegally. Thanks to everyone who reported violations, and assisted wardens with their investigations. Most importantly, thanks to all the wardens who worked hard in the field this season.

Deer harvest report

The 9-day gun season ran November 21-29. Hunting conditions were warmer than average with some fog on the opening day. Although not great for deer movement, these conditions are generally conducive to hunters being able to comfortably stay in the woods.

Deer populations in many northern and central units are near healthy goals. This will result in habitat that can sustain deer populations and hunting opportunity for generations to come. However, these populations are lower than recent years and may result in hunters seeing fewer deer.

Populations in northeastern Wisconsin are below goal due to herd reduction seasons and the effects of severe winters and below average fawn production. Antlerless harvest was very limited in these units to allow populations to grow.

Statewide preliminary registration figures indicate the harvest during the 9-day season was down 29% over 2008 to 196,098 (Table 1). This includes 86,708 antlered bucks - a 12% decrease, and 109,390 antlerless deer - a 39% decrease from 2008 (Table 1).

There were a number of factors in 2009 that lead to a lower total deer harvest:

- Across the state, deer populations are nearer healthy sustainable goals than they have been in many years. This means there are fewer herd control units and no earn-a-buck requirement except in the Chronic Wasting Disease Management Zone. This will reduce antlerless deer harvest opportunity.
- There was below average fawn production in the past two years in northern and central Wisconsin resulting in fewer antlerless deer tags and less harvest opportunity.
- In 13 units in northern Wisconsin there were no antlerless deer permits available in order to increase deer populations in that region.
- Corn harvest was delayed statewide resulting in additional escape cover for deer.

Youth Gun Deer Hunt and Mentored Hunting Program

Over 10,000 new mentor licenses were sold this fall, the first time this opportunity has been offered. During the October 10 and 11 youth hunt weekend, 6,000 deer were harvested exceeding the 4,000 reported last year.

This was the eighth year a youth gun deer hunt has been offered –the fourth year in which it was held on a separate weekend – October 10-11. The youth hunt was established in 2002 through the recommendations of the Deer 2000 and Beyond Project. The hunt was held in all deer management units statewide, with the exception of some state park and non-quota areas. This year, the Department received a large number of inquiries about the hunt as well as a lot of positive feedback. The youth hunt weekend this year was greeted with seasonably cooler weather than the previous couple years, which was better for deer movement. There are almost 6,280 records in our harvest database from the Youth gun hunt; a significant increase from last year.

Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities

The 2009 Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities was held October 3 - 11, 2009. Over 100 sponsors enrolled more than 66,000 acres of land to disabled hunters with Class A, long-term Class B, or Class C disabled hunting permits. The DNR's Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities Program first began in 1990 to give disabled hunters an opportunity to hunt deer while mild temperatures persist and mobility is relatively unhampered. These hunts are sponsored by private individuals or organizations and almost entirely take place on privately-owned lands. Since the programs inception, the DNR has encouraged private landowners and organizations to become involved and sponsor a hunt.

Unfortunately, no harvest information is available from these hunts. Reports from hunting camp representatives and individual disabled hunters, however, indicate the disabled hunting program continues to be a huge success. For many disabled hunters, the hunting experience itself is what's most cherished, rather than harvesting a deer.

Steady increases in sponsorship and participation have been observed each year and the popularity of the program continues to soar. We are committed to making opportunities available to everyone regardless of their physical abilities or limitations. We are proud of the continued success of this program and we look forward to acquiring more sponsors and participants in years to come.

Hunting Conditions

The weather on opening day was warmer than average with some fog covering a majority of the state. Many hunters reported poor visibility on opening morning. However, the warmer temperatures enabled hunters to remain in the woods longer. Seasonably warm temperatures persisted throughout the 9-day hunt, with rain and some snow falling in some of the days following opening weekend.

New ways for Hunters to participate in deer management

We are increasing the involvement of hunters in the deer management process. Hunter submitted data will help form a picture of the hunting conditions and can be used to provide an index tracking population changes in the future. Every successful hunter was asked to complete a short survey on the registration stub asking them how long they hunted, how many deer they saw, and to rank the weather conditions for hunting.

Generally less than 40 percent of hunters tag a deer in a year. This is a large population of hunters who can also help inform the decision making process. For the first time this year, all hunters were able to complete a web based survey asking for deer observations, hours hunted, and weather conditions. Thus far, hunters have submitted observations from over 4,400 trips during the 9-day gun season and reported seeing about one deer per hunting trip.

Summer Deer Observations

Preliminary summer deer observation reports indicate fawn:doe ratios were near the long-term average in farmland units. Overall fawn:doe ratios in the northern and central forest deer management regions were significantly below average, but a slight increase from the 2008 observation season. These findings appear to be related mainly from the effects of two consecutive moderate-severe winters and possibly increased predation rates. Reports from deer aging also suggest a lower than average proportion of deer in the yearling and two-year old age classes.

Early Archery Season

The early archery season ran from September 12th – November 19th this year. As of Nov. 27, 2009, there were over 31,600 archery records in the stub database, and this number is increasing daily as data entry catches up.

October 4-day antlerless hunt

The October 4-day antlerless deer hunt ran October 16-19 in herd control, EAB and CWD units. There were 327,365 hunters who purchased a gun deer license prior to the October season. Of those, 83,252 were purchased during the week prior to the October hunt. As of December 1, there are approximately 12,000 antlerless deer stubs from gun harvest during the October gun hunt.

CWD Update – 2009

This fall we are conducting disease surveillance in the CWD Management Zone (CWD-MZ) and around game farms where CWD has been found in captive deer in Portage, Waushara, and Crawford Counties. Within the CWD-MZ, testing of all adult deer harvested in the western-core monitoring area, eastern monitoring area, and the area around Devil's Lake State Park remain mandatory. Additionally, extra efforts are underway to increase the number of samples taken around the northern edge of the southwestern CWD outbreak. Throughout the rest of the CWD-MZ we offer testing for hunters if they are able to bring their deer to one of our sampling stations.

A final count of the number of deer tested for CWD through the end of November is not yet available, but test results are in for over 5000 deer sampled since April 1st, 2009. Twenty-five of these deer have tested positive for CWD. Department staff increased efforts to collect lymph nodes in the field this fall in lieu of collecting entire heads. Those efforts were well received by hunters and they reduce some of the costs associated with transportation, storage, and staffing needs at the Black Earth processing center.

We again had a great group of DNR staff, volunteers, students, and partner-agency staff assisting at our registration and sampling stations and at the Black Earth processing center. Those long hours and assistance are greatly appreciated!

Many thanks are also due to the partners involved in the Target Hunger program which offers hunters an option for donating deer in the CWD zone. The DNR is covering the costs of testing the deer that are going to pantries as well as providing funding for the pantry program through cooperative agreements with the various community action coalitions involved.

Our future CWD management direction will be influenced significantly by the CWD management plan which will likely be presented to the Natural Resources Board in January. A draft plan was presented to the Board at their August meeting and is currently being reviewed by an independent group of CWD experts from across North America. The goal of the plan is to minimize the area of Wisconsin where CWD occurs and the number of infected deer in the state. This will require a sustained commitment of effort and resources to support the management, surveillance, research, outreach, education, and other tools necessary to reach this goal. Our ability to reach this goal depends on fostering and continuing to strive to develop a strong partnership with everyone who values Wisconsin's deer herd.

Deer donation

There were 3,434 deer donated at the close of the nine-day November gun hunt. In the CWD Zone, 927 deer were donated and 2,507 were donated outside the CWD Zone. There are 133 processors in 62 counties participating this year, up slightly from last year.

Deer donations this year are 45 percent below last year's total at this time. With no EAB units in many northern areas, some of the highest county donations plummeted. One example is Buffalo County which typically ranks in the top 3 counties - at 909, 797 and 653 for the past 3 years, has yielded only 237 deer this year. Even so, Buffalo County is still ranked in the top three counties. Dane County was the highest with 423 deer followed by Buffalo at 237 and Columbia with 185. St. Croix and Trempealeau counties followed with 154 deer each. This year there were quite a few processors who only saw numbers in single digits.

Similar to last year, we did hear of hunters donating to friends and family rather than to the food pantries. Marinette County reported that the donated deer were big this year, yielding 60 to 80 pounds of venison per deer. Based on an average of 45 pounds per deer, the donations so far have yielded over 150,000 pounds of ground venison for food pantries.

In an effort to promote the program in its 10th year, a sign was created for the processors identifying them as participants in the program. A sticker was also created for the hunters, identifying them as participating hunters. The sticker was designed by Laurie Fike, program coordinator. Tom Senatori, of Madison, used the elements in the sticker to design the processor sign. Processors displaying the sign during opening weekend were featured on televised news casts. Feedback from both hunters and processors confirmed they were very well received.

The Green Bay Packers orange hat "Hunting Down Hunger" program has been promoting Wisconsin Deer Donation in their campaign to benefit food pantries by encouraging hunters to donate deer in addition to buying a hat. Michelle Friedrich, Target Hunger program coordinator in the CWD Zone, recently reported receiving a \$300 check from the Packers to benefit her local food pantry.

ATTACHMENT 1

Table 1. 2009 9-DAY CALL IN DEER REGISTRATION TOTALS (all figures are preliminary)

NER NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION

COUNTY	2008			2009			Percent change		Total
	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	
Brown	268	773	1041	262	352	614	-2.24	-54.46	-41.02
Calumet	402	963	1365	318	383	701	-20.90	-60.23	-48.64
Door	900	1461	2361	897	746	1643	-0.33	-48.94	-30.41
Fond du Lac	1028	1991	3019	746	968	1714	-27.43	-51.38	-43.23
Green Lake	1225	2169	3394	988	1037	2025	-19.35	-52.19	-40.34
Kewaunee	612	1374	1986	571	632	1203	-6.70	-54.00	-39.43
Manitowoc	645	1541	2186	627	754	1381	-2.79	-51.07	-36.83
Marinette	2804	2579	5383	2551	1672	4223	-9.02	-35.17	-21.55
Marquette	1825	3529	5354	1448	1853	3301	-20.66	-47.49	-38.35
Oconto	1991	2221	4212	1836	1663	3499	-7.79	-25.12	-16.93
Outagamie	1168	2292	3460	1003	982	1985	-14.13	-57.16	-42.63
Shawano	2238	3066	5304	2069	2013	4082	-7.55	-34.34	-23.04
Waupaca	3076	5716	8792	2949	2973	5922	-4.13	-47.99	-32.64
Waushara	1571	2893	4464	1240	1621	2861	-21.07	-43.97	-35.91
Winnebago	500	1039	1539	448	461	909	-10.40	-55.63	-40.94
Total	20253	33607	53860	17953	18110	36063	-11.36	-46.11	-33.04

SCR NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION

COUNTY	2008			2009			Percent change		Total
	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	
Columbia	2113	4056	6169	1597	2491	4088	-24.42	-38.58	-33.73
Dane	779	1813	2592	575	1244	1819	-26.19	-31.38	-29.82
Dodge	1291	3066	4357	882	1324	2206	-31.68	-56.82	-49.37
Grant	1945	4577	6522	2029	3139	5168	4.32	-31.42	-20.76
Green	546	1221	1767	479	1015	1494	-12.27	-16.87	-15.45
Iowa	1112	2172	3284	935	2068	3003	-15.92	-4.79	-8.56
Jefferson	846	1977	2823	571	1342	1913	-32.51	-32.12	-32.24
Lafayette	766	1885	2651	437	1121	1558	-42.95	-40.53	-41.23
Richland	1564	2855	4419	1249	2174	3423	-20.14	-23.85	-22.54
Rock	395	1184	1579	374	710	1084	-5.32	-40.03	-31.35
Sauk	2240	4257	6497	2019	3957	5976	-9.87	-7.05	-8.02
Total	13597	29063	42660	11147	20585	31732	-18.02	-29.17	-25.62

SER NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION

COUNTY	2008			2009			Percent change		Total
	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	
Kenosha	79	168	247	72	156	228	-8.86	-7.14	-7.69
Milwaukee	2	3	5	0	0	0			
Ozaukee	169	285	454	136	178	314	-19.53	-37.54	-30.84
Racine	132	306	438	117	245	362	-11.36	-19.93	-17.35
Sheboygan	503	992	1495	418	651	1069	-16.90	-34.38	-28.49
Walworth	193	526	719	121	411	532	-37.31	-21.86	-26.01
Washington	561	1259	1820	483	758	1241	-13.90	-39.79	-31.81
Waukesha	347	843	1190	283	570	853	-18.44	-32.38	-28.32
Total	1986	4382	6368	1630	2969	4599	-17.93	-32.25	-27.78

NOR NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION

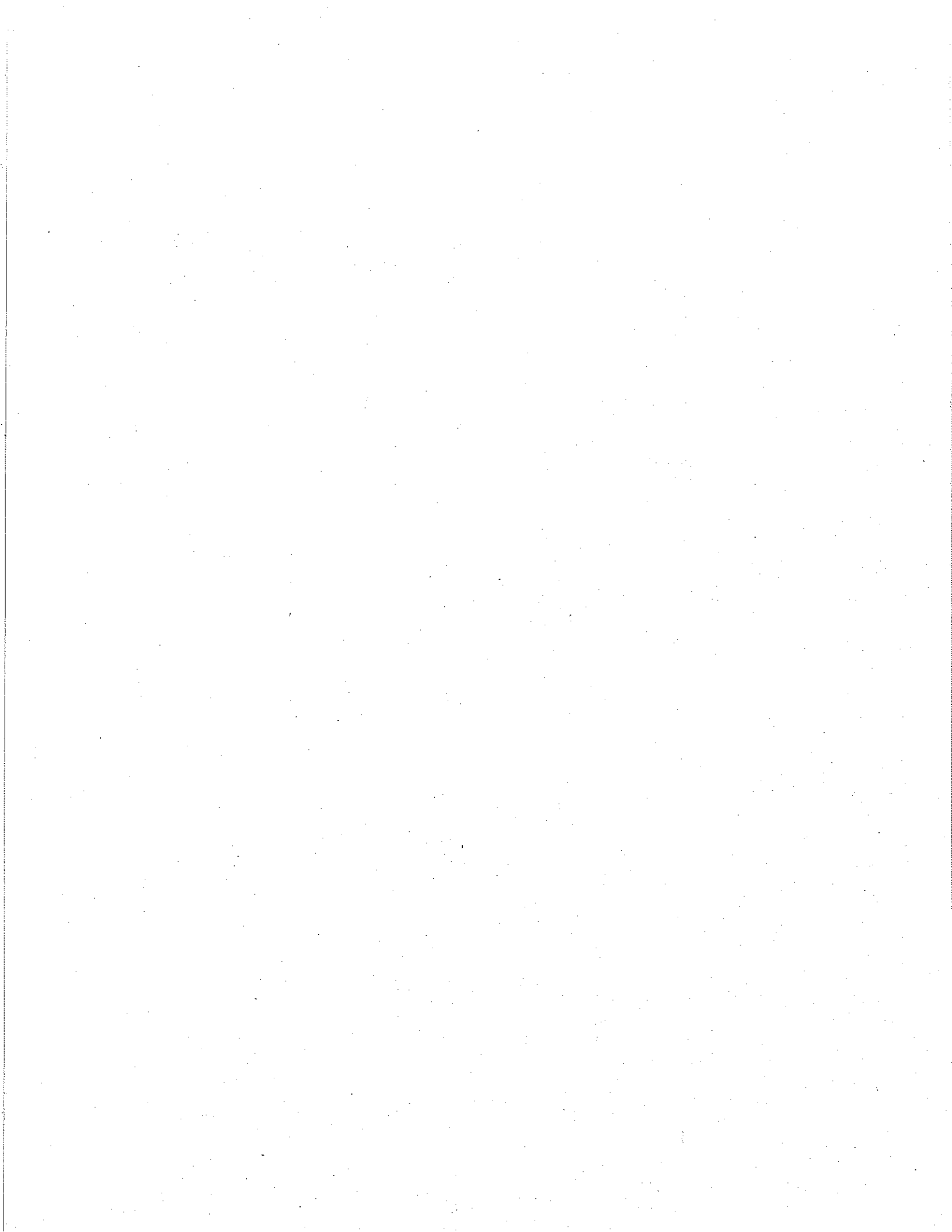
COUNTY	2008			2009			Percent change		
	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total
Ashland	1219	1289	2508	949	664	1613	-22.15	-48.49	-35.69
Barron	2563	4551	7114	2365	3238	5603	-7.73	-28.85	-21.24
Bayfield	2320	3177	5497	1969	1703	3672	-15.13	-46.40	-33.20
Burnett	1603	2865	4468	1550	2413	3963	-3.31	-15.78	-11.30
Douglas	2149	3484	5633	2168	2093	4261	0.88	-39.93	-24.36
Florence	944	567	1511	828	33	861	-12.29	-94.18	-43.02
Forest	774	478	1252	749	80	829	-3.23	-83.26	-33.79
Iron	542	467	1009	331	203	534	-38.93	-56.53	-47.08
Langlade	1255	1789	3044	1057	267	1324	-15.78	-85.08	-56.50
Lincoln	1504	2190	3694	1184	463	1647	-21.28	-78.86	-55.41
Oneida	1490	1964	3454	1159	365	1524	-22.21	-81.42	-55.88
Polk	2658	5014	7672	2636	3815	6451	-0.83	-23.91	-15.92
Price	1559	1839	3398	1227	1023	2250	-21.30	-44.37	-33.78
Rusk	1692	2642	4334	1538	1815	3353	-9.10	-31.30	-22.63
Sawyer	1820	2749	4569	1489	1720	3209	-18.19	-37.43	-29.77
Taylor	1823	3223	5046	1499	2002	3501	-17.77	-37.88	-30.62
Vilas	928	990	1918	669	117	786	-27.91	-88.18	-59.02
Washburn	1929	3174	5103	1583	2219	3802	-17.94	-30.09	-25.49
Total	28772	42452	71224	24950	24233	49183	-13.28	-42.92	-30.95

WCR NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION

COUNTY	2008			2009			Percent change		
	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total
Adams	1364	2682	4046	1013	1719	2732	-25.73	-35.91	-32.48
Buffalo	1664	3851	5515	1619	2539	4158	-2.70	-34.07	-24.61
Chippewa	2231	4250	6481	2092	3501	5593	-6.23	-17.62	-13.70
Clark	3310	6224	9534	2644	3903	6547	-20.12	-37.29	-31.33
Crawford	1105	2951	4056	1136	1854	2990	2.81	-37.17	-26.28
Dunn	1657	3992	5649	1727	2957	4684	4.22	-25.93	-17.08
Eau Claire	1155	2431	3586	1007	1525	2532	-12.81	-37.27	-29.39
Jackson	2598	5404	8002	2163	2871	5034	-16.74	-46.87	-37.09
Juneau	1705	3177	4882	1204	1732	2936	-29.38	-45.48	-39.86
La Crosse	1328	2447	3775	1119	1386	2505	-15.74	-43.36	-33.64
Marathon	3033	4908	7941	2771	2297	5068	-8.64	-53.20	-36.18
Monroe	2143	4222	6365	1971	2494	4465	-8.03	-40.93	-29.85
Pepin	638	1508	2146	757	1012	1769	18.65	-32.89	-17.57
Pierce	1306	2689	3995	1415	2244	3659	8.35	-16.55	-8.41
Portage	1877	3092	4969	1580	1724	3304	-15.82	-44.24	-33.51
St. Croix	692	1671	2363	765	1241	2006	10.55	-25.73	-15.11
Trempealeau	2283	4975	7258	2299	3482	5781	0.70	-30.01	-20.35
Vernon	2059	4664	6723	2021	2983	5004	-1.85	-36.04	-25.57
Wood	2336	3789	6125	1725	2029	3754	-26.16	-46.45	-38.71
Total	34484	68927	103411	31028	43493	74521	-10.02	-36.90	-27.94

Statewide Totals

*2008 Figures			*2009 Figures			Percent change		
Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total	Bucks	Antlerless	Total





**Dean Hamilton
President
Wisconsin State Chapter
1014 Pasadena Parkway
Waunakee, WI 53597-1920**



Re: Joint Hearing on Clearing House Rule 09-053

Assembly Committee on Fish and Wildlife

Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry and Natural Resources

Room 411 South State Capital December 16, 2009 10:00AM

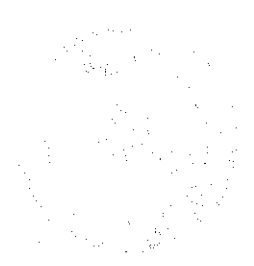
Chairman Holperin and Chairwoman Hraychuck committee members: I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I appreciate your willingness to hear the concerns of the hunting community today on deer goals.

It is no surprise that "deer goals" are a subject that effects not only the WI deer hunter, but has wide ranging effects on the turkey hunting community and other hunting enthusiasts as well as other outdoor user groups like hikers, bird watchers, cross country skiers, and snowmobilers. The "deer goals" issue effects more than just deer hunters.

On the other hand "deer goals" mean absolutely nothing if population estimates are incorrect. Deer goals or inaccurate population estimates are a subject that affects not only the WI Deer Hunter, but the fall turkey hunting season. The largest impact had to deal with wearing blaze orange during Herd Control hunts and many of our members simply did not hunt during that time, thus a loss of turkey hunting opportunity. Calling a turkey is hard enough let alone having to do while wearing blaze orange. The Current "deer goals" have created unneeded fall seasons and is causing friction between hunting/outdoor user groups who now are lined up against one another fighting for their right to enjoy their time afield.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN
LIBRARY



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
48106-1000

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
48106-1000

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
48106-1000

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
48106-1000

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
48106-1000

It is apparent that a fix is relatively easy to achieve, but hard for the department to accept. One only needs to look back to the fact that in 2000 we had the highest 9 day deer harvest on record. That nine day harvest in 2000 exceeded any gun season harvest that included any additional seasons and EAB. This was accomplished by the department issuing adequate free antlerless tags to hunters who will use them.

The WSC-NWTF would also ask that this committee reject the rule and send it back to the NRB with the following modifications:

1. Determine deer goals for total square miles of area and not square miles of habitat.
2. Establish deer population goals at a level capable of sustaining an annual total hunter harvest (all seasons, gun, bow, tribal, crop damage, etc.) of 400,000 deer plus the 15% wounding loss and the non-harvest mortality.

The WSC-NWTF supports the recommendations of the Hunters Rights Coalition and asks the committee to take actions on the following recommendations:

Coalition Recommendations

1. Bring in outside experts to recalculate current population estimates along with hunter and hunting group involvement.
2. Eliminate all additional Herd Control seasons and EAB and return to a 9- day gun season for a period of 5 years statewide, including CWD management zones, to allow the SAK formula the needed time to stabilize.
3. For the initial 5 years, if a tool is needed to reduce populations in units still determined to be more than 20% over goal, the Department should issue free and/or \$2 Herd Control tags, including the Public/Private land tag proposal from EAB Alternative rule to minimize the risk of overharvest on public land.
4. If further Herd Control methods are needed at the end of the 5 year term, before Earn-a-Buck and Herd Control Hunts are implemented, we recommend the Department look to the 2009 EAB Alternative Committee's recommendations that could be supported by all stakeholders.

Dean Hamilton

President WSC-NWTF

2009



Deer Management Unit

Public Stakeholder Advisory Panel Report

May 18, 2009

- Quality Deer Management Association
- Safari Club International
- UW - Madison Forest and Wildlife Ecology
- UW- Parkside Biological Sciences
- Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association
- Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association
- Wisconsin Conservation Congress
- Wisconsin County Forests Association
- Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association
- Wisconsin DNR
- Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
- Wisconsin Muzzleloaders
- Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
- Wisconsin Wild Turkey Federation
- Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association

www.widmu.org



Photo Credit - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION 3

II. PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY PANEL 4

 ROLE 4

 WEBSITE 4

 CRITERIA USED 4

 CONSENSUS APPROACH 4

III. PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER PANEL INPUT 5

 DMU BOUNDARY INPUT 5

 DMU OVERWINTER GOAL INPUT 5

IV. PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER PANEL GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS 6

 COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS 6

 PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER PANEL PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS 7

 DMU CHANGE CRITERIA RECOMMENDATIONS 8

V. PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER PANEL PROCESS 9

 ONLINE COLLABORATION 9

 ONLINE SURVEYS 9

 MEETING SCHEDULE 9

 MEETING FORMATS AND OVERVIEW 10

 STAKEHOLDER PROCESS DIAGRAM 11

 OVERALL DMU REVIEW TIMELINES 12

VI. STAKEHOLDER PANEL PERSPECTIVES 13

 BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY / FORESTRY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS 14

 QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION 16

 SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL 17

 WISCONSIN BEAR HUNTER'S ASSOCIATION 18

 WISCONSIN BOW HUNTER ASSOCIATION 19

 WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS 20

 WISCONSIN COUNTY FOREST ASSOCIATION 21

 WISCONSIN DEER HUNTERS ASSOCIATION 22

 WISCONSIN MUZZLE LOADING ASSOCIATION 23

 WISCONSIN WILDLIFE FEDERATION 24

 WISCONSIN WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION INC. 25

 WISCONSIN STATE CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION (WSC-NWTF) 26



I. Introduction

This report is the volunteer Public Stakeholder Deer Management Unit Review Panel's input to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Deer Committee which will then develop recommendations to the Secretary of the Department that give due consideration to these Stakeholder Panel's recommendations.

This report will also be provided to the Secretary and the Natural Resources Board.

The scope of the Public Stakeholder DMU Review Panel's work did not include providing input on the following topics:

- CWD zones overwinter goals or boundaries
- Earn-a-Buck or other deer management methods
- Sex-Age-Kill (SAK) modeling audit or comments

The Public Stakeholder DMU Review Panel was able to reach consensus on DMU boundaries and goals along with general recommendations. The Public Stakeholder DMU Review Panel's boundary and goal input is detailed in Section III on page 5 with their general recommendations outlined in Section IV beginning on page 6.

Panel members were also provided the opportunity to attach a one page summary of their stakeholder group's background and perspective to this report. These begin on page 13.

While these stakeholder panel attachments include more specific language than the points of consensus agreed to by the entire Stakeholder Panel, none of these Stakeholder attachments represent a statement of dissent or minority report. The points of consensus achieved by the Stakeholder Panel were defined during meetings and confirmed individually with each Stakeholder Panel member in the exact language appearing on page 5 of this report.

A copy of this report along with numerous other related materials was posted to www.widmu.org and is planned to be available there until December 31, 2010.

II. Public Stakeholder Advisory Panel

Role

The role of the Public Stakeholder Advisory Panel (Stakeholder Panel) was to provide useful and balanced input to the Department of Natural Resources' Deer Advisory Committee's review of Deer Management Unit (DMU) overwinter goals and boundaries.

Stakeholder Panel members succeeded in this regard by reaching consensus on a number of DMU overwinter goal and boundary change concepts based on their review of current biological, social, and economic impacts of deer as well as public comments.

The volunteer Stakeholder Panel was assembled with members invited from the diverse stakeholder communities interested in the management of Wisconsin's deer herd. The Stakeholder Panel volunteer members represented the following categories of interests:

- Hunting
- Land Ownership
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Ecology
- General Public

The diverse nature of the Stakeholder Panel was intended to add value by facilitating consideration of all viewpoints prior to decision making by the Deer Advisory Committee (Deer Committee) and the Natural Resources Board (NRB).

Website

In addition to this report, the Stakeholder Panel initiated the creation of a website used for panel collaboration between meetings, sharing information with the public, and gathering public stakeholder input. A copy of this report along with other Panel information and discussions will remain available online at www.widmu.org until December 31, 2010 or longer if deemed useful.

Criteria Used

The Stakeholder Panel found the social, economic, management capability, and ecological criteria defined during the *Deer 2000 and Beyond* initiative helpful as a starting point for reviewing DMUs.

Consensus Approach

To maximize the impact of the Stakeholder Panel's input on DMU overwinter goal and boundary decision making, the panel members worked to identify points of consensus supported by all panel members. The resulting input described on the next page is the result of meetings, open-minded sharing of perspectives, and agreements to consider the interests of other stakeholder communities. Because the panel's overwinter goal input only includes points of consensus, few individual DMU changes are mentioned. Consensus was reached by agreeing to a range of overwinter goals.

Panel members were given the opportunity to attach a page at the end of this report to describe their stakeholder community's specific input and perspective. These are also available at www.widmu.org.

III. Public Stakeholder Panel Input

DMU Boundary Input

The Public Stakeholder DMU Review Panel (Panel) supports the concept of conducting a study during the next 3 years to identify the benefits of consolidating existing DMUs.

The study would be a comparison of the precision gained from unit consolidation relative to the 2009 DMU structure. The Panel recommends that potential boundary adjustments consider the impact on the integrity of the study.

DMU Overwinter Goal Input

The Panel developed a regional approach for providing input on overwinter unit goal changes. Note: CWD units were outside of the Panel's scope of consideration and discussions.

Southern, Eastern, and Western Farmland Regions (Excluding CWD units)

The Panel's overwinter goal input for units in the Southern, Eastern, and Western Farmland Regions is defined below:

- In units currently with overwinter unit goals of 30 deer per square mile of deer range, the Panel was unable to reach consensus on recommending goal changes.
- In units 80A and 81, the Panel did reach consensus in support of leaving these unchanged with an overwinter unit goal of 15 deer per square mile of deer range.
- In all other units in the Southern, Eastern and Western Farmland Regions, the Panel reached consensus to support recommending overwinter unit goals being set within the range of 20 to 25 deer per square mile of deer range.
However, the Panel's consensus fell short of recommending specific increases or decreases in overwinter goals in these units.

Northern Forest Region

The Panel's consensus on units in the Northern Forest Region is defined below:

- For units currently at or below overwinter goals of 21 deer per square mile of deer range, maintaining those overwinter goals would be acceptable.
- For units currently at 25 deer per square mile of deer range, the Panel's consensus fell short of being able to recommend making changes to overwinter goals.
However, the Panel found consensus by stating it would be acceptable if the DNR Deer Committee recommended lowering these overwinter unit goals from 25 to 20 deer per square mile of deer range.
- Consensus was reached to allow an overwinter goal reduction in unit 3 to 15 deer per square mile of deer range.

Central Forest Region

Panel consensus was reached to support maintaining current overwinter goals in the Central Forest Region.

Metro Units

The Panel reached consensus to recommend the evaluation of metro unit overwinter goals by the Deer Committee.

IV. Public Stakeholder Panel General Recommendations

The Public Stakeholder Panel also developed the following general recommendations.

Communication and Education Recommendations

The Stakeholder Panel was in agreement that the overall process would benefit from improved communication with the general public and stakeholder communities. Recommendations developed by the Stakeholder Panel to help with this effort are described below:

Increase Public Awareness of Stakeholder Panel Activity

The use of a Stakeholder Panel website and online public input forms should allow future Panels to increase the level of public participation in the review process. Towards this end, any effort to help increase public awareness of the Stakeholder Panel's existence and role will benefit the overall process. Specifically, the following are recommended:

- Provide a link to www.widmu.org on the DNR website until the 2010 deer hunting season.
- Continue including mention of the Panel and website in deer related press releases.
- Encourage DNR field staff to share the Panel's website and activities in local meetings, public correspondence, and conversations.

Continue Building Communication Channels

The Stakeholder Panel supports DNR initiatives to improve communication of DMU management processes with both hunter and non-hunter communities to increase understanding and participation in the review process. Specific recommendations include:

- Continue including Stakeholder Panel representation from hunter, non-hunter, forestry, landowner, wildlife preservation, biology, and other interested stakeholder communities.
- Continue including Stakeholder Panel members from across the state to help provide an informed and balanced geographical cross-section of public interests.
- Continue ensuring Stakeholder Panel members demonstrate the ability and commitment to solicit input from their respective stakeholder communities. In particular, the Stakeholder Panel understands the growing importance of communicating via email and websites.

Education Initiatives

The Stakeholder Panel members strongly support efforts to educate hunters and non-hunters on the methodologies and science used to manage Wisconsin's deer herd. The Stakeholder Panel benefited from both expert and stakeholder panel member presentations on these topics. Recommendations to improve public education on deer management include:

- Encourage presenters and stakeholders to tailor their information for a wider audience with a more general understanding of mathematical and scientific modeling principles.
- Periodically email useful DNR deer website links to stakeholder groups in Wisconsin for inclusion on stakeholder websites and newsletters.
- Develop a simplified presentation of the sex-age-kill (SAK) model and how it relates to managing sustainable deer herds in Wisconsin.
- Include link on the online DNR licensing page to educational sites on deer management.



Public Stakeholder Panel Process Recommendations

The Stakeholder Panel discussed and developed recommendations for future Stakeholder Panels to consider during their review process.

Stakeholder Panel Member Presentations

During the current review process, time was scheduled for presentations from the biologist and forestry communities. Future Panels should discuss allotting time for other stakeholders (i.e. landowners, hunters, farmers) to prepare and present information useful to the discussion of DMU overwinter goal and boundary changes.

Given the limited amount of meeting time available, presenters should be encouraged to provide advance copies of presentation materials and stay within the time allotted.

Online and Paper Public Input Collection

The Stakeholder Panel benefited from efforts to collect public input using both online and paper forms. Improvements could be made by having future Stakeholder Panels deliberate the pros and cons of public surveys; develop the survey questions earlier in the Panel meeting process; and begin the data collection in January or February prior to the herd status meetings.

The data collected prior to the herd status meetings would also assist biologists with tailoring their presentations to address the public concerns and questions identified by the surveys.

Deer Herd Status Meeting Recommendations

Stakeholder Panel members attended 11 of the herd status meetings held around State in March 2009. Based on Panel member observations of the various meeting formats used, the recommended format is having the biologist presentation followed by a structured question and answer period.

Including a brief review of deer biology covering typical home range, dispersal, food requirements, and habitat requirements would also be beneficial.

Stakeholder Panel Hurdles

During the review process, the Stakeholder Panel acknowledged the following hurdles in the consensus building process. Future Panels should continue efforts to minimize or eliminate these hurdles where possible.

- Perception of DNR Motives and Overwinter Goals
- Trust Level Between Different Stakeholder Communities
- Public Understanding and Education on Deer Population and Management Models
- Questions on the Reliability of the SAK Model
- Regional Differences in Deer Population, Behavior, Habitat, and Hunting Practices
- The Counter-Intuitive Nature of Certain Aspects of Deer Herd Management
- Mutually Exclusive Outcomes Desired By Different Stakeholder Communities

Overall, the assembling of a diverse Stakeholder Panel was seen as a positive step towards reducing misunderstandings, misperceptions, and distrust between the various Stakeholder communities.

DMU Change Criteria Recommendations

The Stakeholder Panel attempted to consider a variety of criteria when developing input on DMU overwinter goal and boundary changes. The criteria developed during the Deer 2000 and Beyond initiative was found to be helpful and provided a starting point for discussing overwinter goal and boundary changes.

Based on these discussions, the Stakeholder Panel recommends further improvements in the criteria used for measuring deer impact and managing deer herds in Wisconsin.

- The Panel recommends that separate forestry and agricultural indicators be measured and considered during DMU overwinter goal and boundary reviews.
 - Indicators of agricultural impact should be independent of farmer enrollment in crop damage programs to ensure an unbiased estimate of agricultural impact due to deer. If such data does not already exist, then methods of defining and collecting this data should be developed.
 - The Panel recommends developing better ecological indicators of deer impact on tree regeneration and biodiversity. These silvicultural* indicators would be in addition to agricultural damage indicators that would focus on crop damage rather than forest regeneration. Indicators should be based on sound scientific (experimental) data and be collected on a regular basis to represent an unbiased monitoring of browse levels (forestry) and demography of indicator species (size and fecundity measures of herbaceous understory species that have been experimentally demonstrated to reflect deer impacts).
- * Silviculture is the science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health, and quality of forests.
- Future Stakeholder Panels should consider reviewing and comparing the methods used by other States to manage their deer herds.
 - Car-deer collision data is useful for identifying trends in deer herd size. It would be useful to have that data set available during future Stakeholder Panel reviews.



V. Public Stakeholder Panel Process

The 2009 Stakeholder Panel process involved meetings, phone conferences, online collaboration, and attendance at local herd status meetings in March 2009.

Online Collaboration

Online collaboration on the Panel’s website was an ongoing effort with Panel members reporting input gathered from their stakeholder communities, sharing perspectives, and discussing information obtained on current biological, social, and economic impacts of deer in Wisconsin.

Online Surveys

To facilitate the Panel’s consensus building between meetings, online surveys were used to poll Panel members and gather their input on overwinter goals and general recommendations. This method greatly aided the Panel with drafting specific language that encompassed the wide range of viewpoints of the various stakeholder communities. As a result of this approach, fewer meetings were required to reach consensus.

Meeting Schedule

The volunteer Stakeholder panel met a total of three times and had two conference calls scheduled. Members of the Panel also planned to attend the May 19, 2009 Deer Committee meeting to deliver this report.

A final meeting or conference call is planned in September 2009 to review public input at official public hearings held in early September and advise the department as to whether the panel believes that overwinter goals or boundaries presented at the hearings should be modified. The date and format of that final meeting are to be determined.

The Stakeholder Panel’s meeting schedule is shown below.

January 17, 2009	Saturday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Stevens Points, Wisconsin
February 21, 2009	Saturday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Stevens Points, Wisconsin
April 9, 2009	Thursday 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Teleconference
April 25, 2009	Saturday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Stevens Points, Wisconsin
June 4, 2009	Thursday 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	<i>Tentative</i> - Teleconference
September 2009	TBD	

Assisting the Stakeholder Panel was an outside facilitator provided by the DNR to support the Panel with meeting activities, online collaboration, and reporting.

It was anticipated that DMU overwinter goal and boundary changes would be in administrative code by early 2010 and used to set deer harvest quotas and deer season structures for the 2010 hunting seasons.

Meeting Formats and Overview

Meeting agendas, expert presentations, and handouts were posted to the Panel's website www.widmu.org. The description below provides a high level overview of the meetings.

January 17, 2009 Meeting

Held to review the role of the advisory panel and listen to presentations on the ecological, social and economic factors to be considered in developing DMU overwinter goal and boundary recommendations. Panel members discussed their views of deer numbers at this meeting while focusing on discussing the review and decision making process ahead. The panel developed a list of information requests to help with their review process. At this meeting, the Panel initiated the approach of using a website to stay connected between meetings and share information.

February 21, 2009 Meeting

After a review of the Panel's website and an update from the Deer Committee, the Panel focused on developing proposals for public discussion at local herd status public meetings scheduled for March. The outcome of the Panel's discussions was to propose the boundary concept of studying consolidation. No specific overwinter goal concepts emerged to gain the Panel's consensus. The Panel decided to assist gathering public input by creating online versions of the public input surveys to be handed out at deer herd status meetings in March. As part of this effort, the Panel reviewed and assisted with drafting the questions for both surveys.

April 9, 2009 Phone Conference

A brief 30 minute phone conference meeting was held to update Panel members on public input gathered via online surveys and to approve the use of online surveys to poll Panel members on possible points of consensus.

April 25, 2009 Meeting

The Panel reviewed public input, agreed to support the study of the consolidation concept, and outlined points of consensus on overwinter goals by focusing on regions rather than specific DMUs. The Panel agreed to finalize the points of consensus using online surveys, emails, and if necessary a phone conference.

June 4, 2009 Phone Conference

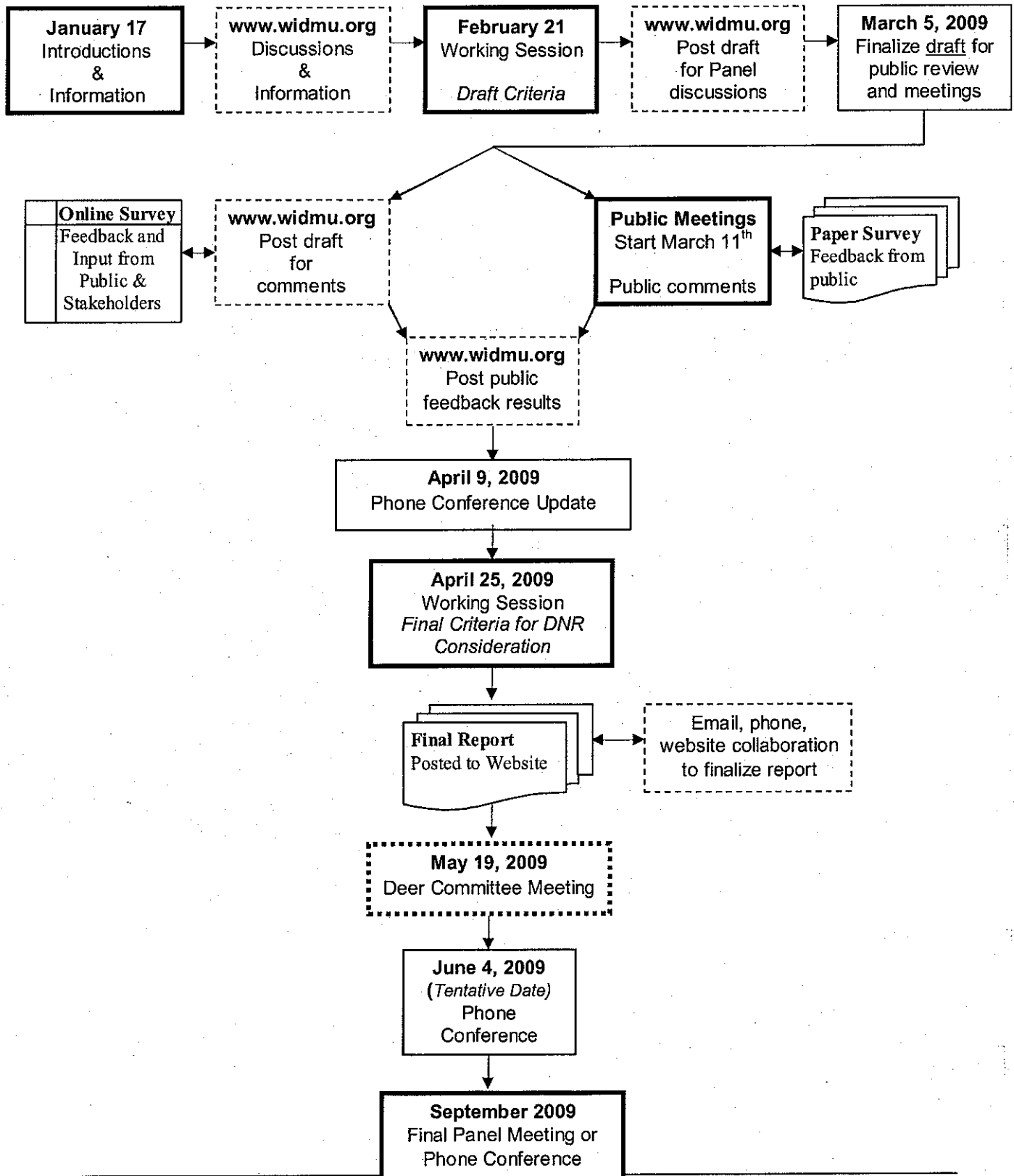
A brief 30 minute phone conference was planned to confirm the Panel being represented at the Deer Committee's May 19, 2009 meeting. The call would also be used to confirm panel members' commitment to reconvene in September to review final recommendations and address any open items requiring attention prior to reconvening in September.

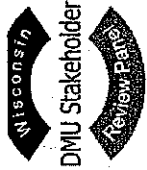
September 2009 Meeting

A Saturday meeting or conference call was planned to review public input at official public hearings held earlier in September and advise the department as to whether the panel believes that overwinter goals or boundaries presented at the hearings should be modified.

Stakeholder Process Diagram

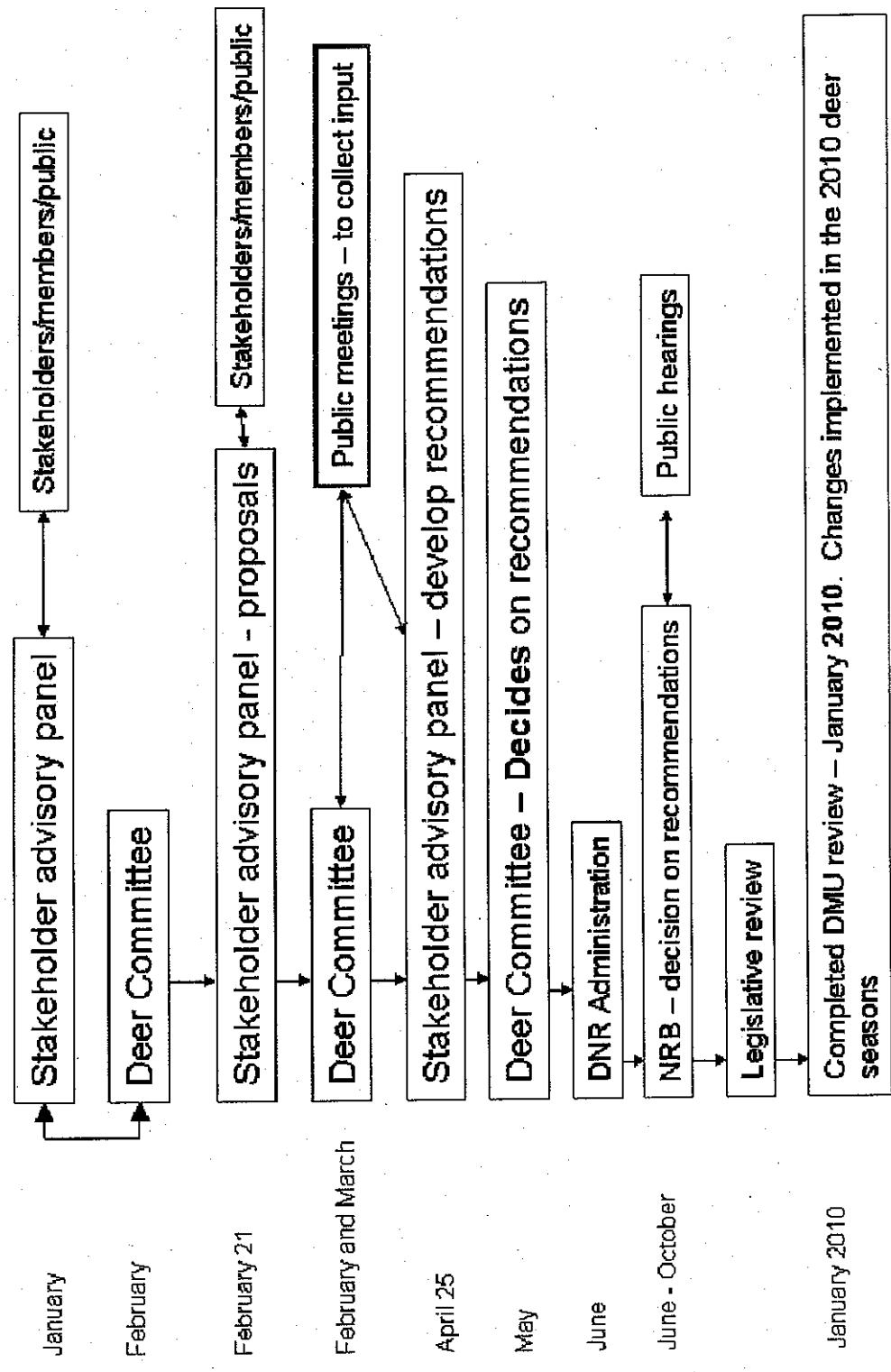
The block diagram below describes the Stakeholder Panel's activities during 2009. There was an extended period of gathering public input and attending deer herd status meetings during March and April.





Overall DMU Review Timelines

DMU Review 2009 Timeline and Process rev 4/09





VI. Stakeholder Panel Perspectives

The remaining pages were contributed by individual Stakeholder Panel members.

While some of these perspectives and input are more specific and detailed than the Panel's consensus, careful reading of both will reveal that although Panel members worked to reach points of consensus with other stakeholder groups, they did not compromise their own community's key interests.

None of these Stakeholder attachments represent a statement of dissent or a minority report. The points of consensus achieved by the Stakeholder Panel were defined during meetings and confirmed individually with each Stakeholder Panel member in the exact language appearing on page 5 of this report.

The purpose of this final section of attachments was to give each Panel member the opportunity to provide a short overview of their experience on the Panel and also to detail their stakeholder community's perspectives and input on DMU overwinter goal and boundary changes.

These attachments will provide valuable insight for future Stakeholder Panel members seeking to understand the perspectives of other stakeholder groups. Visits to the websites listed on each page will provide additional information.

If Panel members were unable to complete this by the original submission date, it was agreed that their overview could be added to the report posted at www.widmu.org. Readers are encouraged to verify they have the latest and most complete copy of this report by downloading a copy from the Panel's website.

These pages were added in alphabetical order using the organization name or description.

Biology / Ecology / Forestry Stakeholder Groups

(Note: Three panel members representing biology, ecology, and forestry elected to submit a combined summary to provide readers with a single document integrating the views of all three scientific stakeholder communities. The panel members chose to limit their combined summary to two pages instead of the three pages individually allotted.)

UWM-Madison Forest and Wildlife Ecology www.forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu
UWM-Parkside Biological Sciences Department www.uwp.edu/departments/biological.sciences
WDNR-Division of Forestry www.dnr.wi.gov/forestry

Overview of Group or Community

Together we represent an informal coalition of professional foresters and ecologists interested in the long-term viability and biodiversity of Wisconsin's forests. Many of us are also active deer hunters and we affirm the importance of Wisconsin's deer hunting traditions.

While we recognize the ecological, economic, and cultural importance of whitetail deer, we are concerned that chronic and nearly uniform over abundance of this keystone herbivore over the past few decades threatens the long-term health of those resources. We believe that there is clear and compelling scientific evidence that high deer numbers have contributed to the widespread failure to regenerate numerous economically and ecologically important tree species such as oak and hemlock and began shifting understory composition towards dominance of grasses, sedges and ferns. These changes have likely had significant cascading impacts on non-game wildlife, particularly shrub nesting birds.

Our goal must be a sustainable deer population management that balances the benefits of a robust deer population against the costs that overabundant deer exert on other ecosystem services.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

We view our inclusion on the Stakeholder Panel as an earnest effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to look beyond the hunting community for input on deer management. This is a positive sign the WDNR recognizes deer management impacts hunters and non-hunters alike and that sustained large deer populations can significantly and negatively impact sustainable forestry and a wide range of biodiversity.

We were impressed by the collegiality and generally respectful tone of the meetings and felt that the format was a good way of bringing diverse opinions together for open debate.

However, we were surprised by the lack of quality, unbiased data with which to measure deer impacts on agriculture, forestry and ecological integrity. We view this as a serious barrier to making sound, science based decisions as to ecologically sustainable population goals. Obtaining such data should be a priority.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

Ecologists value healthy ecological communities with species diversity and emphasize the long-term viability of native populations and sustainable use of natural resources. We recognize our dependence on ecosystem services to provide us with a wide variety of needs and believe management goals should be based on sound science and reliable data.

At present, the preponderance of data suggests that deer densities are too high throughout much of the state and this is causing regeneration failure of important tree species and widespread potentially irreversible ecological damage. In addition, many units in the northern forests are converting from early successional to late successional forests, further reducing carrying capacity and magnifying impacts. These problems are likely compounded by chronic high deer densities of the past decades which inhibits habitat recovery when



population goals are finally reached. We feel that the most severe negative impacts on forest regeneration and biodiversity are due to herds being chronically above goal.

We are encouraged to see the WDNR success at finally bringing deer populations near goal in many DMUs, and are eager to see if habitats recover in these units.

However, we encourage the deer committee to reduce goals in Northern Forest units from 25 to 20 deer/square mile of deer range. Given the extent of browse damage in unit 3 as reported by the WCFA, we support reducing the goal in that unit to 15 or lower. We also support the consensus reached for the southern farmland units but again would encourage the deer committee to consider the lower end of the range in consideration of forestry, agriculture and ecological benefits.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

More work is needed to educate hunters as to the methods used to estimate herd populations, set population goals and, most importantly to the deer impacts on the environment and habitat quality.

Better information needs to be gathered as to what deer densities are ecologically sustainable across the wide range of habitats that support deer. Consistent, unbiased monitoring tools for measuring deer impacts need to be developed and monitored on a regular basis.

More work is also needed to increase participation of non-hunters into both the stakeholder groups and public opinion surveys.

Though different stakeholder groups had diverging viewpoints and interests, we all shared the goal of having a healthy deer herd living in balance with its environment. Bringing diverse interest together in an effort to increase understanding and reach consensus on a way forward is of critical importance and we look forward to continuing participation in this process.



Quality Deer Management Association

www.QDMA.com

Overview of Group or Community

The QDMA is an international nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ethical hunting, sound deer management and preservation of the deer-hunting heritage. The QDMA's mission is to promote sustainable, high-quality white-tailed deer populations, wildlife habitats, and ethical hunting experiences through education, research, and management in partnership with hunters, landowners, natural resource professionals, and the public.

Among QDMA's 53,000 members are more than 3,000 of the nation's leading wildlife and forestry professionals. As such, QDMA is widely regarded as the most respected whitetail organization in the United States. Wisconsin is home to over 2,000 QDMA members, 8 local Branches and a State Chapter. These Branches conduct numerous educational events annually, and Wisconsin QDMA members help manage over a quarter million acres for white-tailed deer and other wildlife species.

The QDMA's ongoing commitment to education and stewardship was formally recognized in 2001 when it became the only whitetail organization ever to be awarded the prestigious "Group Achievement Award" from The Wildlife Society – the parent body of nearly 10,000 wildlife professionals in North America.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

QDMA's primary focus has always been on education, research, and on-the-ground management. The QDMA has a long history of working with Wisconsin sportsmen and women, as well as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). We welcomed the opportunity to participate in reviewing the Wisconsin DNR's deer management plan as part of our continued involvement in the State's wildlife agencies' programs.

This Panel review process brought together many different perspectives and interests for the DNR to consider.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

The QDMA's biological staff routinely works with state wildlife agencies on their deer management programs. As a result, hundreds of thousands of hunters and millions of acres of public and private lands are managed under quality deer management guidelines. The QDMA has also actively partnered with numerous federal and state wildlife agencies, forest products companies, conservation organization, and other groups to improve white-tailed deer and habitat management programs.

Based on our experience and background, we support the Panel's consensus while continuing to promote quality deer management guidelines that encourage sustainable, high-quality white-tailed deer populations, wildlife habitats, and ethical hunting experiences. The balance between these is not easy to achieve and we believe more work is needed to develop consistent measurements of deer population, habitat condition, and hunter experiences.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

Preserving our deer-hunting heritage is a priority for QDMA. Each year QDMA conducts numerous events for youth and women as well as supporting numerous worthy organizations like Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry, the Paralyzed Veterans Association, and the Catch-A-Dream Foundation.

As part of our recommendations, we encourage DNR efforts that provide educational programs, publications, and other opportunities for hunters and non-hunters to learn about deer management practices.

Biology / Ecology / Forestry Stakeholder Groups

(Note: Three panel members representing biology, ecology, and forestry elected to submit a combined summary to provide readers with a single document integrating the views of all three scientific stakeholder communities. The panel members chose to limit their combined summary to two pages instead of the three pages individually allotted.)

UWM-Madison Forest and Wildlife Ecology

www.forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu

UWM-Parkside Biological Sciences Department

www.uwp.edu/departments/biological_sciences

WDNR-Division of Forestry

www.dnr.wi.gov/forestry

Overview of Group or Community

Together we represent an informal coalition of professional foresters and ecologists interested in the long-term viability and biodiversity of Wisconsin's forests. Many of us are also active deer hunters and we affirm the importance of Wisconsin's deer hunting traditions.

While we recognize the ecological, economic, and cultural importance of whitetail deer, we are concerned that chronic and nearly uniform over abundance of this keystone herbivore over the past few decades threatens the long-term health of those resources. We believe that there is clear and compelling scientific evidence that high deer numbers have contributed to the widespread failure to regenerate numerous economically and ecologically important tree species such as oak and hemlock and began shifting understory composition towards dominance of grasses, sedges and ferns. These changes have likely had significant cascading impacts on non-game wildlife, particularly shrub nesting birds.

Our goal must be a sustainable deer population management that balances the benefits of a robust deer population against the costs that overabundant deer exert on other ecosystem services.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

We view our inclusion on the Stakeholder Panel as an earnest effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to look beyond the hunting community for input on deer management. This is a positive sign the WDNR recognizes deer management impacts hunters and non-hunters alike and that sustained large deer populations can significantly and negatively impact sustainable forestry and a wide range of biodiversity.

We were impressed by the collegiality and generally respectful tone of the meetings and felt that the format was a good way of bringing diverse opinions together for open debate.

However, we were surprised by the lack of quality, unbiased data with which to measure deer impacts on agriculture, forestry and ecological integrity. We view this as a serious barrier to making sound, science based decisions as to ecologically sustainable population goals. Obtaining such data should be a priority.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

Ecologists value healthy ecological communities with species diversity and emphasize the long-term viability of native populations and sustainable use of natural resources. We recognize our dependence on ecosystem services to provide us with a wide variety of needs and believe management goals should be based on sound science and reliable data.

At present, the preponderance of data suggests that deer densities are too high throughout much of the state and this is causing regeneration failure of important tree species and widespread potentially irreversible ecological damage. In addition, many units in the northern forests are converting from early successional to late successional forests, further reducing carrying capacity and magnifying impacts. These problems are likely compounded by chronic high deer densities of the past decades which inhibits habitat recovery when



VI. Stakeholder Panel Perspectives

The remaining pages were contributed by individual Stakeholder Panel members.

While some of these perspectives and input are more specific and detailed than the Panel's consensus, careful reading of both will reveal that although Panel members worked to reach points of consensus with other stakeholder groups, they did not compromise their own community's key interests.

None of these Stakeholder attachments represent a statement of dissent or a minority report. The points of consensus achieved by the Stakeholder Panel were defined during meetings and confirmed individually with each Stakeholder Panel member in the exact language appearing on page 5 of this report.

The purpose of this final section of attachments was to give each Panel member the opportunity to provide a short overview of their experience on the Panel and also to detail their stakeholder community's perspectives and input on DMU overwinter goal and boundary changes.

These attachments will provide valuable insight for future Stakeholder Panel members seeking to understand the perspectives of other stakeholder groups. Visits to the websites listed on each page will provide additional information.

If Panel members were unable to complete this by the original submission date, it was agreed that their overview could be added to the report posted at www.widmu.org. Readers are encouraged to verify they have the latest and most complete copy of this report by downloading a copy from the Panel's website.

These pages were added in alphabetical order using the organization name or description.



Safari Club International

www.scifirstforhunters.org

Overview of Group or Community

Safari Club International's (SCI) mission is to be the leader in protecting the freedom to hunt and in promoting wildlife conservation worldwide. With approximately 190 chapters in 19 countries, SCI is recognized as a world leader in wildlife conservation and education programs. Six chapters are found within Wisconsin's borders, and members frequently contribute to the conservation and management of Wisconsin's natural resources.

In addition to protecting the freedom to hunt, the SCI also supports through its SCI Foundation (SCIF) conservation initiatives, wildlife education, and humanitarian programs worldwide. Both the SCI and SCIF have earned the Charity Navigator 4-Star rating meaning that they exceed industry standards and outperform most charities in its cause. More than \$47 million has been spent on Foundation programs since 1980.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

Wisconsin DNR has clearly made a great investment to be transparent in the deer management process and has engaged a diversity of stakeholders throughout the state. The use of technology provided by the DNR contributed greatly to our success as a panel. Sharing this information helps educate stakeholders and the general public resulting in better decisions for future hunters and all wildlife enthusiasts.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

SCI comments and contributions were based on the scientific data available and public input gathered from herd status meetings and the Panel's online surveys. To emphasize the commitment to science, SCIF's Director of Conservation was selected to represent organization views to the panel.

SCI supports the concept of the studying the consolidation of DMUs during the next three years. Given the level of debate on SAK estimators, keeping boundaries consistent for research purposes during the study period is justified. Since the panel process did not review scientific data on individual DMU boundary change requests, SCI does not support recommending specific changes to DMU boundaries. However, we do recognize that local public input, local biologists, and law enforcement personnel may provide decision makers with the best knowledge on where boundary adjustments could be improved for communication and enforcement purposes. However, any changes made need to consider the impact on the comparison study. The SCI supports the panel's consensus on goals and would like to see final Deer Committee recommendations based on scientific data and guided by public input.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

The panel started its group effort by identifying specific criteria that the DNR should consider when establishing white tail deer population goals. This is an important step and more work should be done to come to define and agree on a standard set of criteria and measurements. Throughout panel discussions questions were raised on the exact definition and measurement method used for each social-economic criterion. Answering these questions over the next few years will yield more productive stakeholder review processes in the future.

While there has been a good discussion about population goals and related issues, we would recommend continuing with the existing population goals and continuing to work on the myriad of management issues that affect achievement of those goals (from either direction). The DNR has many management tools in its toolbox, and we support the use of those tools when appropriate. The recent scientific article on SAK population estimators needs to be fully evaluated in the context of the Wisconsin DNR application of the model. SCI strongly recommends initiation of research specifically addressing the non-harvest mortality of both fawns and adult deer to improve our current understanding of the role of predators, winter weather and habitat changes on deer population trends and carrying capacity (represented in SAK in the BRR and lamda).

Wisconsin Bear Hunter's Association

www.wbha.us.com

Overview of Group or Community

For over 40 years the WBHA has been at the forefront of protecting the rights of sportsmen and sportswomen in Wisconsin as well promoting youth hunting, conservation, and sound wildlife management. Each year the WBHA gives out scholarships to college bound high school graduates, sponsors highway and public forest cleanups throughout the state, supports a number of charitable causes through our foundation, and supports outdoor opportunities for dying and disabled youth.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

The WBHA actively works to ensure that future generations have the opportunity to enjoy Wisconsin's great outdoors. By working with the DNR and other conservation minded organizations, we see ourselves helping promote and protect opportunities for young people to participate in hunting, fishing, and trapping. Our view is that by getting young people to enjoy the outdoors, they will become more interested in learning the proper wildlife management practices critical to guarding our precious resources.

The Stakeholder Panel was a great opportunity to continue this effort by sharing our hunter viewpoints on deer herd management in Wisconsin while dispelling misconceptions regarding the impact of Wisconsin's bear population on the deer herd. The panel discussions were a good reminder of the range of viewpoints on deer hunting. By working together, hunting and other outdoor traditions will continue to drive Wisconsin's tourism industry which in 2008 generated over \$13 billion dollars, supported 310,000 jobs, and provided over \$2 billion in tax revenue.

The consensus found by the panel shows that common ground can be found in the midst of differing opinions. We hope to see this type of stakeholder involvement continued in the future.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

As avid hunters of big game including white tail deer, the WBHA supports increasing the overwinter goals in deer management units that are below their carrying capacity.

When setting overwinter goals, we would like to see changes in how deer range (habitat) in farmland units is defined or see over winter goals in farmland units increased. Frequently, less than 50% of the land in farmland units is considered to be deer range. Because over winter goals are set for the number of deer per square mile of deer range and not the total number of square miles in a unit, the actual density of deer spread out across an entire DMU is significantly less than the over winter goal.

As a simple example, for a farmland unit with a total 100 square miles, if the over winter goal is set to 25 and only 20% (20 square miles) of the unit is defined as deer range, then the over winter goal equates to $25 \times 20 = 500$ deer for the entire unit. Thus, if the herd spreads out across the entire unit as is likely during hunting season, then 500 deer across 100 square miles works out to 5 deer per square mile – not 25 deer per square mile. This is one reason that hunter expectations of seeing 25 deer per square mile are unfulfilled. By either increasing goals in farmland units or defining a greater percentage of farmland units as deer habitat this issue can be resolved.

The WBHA believes that stakeholder input to deer management in Wisconsin is critical and the current three year review process should not be extended.

Wisconsin Bow Hunter Association

www.wisconsinbowhunters.org

Overview of Group or Community

Wisconsin Bowhunters Association is the Nations oldest State Bowhunting organization (68 years) with approximately 7,000 members.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

WBH's mission is to foster and promote the sport of hunting with the bow and arrow; and to promote to that end, the education, social relationships, good sportsmanship and good fellowship of and among our members.

While WBH is an advocate for all Bowhunters, the keystone species for most of our members is the Whitetail deer. As such, issues like overwinter goals and DMU boundaries or anything that affects deer and deer hunting is very important to WBH and our members. We are committed to working with all stakeholders in making sound deer management decisions and realize that our idea for deer population goals can differ from other stakeholders who may view deer as a nuisance animal.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

WBH advocates increasing overwinter goals while factoring in social and biological concerns. The importance of deer to this state and its history, traditions, and economy are very clear and all management decisions need to be weighed accordingly. Hunters play a vital role in whitetail management beyond keeping deer numbers in check. Today's deer hunters are resource managers in their own right since every time we release an arrow or pull the trigger, we are making management decisions on a local level as more hunter/landowners actively manage their properties to attract and hold deer.

Hunters are very knowledgeable about local deer populations and harvest deer in accordance with the balance they view as important. The farmland regions of the state are a good example of where increasing overwinter goals and harvest potential are a good idea. In the Northern region, increased predator effects mean more deer being removed from the landscape on a year round basis leaving fewer deer for hunters. Adjusting goals to address predation is imperative.

The many DMU goal and boundary meetings held around the state as well as the online survey collected a great deal of data. That coupled with the many citizen resolutions at the spring Conservation Congress hearings clearly suggests that there is a desire to increase overwinter goals.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

Setting population goals is important but reaching those goals is the task of the hunting community. DNR sets harvest quotas based on the difference between estimated populations and goal populations. This means that accurate estimates are critical to sound management.

It is imperative that real and accurate indicators of the deer population not only be used but also be constantly updated and verified against other indicators of herd size so that a realistic season structure is set based on the most accurate estimates available. If reaching goal is important, it should not matter on which side of the goal the population is. Currently a large portion of the North is below prescribed goals meaning improvements need to be made in estimating to avoid below goal situations otherwise setting goals becomes a meaningless exercise.

DMU reviews are set in the administrative code to take place every 3 years. That time frame should not be extended.



Wisconsin Conservation Congress

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/nrboard/congress/>

Overview of Group or Community

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) is the only "advisory body" in the State where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests in natural resources by working with the Natural Resources Board (NRB) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

The State Conservation Commission (the predecessor of the Natural Resources Board) created the Conservation Congress in 1934 to provide Wisconsin citizens a venue for contributing input and exchanging concerns on conservation issues. Legislation was signed in 1972 legally recognizing the WCC (Statute 15.348) to provide citizens with a liaison between the NRB and the WDNR.

Our Mission includes working with citizens, organizations, and educators on matters related to the management and enjoyment of Wisconsin's natural resources. The WCC also considers citizen submitted resolutions on matters pertaining to the management of natural resources including deer herd management.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

The Public Stakeholder Deer Review Panel was well rounded providing different perspectives on the management of Wisconsin's deer herd. While inherent in the consensus building process is the inability for every stakeholder member to get everything their group desired, the panel process was well run and provided opportunities for different perspectives to be heard.

The panel's final consensus reflects the willingness of panel members to consider other viewpoints without compromising their stakeholder group's interests. As a result, the final consensus reached by the panel was unable to include all of the specific goal and boundary changes submitted through the WCC's written resolution process. The WCC values this opportunity to provide more specific input based on approved WCC resolutions.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

The WCC supports the Panel's final consensus while continuing to consider more specific input detailed in written resolutions submitted by citizens.

In the case of this current review, unit change resolutions submitted for units 77M, 47 and 70E appear to reflect considerable thought and the WCC supports having these specific requests reviewed by the Deer Committee. While any changes to boundaries should weigh the impact on the study of unit consolidation over the next three years, the WCC strongly believes that input from local citizens, local biologists, and other local stakeholders must be objectively included during the Deer Committee's review process.

This local input ensures that deer management decisions will account for significant differences between units falling within the same category of land use, ownership, type of deer habitat, or geographic location. Although a 'one size fits all' approach to unit goal and boundary changes is a sound starting point for building general consensus, the Deer Committee's final goal and boundary change recommendations should reflect a unit level review of objective data when local input indicates strong interest in making changes.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

Addressing public concerns regarding the accuracy of deer population estimates, the methods of scientifically measuring deer herd social, economic, and environmental impacts, and the overall public input process needs to be a top WDNR priority for future panels to provide more specific goal and boundary input. Current and future reviews must examine local unit differences within the 5 regions (Northern/Central Forest, Western, Southern, Eastern Farmland). To help in this regard, stakeholder panel member selection and/or the panel's gathering of public input should represent the variety of units found within the 5 regions.



Wisconsin County Forest Association

www.wisconsincountyforests.com

Overview of Group or Community

The Wisconsin County Forest Association (WCFA) is comprised of 29 county members responsible for managing nearly 2.4 million acres of public forest land for timber, recreation, and wildlife. The majority of county forest acreage is in the northern half of the state, with a few small holdings as far south as Vernon County. In addition to producing timber resources, Wisconsin's county forests provide recreational opportunities for a wide variety of users. These users include but are not limited to hunters, birders, hikers, bikers, ATVers, snowmobilers, horseback riders and campers.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

Since the vast majority of the land under county forest management is deer range, the association was pleased to be invited to participate in this review of deer management unit goals and boundaries.

Even though most county foresters are deer hunters and talk with other deer hunters regularly, it is important for the WCFA to hear what hunters have to say since many of them hunt on county forest lands. We understand that deer hunters are the ones who actually have the ability to harvest deer from the forest and that we need to work together with them to manage the deer herd. We make an effort to take the opinions of our user groups into consideration when making decisions regarding the management of county forest lands. Unfortunately, these decisions sometimes seem to be weighted to one group and disregard the concerns of another.

Managing the county forests can be a balancing act between what users desire and what the resource can support. In trying to find that balance, we use available science to decide what is best for the land and resource first. County forests attempt to provide opportunities for as many user groups as possible, but conflicts can arise. We realize that we cannot provide everything that every group desires and often, the best balance is when many groups get something but none get everything.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

In the case of this review, the Wisconsin County Forest Association supports studying the concept of combining Deer Management Units and would support an actual combination if it becomes an option in the future.

Most county foresters are deer hunters and enjoy seeing deer, but we have all seen what damage can be done when there are too many deer. In the past several years many county forests have reported difficulty regenerating tree species such as oak, maple, hemlock and pines due to over-browsing by deer. Not only are these species valuable for timber products, but they provide good deer habitat as well. Foresters and hunters alike want good quality habitat, but with too many deer, tree and plant regeneration, future quality of the habitat, and timber production will be in jeopardy. Allowing deer populations to remain at levels that have been shown to cause negative impacts will result in long term habitat degradation and eventually reduced deer productivity. We must all weigh our current desires with the impacts they may have on the resources of future. Our goal must be a sustainable deer population that is in balance with the available habitat. In some areas of Wisconsin, that means lower deer numbers.

The WCFA supports the points of consensus reached by this stakeholder group. Generally speaking, we feel that the negative impacts on the county forests are due primarily to herds being above goal and support maintaining the current goals in most of the Northern and Central Forest units. We would support the deer committee if they chose to reduce goals in Northern Forest units from 25 to 20 deer/square mile of deer range. Due to the extent of browse damage in unit 3, we would also support reducing the goal to 15. The WCFA supports the consensus reached for the southern farmland units but would like the deer committee to strongly consider forest health and productivity in these units as well.



Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association

www.wideerhunters.org

Overview of Group or Community

The Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association (WDHA) was founded on the belief that all deer hunting related issues should be based science-based wildlife management principles and not personal or political agendas. We also believe in maintaining a healthy deer herd because we believe that what's best for the deer herd is what's best for the deer hunter.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

The WDHA's role on the panel was to ensure that the critical balance between the desires of deer hunters and the need to maintain healthy deer habitat was met. It became obvious there is a critical need to collect real data to determine where this balance lies. The currently process of setting goals involves discussions without any factual basis for knowing what the number should be. We also learned that higher goals do not always mean seeing more deer or reducing the need for controversial herd control seasons. In fact higher goals can be counter productive to hunting and the deer herd if habitat is destroyed or conflicts arise with other stakeholders.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

The WDHA believes there is insufficient data to recommend changes to the deer population goals at this time. Hopefully our recommendation to develop methods to collect actual data on agricultural, forestry and habitat (biodiversity) impacts will be available for the next 3 year review. Setting goals without objectively measuring deer impacts (or lack of) is impossible.

The WDHA also recognizes that accurate population estimates are critical and supports all efforts to improve the process. However we realize the relationship between deer population and the number of deer seen is lost as a direct result of deer baiting and feeding. While DNR management chose to exclude this from discussion it is important to understand that until hunters start seeing deer we will never reach consensus on population goals. It is disappointing that organizations very critical of DNR deer population methods continue supporting deer baiting while ceaselessly complaining about the lack of deer - even in years past with much higher populations. The real problem is we are not seeing deer, which will never be resolved until baiting and feeding are eliminated and deer resume their normal activities and are more distributed on the landscape.

The WDHA questions the purpose of having hunting groups not directly representing deer hunting on the committee. There was never a concern about deer goals on turkey or bear populations. Yet these non-deer groups exert political influence on deer hunting issues that prevent the elimination of deer baiting and feeding that a majority of deer hunters support. In our view this became another opportunity to push personal agendas without regard to what is best for the future of deer hunting, nor does this allow any real agreement on deer population goals.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

Our recommendations are to develop real measures of agricultural, forestry and habitat damages that can be tracked over time to set future deer population goals. We also support education efforts on the basic principles of wildlife management. We believe the simplest task to help resolve some of the major issues is to ban deer baiting and feeding statewide so hunters begin seeing more deer regardless of the population. Right now we are raising a generation who think deer hunting is walking 100 yards in the woods, dumping a pile of corn and then blaming the DNR when they don't see any deer. Until this cycle is broken there will never be enough deer in the eyes of many hunters who will never believe population estimates and demand higher goals, even to the detriment of the deer herd, other stakeholders and the future of the sport.



Wisconsin Muzzle Loading Association

www.wiscmla.org

Overview of Group or Community

The Wisconsin Muzzle Loading Association (WMLA) was formed in 1982 to promote the sport of muzzle loading in Wisconsin. The WMLA was the key player in getting the separate muzzle loader season established and we continue to represent the interests of Muzzle Loading Hunters, Shooters, and Collectors.

In addition to our commitment to the enjoyment of hunting, WMLA supports historical reenactments that provide invaluable learning experiences to younger generations; competitive shooting programs for all styles of muzzle loaders from flintlocks to in-lines to shotguns; and other related activities for men, women, and children through rendezvous across the state.

The WMLA also offers scholarships to both secondary and post-secondary students. These scholarships are awarded to college students who are pursuing degrees or high school or middle school students participating in summer programs. The programs must be related to the fields of history, outdoor recreation, natural resources management, reenactment, or shooting related sports.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

Being invited to participate on the Stakeholder Panel was taken as a serious commitment to help carry on the tradition of hunting for future generations. During the meetings and between meeting discussions, there was a lot of information delivered that required examination and consideration. It became apparent that the same information could be viewed from different perspectives making it important to identify the science and facts.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

Muzzle loaders value their ability to enjoy hunting in the ways of past generations to help preserve this heritage for future generations. For this reason, we support higher over winter goals that consider other factors including deer impact on biological/environmental aspects of Wisconsin's landscape.

Our WMLA members, like other hunting groups in Wisconsin, experienced poor results in 2008 and would like to see more deer during future seasons.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

More work is needed to educate both hunters and the general public on deer management practices and the methods used to measure herd populations and deer impacts on the environment.

While all panel members had strong viewpoints, all were in support of seeing deer in a healthy environment. If we can continue to work together, everyone will benefit. For this reason, we look forward to being invited to participate again on the panel for the next review in 3 years.



Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

www.wiwf.org

Overview of Group or Community

The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF) has a dual mission to engage in conservation education and to advocate for sound conservation policy. Our educational efforts are largely focused on youth education. We operate the MacKenzie Environmental Center in Poynette, grant scholarships for future resource professionals at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, provide wildlife educational trunks to schools for K-12 education, send kids to summer conservation camps and implement the National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard and Backyard Habitat programs.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

The WWF is very active in promoting strong conservation policies before the Wisconsin Legislature and the Department of Natural Resources. These conservation policies include the protection of fish and wildlife habitat, the protection of public access to lands and water for outdoor recreation, assuring the right to hunt, fish and trap and the pursuit of other outdoor recreational activities and the furtherance of conservation education with an emphasis on youth education.

Participating on this and other DNR review panels is considered an important part of WWF's commitment to preserving Wisconsin's wildlife and environment. Bringing stakeholders together is important to ensure our hunting and fishing heritage is strengthened and passed on to the next generation.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

We strongly believe that conservation policies should be scientifically, professionally and factually based, not politically based. Because of this, we support improvements to deer herd population estimates and measuring as accurately as possible deer impact on agriculture, forestry, and other social-economic factors.

In general, the WWF supports increasing over winter goals but recognizes the need to balance these within a long-term conservation strategy that ensures our forests, farmlands, and wetlands are protected for other wildlife.



Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association Inc.

www.wisconsinwoodlands.org

Overview of Group or Community

The Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA) is comprised of 14 chapters across the state, representing over 2,200 landowner members that own more than 300,000 acres of private forested land in Wisconsin. WWOA chapters host events allowing members to meet neighboring woodland owners, learn more about local forest issues and management techniques, and work with DNR and consulting foresters. An important part of WWOA's mission is to provide educational opportunities for members, their families, and the public to learn more about sustainable forest management of Wisconsin's forests.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

WWOA participated on the Deer Stakeholder Review Panel because we consider managing private forest land a responsibility of membership. WWOA felt this was a very worthwhile investment of time and effort.

Private woodland owners have an invested stake in the management of forested land to maintain the quality and value of their properties. Many woodland owners enjoy seeing and/or hunting deer on their land. This is just one part of carrying on traditions which in some families have been passed down for generations. Woodland owners also take pride in being good stewards of their land for other wildlife, native flowers and vegetation, and healthy maturing forests.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

During panel discussions, the WWOA position seemed at times to be a middle ground between hunter interests and biologist/agriculture/forestry interests. This made sense because woodland owners constantly must balance the benefits of deer on their land with the long-term impact deer have on forest regeneration, understory, and other wildlife. Because most woodland owners hunt their land, managing to lower deer herd populations negatively impacts their enjoyment and tradition of deer hunting. At the same time, over-population negatively impacts regeneration of forests and reduces the density of the understory needed to support the other types of wildlife and vegetation enjoyed by landowners. Add in timber and wildlife diseases, extreme seasonal storm damage, and other natural impacts, managing woodland properties including deer herd management is a complex task.

WWOA supported studying the consolidation concept of DMU boundaries to verify the benefits of using fewer DMU's to estimate deer herd size. WWOA would like to review study results before fully endorsing any proposed consolidation of DMU boundaries because this will directly impact woodland owners. WWOA supports deer management by professional resource managers that will result in natural forest regeneration and keep forests healthy. WWOA will support the panel's decision to agree to support the Deer Committee if valid scientific reasons to recommend reducing overwinter deer herd goals in the Northern Forest region are found. As these forests mature, their ability to support large deer herd populations diminishes as less sunlight reaches the forest floor resulting in less vegetation for deer to eat. There seemed to be panel recognition that the deer impact on forest regeneration needs to be considered in setting overwinter deer herd goals.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

Earn-a-buck (EAB) and the Sex-Age-Kill (SAK) were not in the Panel's charter to discuss but came up occasionally. It appears that more hunter and public education is needed on SAK and how programs like EAB affect SAK estimates. There still seems to be considerable distrust of SAK estimates that needs to be resolved for future panels to develop more specific overwinter goal recommendations.



Wisconsin State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (WSC-NWTF)

www.nwtf-wi.org

Overview of Group or Community

The WSC-NWTF has over 120 Local Chapters across the state and approximately 13,000 adult members. Our primary mission is the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of our hunting traditions. We support not only wildlife through conservation but conservation through hunting. We believe that hunters are true conservationists.

Lessons Learned from the Stakeholder Panel Process

The WSC-NWTF presence on the committee brought a diverse group together to work at formulating a three year DMU plan. While the groups all had different reasons for their involvement ours was to represent our membership that is also affected by these decisions. Together we can accomplish our goals while protecting Wisconsin's rich hunting traditions.

Although we focus mainly on the wild turkey, we have always been involved in all facets of hunting as a management tool. We realize that all may not see the issues exactly the same but we share a commitment by all to effectively manage wildlife in Wisconsin and across the nation.

Stakeholder Group Specific Input

The WSC-NWTF encourages increasing the over winter goals. In order to do so we must use all available data within our means and that data must be credible and socially acceptable to the hunting public. Hunters are the best management tool at keeping the deer herd within goal and we must foster a role that hunters and landowners collectively make management decisions on the deer herd in their area.

We understand that a one size fits all strategy across the state will not work and we need to address a variety of issues such as accurate and reliable herd estimates, available habitat, hunter harvest, predation and winter kill. Hunters can also provide a unique perspective to local herd estimates due to their vast knowledge of the landscape. This must all be balanced with the biological and social science when setting herd estimates.

We continue to see willingness from the hunting community to be very involved in the process. The online survey mined much information and it is clear the hunting public wants to be involved in the discussion of DMU goals and boundaries. Engaging the hunting community as equal partners in the discussion will help bridge the gap between managing hunters and managing the herd. It is clear that hunters do not like to be managed, but would rather manage the herd.

Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

Without the hunting communities support, getting to the population goals is all but impossible. To do that we need an accurate and reliable herd estimate that the hunting public can trust. Without accurate and reliable estimates the goal can not be defined, or be achieved. In order to reach the goal we need hunter support, accurate pre-hunt estimates, and reasonable herd goals. Currently administrative rule mandates the department perform a DMU review every three years and we support it and would ask for no extension.

Department recommendations

Good morning Chairs Hraychuck and Holperin and committee members.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide a bit more detail about the deer population goal changes. As Secretary Frank mentioned, the department considered the recommendations from the stakeholder panel, information collected at the public hearings, and biologist and deer advisory committee input when making these goal changes.

The Natural Resources Board adopted changes to the over-winter population goal in 15 Deer Management Units. In two Deer Management Units the goal will be lowered, and in 13 Units the Board adopted increases to the over-winter goal.

- In north eastern Wisconsin, the goal in unit 49A would decrease from 25 deer per square mile of range to 20. The decrease is consistent with the stakeholder consensus and the reduction is warranted due to concerns for forest regeneration and composition impacts.
- The rule decreases in the goal in unit 68B in Dodge county from 30 deer per square mile of range to 25. Unit 68B is adjacent to the CWD zone and is chronically over goal. Hunter pressure in there is not high enough to maintain the population at 30 deer per square mile of range

without an EAB-type season structure, and the unit has a history of high agricultural damage.

- The Board adopted an increase in the goal in units 6 and 14 in far northern WI. These changes were supported by hunters in the area at the public meetings. Department biologists and staff are confident that these units can be managed effectively at these goals and that agricultural damage and forest composition and regeneration impacts are not of great concern at the higher goal.
- The goal in metro units 59M (LaCrosse county), 60M (St. Croix county), 64M (Green Bay), and 77M (the Milwaukee metro area) is increased from 10 to 15 deer per square mile of range in this rule. We believe that 15 deer per square mile of range is a reasonable objective for these metro units and that goal balances hunters' and residents' desire to hunt and observe deer near these urban centers.
- Finally, the rule increases in over winter goals in several farmland units in southern Wisconsin (units 57, 59B, 60A, 60B, 64, 77C, and 80B.) We are confident that these units can be effectively managed at these goals and that agricultural damage and ecosystem impacts are not likely to exceed tolerable levels at the higher goal.

Department recommendations

Good morning Chairs Hraychuck and Holperin and committee members.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide a bit more detail about the deer population goal changes. As Secretary Frank mentioned, the department considered the recommendations from the stakeholder panel, information collected at the public hearings, and biologist and deer advisory committee input when making these goal changes.

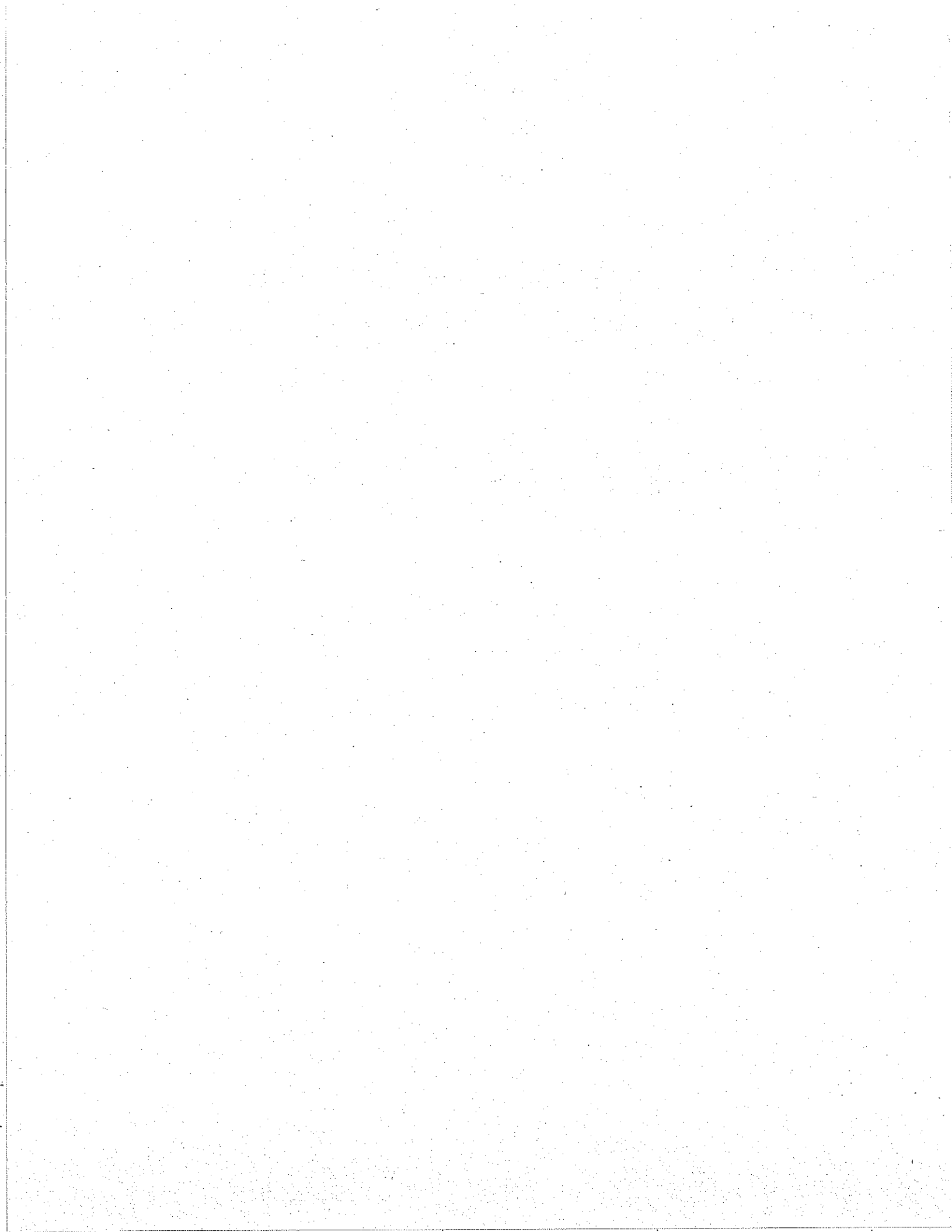
The Natural Resources Board adopted changes to the over-winter population goal in 15 Deer Management Units. In two Deer Management Units the goal will be lowered, and in 13 Units the Board adopted increases to the over-winter goal.

- In north eastern Wisconsin, the goal in unit 49A would decrease from 25 deer per square mile of range to 20. The decrease is consistent with the stakeholder consensus and the reduction is warranted due to concerns for forest regeneration and composition impacts.
- The rule decreases in the goal in unit 68B in Dodge county from 30 deer per square mile of range to 25. Unit 68B is adjacent to the CWD zone and is chronically over goal. Hunter pressure in there is not high enough to maintain the population at 30 deer per square mile of range

These changes increase the statewide population goal by about 11,500 deer.

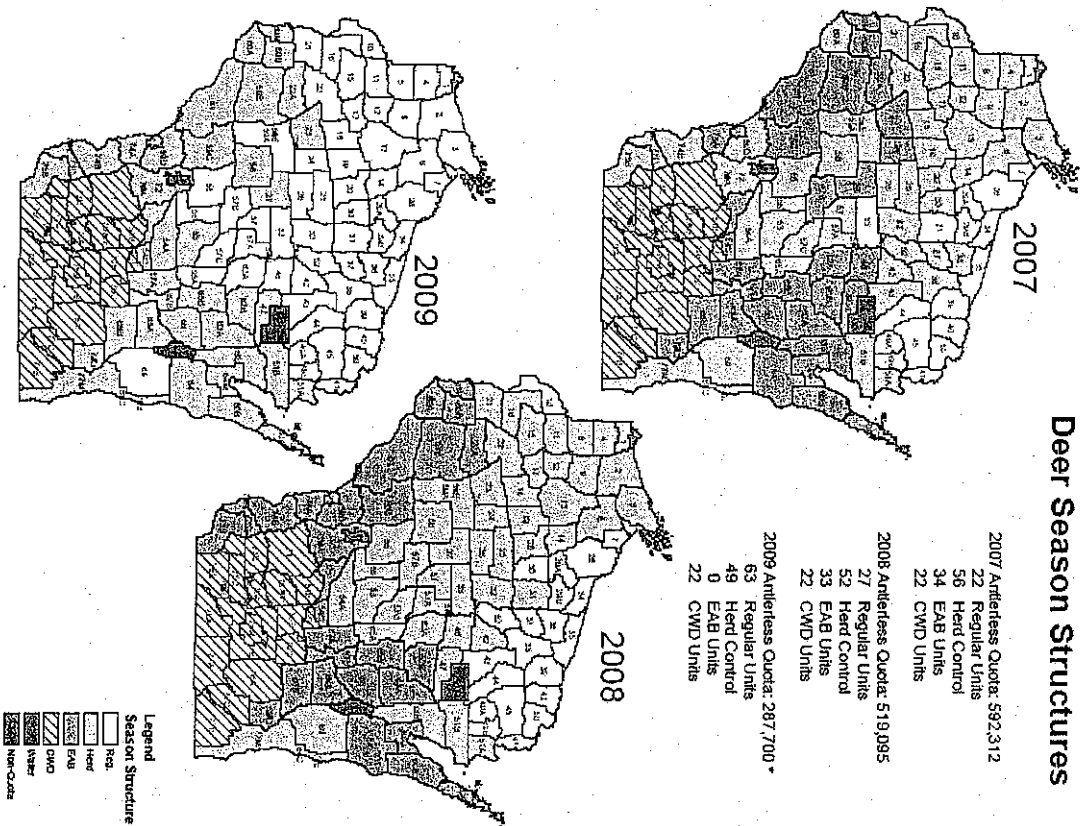
We are committed to continued monitoring of the effects of deer populations across the state and we will re-evaluate deer management unit goals and boundaries again in three years.

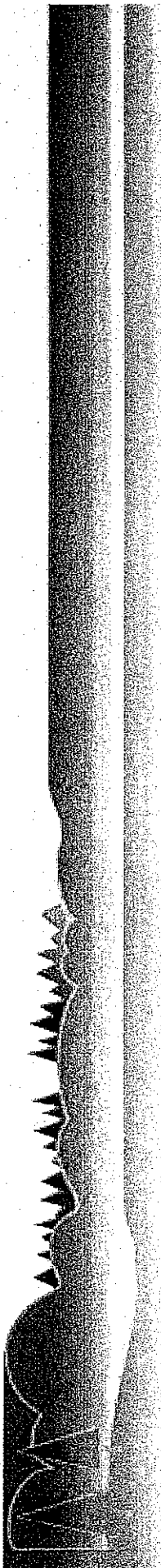
Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. We look forward to answering any questions you may have.



Antlerless Quotas and Season Structure 07-09

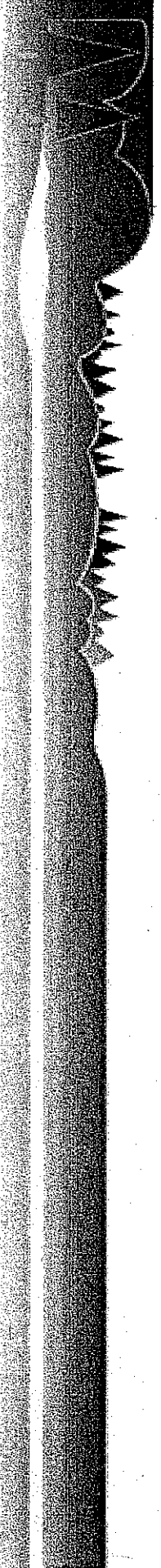
Deer Season Structures





Antlerless Quota Reduction 2007 - 2009

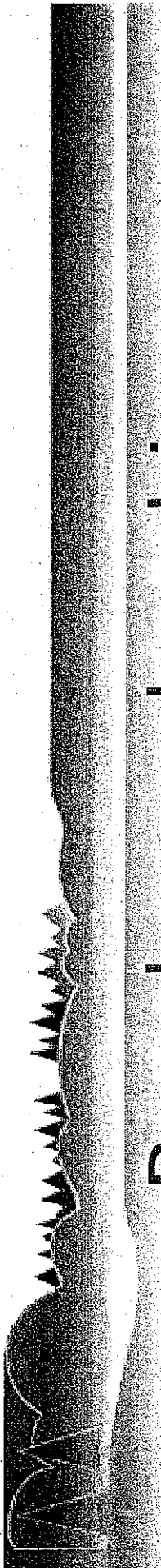
	2007	2008	2009
Antlerless quota	519,312	519,095	287,700
Regular Units	22	27	63
Herd Control Units	56	52	49
EAB Units	34	33	0
CWD Units	22	22	22



Deer Population Goals

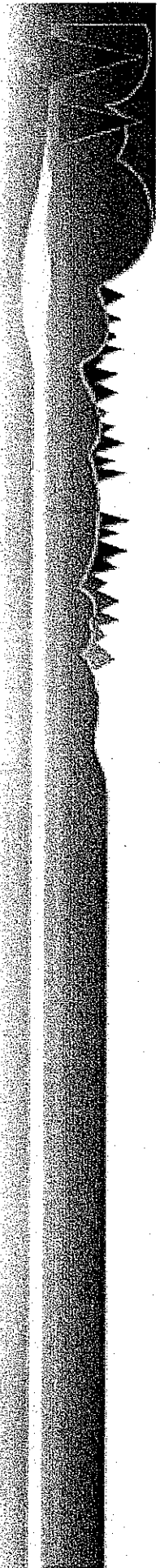
NR 1.15 (2) (a)

- The department shall seek to maintain a deer herd in balance with its range and at deer population goals reasonably compatible with social, economic and ecosystem objectives for each deer management unit



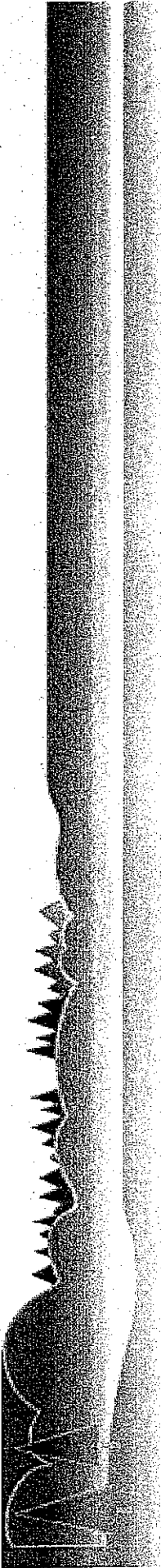
Panel membership

- Quality Deer Management Association
- Safari Club International
- UW - Madison Forest and Wildlife Ecology
- UW- Parkside Biological Sciences
- Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association
- Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association
- Wisconsin Conservation Congress
- Wisconsin County Forests Association
- Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association
- Wisconsin DNR
- Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
- Wisconsin Muzzleloaders
- Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
- Wisconsin Wild Turkey Federation
- Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association

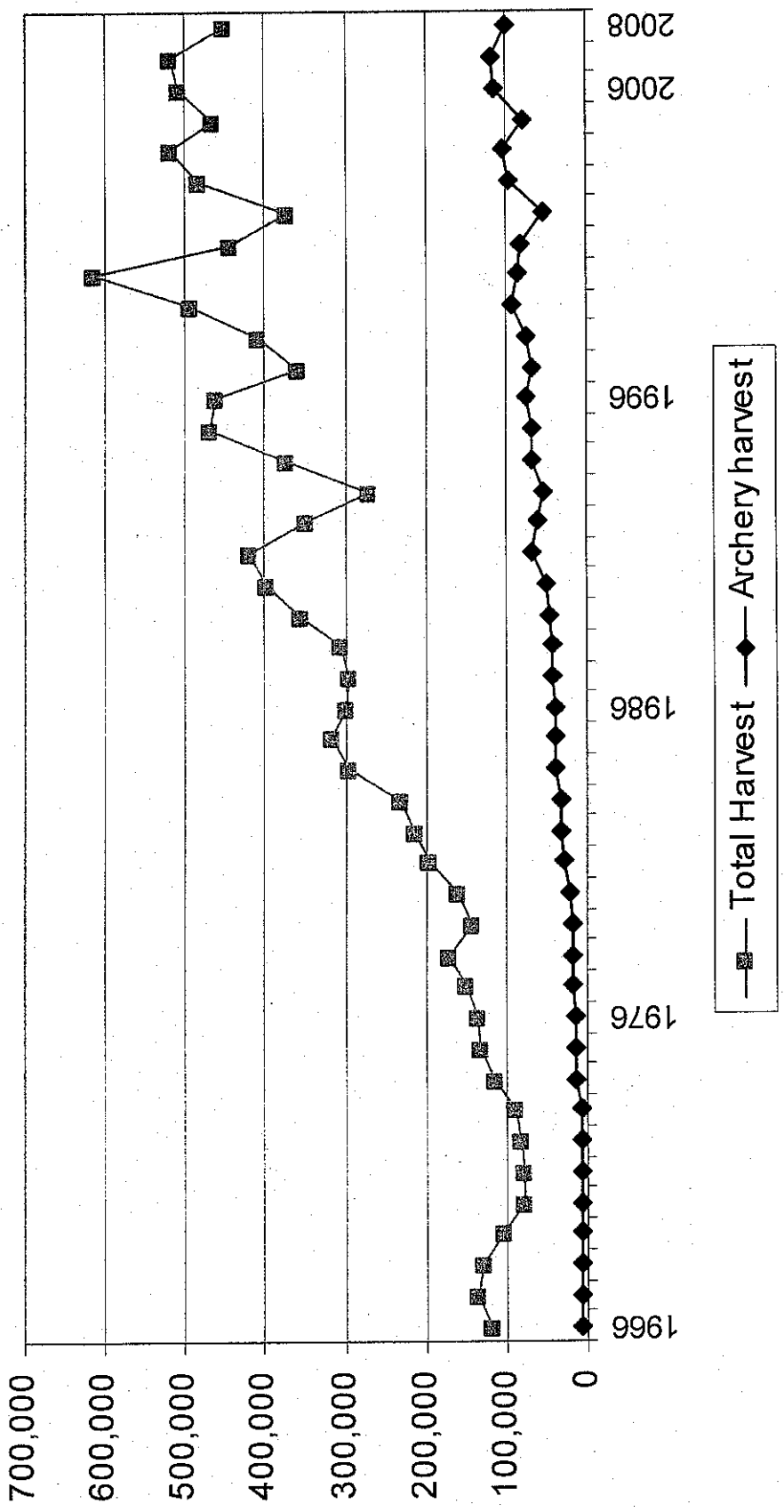


Balancing deer population goals

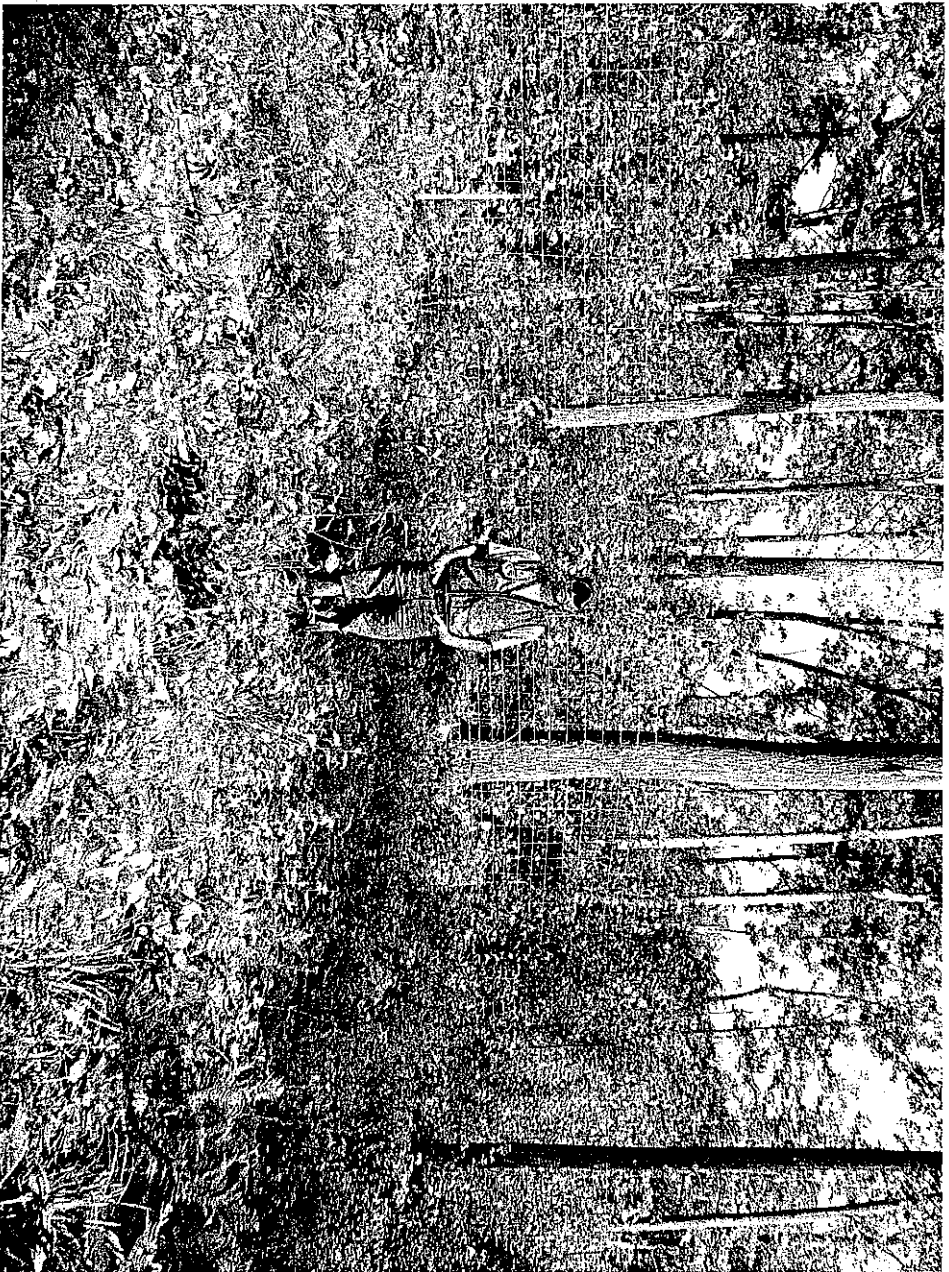
- Hunter success
- Forest and economic impacts of deer browsing
- Agricultural damage
- Concern for deer-vehicle collisions
- Disease transmission
- Ojibwe treaty harvest
- Hunter access to land in a deer management unit
- Ability to keep the deer herd in a DMU at goal.
- Carrying capacity



Total deer harvest 1966-2008



Forest sustainability



Behind this forester, deer have been excluded by fencing. Where he is standing, deer browse has impacted the regenerating forest.



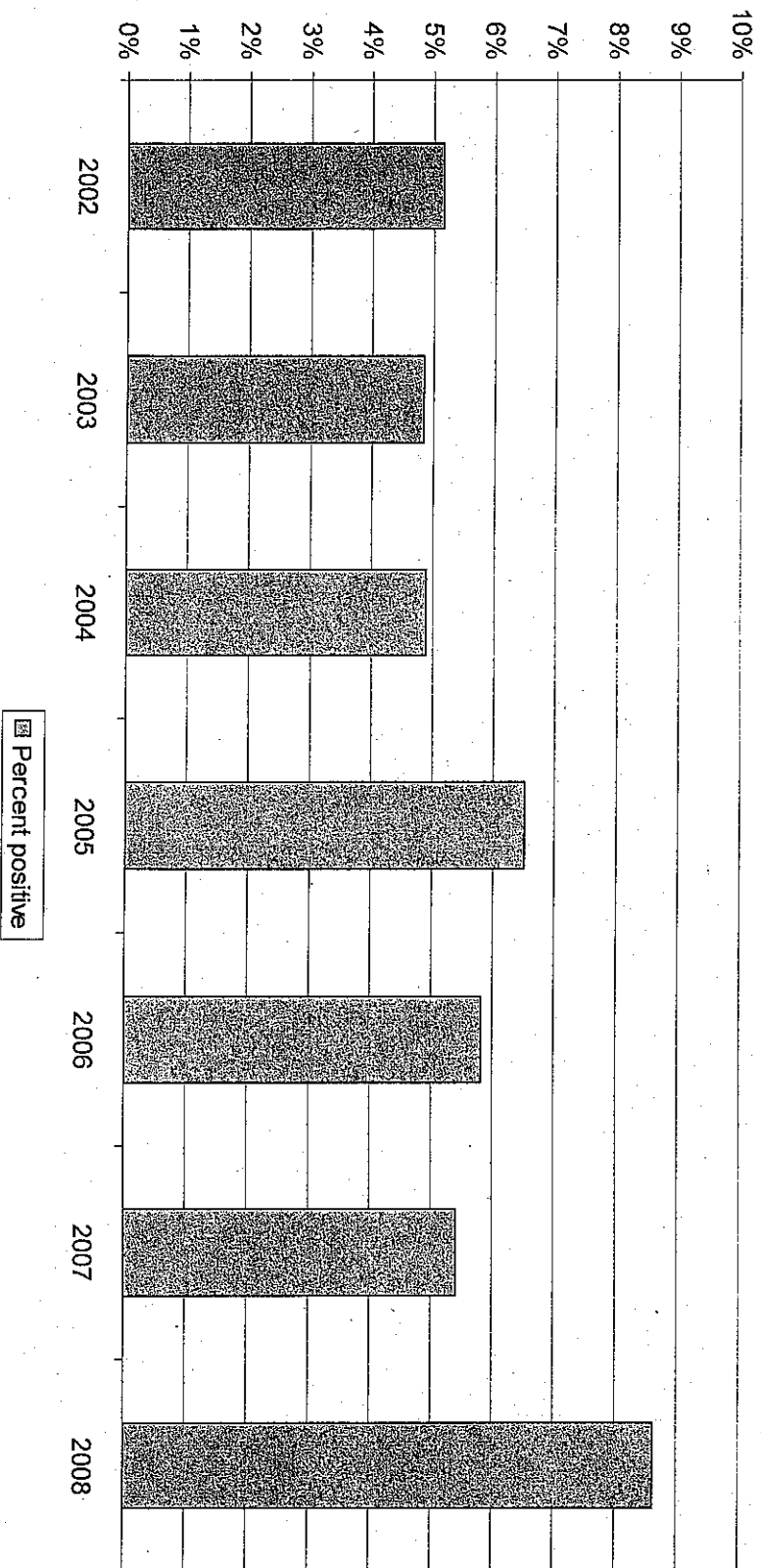
Agriculture Damage

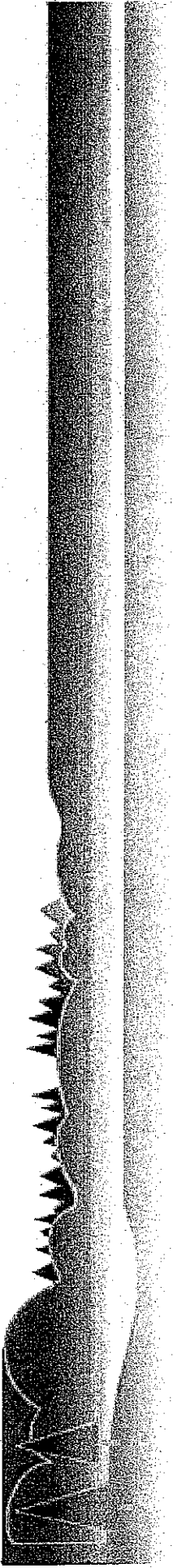
Agriculture Damage Abatement and Claims Program 2000 vs. 2008

	2000	2008
Total acres damaged by deer	15,440	8,155
Bushels of corn lost	339,009	172,970
Bushels of soybeans lost	70,927	30,661

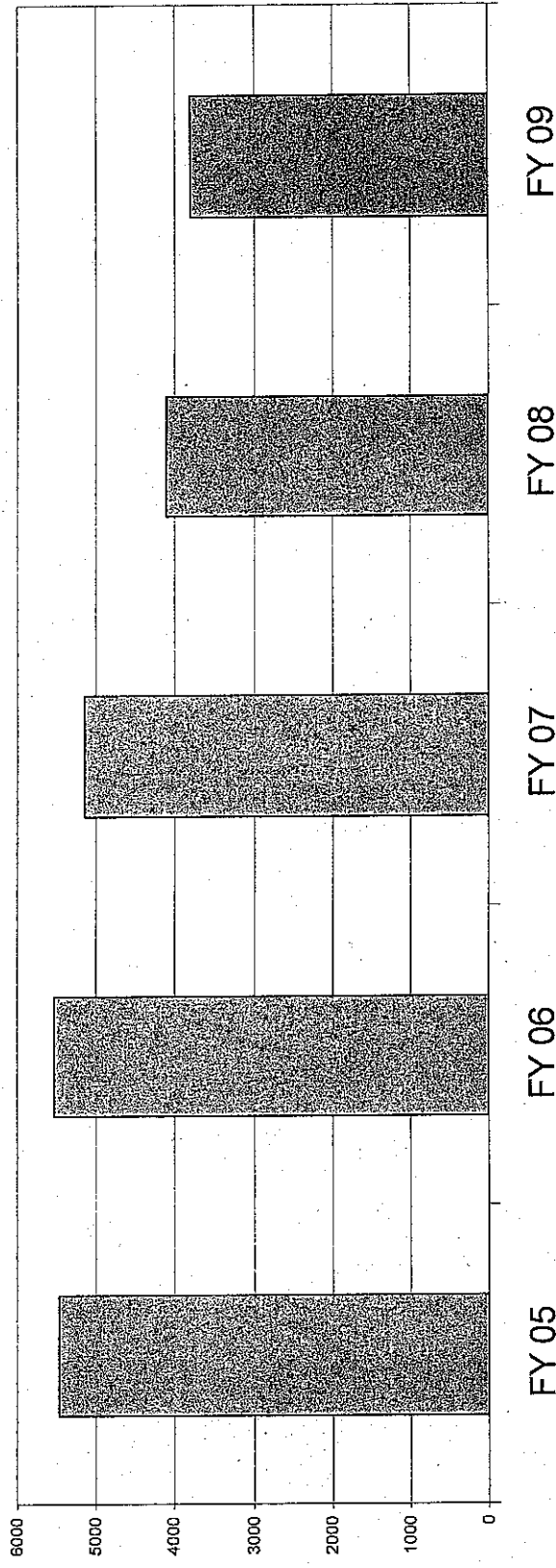
CWD prevalence

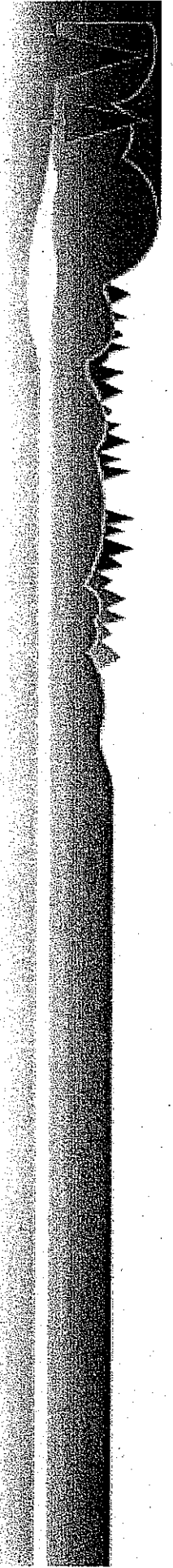
Core Area CWD Prevalence Rates 2002-08



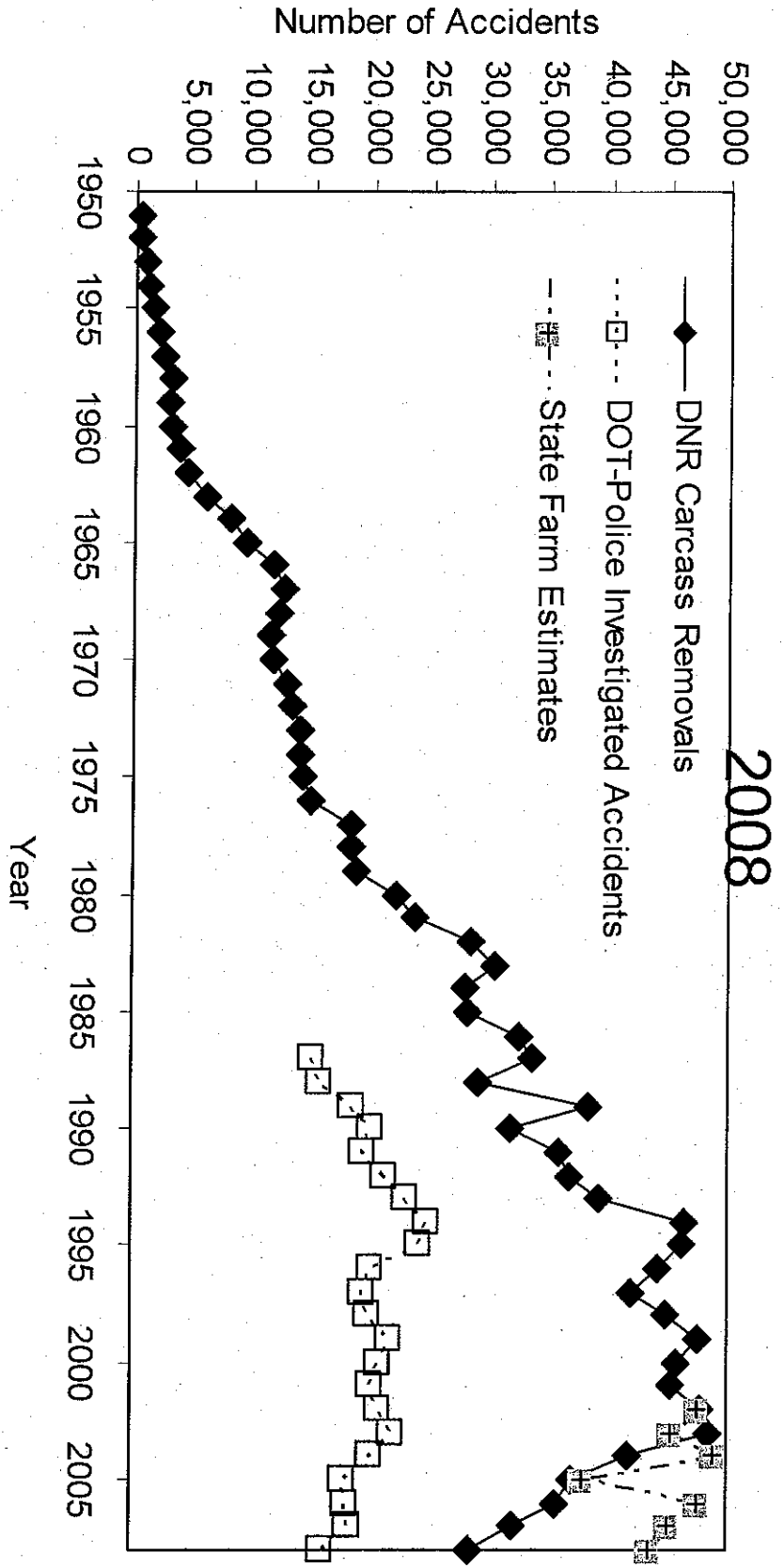


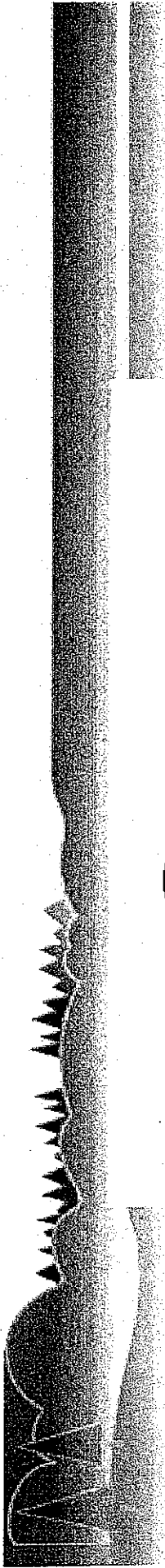
Deer salvage permits issued



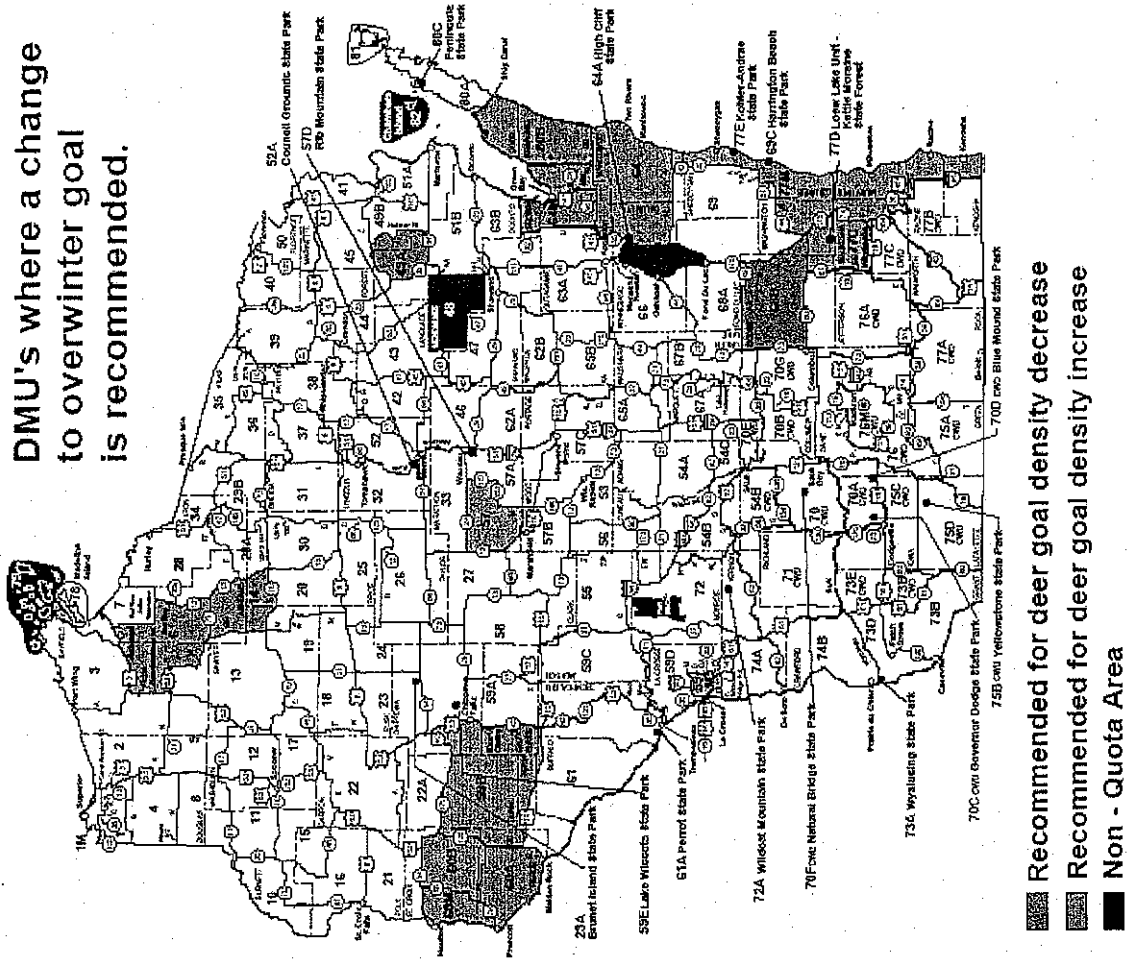


Deer-Vehicle Accidents in Wisconsin, 1950-2008





DMU's where a change to overwinter goal is recommended.



- ▨ Recommended for deer goal density decrease
- ▩ Recommended for deer goal density increase
- Non - Quota Area

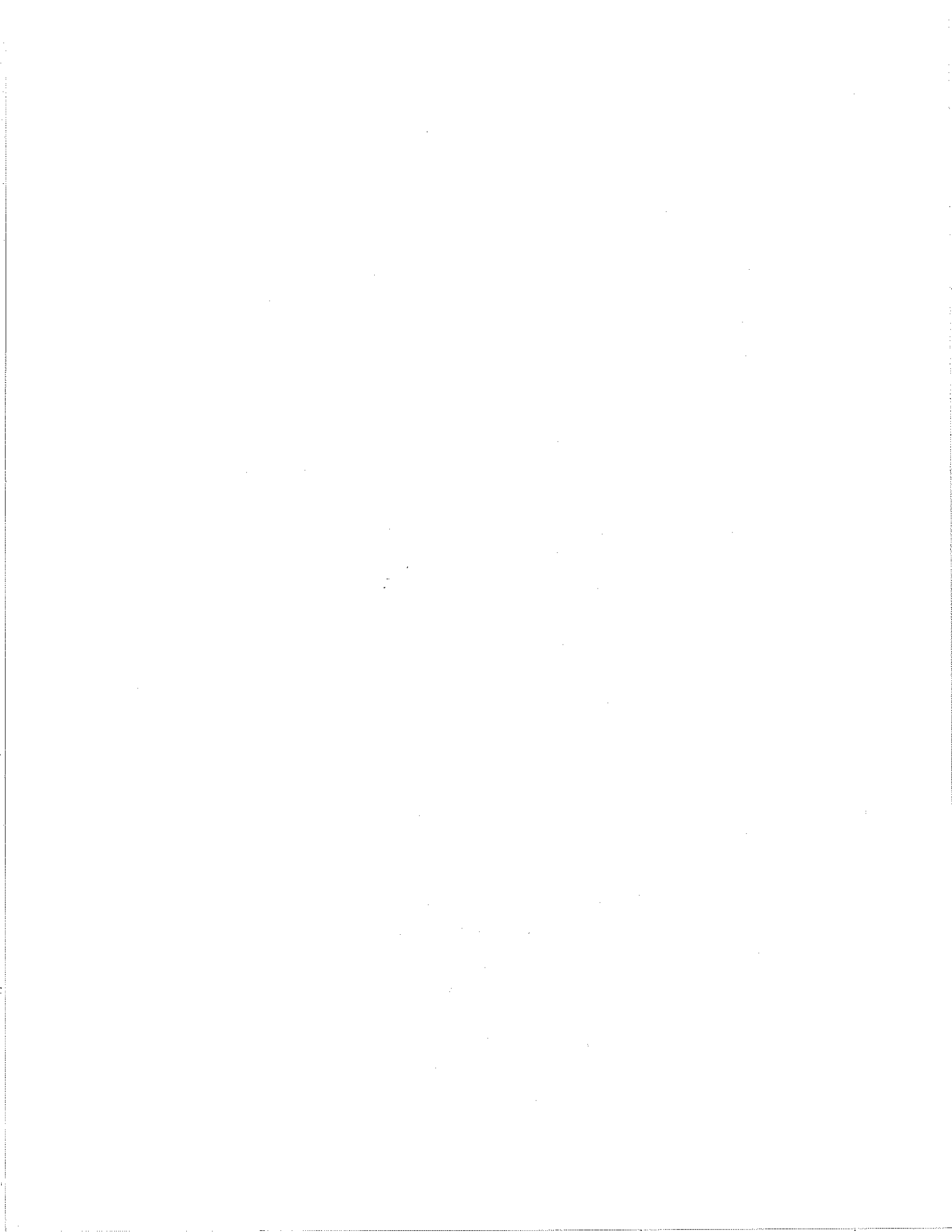
Deer Population Decline below acceptable limits.

To: Joint Wildlife Committee

From: Marshfield WI Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited.

The Board of Whitetails Unit Marshfield on behalf of it's 450 members and 100's of sponsors ask the legislature to take action to prevent additional harm to Wisconsin's once great Whitetail resource.

- 1. Suspend any attempts to increase from a 9 to a 16 day gun season.**
- 2. Increase overwinter goals by 20% immediately as the dept will still continue to believe that many units are over goal. Obviously the public's perception of the Deer population is one of being below goal in much of the state.**
- 3. Help bring Social Economics back to at least 50% of the decision making regarding deer populations. The Hunters, Fishers, and Trappers provide 78% of the dept's budget yet find themselves being out lobbied by fringe groups such as The Woodland Owners Assc, The County Foresters Assc, and others. 59% of wooded land is privately held, most by hunters who manage for Deer, Grouse, and Small Game. Yet the W O A has a seat at the table as an equal stakeholder. County foresters complain that they suffer losses to deer. They also suffer revenue losses when hunters no longer show up to hunt their counties. Of course that is not what they are looking at.**
- 4. EAB is a failed policy and should have been used only in the most extreme overpopulation situations. Population reduction can be achieved with FREE or LOW COST antlerless tags. EAB promotes illegal registration, ie: Car kills, Reregisters, Unit to Unit transportation. EAB destroys any credibility in the SAK model and requires atleast 5 years to recover to reliability. In addition inflates**



the population kill data and skews any attempt to determine acceptable harvest for the upcoming season in affected units. EAB penalizes Small Parcel Owners, Public Land hunters, and those who have tried to manage to goal, while rewarding those who manage for large populations and harvest very few antlerless.

- 5. Scouting Camera use is in excess 200K making the hunting public much more knowledgeable about the Deer population. This monitoring goes on year round. The dept rejects most hunter opinions because those who operate the SAK model have most of the control. Local game managers have opinions which they share but if they want to move up they need not rock the boat.**

Why would the dept remove units from HC only to attempt to sell 18,000 antlerless permits in 55, 7500 in 57B, and so on.

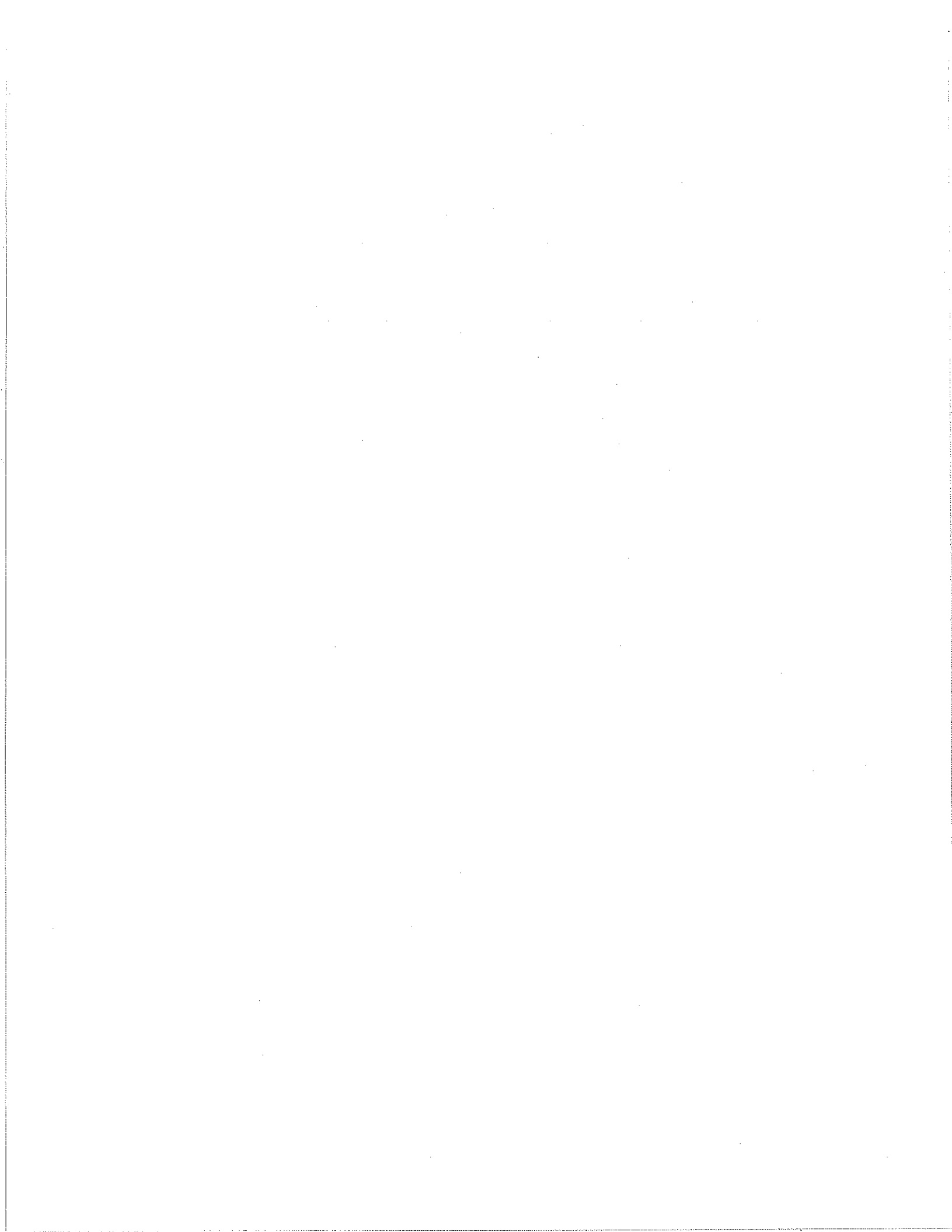
We have seen the tradition and the quality of hunting erode over the last 5 years. Hunter success and declining car deer mishaps tell the story which we the hunters reported vigorously only to be blown off by dept officials.

We believe the Hunting, Landowning, Budget Providing public deserves better.

Please help improve hunting by:

- Increasing over winter goals by 20%**
- Abandoning any 16 day season proposals indefinitely**
- Eliminate EAB and Oct T zones. Exceptions allowed only in extreme situations after Free tags have been available for three years.**
- Population Modeling must be improved to get public buy in.**

**Robert Fredrich Pres., Mike Behling V.P. , Marlin Laidlaw
BOD. Whitetails Untl. Marshfield Wi.**



Comments on the 2009 Deer Season Review

Submitted by Rep. Louis J. Molepske, Jr.

to the

Joint Public Hearing

of the

Assembly Committee on Fish and Wildlife

and the

Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry, and Natural Resources.

December 17, 2009

12/15/2009 **Joseph "Dick" Lange**, Facilities Manager, Officer-At-Large, "Wisconsin Health care Engineering Association, 611 St. Joseph's Avenue, Marshfield, WI, 54409, Dick.Lange@ministryhealth.org

I have hunted 41 years now in Wisconsin. I hunt, on private property, that has 7 acres of food plots, and did not see a deer all gun season in Rusk County. Imagine that. Please, stop the doe killings. The wolves and bear have taken most every fawn this spring and now with another tough winter ahead I swear it is just getting worse. I walked 80 acres yesterday in the new snow. 2 sets of deer tracks. The economic impact to Wisconsin is going to be devastating. We need a bucks only season, bow and gun, for at least two years. And we need to control the bear and wolves or all your efforts will be in vain. I took a large black bear this fall after waiting 8 years for a tag. I baited from April forward and had camera up. I had 15 different bear in that bait! The sows had three cubs each. Please, for the sake of my grandsons hunting opportunities, listen to the hunters that are in the wood. Thanks for your time in dealing with this mess.

12/15/2009 **Chester D Bruns Jr**, cdbcmb@hotmail.com

I am 65 yrs old and i have been hunting for over 50 yrs the last 10 yrs bowhunting only. My testimony on our current management of our deer herd is this .For over the past 6 yrs the deer herd has been completely mismanaged. 1 we have over harvested our doe population 2 way to many doe permits given out .this has resulted in desimating our deer herd.3 WE DONT NEED THE EARN A BUCK HUNT. 4 WE DONT NEED THE EARLY DOE HUNT IN OCT. 5WE DONT NEED THE DECEMBER DOE HUNT 6WE DONT THE COMPLETE ERADICTCATION OF DEER IN THE C W D AREAS. WE NEED TO GET BACK TO THE BASICS ON OUR DEER HUNTING REGULATIONS. 1 , ONLY ONE 9 DAY GUN SEASON WITH THE LIMIT OF ONE BUCK AND ONE DOE .ARCHERY SEASON TO BE ONE BUCK AND ONE DOE. This has to be done starting with the 2010 seasons. I live in wisconsin rapids and in the last 3 yrs of bowhunting i have seen the least amont deer ever . We truely need to address this issue immedietly. Thank You for taking the time to listen to my thoughts on this issue. It is very much appreciated.

12/15/2009 **Wally Shulfer**, 4888 County Road T, Amherst, WI 54406m wkshulfer@wi-net.com

I will be unable to attend the hearing this Thursday in Madison and would like to submit to you my testimony, suggestions and comments as per the article in the Central Wisconsin, Inc. newspaper on Sunday, Dec. 13. I live in eastern Portage County. I own 160 acres and have 6 hunters on my land for the past 20 years.

This season was the worst deer hunting season I have ever experienced as far as complete number of deer I saw. I have talked to my neighbors and many other hunters in Portage County and I've heard the exact same thing. There were no antlerless deer to shoot.

In Sunday's article, Keith Warnke (big game ecologist for the DNR) said the drop in the number of does harvested in central Wis. this year has a lot to do with the fact that there were fewer antlerless tags available. Regardless of the fact that there were fewer antlerless tags available, hunters did not SEE does to harvest.

Warnke also said that there were less fawns because of colder than normal winters. Excuse Me! I've lived on the same farm for 20 years and have seen plenty of hard winters before the past two winters and have still seen plenty of deer. Maybe, just maybe the DNR MADE us shoot too many fawns and does before we could shoot a buck via "Earn A Buck" for 3 years in a row in my unit, 62B. Warnke should probably go to some of the registration stations where EAB is required and see what comes in as does. (A lot of nubber bucks and doe fawns.) This is the first year in three years of EAB that we did not have to shoot a doe and were happy about that. The few we saw, we did not shoot, hoping to rebuild the herd.

My suggestion is to go back to the old way of hunting. One hunter, one buck tag for at least 3-4 years. Then, possibly go back to "either-or" tags. NO EAB's, NO BONUS TAGS, NO T-ZONES!!! I hope that the DNR and Warnke will admit they were wrong for once and hopefully the hunter's voices will finally be heard. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

12/15/2009 **Mike Fuge**, Stevens Point, mtfuge1984@yahoo.com

I read an article asking for input from the hunters in regards to the deer season. Well for starters, the season isn't over yet and we must take everyone into consideration when it comes to the deer herd, hunters, non-hunters, landowners, snowmobilers, sporting good store owners, motel owners, resort owners,

restaurant owners, gas station owners, grocery store owners, etc. Let's face it, deer hunters who use a bow, gun or muzzleloader spend a lot of money enjoying a passion that is near a dear to them.

At the end of the regular gun deer season I sat down and went over my personal notes that I have been keeping since 1974. Back when I started deer hunting we had a group of 4 hunters which grew to a group of 12 in the 1980's and has since fallen back to 4 hunters. When I started hunting we had to apply for party tags and if we got one it was great, because it meant we didn't have to wait for a buck to harvest something. Even then a party tag was no guarantee that we would get a deer. Then came the Hunters Choice tags, where we had a choice of either shooting a buck or a doe. This really helped put a lot of venison in our freezers. Then in the mid 1980's we had a season with a lot of snow and very few bucks were harvested, the hunters complained and the DNR extended our gun season. Which in turn brought Earn A Buck, where we had to shoot a doe before shooting a buck. Which in turn brought Quality Deer Management into the forefront. Maybe if we don't shoot a small buck, we'll get a chance at shooting a big one next year.

Well, it worked. We have been over run with deer for many years, hunter success rates have been as high as 75% according to the DNR harvest records. The way we hunt has changed over the years, we no longer make deer drives and move the deer around. We put up elaborate deer stands with heaters and TV's so we don't miss the Packer games. In my mind hunters have become lazy and expect too much without putting too much bad into the sport. Hunters expect to see a deer behind every tree and want the DNR to make sure it happens.

We have to take a step back and look at what we have become. Personally I think our group has become a good bunch of people who have learned how to manage our property for what we want to see. I am very fortunate to be involved with a group of people who want what is best for the deer herd in our area that we hunt. This also helps out with many other species of wildlife that just happen to be out there. We have become stewards of the land and do our best to insure that we have a great deer population to hunt every year.

I have to laugh when I hear people who hunt deer 9 days every year complain about what the DNR has done to the population. The DNR is out there to manage the deer at population goals set by the hunters. Hunters have to realize that the property that they hunt have carrying capacities, this is the number of deer that can survive during the hardest times. If they want to see higher numbers, the hunters have to get involved in better management practices. Which means learning what is best for the deer and putting that plan into action. I hear many so called "hunters" who don't recall success rates in the low 30% range, they just remember the good years.

Deer management is a fine balancing act. The "hunters" have to learn how to be better stewards of the land and work with the DNR to make the herd the best it can be. If this means setting up a season where we have to draw for buck tags, or implement something like 4 points on a side rule, so be it. The herd will be better in the long run for it.

So, how did my season go. On our property, which is managed for big bucks, we harvested what is the #2 non-typical buck in Waupaca County, one 2 1/2 year old 8 pointer and 8 does for a total of 10 deer so far. The fog hindered the gun hunt opening weekend, and now with the snow, the deer will get into survival mode pretty quick. Which means they are easier to hunt and harvest.

Has the season been a good one as compared to the past. We averaged harvesting 2 bucks and 10 does over the past ten seasons, and I would have to say that we are right on track again. The deer numbers are stable in our area that we hunt, but again we spend a lot of time and money making the herd the best it can be.

What could you do to help the herd along? I believe that we need to be allowed to supplemental feed in areas where the Winter Severity Index has been high. I know that everyone is worried about CWD, but supplemental feed has been proven to work in Colorado where CWD was first discovered. Allowing landowners to feed the deer and other animals by broadcasting feed either manually or with the use of feeders after the end of deer season would do a lot for the herd.

What we do not need is a longer gun season, or an earlier opener. With an earlier opener we would be putting a lot of pressure on the deer during the breeding season. Which in turn will make the deer nocturnal, causing many does not to breed until late December. This will result in a much lower fawn recruitment rate, and in the end we'll be shooting a lot of small spike and fork horn bucks. Then there is the issue of the proposed Holiday Hunt! This hunt is proposed to take place during the rut in December, which will again cause many does to be bred in January, causing smaller fawn birth weights, and lower fawn recruitment rates.

I feel that the DNR is trying to decimate the herd and it's time that the landowners and hunters take back what is ours and do the right thing. It won't happen overnight, but we've got to start somewhere!

10/14/09 **John Keener**, Amherst, WI 54406, E-mail eskoflat@wi-net.com

I am writing to you in regards to the Legislature's Assembly Committee on Fish and Wildlife public hearing scheduled to be held at 10:00 a.m. December 17, 2009. I am a fifty-eight year old life long resident of the Township of Amherst in Portage County. I retired last December as Captain of Operations and Communications with the Portage County Sheriff's Department after 33 years of service. My family and I love to hunt. We own land in the TN of Lanark and built a log cabin on it and hunt on that same property. Our passion is deer hunting and being outdoors.

I am writing to ask that you listen to the voices of the Wisconsin hunters as they speak at the public hearing this week in regards to the continued ridiculous harvest of our Wisconsin deer herd. About the time I was born in 1951 the first deer started migrating down from northern Wisconsin into the Portage County area. Since that time our deer herd has grown and expanded and numerous changes have occurred. Hunting methods, season structure changes, methods of harvest, predation from other animals, crop damage complaints, and a host of other sources of elation or disgust regarding the deer herd have come about from various sources over the years.

I am fully aware that a socially acceptable level of the deer herd must be found. Compromises must be made and met. However, the past few years have seen a drastic over-kill of animals. The DNR is handing out tags like there is no end to the deer. This year hunters in some areas of the state were still able to obtain six tags if they purchased an archery and a gun license and were still able to go buy more if they wanted to. The kill has steadily been falling at a rate that is unacceptable to the hunters. The past three years during the gun season I have seen a total of three deer during the six days of opening weekends. And this is in an area of Portage County that was noted for its excellent whitetail population and hunting.

Each year as the kill drops the DNR comes up with different excuses. This year it was the fog, the standing corn, the reduced Earn A Buck areas, and water in the swamps. Last year it was the cold opening weekend and whatever else they could think of that might apply. I don't recall what it was the year before that. Actually it's very simple - they have reduced the deer population to such ridiculously low levels that there aren't any deer to see. If I might suggest something I would strongly urge you to request the car/deer accident report totals for the last ten years from the Portage County Sheriff's Department records custodian. Since the number of vehicular miles travelled have increased and the number of roads have increased along with the number of vehicles travelling those roads I could only imagine that the car/deer accident rate would increase if they herd levels remained somewhat consistent. You'll be shocked to see the reduction of accidents in the county. Naturally less deer related vehicle accidents is a great thing, but it is also a very good indication of where our deer herd currently stands no matter what the DNR tries to tell us.

I'm asking that someone steps up to the plate to get the DNR to listen to the hunters for a change and have them reduce their harvest goals so that our deer herd can respond to a reasonable level. I don't need to harvest a deer every year to be happy but I certainly would like to see a few every so often. As a hunter I'm sure you know that we need to keep our youth interested in hunting for the future of the sport. As it stands now I'm not confident that the youth will maintain their enthusiasm if they sit all weekend long or longer and not see any deer. One of my friends had a son and daughter that wanted to start hunting this year. Dad had them save their own money for their licenses to make them feel some ownership, and they practiced with their guns and helped pick out spots to hunt, put up stands and did all of the rituals that go along with pre-hunt preparation. They were excited and talked about deer hunting for weeks prior to the youth hunt. The youth hunt came and went with no deer sightings. So they did more preparation for the nine day gun season and got excited all over again in anticipation for that hunt. Well, opening weekend came and went with no deer sightings again. As expected for anyone in that age bracket they lost their enthusiasm and excitement and announced that they would spend their money on something other than a deer license next year. We just lost two young hunters to carry on our heritage and traditions because of the terribly low deer densities. Let's bring the deer population back to a reasonable level that we can all live with. And while doing that let's get the DNR to get off their high horse and start listening to the people

that support their projects and programs with their license dollars. I have written to DNR Big Game Specialist Keith Warnke the last two years with my concerns and have also written to DNR Secretary Matt Frank. I have yet to receive any form of response. I recently wrote to State Senator Russ Decker thanking him for speaking out against the DNR's deer management program and offering him any assistance I may be able to provide him in his attempt to gain the DNR's ear with our complaints.

I firmly believe that the deer population in DMU 65B in Portage County is too low. DMU 65B is a fairly large area. I can't speak for all areas of 65B, and I can't suggest a remedy for the low population other than to back off on the tags issued and the harvest levels and over winter goals. I don't claim to be a wildlife biologist but I do know that a person is hard pressed to find a good population of deer in my hunting area. The hunting camp on 300 acres just east of me closed at noon on the second day of this years gun season because the property owner would not allow any more deer to be taken. Out of the 12 or 14 hunters in his camp they only saw four deer on opening weekend. He plans on not allowing any hunters next year. So if that type of thinking becomes prevalent the DNR's management methods have just been thrown out the window by the hunting public.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please listen to the hunters at the public hearing and try to sort out the good ideas presented. I believe the future of deer hunting for many of us older hunters is in the hands of those who will listen and make informed decisions. Some of us may not have many years left to hunt and to enjoy seeing a plentiful deer herd again; and then there are the youth who may not want to hunt in the future because of what they see today.

12/14/2009 **Scott Anderson**, picklepollock@yahoo.com

I was not going to waste my time writing this, however I was told by a friend that he got a reply from you. So you do actually read your mail. Great.

As for my deer hunt this year, I didn't hunt. I took my 12 yr. old this year and was hoping we could score his first deer. Opening day we hunted in a QDM area because I knew there was a Very nice buck in the area. Got him on camera. 160 acres all to ourselves. Nice stand, great location, everything was right. We saw 1 doe, (which, we don't shoot does), and then a small 8 pointer. Let him go too. My son was discouraged because he couldn't shoot, so we went behind our house. Between my brother-in-laws and myself, we have 80 acres, mostly wooded with some cedar swamp. Perfect. Now my son can shoot anything except fawns. NEVER saw another deer!!!! I've been hunting since 1982 and have never seen so few deer, ever! Even driving around, places we used to see lots of deer, now we're lucky to see any in the fields. Very sad. I know there are some around, just not the numbers the DNR thinks there is.

I personally know of one local farmer who bought a brand new ATV a few years ago with the money that he made from crop damage tags. He passed them out like candy. He even said, "You don't even have to shoot it on my property, just don't tell anyone." And I know this happens with farmers all across Wi..

When I heard that anyone that wanted to shoot a doe in our area had to BUY a doe tag, my jaw just about hit the counter!!!! Maybe we should pass out more crop damage tags, hold a few more T Zone hunts, and try to extend the season. (glad that last one was shot down)!!

I also know of at least 12-15 guys that are not deer hunting next year. And thats a fact. As for me, my son and I are going to South Dakota prairie dog hunting some time in Aug..It will be more fun than looking at gray squirrels and woodpeckers. It is sad that it has come down to this. Maybe we'll buy an out of state deer tag. However the Wi. DNR will not be making any money off of me, or my son any time soon. I'm sure they'll make it up somewhere else. Fishing licenses, park stickers, snowmobile registration, ect.ect....

12/14/2009 **Dan Schwalenberg**, stranz03@sbcglobal.net

The purpose of this letter is to address the damaging and ruinous Whitetail Deer Management practices that are currently in place and upheld by our states DNR & NRB. The DNR of our state has along history and reputation for the outstanding track record of positively managing our states wildlife resources, but something had gone seriously wrong with their managing of our States Whitetail Deer herd. Long term damage has been done to our states deer herd through management tools such Earn A Buck (wish I hopes never returns) and excessive numbers and years of antlerless deer permits. I oppose all the new proposals that the NRB is currently proposing. I feel we need to hire an outside third party to estimate our States Deer numbers. I also believe those found not performing their duties should be removed from office. I personally

drove 1200 miles this past Gun season between Bayfield County east to Forest County looking for a new area to hunt. During those miles I saw one deer and of the numerous groups I spoke with the story was always the same "worse than last year". The northern section of our state has far too many predators and a balance needs to be determined with reducing the number of predators up North and yes including the Timber Wolf.

12/14/2009 **Marvin & Dorothy Raasch**, mdraasch@solarus.net

Deer Population - When you can sit all day and see one/two deer a day or no deer, the urge to go hunting drops. In our area, western 57C, the deer ag tag kills we feel have been the real start of our population decline. This sitting of deer is using of deer stands in areas that only a few years back, one would see 8 - 10 deer in a day, now nothing.

Ag Tag Kill - When, as we have heard, our area received and killed off about 40 does in one year due to the Ag Tag the effect was very noticeable. Ag tags in our opinion are not needed and if as a farmer you are going to be that concerned about what the deer eat, then you should not be farming. By the way we are farmers and we feel we feed more deer on average than any one that we believe have received these tags. Deer like grass/hay, corn and rye, which are the crops from our farm. Our neighbors crops are potatoes, sweet corn, soy beans, cranberries and corn, they are the farmers that we were told received Ag Tags.

Doe Permits - This is another area that has been over used. There may be years when a bonus doe permit will help to keep the herd in control, but the DNR has issued so many doe permits that the kill has been overdone. Without the does the birth rate for the next year is just not there. Killing a doe in low population and you may as well say you have killed three deer.

Predators - Despite what the DNR tells us, our area has wolves. We have seen the wolves and we have also found dead deer in our hay fields and in the neighbors cranberry marsh. Deer that have not been hit by an auto or shot. But, yet the DNR tells us that a wolf would not kill a live deer when there are dead animals in the area to eat on. We really question that comment.

12/14/2009 **Mark A. Wedde Sr.**, myzdwedde@charter.net

Hello, I am writing this in response to the article I read in Central Wisconsin Sunday (12/13/2009). My son and I hunted in central WI on PUBLIC LAND this fall and had a very successful hunt. I am an avid hunter, I plan, I scout, I understand and I adjust. I do not disagree that there are fewer deer around than there were 10 years ago, however, anyone who says that there were not too many of them ten years ago is environmentally irresponsible. I think the deer herd is where it should be; let the professional wildlife biologists do THEIR job! I've hunted many other states, and trust me when I say that Wisconsin has a very high quality hunt, for many species, not just deer. Please keep politics out of it, and again let the biologists do THEIR job. Thank you for your time.

12/13/2009 **Pat Pechinski**, kimp@solarus.biz

After reading the story about the poor deer season I thought I would let you know that I think that deer hunting will never be the same if something does not change. The DNR has been killing does for the past three or so years and now it is starting to show that they have it all wrong. If someone kills one doe it is counted as one to the DNR. That is not true. That doe is carrying next years fawn which is now dead. Also many does have more than one fawn so now someone has killed three deer but its counted as one. There are seasons just for killing does which is compounding the problem. Now they want ten year olds to hunt so that the younger generation will hunt. I have been taking my grandson hunting with me for the past three years and we have seen two deer while he was with me. I don't think lowering the age will do anything to get these younger kids to hunt when you take them hunting and see nothing to keep them interested. He has put in alot of time with me on stand and I can see he is slowly losing interest because we sit and see nothing. I own sixty acres and sit on stand every day. I know that you won't see deer every day but sitting nine days to see four deer? If something doesn't change, I and alot of other hunters are going to not buy a license and take the money and use it in other ways. It's sad to see how deer hunting has become a money maker rather than a sport. I have been hunting for forty two years and have taken my vacation for hunting season for the past thirty four years so that I could hunt... now who cares. I am tired of reading the excuses of hard winter, too warm, foggy, ect. I hunt in Adams county area 53 and have been hunting in a three mile area all my life and have not seen such a kill off ever. I could go on but I think you get the message. Please pass this on at the hearing this Thursday at 10am at the state capital. Thank you.

12/13/2009 Dr. Al Neuhoff, alneuhoff@yahoo.com

I just wanted to provide my input prior to the public hearing on the DNR deer herd (mis)management this Thursday. I'm sure you've been overwhelmed with input, so I'll try to be brief. I knew we were in trouble four years ago when I was seeing 3 bucks for every doe while bowhunting. While it was nice to see all the bucks, I knew that once they were gone, there wasn't going to be anything to replace them. Three years ago, I realized my lifelong dream of getting 155 acres of hunting land in Adams County to enjoy with my sons. After spending over 100 hours on stand between the three of us and seeing a combined total of 7 deer (all bucks), we opted not to waste the money on gun licenses this year. It killed me to see my sons so excited about bowhunting in September, yet by the time the rut rolled around, they didn't even want to go out as the last 4 times they sat, they never saw a hair. We opted to go to Montana instead and all three of us tagged out (unguided) in 90 minutes with beautiful 8 pointers. We will continue to hunt out of state until the DNR wakes up. My kids have a lot of patience, but that can wear thin after days on stand without seeing game. I am not going to subject them to that. I would like to see the science behind the DNR overwinter goals of one deer per 40 acres. Assuming a balanced buck:doe ratio, that would mean you need to own 80 acres to statistically have one buck on it, 160 acres if there was a 50% chance of shooting a deer that lives there, and 320 acres if you hope that both you and a child could get a buck. Give me a break! You will never convince me that Montana sage brush can support more deer than our fertile farm land, yet there were deer in every patch of cover we checked out there. Every hunter in the state knew last year that the deer herd was way down, yet the DNR denied it until the bitter end. That would mean they were either incompetent or deceitful--either one a disturbing possibility. The DNR needs to dramatically liberalize their overwinter population goals. Whoever was responsible for destroying one of Wisconsin's most enduring traditions needs to be fired. Any DNR official that even hints at earn-a-buck, 16 day seasons, etc. to control the population needs to get canned--before the whitetail gets placed on the endangered species list. The DNR needs to remember who they are working for--and it's not the insurance companies. I'm tired of the excuses. We have 5 trail cameras on our land, so I have a fairly good handle on our deer herd. We had at least 10 buck pictures for every doe picture, and there has not been a doe harvested on our land the last three seasons. Winter kill, predators, etc. is not gender specific. The terribly skewed buck:doe ratio is solely because of DNR management. I am glad that you hunt and have an appreciation of the magnitude of the problem. It would seem that the only way to get things changed is to go over their head or hit them in the pocket book. It will be interesting to see how license sales are next year, but I can't see very many people forking out the cash and effort to go out and watch chipmunks. Thank you very much for your help.

12/13/2009 **Walter Camp**, waltercamp@hughes.net

I have been hunting in Wisconsin for the past 23 years with great success until this year. For the first time I did not see a single deer! I hunted every day except for 6 hours and even hunted the first 3 days of muzzle loader season. I did see coyotes and bobcats.

I just returned from hunting with my father in southern NJ where I saw a total of 44 deer, 3 being bucks, I saw 24 on the first day. I hunted all state managed land for deer with feed strips and controlled burn areas to permit habitat for deer, imagine that a state that actually uses state land to manage for deer hunters with hunters and state money.

12/13/2009 **Chris Bondioli**, bondi@charter.net

I won't be able to attend the upcoming hearing regarding the significantly lower deer harvest this past season. I would like to share my thoughts on the issue. I hunt with a group of 11 friends and relatives on about 250 acres of land north of Merrill. The combined number of deer that we saw during the nine day rifle season was 6! My dad and uncles have been hunting together since the 60's and the second generation of us have been hunting since the 80's, and this was by far one of the worst seasons we have experienced! We have dealt with poor years in the past, but this year we even experienced a general lack of interest in even getting out into the woods. There was nothing to be excited about!

Obviously, the deer population was a hot topic of discussion during the season, and collectively we agree that too many does have been harvested the past few deer seasons. You have to remember that when you shoot a doe, you are taking out 3 deer from the population (the doe and her twin fawns). If this is allowed to happen year after year, we obviously will quickly deplete the deer population.

I understand that the DNR believes they are doing what is right, but some other measures need to be implemented to achieve their goals. I think they need to start with new goals and a better system of estimating the deer population. How do our neighboring states do this? I don't hear of them having the problems and issues that we do here.

In this era of depleting hunters and trying to increase the amount of youth hunting, going out for a season and not seeing many deer is not going to excite anybody into wanting to continue to hunt. Not shooting does and increasing the deer population must be one of the first steps to help turn this dismal situation around. I realize there are many other issues too such as wolves and bears eating fawns, but the DNR has to start focusing on immediate deer hunter satisfaction or they will quickly deteriorate this long standing tradition in our state.

12/13/2009 **Steve Spath**, stevespth@yahoo.com

I am writing to tell you about my experience during deer season this year and the past few years, since I will be unable to attend the hearing in Madison. I am 37 years old and have been hunting deer for 25 years in the same area of Clark and Eau Claire County my entire hunting life. I hunt with family and friends (18 of us) on public land in the Central Forest area. When I started hunting, I would see 20 to 30 deer every opening day. I have seen 2 in the last 3 years. We usually sit all opening weekend and then start making deer drives on Monday. We have began making drives on Sundays now and are thinking of starting right away opening morning now. It's the only way we see deer, but even those numbers are few and far between.

The hunting zone I hunt in is area 58. Again we hunt on public land on county forest. This area was a herd eradication zone this year, which is NUTS!!! Area 58 as well as other units need to be revamped. Area 58 has alot of public land in it as well as private farm land. It is very frustrating to see one or no deer while hunting hard on public land, only to go and shine deer in the farm area of 58 and see 100 deer. These areas should not be lumped together!

We have several young children starting to hunt or will be starting in the next few years. If I was 10 or 12 years old and beginning to hunt, I wouldn't do it very long if I didn't see anything. I feel for the young people, who will not start out hunting like I did. What the DNR has done to our deer herd in such a short time is disgraceful!. Wisconsin used to have the best deer hunting in the country. Now its the worst! what has happened?

Me and my family are VERY upset about what has happened to our deer herd. we are talking about not hunting next year, wish is a terrible thought.

The DNR has ruined deer hunting. They have had us slaughtering deer for the past 5 or 10 years. I guess they got what they wanted. The DNR will not acknowledge the damage the Timber Wolves are doing to the deer herd. I found several wolf kill areas in the woods. The deer population cannot take us shooting everything, wolves killing thousands, and the hard winters we have had lately. I didn't go to environmental school, and I know that. I have seen pictures on a trail camera that showed one wolf killing 42 fawns. The camera was set up on a wolf den and was there from June till October. 42 fawns!!!! Do you know what that does to the deer population in that area?

Why is the DNR secretary appointed by the Governor? Someone that has not worked in that field runs our wildlife management? I don't get it. I did not vote for Doyle and I am glad he is not running again. All this has happened under his watch.

Please do something to help us save deer hunting in our great state! It is my favorite time of year and count the days till deer camp every year. It's better than Christmas! Stop the slaughter! Say no to EAB, Say no to herd eradication zones! Lets start controlling the wolf population through hunting/trapping. The DNR will find out how upset we as hunters are when license sales plummet next year. I fear that we will see even less deer next year!

12/13/2009 **Brian D. Smith**, smittyjb@verizon.net

I am 48 years old and have been hunting since I was 12 and for the past 33 years have hunted in Clark County near Rock Dam and Mead Lakes. I hunt both rifle and bow and I use vacation time each year to do both. I usually take the first two weeks of November and the week of rifle season. ;During my two week hunt I saw a total of 11 deer. 8 bucks and 3 does and I hunt hard. I spent many a hour not seeing anything but birds and squirrels. This was the absolute worst hunting I have had in my 36 years of hunting. I have 9 other people I hunt with including my son, dad, brother brother-in-law and several close friends. 6 out of the 10 did not see a deer in 7 days of hunting. I have had seasons when I didn't see a

deer opening day but eventually during the week I would see my share. I am extremely concerned about the deer herd. In my opinion there have been way to many doe tags given out, to many t-zone or herd control hunts. The past two winters have been hard on the herd along with the growing bear and wolf populations. There are many more of these animals out there than the DNR is willing to admit to. This is a great resource that fuels the economy. I am very concerned about the number of children (NEW HUNTERS) that will lose interest in this sport and will decide to quit all together. The smaller communities will suffer they rely on this sport to survive. Rifle season week allows them to get through the winter. I hope that something is done about this situation. Cut back on the crop damage tags, doe hunts and get this resource back. I truly believe that next years numbers will be even worse because if you don't have does you will not have bucks of any\$\$\$ kind.

12/13/2009 **Don Camper**, camper@wctc.net

please stop all doe tags baiting and food plots in central wis before they wipe out all deer we are seeing very few deer

12/13/2009 **Robert Schmidt**, schmidtr2@charter.net

First of all thank you for your action on the deer herd issue. It isn't rocket science to know that when the wolf and bear population is growing the white tail deer herd will be smaller. The wolf population is at an all time high and so is the bear, wolf have no predator but man. Deer will move out of an area if they are chased out.

12/13/2009 **Thomas Wolosek**, wolosek@tznet.com

I will not be able to attend the meeting on the issue of deer hunting. I hope that you will inform the D.N.R. that most of the hunters that I talked to did not even see a deer. I am 58 years old and have been hunting since the age of 12 this is by far the worst season. The people who are managing our deer herd are either counting them on some totally private refuge or have never gotten out of their office in Madison. As far as I know deer still walk on the ground meaning that they must leave tracks, I don't believe that the deer are able to fly yet. When walking around before season I found very few tracks. I found more wolf tracks than deer tracks but we know that is a totally different topic. The very least that the D.N.R. should do is go back to the old bucks only season for a year or two so that the younger hunters that they are trying to get in the sport may actually see deer to keep them coming back to hunt. Many of the older deer hunters are talking about not even buying a hunting license next year. Thank you

12/12/09 **Ron Kulas**, ourfamily1964@centurytel.net

Greetings from Ron Kulas of the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association. I know Representative Molepske is a busy person but I wanted to share with him some thoughts and ideas prior to this Thursday's hearing. I am originally from the Stevens Point area and still hunt there. the bulk of my family live in his District.

If he has the time, I would ask that he please review the info at my site.

<http://ronkulas.proboards.com/index.cgi?action=display&board=deerpop&thread=135&page=1>

12/10/2009 **Dan Kohler**, 1520 Ojibwa Lane, Plover, WI 54467
dkohler1@charter.net

I just read your comments in the Outdoor Capsules in the Portage County Gazette looking for comments on the 2009 deer season.

I have been hunting deer in Wisconsin for 51 years. This is one of the leanest season that I have ever experienced. I hunted 7 days of the gun deer season and saw a total of 6 deer, they were all together the first day. Never saw another deer the entire season. I hunted 4 days during the muzzleloader season and saw 3 deer, again they were all together.

From what I have heard from other hunters I may have had a fair season compared to what other hunters saw. The point is that I hunted in Portage and Jackson County's, known for numerous deer numbers. I have never seen deer numbers this low in all my years of hunting.

I spend about 3 days a week from early September through November in the field hunting birds with my dogs and have never seen so little deer sign as I have in the last few years. I think the DNR has grossly over estimated the deer population, and has been way too liberal with antlerless deer tags.

I know the over winter goal in most of the areas I have been hunting is 20 to 25 deer per sq. mile of deer range. In my estimate I would be willing to bet that we are closer to 7 to 10 deer per mile in these areas.

I find it hard to believe that our wildlife managers are that incompetent with estimating the deer population. To be honest, I think something stinks in Madison and our wildlife managers are taking the heat over deer numbers and the harvest.

My proposal for the deer hunt in Wisconsin is to open the gun season on Nov.15th and close it on Nov. 30th. The same as Michigan. Eliminate ALL of the special hunts including the Youth Hunt which I think is a joke. Eliminate all antlerless tags in any area that had a reduction in deer kill for 2009. Eliminate ALL baiting and feeding of deer in the entire state.

Above all the DNR should stop listening to the special interest groups like WBHA, these people have one agenda and it is only about them. I place most other organizations in the same boat as WBHA. Like I said let our professional wildlife managers manage the deer herd and not a bunch of laymen only interested in their self interest. That includes the Izaak Walton League.

12/10/2009 **Kevin Grenzer**, loontick@hotmail.com

While I was hunting numerous hours in the woods this past bow and gun season, I had come to the conclusion that something has to be done to get the DNR to start listening to the hunters in the woods. Every hunter that I spoke to stated that our deer population is grossly under estimated.

I started talking to many hunters I know with this idea and everyone encouraged me to seek out media attention to this grass roots effort to get the DNR to listen to the hunters.

I came up with the idea to have hunters send me their back tags and/or a letter with comments on their experience of not seeing deer this year. After collecting all the back tags and/or letters I have received, I will then personally take them down to the Madison's DNR. The more hunters that ban together, the better chance that our voices will be heard of the politics of deer hunting.

Many hunters feel that the deer population is under attack from predators such as excessive number of black bears and wolves, and the over issuing of antlerless deer permits. Many hunters have trail cameras that are set up 24/7. Trail cameras don't lie; the deer are not here, but the bear and wolves are.

The people that I have talked to are so discouraged, that some are threatening to not buy a license next year; while others are wondering how to keep their children/grandchildren interested in the hunting tradition.

If the hunting tradition keeps on declining in interest, this will, without question, put a negative impact on Wisconsin's economy.

Save Wisconsin Deer Hunt has been aired on Channel 12, Rhinelander and Channel 9, Wausau newscasts on Tuesday, December 1, 2009. Articles have also been reported in area newspapers such as Tomahawk Leader, Rhinelander Daily News, Wausau Daily Herald, Lakeland Times of Minocqua, etc. To date, I have received numerous back tags and letters from hunters from the North Central Area of Wisconsin. Once the back tags and letters stop coming, I will personally bring them to Madison. Major concerns from the hunters I received are:

1. Too many antlerless tags given out the past years. Bucks only for the next 3 to 5 years to build up the herd.
2. Hunters not seeing deer when spending countless hours in the woods.
3. Predators are taking their toll on the fawns. Bears, wolves and coyotes have taken countless fawns; some have pictures on trail cameras of the event. DNR needs to issue more bear tags and delist the wolves to hunt them.
4. Hunters stating they will not buy a license next year.
5. Young hunters are discouraged by not seeing any deer and don't want to hunt anymore.
6. Received many letters from hunters who have hunted 30 plus years and say this is the worst they have seen the Wisconsin Deer Herd
7. Business's have stated hunters didn't stay for the full week and left early due to lack of deer.

12/8/2009 **Shorty Flees**, shorty@wi-net.com

Thanks for seeking input regarding the deer hunting in this area. Here is what I see. The deer herd has been decimated and people are ready to quit hunting. Every single person I've spoken to is disgusted, myself included. It used to be enjoyable to sit in the woods and hunt. That is no longer the case. It is hard to even see a deer now. My family owns 1800 acres in Marathon and Portage county and on much of our land we never saw a deer all deer season. We had a group of 8 people hunting with us and there was only 1 shot fired from our group all season. That was by my nephew who was 15. I feel sorry for him because he has a really hard time justifying sitting in the cold for 9 days straight just hoping to see a deer. Lucky for him he got to shoot once or it very well could have been the last time he'll hunt. It just is not enjoyable to hunt around here anymore. Something needs to be done to get the DNR to realize that people WANT to see deer. There seems to be some hidden agendas out there and some special interest groups pushing to practically wipe out the deer herd.

I know myself personally and many of my friends and family that love to hunt have started hunting other states for deer. To get a quality hunting experience unfortunately that is what we have to do. It really bothers me because over the past several years we have spent so much money buying land for hunting purposes and now I don't even enjoy hunting around here.

Two things that I think need to be addressed are the overpopulation of wolves and bears and the crop damage permits. Obviously wolves and bears are hurting the deer numbers on top of the "kill em all attitude" of the DNR. The crop damage program is seriously flawed. How is it that hunters that buy licenses hoping to see and shoot deer can't but people getting crop damage tags are getting paid to kill the few deer that are out there. We have farmers on 3 sides of us that get the crop damage tags and the only reason they do it is for the money. That is not right. There is very little damage being done by a deer herd that hardly exists. One farmer laughed a few years back saying he went out and bought a 4 wheeler with the money he got from shooting crop damage deer.

If something isn't done about the wolf and bear populations and crop damage permits I think you will see more and more people quit hunting all together or take their money to other states to hunt. Its a travesty when this state if properly managed could be an awesome hunting destination. Sadly it is not.

12/10/2009 Shorty Flees, shorty@wi-net.com (continued)

Thanks for listening and reading my email. Hopefully something can be done and changes made because the system is not working. In regards to the crop damage tags, I think it is way more abused than most know. Like I said in my past email, one farmer I know bragged of buying a 4 wheeler with the money he got from shooting the deer.

The money was his only motivation for getting the permits. He actually handed them out to various people and had them shoot many of the deer because he had little to none on his properties anymore. He's been applying for tags for years and getting the money and now he didn't want to lose that "income." That is also why he had very few deer to shoot. I know the man personally so I have pretty intimate knowledge of the situation.

In another case right next to our property, a farmer has been getting the crop damage tags for years. I spoke with one of his sons last year who lives on the farm and he was disgusted that his dad was getting these tags. He knows darn well that there are very few deer in the area. He approached his dad on the subject and talked him out of getting the tags last year, but now this year his dad told him that he needed the money. It has "nothing" to do with "crop damage" in these cases. Its an abused system. The dad doesn't hunt or care about hunting at all so he could care less about the deer herd. He also admitted to his son that there was virtually no crop damage in recent years. He said the money was there though so he feels he deserves it.

I guess I don't understand how we can have roughly 6-700,000 people buying licenses and paying to hunt but yet we are paying some farmers to shoot deer. That makes no sense to me. Let the sportmen shoot the deer they are paying to hunt and save money on the other end.

I'd be willing to bet that if there was no monetary benefit to getting the crop damage tags that you would see the program virtually phase itself out. If the farmers feel that shooting deer is of great benefit to their crops that should be motivation enough for them. We shouldn't have to entice them with \$\$\$.

I am a farmer as well. My family owns 1800 acres. I see the damage that is done and with our current deer herd it is next to nothing.

12/10/2009 Ted Knoeck, ted2192@msn.com

I work as a deputy in the northcentral WI area and am on night shift. I'm also an avid bow and rifle hunter. I knew by the beginning of archery season and especially by the rut that the herd was down. This years deer population was scarce to say the least. The amount of deer seen while hunting and working is in my opinion a mismanagement of the heard.

I recently found that the DNR doesn't track car deer crashes. In my experience almost every reportable car deer crash results in a dead deer. I hope something can be

12/9/2009 **Scott Jahnke**, scottjahnke@bricknerfamily.com

I've been hunting many years, and never seen a poor year like we experienced this year. Two years ago I could see this coming, (a shortage of deer) if you take the number of large bucks shot this year you will see alot more mature whitetails were shot, it shows some variables the DNR does not take into consideration, when deer are starving the first deer to die or be killed by predators (mainly wolves) are the young fawns, explains why there were less 1 1/2 bucks shot, If the DNR wants to completely wipe out our population they are on the right path. I have spoken to many hunters and we could be in trouble, you had a 11% decrease in licenses purchased, many hunters have told me they will not be buying for next year. The DNR will be forced to increase licenses to keep their budget where it needs to be. I feel money spent on some of these projects like the wolf projects, turkey projects, elk projects have cut into the budget far too much, so a lack of going into the field to find what deer populations actually are, simplies been neglected. It's time for a change maybe the DNR shouldn't be responsible for the deer estimates, maybe some type of conservation congress group could set something up.

12/9/2009 **Brian Steffen**, BSteffen@Silgancontainers.com

I saw your article in the paper asking for input on the current state of deer hunting in our area. I have bow/gun/muzzleloader hunted this area for the last 30 years and with the T-zones, earn a buck, and liberal herd control tags the deer herd is at all time lows. I have a brother in law that is the regional manager for AAA and his claims have also reached lows he has never seen as far as car-deer go, so it is not just my observations that make this claim. I also coyote hunt from January till the snow is gone so I spend a great deal of time that most hunters don't in the woods, and in the traditional yarding areas that would hold 30 to 40 deer around the Dewey Marsh last year had small 4 to 8 deer in them. I have walked just about every inch of that area last winter numerous times following coyotes and we saw the same few groups of deer which all told numbered less than 20. Our group hunts coyotes from Hwy 66 north to the Mosinee airport and there is very few deer in the large public tract from Hwy C to Hwy 153 (Leathercamp) we have permission to chase coyotes on a lot of that area and the deer numbers even on the private property are nonexistent. Everyone I know had the worst season ever as far as deer sightings go this last season and looking ahead to the next several years it will be worse. We as hunters have taken too many does and the population will take years to recover unless we limit the doe harvest to the bare minimum, go back to the days of 1 in 4 receiving a antlerless tag or cut it out totally. I gun hunt in the northern forest region and also bear hunt and the population up there is ridiculously low, sections where we ran dogs through chasing bears in years past you could count 20 deer a day getting flushed, the last several I didn't see 6 deer in a week of hunting that is counting checking baits before dawn. And the DNR still offered thousands of bonus tags in units that don't have a thousand deer in them totally. One of my hunting buddies had 7 trail cameras out for 3 months in a 6 square mile area and had only 5 different antlerless deer in that time, yet there were 500 available bonus tags. Doesn't make any sense to me.
Just my thoughts,

12/9/2009 **SGT Kevin M. Johnson**, kevin.johnson@buffalocounty.com
C Co. 1-128th INF
FOB Grizzly, Iraq

I am one of the 3,500+ WI National Guard 32nd Brigade soldiers currently deployed in Iraq. I have an idea that I think will be a great benefit to the soldiers of this Brigade upon redeployment in January - we need your help to make it a reality.

I propose that a T-Zone-like deer season be established around the end of January for military personnel returning from this deployment.

There are several reasons to support this proposal: The figures I have seen show that the deer harvest numbers are down approximately 29% from last year's season. We could certainly reduce that gap.

A large percentage of us normally participate in Wisconsin's great heritage of deer hunting and were obviously unable to do that this year. Not only did we miss out on participating, we missed an opportunity to provide venison for our families. With the current state of our economy this could have a large impact on our families as we work to get back on our feet following redeployment.

The state of Wisconsin has done great things for our veterans in the past and continues to maintain a robust veterans' benefits package. This is an additional opportunity to immediately affect the well being of our soldiers at little or no cost to the state.

I thank you for your time, support, and consideration of this proposal.

12/8/2009 **Nathan Demski**, demskin@uwplatt.edu

I am a 20 year old junior attending the University of Wisconsin Platteville for Mechanical Engineering. The reason I am writing you is because of my disappointment during the last few years of deer hunting in our fine state.

I have been hunting with my family since I was 5 years old. It's a wonderful tradition in our state and one I used to be proud to join in on. The decline in our state's deer herd has been a long time coming and I'm afraid it has gone too far. I hunt on 360 acres of prime hunting land in Portage county. In the late 90's I used to see over 100 deer on opening weekend and it was enjoyable for me and my younger cousins alike. In the last five years it has declined drastically to the point where I saw 7 deer in 9 full days of hunting. As the DNR has said in years past it is not because of poor hunting conditions or lack of skill on my part.

On the land we put in food plots, make bedding grounds for the deer, have adequate access to water and other natural resources that deer require. Preseason scouting is a must for a successful hunt for the true hunters. Between me, my father, and my uncles; over a couple hundred hours were spent in the woods this year sitting in the woods watching for signs of deer. I come home from school as often as I can to be out in the woods because it is enjoyable to me. It's sad to say that after this last deer season it is no longer on my list of things to look forward to.

My family and I are now planning to go hunt in Nebraska next year. It is the only way we can protect the few deer that are left in our area. I have attended meetings held by the DNR over the past 4 years and every time I have shown them counts of the deer heard in our area I have been told it is from lack of experience or time spent in the woods by the DNR specialist on big game Keith Warnke. I take it as a deep insult that someone with three quarters of my life spent enjoying and honing my skills, I am called a bad hunter. There were special committees created to look into the deer herd solution, but still our state's DNR officials refused to listen to us hunters' advice.

The only way left for hunters to look for a solution to the dwindling deer population is one of two things:

1) A lot of hunters are hunting out of state and are refusing to buy licenses in the state which will cut funding to our state's overpowered DNR, and in the state of the economy I know it's not something that they want to happen. Also with hunters going elsewhere our tourism based economy throughout the state will definitely start to see a large hit. That is not something I wish to see as a resident of central Wisconsin but unless something changes.

2) Our private land that is supposedly holding 20% too many deer according to DNR population goals will no longer be hunted until we see a change in the deer herd. If seeing 7 deer is 20% too many I guess I should have shot two of them to go along with the goals they set. I find that as sadly too few deer on our parcel of land. Along with a lot of our neighbors we plan on starting managing our own deer unless things change in our state's DNR.

I hope that as my Representative you can listen to my concerns and try to help me out in saving our state's deer herd and turning things around. I hope that in the next 5-10 years when I have my own kids I can take them out hunting behind the house with me to enjoy the same things I did as a child.

12/7/2009 **Joe Trembl**, jtrembl@lester-smart.com

As respects the growing wolf population, I believe the state legislators and governors in the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan need to stand together against the Federal judges and persuade the Federal government to allow the states to control the growing wolf population. This needs to be accomplished as soon as possible.

While scouting for my gun deer hunting stand, I encountered a wolf near Saddle Mound. It was about 75 yards away. It looked at me for about a minute, while we both looked at each other, before proceeding on

its way. I will readily admit, I had my 12 gauge with grouse loads ready in the event it would chosen to approach even closer. Fortunately that was not the case. The state of Wisconsin needs to aggressively present their case to the Feds that Wisconsin DNR made the present wolf population what it is today and as such, needs the have the authority to manage its future existence which has to include an open season on wolves.

In my 45 years of deer hunting, this was the worst year for seeing deer and last year was not much better. While the DNR would not agree with me, I believe we should not have any type of doe harvest in 2010. We need to increase the population. Just seeing deer makes the gun deer season rewarding! The DNR needs to be reminded of the economic impact that both bow & gun deer hunting has in Wisconsin. I am going to do my own pocketbook a favor in 2010 and WILL NOT be purchasing a Conservation Patron license. It may be only Fishing, or it could be a Sportsman's license and Archery license. From people that I speak with there is much dissatisfaction and trust with the DNR governing body.

I have one last comment and that is a state wide ban on deer baiting. I firmly believe that if deer had to search for food they would be more active during the day and hunters would see a few more deer. Baiting has encouraged deer to become nocturnal feeders giving way to less daytime sightings.

12/7/2009 **Jeff Vaughter**, the.hole.deal@hotmail.com

I see in the Point Journal you are interested in comments on this years deer hunt. Here are some of my thoughts.

My brother joined me once again this season to hunt in the Forest County area. He lives in the state of Washington and must pay \$160 for an out of state license. Initially, after his not seeing a single deer last season, he was inclined to save the \$160 and just drive and spot for me. I offered to buy his out-of-state license for him but he declined my offer and paid for his license himself. Needless to say, he once again saw no deer, and I only saw one tail this season. Incidentally, last year I shot a bonus antlerless deer in Florence County for the only shooting either of us got in 2008.

You would think that I would be a little down about the season but I have mixed feelings. First off, I saw a lot more cedar regeneration than I have seen in a long time. This is a good thing. Deer in the northwoods love cedar. Deer will always rebound but cedar regeneration takes a lot more time. This regeneration will ensure that another species does not disappear from our landscape.

I saw quite a bit of deer sign this season, but due to the lack of snow and the foggy mornings it was difficult to see or track deer even if they were nearby. It was also unseasonably warm which allowed hunters to sit still longer and not get up and move around and thus, also move the deer. This was not the ideal year for seeing deer, weatherwise.

You also hear a lot about wolf predation but I think it is overblown. They estimate 500 to 600 wolves in the state with each taking just under 20 deer a year for survival. That is 12,000 a year total. Even if the DNR has blown the wolf number estimates as they have appeared to do with the black bear numbers, wolf predation is probably not a overly significant. But the mere presence of wolves may be altering the behavior of deer. Before wolves were reintroduced the main predator was man. And that was a seasonal thing. With wolves present 24/7/52 deer may be far more nocturnal than they have been in the past and they may also be far more wary and prone to hang closer to escape cover than in the past. Just a thought.

I also think that a lot of deer hunters are getting softer these days with baiting allowed (I'm for eliminating all baiting), and permanent shelters on stilts visible on just about every privately held piece of land. With the exceptionally high numbers of deer available fairly recently hunters have gotten very used to seeing high numbers of deer and getting their deer, or several deer every year.

I also would say that the poor weather during the winter and spring this passed year was also a factor.

Considering all these things, it was probably reasonable to expect a less than optimum season this year. Be careful of overreacting to the events of this season. Some adjustments in doe tags probably need to be made, but it is still a science in progress. Don't judge the process on this year alone.

12/07/09 **Bob Worden**, 2741 County Road K North, Custer, WI 54423 Bob.worden@travelguard.com

Secondly, I would like to see Wisconsin's deer hunting seasons structured as follows:

- Early archery season to start the closest Saturday to September 15 and end the Thursday before the opening of firearms season (no change).
- Late archery season to start the Monday following firearms season and end the second Sunday in January (one week extension).

- Firearms season would start the Saturday before Thanksgiving and end the Sunday following Thanksgiving. In other words, the traditional nine day season (no change).
- Special Muzzleloader seasons would be eliminated. Muzzleloaders are firearms and, therefore, would be included in the traditional nine day firearms hunt, just as high-powered rifles, shotguns and pistols are now included in the regular "gun" hunt with no special seasons for any of those weapons.
- Herd control (T-Zone) hunts would be eliminated until such time as the DNR develops an accurate herd census methodology. The SAK calculation is touted as the best there is, yet the kill/sighting numbers speak for themselves. If we had continued through time using hunting tools developed and touted as the best there is, we would still be using spears. It's time to spend time and money on new census tools.
- There would be a special four day October youth hunt (no change). Thankfully, I taught my kids to hunt during a time when deer sightings were plentiful. With everything available to occupy the time of today's young people, asking a 10, 11 or 12 year-old to sit in the woods in late November hoping to see even one deer will be the death of the sport. We don't need this season as a means of reducing/controlling the deer population today. We need it to begin the process of keeping the sport alive and controlling the deer population 20 and 30 years from now.

In summary, there would be an early and late archery season, a nine-day firearms season and a four-day October youth season. Nothing else. The structure would remain in place until accurate census tools are developed and an accurate and quantifiable need to change this structure is developed.

12/6/2009 **Greg Flees**, gflees@charter.net

Thanks for your interest in improving the deer hunting in Wisconsin. I along with my family have been hunting for years and own land in Portage and Marathon counties. We used to see deer. We like most others very rarely see any deer anymore. A program that must be either eliminated or modified is the crop damage tags. My neighbor in portage county received 15 crop damage tags this year. My neighbor to the west in marathon county received 22 tags, while the neighbor to the north received 12 tags in 2009. All 3 properties are in direct contact with my land.

Why are we allowing these people to go and shoot all these deer every year and paying them to do so when there are not many deer? By the time they get done and our hunting starts the deer population is decimated. These people are wrecking deer hunting for the entire neighborhood. Doing it year after year only compounds the problem. The only reason they are doing it is for the money!

I am a farmer that plants hundreds of acres of crops. Believe me when I say there is little to no crop damage happening anymore. Please if any way possible lets get rid of the crop damage program!

12/4/2009 **Ken Ramage**, ramage@charter.net

I understand there is a motion to suspend the 2009 December antlerless deer season because of the greatly diminished deer herd.

I SUPPORT THE SUSPENSION.

I also support returning selection of the DNR leader to the DNR board, away from the governor; get the position out of politics, manage scientifically.

Non 71st Assembly District

12/16/09 Fred Guyant, Wildwood Acres Ltd

Rep. Molepske, It's quite obvious that the DNR of Wis. care little of what the hunters of this state have been telling them for the last three years. Now that the majority of hunters in the state are banding together and either they are not going to buy a license and not hunt, or are shutting down there land for ANYTHING including hunting, snowmobiling, or camping. When they propose ANY type of herd control for next year OR try to go with a 16 day season I'm done hunting in this state. When the thousands of fed up hunters fail to spend the

multi-millions of dollars that they usually do,(and this has already started)the DNR will be solely responsible.

I'm the 3rd of 5 generations that have lived and hunted in this wonderful state and would like to continue doing so but I am thoroughly fed up with DNR of Wis.

12/16/09 Gary Krultz, gary@northsideelevator.com

In this e-mail I am expressing my views on the just concluded 2009 gun-deer hunting season.

I have been both a gun and archery deer hunter for many years and I will continue to do so.

It isn't just Wisconsin. Both Minnesota's and Michigan's results are down by almost exactly the same degree as Wisconsin's.

One the DNR side.

In 2008 when the numbers were down, the DNR insisted that hunter's just won't out hunting.

The DNR won't state that their estimate of the deer size was too high.

Why not?

The winter of 2007-2008 was very sever and took a large number of deer.

The thing is that DEER HUNTERS themselves are very responsible for this.

Way too many deer hunters refuse to take a doe to reduce the over population problem Wisconsin had going into the winter of 2007-2008.

The herd was too large for the amount of winter food available. Which resulted in more severe winter losses then if the herd was in check.

The DNR has two years of herd Control before they put earn-a-buck in place.

Why didn't the deer hunters reduce the herd during these two years?

Deer hunters complain that earn-a-buck causes them too have to pass on bucks.

This is very incorrect IF the deer hunters would choice to take a doe during the herd control years.

The DNR allows taking a doe the year before to qualify for a buck in the next year,

Why don't hunters do this?

I know, they don't see many deer.

Why is this.

They sit all day in their enclosed stands, most likely over a food plot or bait pile, and don't see many deer.

Big surprise. Food plots and bait piles allow deer NOT to have to move very much during the daylight hours.

Get out and walk around their land. WHAT? And chase all the deer off!

They don't see deer so there must not be many.

The DNR is charged with keeping the deer herd in balance.

How can the DNR do this when hunters won't shoot does?

Know why the DNR didn't recognize after the 2008 hunt that the herd was down and reduce the number of herd control units for 2009 is a valid question.

But hunters need accept their equal share of the 2009 low deer numbers problems.

12/16/09 **Thomas J. Pionek**, tjpionek@yahoo.com

Although I am not in your district I feel compelled to write you on this issue because of its importance to both me and my children and their children.

I like you hunted this past season but did not see any deer in the Iola area of Waupaca County. I have hunted deer in this area for over fifty years and this was a first for me. The DNR should wake up and look at the stats. of the last five years. The deer kill has been going down. When you set a goal to eradicate the breeding stock this season is what you get.

The Portage County Post said Keith Warnke may have the worst job in the state. Look at the numbers; If he were in a normal business position he would have been history several years ago. Yet we allow him to continue to not listen to what his constituents are telling him in meeting after meeting. I really feel like being raped over and over again by the DNR. They offer excuses and talk over being over extended with air and water control. I believe its time these other areas of responsibility be segregated into other areas of state government so maybe the DNR can do what it was meant to do.

Please note - We are close to killing one of Wisconsin's Jewel traditions.

12/16/09 **Brian L. Wojcik** (via Rep. Strachota), blwojcik@ra.rockwell.com

It is imperative that the DNR Board is asked the difficult questions, as the constituents do not have a voice in their decisions. Letters and emails to the DNR are largely ignored by the Board. The only way the public can weigh in is during the spring hunting/ fishing meetings statewide, and that is completely 'advisory', which really means the DNR will do what they want.

Questions like, why aren't the larger zones in the state split? There are several deer management zones (such as 45 and 13) that have large farm areas in the south of the zones, but nothing but big woods in the north. Doe permits for the county should focus on where the deer are (farm land south not north woods. Their answers have been 'this is the way it has been in the past, it will work now'. But they constantly say 'change your ways of hunting'. Sounds two faced and exactly the opposite. They need to recognize the need for changing the zoning and the way they run their operations too.

How about this question, listening when hunters (we have been telling them this for 3 years) say there are too many bears, coyotes, wolves in the north we need to kill more? How about returning the coyote bounty? True, predators are only a small portion of the issue, but lately, a big one. We have found, in spring this past year, 37 remains of fawns, when the fawn production has been low. We have evidence both bears and coyotes have killed these fawns.

This year, we hunted in a section of north woods with both county land and national forests. There were 18 of us, we saw 1 DEER in 5 days. Disappointing is not close to our reactions.

12/15/09 **Kevin Wolosek**, Wisconsin Rapids, WI, kwolosek@wolosekcpas.com

I have avidly hunted deer (gun and archery) in Wisconsin every year since 1970. I've hunted deer for the past 21 years in Montana, as well as several other states. I can tell you that in central Wisconsin where I hunt, the deer herd is exceptionally low. I've talked to hundreds of experienced hunters who know the same thing. Our venison processor, A&B Butchering just north of Wisconsin Rapids, took in a total of two (2) deer on opening day of this gun season.

A few points:

1) Many of us have substantial investments in deer hunting. To purchase land, pay real estate taxes, build a cabin, put in food plots, acquire trail cameras, etc. amount to quite a sum. We chose to do this when hunting was good. To now have terrible hunting, and have family members who no longer wish to go, just isn't right.

2) I have an accounting practice, I coach a 14-16 year old baseball team, and I have two teenage sons. The point is, I have an opportunity to talk to a lot of parents, as well as a lot of kids. With the current poor hunting environment, we are rapidly losing youth hunters. I don't believe that the DNR has any idea how fast we are losing young hunters. You can have all the youth hunts you want, but if it's a poor experience, you're going to lose them. I know kids who have earned money in order to purchase archery and other equipment, and have not seen a single deer in two seasons.

My own two sons asked me "if they have to hunt deer in Wisconsin anymore".
I have attached a couple of letters depicting kids' feelings.

3) Wisconsin is losing substantial dollars (sales & income tax) by having a poor hunting environment. I know that our hunting party spent zero dollars in Wisconsin in 2009. Instead, we purchased hunting equipment, supplies, gas, groceries, motels, etc. in states that provided us with quality deer hunting experiences (North Dakota and Montana). We figured that these retailers are trying to make a living too, and that their states deserve the tax dollars.

Wisconsin needs to re-establish the deer herd in many parts of the state.
This can only come through reduced quotas and predator control. The DNR needs to back-off herd control, and listen to hunters. Unfortunately, I don't believe the current DNR regime is capable of this, and that personnel changes will ultimately be required.

I want to thank you for your consideration and assistance in dealing with our current deer environment. Hopefully, together we can bring deer hunting back to what it should be.

12/15/09 **Greg Wurz**, 629 Topeka Drive, Lake Mills, WI 53551, maawurz@yahoo.com
Secondly, I would like to see Wisconsin's deer hunting seasons structured as follows:

- Early archery season to start the closest Saturday to September 15 and end the Thursday before the opening of firearms season (no change).
- Late archery season to start the Monday following firearms season and end the second Sunday in January (one week extension).
- Firearms season would start the Saturday before Thanksgiving and end the Sunday following Thanksgiving. In other words, the traditional nine day season (no change).
- Special Muzzleloader seasons would be eliminated. Muzzleloaders are firearms and, therefore, would be included in the traditional nine day firearms hunt, just as high-powered rifles, shotguns and pistols are now included in the regular "gun" hunt with no special seasons for any of those weapons.
- Herd control (T-Zone) hunts would be eliminated until such time as the DNR develops an accurate herd census methodology. The SAK calculation is touted as the best there is, yet the kill/sighting numbers speak for themselves. If we had continued through time using hunting tools developed and touted as the best there is, we would still be using spears. It's time to spend time and money on new census tools.
- There would be a special four day October youth hunt (no change). Thankfully, I taught my kids to hunt during a time when deer sightings were plentiful. With everything available to occupy the time of today's young people, asking a 10, 11 or 12 year-old to sit in the woods in late November hoping to see even one deer will be the death of the sport. We don't need this season as a means of reducing/controlling the deer population today. We need it to begin the process of keeping the sport alive and controlling the deer population 20 and 30 years from now.

In summary, there would be an early and late archery season, a nine-day firearms season and a four-day October youth season. Nothing else. The structure would remain in place until accurate census tools are developed and an accurate and quantifiable need to change this structure is developed.

12/15/09 **John S. Dekarske**, 3150 North Ave., Wisconsin Rapids, Wi. 54495, dekar@wctc.net

I have phoned Marlin Schneider and he told me about the meeting with the DNR this thur. in Madison. I am not able to attend the meeting in person, so, I am doing the next best thing to express my opinion on the deer herd. I heard the Rep. from Weston on the local news and I agree with him that the DNR needs a house cleaning. I am 61 years old and have been a deer hunter since I was 12. The last 3 years have been the worst hunt (as far as seeing deer) since the middle 80's when we had a winter kill. I have been lucky enough to see deer and fill my bow tag for a long time now but the hunt is getting harder and harder each year. The sighting of deer is fewer each year. I have not seen a deer while gun hunting for the last 3 years and the DNR continues to proclaim, we need more does killed. I don't understand it. Even after all the concerns this year about the lack of deer, they still continued with the antlerless hunt last Fri. thru Sun. Again I don't understand it. If something is not done soon, the only place you will be able to see a deer, is in the zoo!.

If I was the DNR and could recognize the low deer numbers, I would close the entire season for at least 1 year maybe 2. Next, the tourism dollars will be a lot lower as the number of hunters is going to go down. The hunters that I have talked to have said that this year was going to be the last year that they would be donating money to the DNR for the right to hunt deer. They have had enough. If everyone would think that way, what would happen to the DNR, they would still be out of a job, and rightfully so.

Is there a chance that there would be a meeting in Stevens Point or Wisconsin Rapids?
Is there a way to get the minutes from the meeting this Thurs or find out what the results from the meeting are?

Thank you for your time in reading this e-mail and good luck with the meeting.
I would appreciate hearing from you,

12/15/2009 **Joseph G. Bredl**, Wisconsin Rapids, jgbredl@yahoo.com

I am contacting you as I believe you have the best interest of the Wisconsin outdoors-man and the health and condition of the existing and future deer herd and hunt at heart.

First let me give a little back ground as to where I am coming from. I'm a 61 year old cabin/property owner in management unit 14. We have been hunting as a deer camp since 1959. I've seen the years when the deer herd was at a low and it's high. I've seen the sport deteriorate from a hunt to a shoot with the introduction of baiting ... witch is another subject for another day... The bottom line is that something must be done now to protect our sport and hunt for the future.

So now my observation from this past fall. I'll start by saying I spend many days and hours in the fall hunting. I am fortunate enough to be retired with a place to go and enjoy the Wis. outdoors. I do a lot of bird hunting with my labs until the rut begins and then it's bow hunting. With all of the time spent at my sports and opportunities to observe deer sign and sightings I would have to say this year was as bad as I've ever seen. Let me state that I hunted both units 13 and 14 which the majority lies in the National Forrest. I did harvest a buck with the bow and had the occasion to watch as wolf cleaned up the remains of the gut pile. There lies one of the major reasons I feel the deer herd is as depleted as it is. I firmly believe the Wis. DNR has not fully taken into consideration the impact that predators have had on the deer population. Only now have they admitted they underestimated the bear population and we all know they are way off on the wolf count. Predation on the deer herd especially the spring fawns in the form of bear, wolf, bobcat, fisher and now cougars... (our party had a sighting)... has gotten way out of hand. Then you throw in an almost unlimited number of doe tags and you can understand why the numbers are down. Unit 14 had a supposedly 40 percent over goal deer population. I believe one issue here is that unit 14 is made up of both National Forrest land and a good share of agricultural lands. You can not manage the Forrest with the same thoughts and practices you do agricultural lands. Again that's another subject !!!

Take it for what it's worth ... Our long time deer camp of eleven hunters that hunted eight of the nine day season, harvested 2 bucks and we do not shoot does. Last season we harvested four bucks, and historically we have about a 60 to 70 percent success racial. I fully support you and your endeavors to get deer management back in realistic control before the damage is beyond repair. Thank you for your work on this issue... Keep me posted !!!

12/15/09 **Dan Schwalenberg**, 800 Fieldcrest Dr., Kaukauna, WI. 54130

The purpose of this letter is to address the damaging and ruinous Whitetail Deer Management practices that are currently in place and upheld by our states DNR & NRB. The DNR of our state has along history and reputation for the outstanding track record of positively managing our states wildlife resources, but something had gone seriously wrong with their managing of our States Whitetail Deer herd. Long term damage has been done to our states deer herd through management tools such Earn A Buck (wish I hopes never returns) and excessive numbers and years of antlerless deer permits. I oppose all the new proposals that the NRB is currently proposing. I feel we need to hire an outside third party to estimate our States Deer numbers. I also believe those found not performing their duties should be removed from office. I personally drove 1200 miles this past Gun season between Bayfield County east to Forest County looking for a new area to hunt. During those miles I saw one deer and of the numerous groups I spoke with the story was always the same "worse than last year". The northern section of our state has far to many predators and a balance needs to be determined with reducing the number of predators up North and yes including the Timber Wolf.

12/15/2009 **Jim Kizewski**, 8941 Bainbridge Trail, Wisconsin Rapids, WI,
jkizew@wctc.net

I heard that you were interested in comments about Wis' deer herd. I hunt on private land in Adams Cty that is owned by my wife's relation. 160 acres of prime deer hunting. I was fortunate to be able to have had good hunting. I used to see deer on most nights that I bow-hunted. I have hunted this land for the last 30 years. This year I saw 4 deer on opening day of the gun hunt. I bow hunted on numerous nights and did not see a deer. The DNR kept killing until they got the deer on private land. I have been sorry for the people less fortunate then I that hunt public land as they have had poor hunting for the last several years.

1. The DNR has gone too far with the amount of doe tags that have been given out.
2. They should have charged for these extra tags and could have made more money without having to talk about raising the fees.
3. There should be no special doe hunts....it really messes with the bow hunters.
4. There should be no special youth hunts.

I am seriously considering doing next year's hunting out of state. Thanks for your concern.

12/14/2009 **Brian W. Risinger**, N4312 Lakeshore Dr., Kewaunee, WI 54216, Brian.Risinger@btg.com

I'm a landowner in Kewaunee County and although it is not a large parcel I do have several deer on my property that come and go. My plan is to manage the deer herd on my property since the Wisconsin DNR does not seem to understand how to manage the herd. I suspect that the Auto Insurance Lobbyist have poured money into the pockets of the legislatures to over harvest deer (as in Michigan) to reduce the Car/Deer accident rate. I hate to see people hurt or deer die without proper harvest but that is part of urban sprawl that needs to be managed by the legislature and allow the biologist to manage the herd/game. This should not be a political decision.

It's unfortunate that in Wisconsin the license fees go directly to the general fund and then money is portioned back (smaller) to the DNR – This is WRONG. If the biologist and wardens can manage the game of the state then that bureau should live and stand on its own merits i.e. license fees go direct to the DNR not channeled through the General fund. States that do this seem to have better success over the long term.

Being a new citizen to Wisconsin (7 years), Wisconsin was always fabled as one of the best places to hunt and harvest BUCKS. Since I have lived here I've seen ONE nice deer but mostly small rack younger deer.

I was a resident of Michigan for over 20 years and believe that their process for deer harvesting had many flaws including the extended season. I'm apposed to the sixteen day season. I think it makes no sense. Michigan did over the years liberalize their harvest of does and I also think they went too far in their approach. When you bought a tag in Michigan (2001) you got a BUCK tag. If you wanted to purchase a doe tag it was available for a fee and allotted by county not large areas (better management practice but I did not purchase the doe tag).

Please reject the extended season and please ensure that the DNR re-thinks their practice on estimating the herd. In the areas that have been EAB the herd has been desimated!

Conclusion:

1. I do not support the extended season (keep the 9 day).
2. I do not support the "second buck" if you register a doe.
3. I do support "Bucks only" for the next 3 to 5 years to reestablish the deer heard.
4. If the DNR continues on the path they are on, I will be forced to not buy or hunt in Wisconsin for deer AND I will not allow hunting on my ground.

12/14/2009 **Bill McMahon**, havnfun@wctc.net, 4621 11th St North, Wisconsin Rapids, Wi 54494

I cannot attend the Deer Hearing Thursday at Madison . I have some comments and opinions that I would like to present to you and maybe you can enter some for me. My name is Bill McMahon from Wisconsin Rapids. I have lived my entire life except for the Marine Corps Tour and have hunted deer for 54 of my 66 years. I have hunted my entire life near my Dad's farm east of Wausau in the town of Weston, Marathon County. I hunted in the 1950's and never say a track a few years. The 1960's were better and I shot a few including "Party tag" does. The 1970's were very good but we drove hard and harvested our share. The 1980's were great, lots of deer and good hunting if you worked some for deer. The 1990's were too easy. Deer were everywhere and doe tags were easily available. Didn't have to work as hard to harvest deer. The 2000's were easy too but much of the land was being posted from hunters as homes were built on poor swampy and non tillable 40's and posted. Homes were evrywhere we used to hunt and cities were growing and shutting more land down to hunters. We now have about the same amount of public hunting land(county, state and federal) as before but many new hunters who were always used to easy access and lots of deer. This really crowded the public land and hunting without owning land was hard to do. Also the Quality Deer Hunters posted large tracks of private land to grow huge racked deer for trophy hunting-both bow and gun. I have heard that the spreading off fuel oil and moth balls on neighboring land also extended their QUALITY hunts. The public land left is hunted hard and many disputed over who shot the deer and even fights over who hunted where. Bad conflicts including a mass murder up north over a trespasser on private land have ocured. We need to open up farm land that we are paying My Tax Money to owners to preserve woodland and idle cropland. If they refuse, save my tax dollars and let them post it. Now for a couple of other comments on deer hunting:

1-The buying of antlerless tags in many herd control areas must be limited to 2 or less extra for \$2 or \$3 a piece per license holder. Some of the Mong community have bought individually 20 antlerless tags at one time in Marathon county that I heard of and maybe more. They then set up huge community hunts and kill every deer on any public land they can get to. They then go to the next public land and do the same thing. Ethnic groups are doing the same thing across the state. The deer are eliminated from those areas completely and will take years to return. They take them to eat but hunters find carcusses withonly the rear hams gone, etc. Make all antlerless tags \$12 or more and still limit them.

2-This is the first year baiting was eliminated from some great deer hunting counties such as Wood, Marathon, etc and it really dropped the kill count. Without driving deer with standers, which is impossible on public land you can only hope a dumb deer that will walk by your stand without going by another hunter. Also you better not wound it or it is also lost if it goes more than a fence line. Maybe CWD is killing deer but we should be able to bait with commercially sold baits such as grains and mixes- not salt! Land owners can still plant food crops for deer on their land to bait deer in the counties that ban one cubic foot of corn for bait. I think deer will find thse food plots and eat spreading CWD that the state is so scared of. Even fields of corn left for the winter to bait deer draws deer for miles. Maybe baiting should be banned for everyone or allow everyone to bait. CWD is spreading with or without bans. Ask Colorado.

3-A deer license does not guarantee that you will see a deer, or shot at a deer, or harvest a deer. It only lets you hunt for a deer. Urban sprall and dumb DNR laws have messed up deer hunting for many

hunters who in the past have had it easier. The problem of poor hunting/killing needs common sense fixes and real input from hunters.

12/13/2009 **Robert Seitz**, rmseitzassoc@hotmail.com
802 East 4th Street
Marshfield, WI 54449

I am sure your hearing on Thursday at 10 AM is nice and convenient for you, but most deer hunters, including myself, are working at that time. However, I want to express my view point. I hunt in Clark County, west of Lindsey, WI. The problem that we have in that area is that the DNR has been giving crop damage permits to the Amish and they have been slaughtering the deer like there is no tomorrow. It is well known among deer hunters that they have parctically wiped out the deer along Hwy W in the Town of Lynn.

I have hunted in that area, the same 80 acres, since 1972, and I did not see even one deer this year. In fact, I had only seen 8 deer in two previous seasons combined. Yet the Amish are shooting 12 months per year. I have been hunting since 1962, as as far as I can remember, this is the only season that I have been in the woods the entire season and never seen a deer.

We also once had a turkey flock of between 75 and 100 birds in that area. This year I saw 3 turkeys and saw all of them while making one drive. In the previous two seasons, I have not seen even one turkey, nor have I heard one clucking or gobbling in the woods during that time. Could it be that in addition to the deer they are also shooting the turkeys that are damaging their crops?

If the state is going to give out agricultural permits, then the DNR should set up a page on their web site and list who is getting the agricultural permits. This listing should be by country and township in which the permits are issued. With the Amish, they only give these permits to their Amish family and friends. I do not believe that they need as many permits as they are given.

Furthermore, it is the fees from licenses that provide a large amount of money for the DNR budget. If these people are going to get to kill all the deer with free agricultural permits, then maybe the rules need to be changed and the Amish need to pay \$100 for the agricultural permits they claim they need to protect their crops.

12/13/2009 **Patrick O'Kelly**, 10819 W. 6th St., Hewitt, WI 54441, pcokelly@gmail.com

I am writing to tell you how upset I am with the policies of the DNR. We hunters have had meeting upon meeting with the DNR and have had one clear voice. We told them repeatedly that the deer herd numbers are way down and deer hunting as we know it is just about gone! They refused to listen to all that spoke at the meetings and explained what the actual field hunting conditions were.

I hunt in several quota units in Central Wisconsin and they are all about the same. I hunted opening weekend in unit 65A on private property and saw two small fawns the entire weekend. I also hunted in unit 55 where there were 18,200 available antlerless carcass tags. According to the DNR website they still have 10,023 tags available after the season is over. If that does not tell you something about the deer herd nothing will. We had a group of 25 hunters on Tuesday made 7 different drives on public land and nobody fired a shot because we didn't see a deer!

59A is the same story, they had 17,100 antlerless tags available and have 12,282 still available. They can print all the tags they want but I think most of the hunters are finally getting smart enough not to purchase them!

We need a major direction change in our policies. I would like to see antlerless tags eliminated completely for at least a year or maybe two. If we have another severe winter in 2009 - 2010 the deer herd could be in bad trouble.

I have hunted for 41 years and have two sons, who I introduced to hunting after hunter safety class at 12 years of age. They are as disappointed as I am, but my current concern is with my two grandsons. If I introduce them to the kind of deer hunting we had the last two years they will not be interested and that will break my heart!

If policy doesn't change for the next deer season, I may just give up hunting in Wisconsin and seek other opportunities elsewhere. That would be a shame, as deer hunting in Wisconsin was a deep tradition at one time and the DNR has about destroyed it!

Thanks for the opportunity to express my opinions, please do something to stop the DNR before it's to late!

12/13/2009 **Tom Bartlett**, tbart@wctc.net

Thank you for holding a hearing on deer population goals and management. As a avid deer hunter I am concerned about the health of the deer herd. I would like to give you a little back ground on my self as a hunter. I have been hunting since 1966. I shot my first deer in 1967. In 1967 I would see 20 to 50 deer a day while hunting public land. Most of these deer were does and fawns.(95% or more) There was a lot less hunters in the woods back then. Today I hunt deer, turkey, duck and pheasant. Here are some of the areas I hunt in during the year. I hunt by my cabin in the town of Nekomis in Oneida county, By my home in the village of Port Edwards, Wood county public hunting grounds and the Meadow Valley Public hunting area in wood county, Dunnville Wildlife area in Dunn County. We also hunt the Jackson county forest. In Oneida county I hunted 26 days and saw 15 deer in all. I have never seen allot of deer in this area, but last year for some reason they made it a herd control unit. This year there are no doe permits. How did they come up with these numbers? We did not hunt Meadow Valley much this year because we only saw one deer in two days of making deer drives. The area I hunt in Wood county is in a herd control unit for the 3rd year. I have seen very few deer. I see the kill numbers are way down. In many areas the DNR blames this on lower antlerless permits. So what excuse are they using in Wood county! In Dunn county we saw less deer, but many bucks.

We saw four bucks for every does or fawn. This unit has been earn a buck for several years. Can you imagine what the deer numbers will be next year (in Dunn county) after they harvest the bucks this year, as it went to a rifle area and no earn a buck.

As you can see I like to hunt in several parts of the state. I have shot a lot of deer over the years. This year I have had to work more because of a big project. The deer herd has been reduced to much. I feel the DNR started out on the right track. The problem is they don't seem to know when they hit their goals in a area. This holds true with other game as well. Bear, ducks and turkey numbers seem to allude them as well.

Another issue that I see is the deer herd is becoming nocturnal. One reason may be the amount of hunting pressure. We can hunt with guns in Oct. four day antlerless, then the gun deer season, ten day muzzle loader, four more days of antlerless and bow season. (5% of the pictures on my trail camera are at night. The muzzle loader season I hunted in Oneida county I saw two deer in six days of hunting. Every day we had fresh snow. Every day there were fresh tracks in the snow from the night before. I feel this is the result of all these gun hunts. It is my belief we should either use a hunt like was used in the river block in the past. That was the first two days of the nine day season was either sex and the last seven were buck only. The other suggestion would be to look at Iowa or Illinois. They have multiplie short gun season. This results in intense but short bouts of hunting pressure.

In closing I would like to state that the DNR was not completely wrong they just need a better way to track game numbers. They need to include hunters input at a higher level than in the past.

12/13/2009 **Bob Lewerenz**, boblewerenz@verizon.net
714 E 9th St
Marshfield, WI 54449

59 year old veteran of 40+ deer hunts, hunt with bow, rifle and muzzleloader, 20 days per year or more, killed 70+ whitetails in Wisconsin.

1. Bowhunted 9 times saw 13 deer, not very good, killed a spike buck opening day of rifle and saw 11 deer in 3 days rifle hunt, not very good, muzzleloader hunted 2 days saw 3 deer, not very good, hunted 1 day statewide antlerless saw 2 deer, all on public land, saw 29 deer in 15 days hunting and killed one, pretty slow.
2. No 16 day deer hunt, are they nuts, more hunting when the number of deer seen is down. Traditional gun season is just right.
3. Cut down or eliminate antlerless tags where deer are down, DUH.
4. I am sure the politically correct agenda group will try to eliminate baiting because of this, which they did even when they were trying to kill as many deer as possible, which is talking out of both sides of their face. If they do, it will just make hunting some areas more difficult, help nothing in non CWD area, just political agenda.
5. How about more opportunities for muzzleloader, an October muzzleloader hunt? More hunting opportunity, less kill due to making it harder.

6. I would personally appreciate allowing scopes with power on muzzleloaders because I am an old guy and my eyes could use the help, won't help the deer hunt, will help us old guys make a clean ethical shot.

12/13/2009 **Jim Filitz**, W5853 St. Hwy. 95, Neillsville, WI 54456, tallpines@tds.net

Sir: In regards to the 09 deer season, I have hunted for 55+ yrs. now that I'm retired I do a lot of bow hunting. also a retired hunter and instructor with 35+ yrs. of teaching. In 08 at the end of bow season I had seen a average of 3+ deer per trip. in 09 in the same area & about the same No. of trips I saw .56 deer deer and 2 wolves.

I would like to see 1 either or license per bow hunter, and the same for gun season, with unused gun tag carried over to the muzzle loader hunt. That hopefully keep the DNR happy with hunters being able to shoot a doe myself I wouldn't shoot a doe until the population has increased.

12/9/2009 **Charles Lanser**, clanser@wi.rr.com

Rep. Molepske, I am unable to attend the public hearing for the Committee on Fish and Wildlife Dec. 17. I would ask that you consider adjusting the overwinter deer population goal upward to 1,000,000.

12/5/2009 **John Giesler**, johngiesler@aol.com

1857 Zion Lane Abrams WI 826 2268

I am a concerned deer hunter. If the herd is managed in the future as it is being done now, lord help Wisconsin sportsmen and women.

I am a land owner in unit 49B. I have hunted the same area for 55 YEARS and have never seen so few deer. I spent 64 hours in my blind and never saw one single deer. I had cameras out all year. I got more pictures of bear, coyotes, fox and bobcat than deer. I imagine wolves will next.

At one time I hunted snowshoe hare with my Beagles, they are totally gone in my swamp saw one squirrel and one grouse all year on my land. Small game is disappearing just like the deer.

I am retired. If the people who set the rules spent as much time in the woods watching for animals and talking to people who do, just maybe things would change for the better.

The thing that really upset me this year the most was, my unit was listed as below the set go by twenty percent, yet there was seven hundred more antlerless tags issued than last year. I would like someone to explain to me how that can be sound management.

To me, Wisconsin is being run poorly in many ways, To many new taxes and fees. deficit spending, poor job market and the DNR's poor decisions
Well that is my two cents worth.

12/13/09 **Pat Pearson**, 316 W. Burnett St., Beaver Dam, WI, pearson920@charter.net

I am glad to see that other representatives are taking up the call from hunters to find out what the heck is going on in Madison with this Big Game Management team. I was happy to see Russ Decker very public stance and call out to fire the so called Deer Management Experts with in the WDNR. Thank god, (we the hunters) finally have some representatives that will stand up to this reckless group of individuals that are destroying this rich Wisconsin heritage. Some of these guys needed to be ousted 2 years ago already. Long before it got to this point. We (the hunters) knew that, but we just never could get banded together or find representation we needed. This whole DNR staff has the appearance of a good old boys club that has no fear of being removed from their positions; They will continue to think that their jobs are safe until we can make an example out of some of them. Then, just maybe those that are left will know they either need to do their job (and do it correctly) or they too will be sent down the road. My personal opinion is any thing short of some jobs being lost at the very top of this group would be considered a failure. We need fresh ideas and mindset in these top positions. If we do not get some type of change the DNR will never have the support of hunters.

I would appreciate your reply on this very important issue.

Population Goals and Good Hunting

State Statute 29

29.014 Rule-making for this chapter. (1) The department shall establish and maintain open and closed seasons for fish and game and any bag limits, size limits, rest days and conditions governing the taking of fish and game that will conserve the fish and game supply and ensure the citizens of this state continued opportunities for good fishing, hunting and trapping.

The DNR is mandated to manage the deer population to goal. All season structures, quotas and management prescriptions are based on how far the calculated population is from the goal.

Goals are a fixed number. Regardless of what the population goal is, the state cannot manage the population, Set season structure, Set quotas or enact proper management prescriptions unless they are able to determine how far the deer population is from the goal. You cannot balance your checkbook without knowing your starting or current balance. Goal setting is pointless and frustrating if you don't know how far you are from reaching the goal.

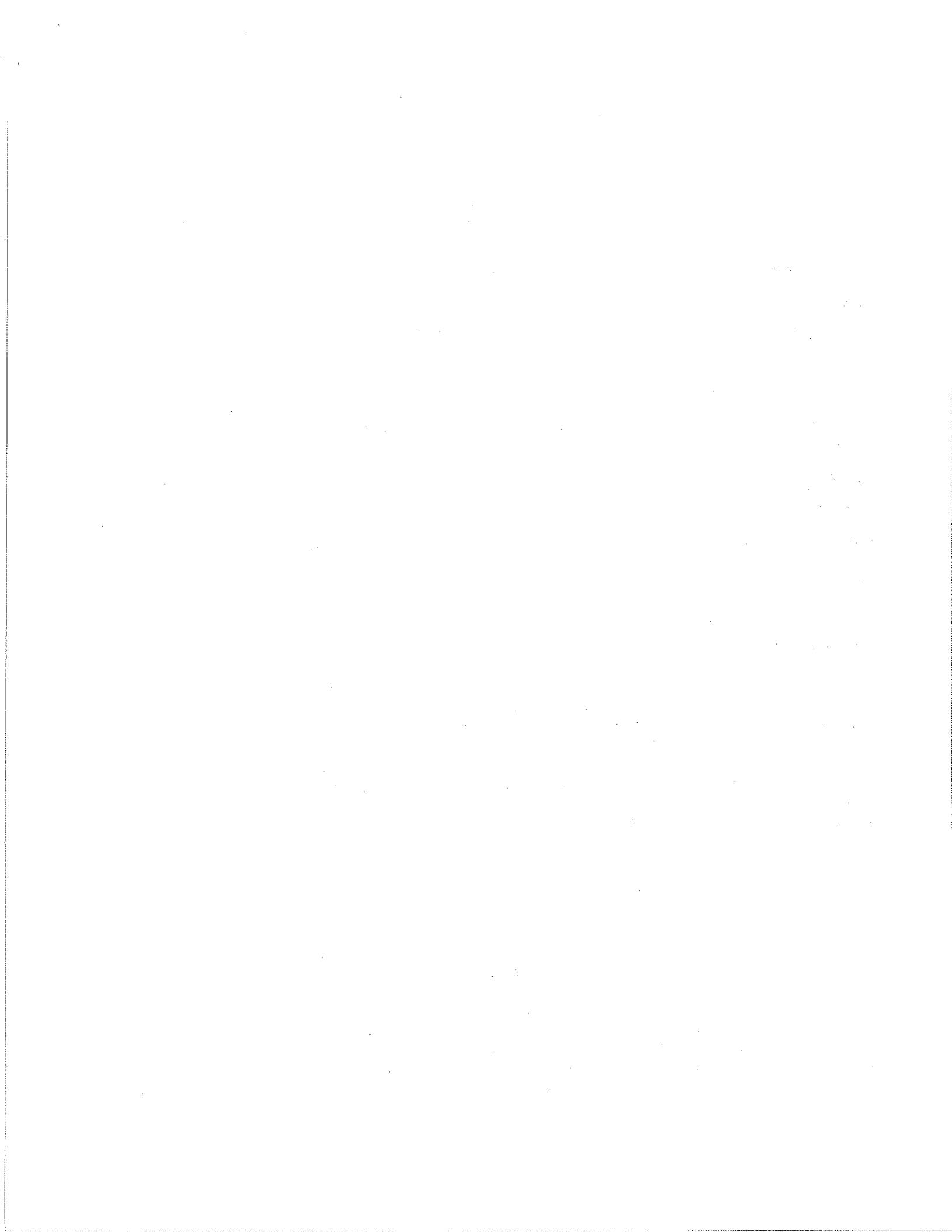
Did this year's deer harvest bring us to goal? The calculated post hunt population tells the Department where the herd is in regards to reaching the goal. Without proper and calibrated tools to gauge the herd in relationship to the goal, managers can neither diagnose the condition nor prescribe seasons to reach that goal next year. While goal setting is important, the ability to verify management practices are getting us there are key. Regardless of what the goal is, if we don't know if we have reached it or passed it, we will be back here again discussing deer herd management.

1. Determine deer goals for total square miles of area and not square miles of habitat/range.

Most of the Deer Management units that are habitually over goal are units that have significant areas that are not currently defined as deer habitat. The biological carrying capacity of farmland areas is 80 to 100 deer per sq. mile. The goals are set at 20 to 25 deer per sq. mile or range. This may equate to 10 to 12 deer per square mile of total land area. These goals are set at social carrying capacity yet most farmers and landowners will never reduce the deer down to these low goals. Land owners paying recreational rate property taxes do not consider this good hunting. A simple solution to this would be to establish goals per sq. mi. of total land area like virtually every other state and increase the goals to a level hunters support.

2. Establish deer population goals at a level capable of sustaining an annual total hunter harvest (all seasons, gun, bow, tribal, crop damage etc.) of 400,000 deer plus the 15% wounding loss and the non-harvest mortality.

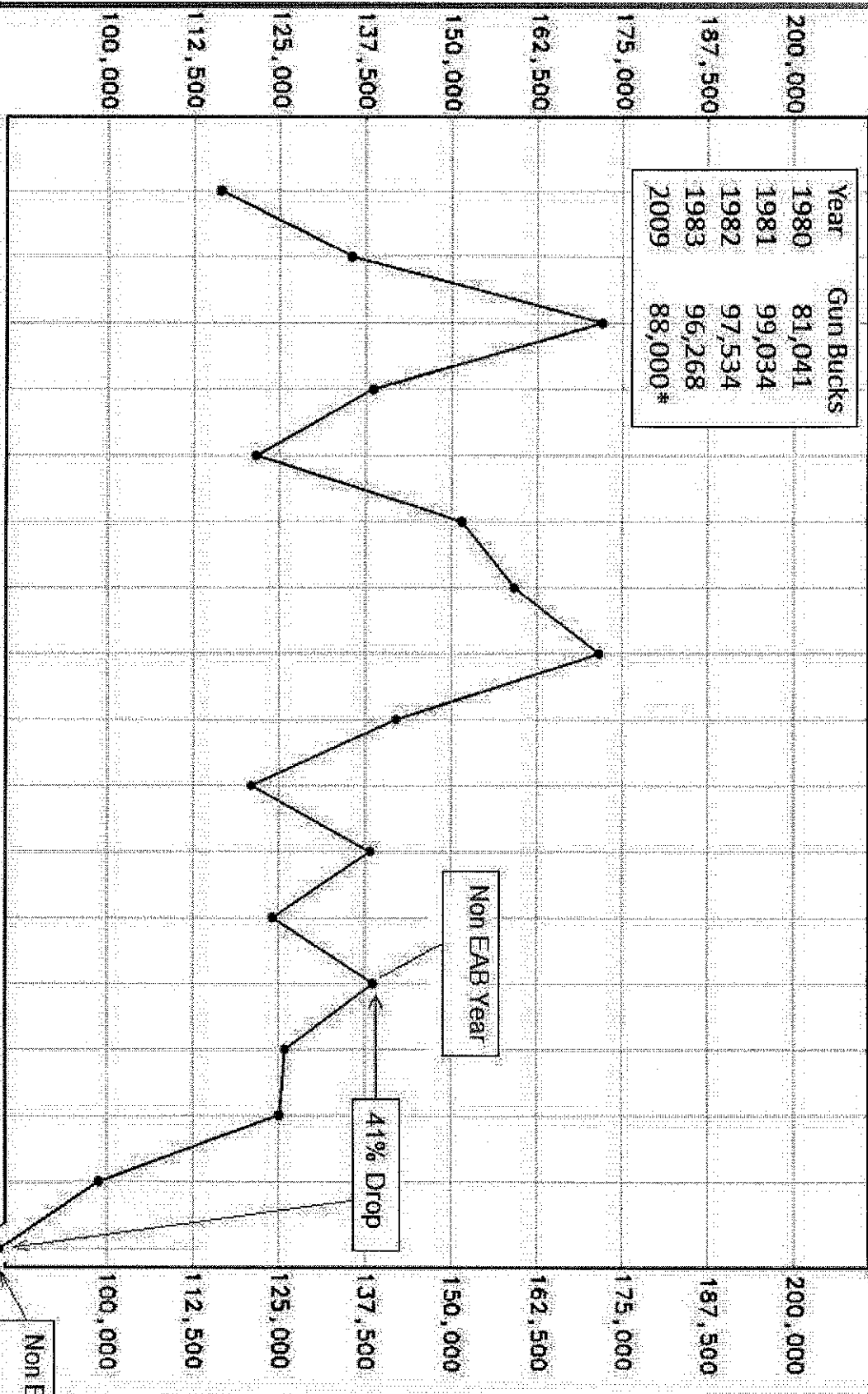
*It has been stated by the DNR that at currently established goal, hunters can expect to harvest roughly 270,000 to 290,000 deer. Since 1990 hunters have harvested over 400,000 deer annually except for 4 years including this year which may end up at roughly 300,000 to 320,000. It is clear that this year's level falls short of what hunters consider **good deer hunting**. To sustain a harvest of 400,000 deer and account for non-harvest mortalities the over winter goal needs to be at least between 1,000,000 to 1,200,000 deer over winter or just under 25 deer per sq. mi. of total land area, well within the biological carrying capacity of most of the state. For the last 10 years, DNR's population estimates have been within that range while car deer collisions and crop damage complaints and harvests have declined.*



Gun Bucks harvested by year

Data Source: WDNR

Year	Gun Bucks
1980	81,041
1981	99,034
1982	97,534
1983	96,268
2009	88,000*



1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008

Buck harvest data is the basis for population modelling

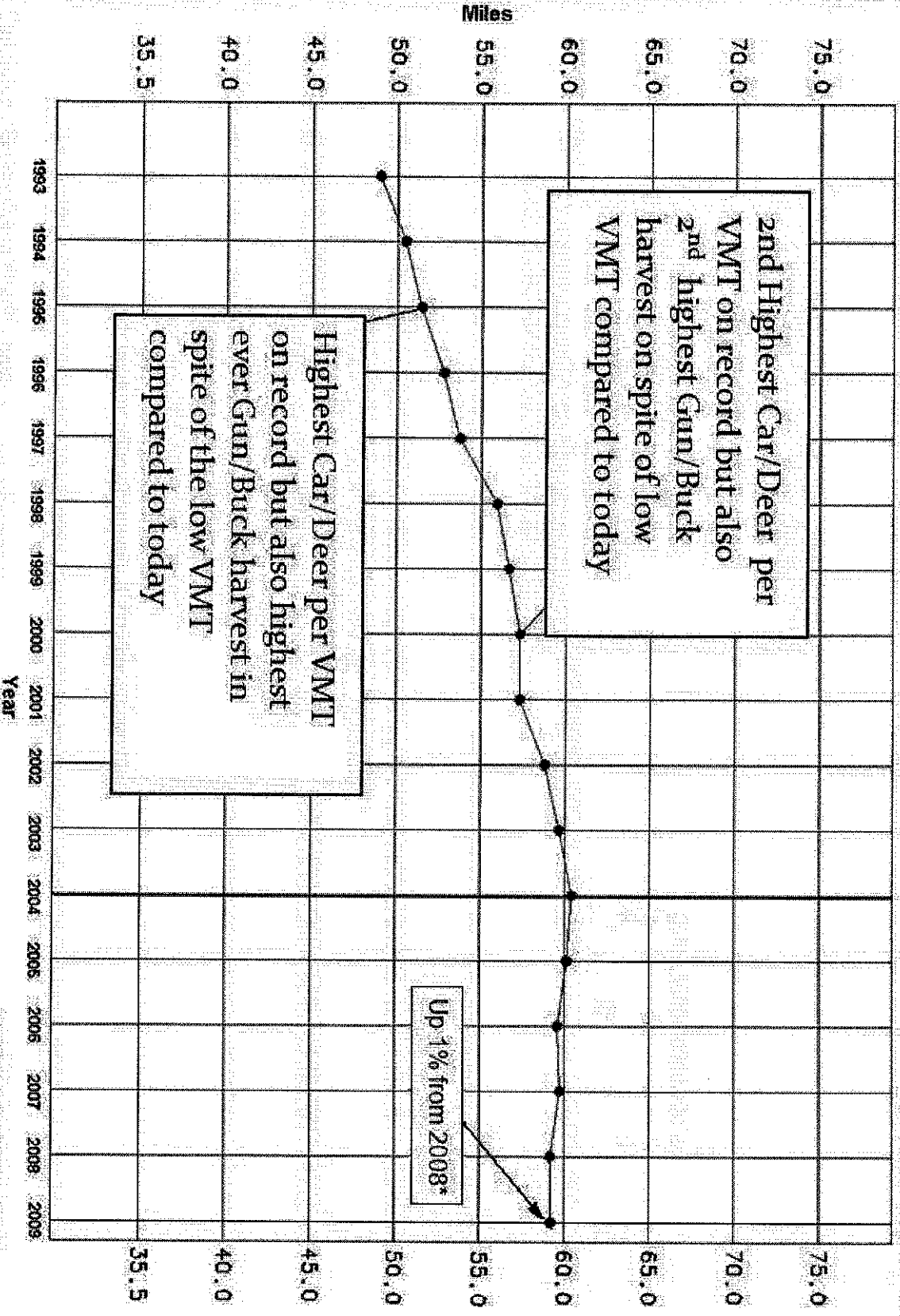
Non EAB Year

41% Drop

Non EAB Year



(VMT) Vehicle Miles Traveled (expressed in Millions of miles) Data Source: WIDOT



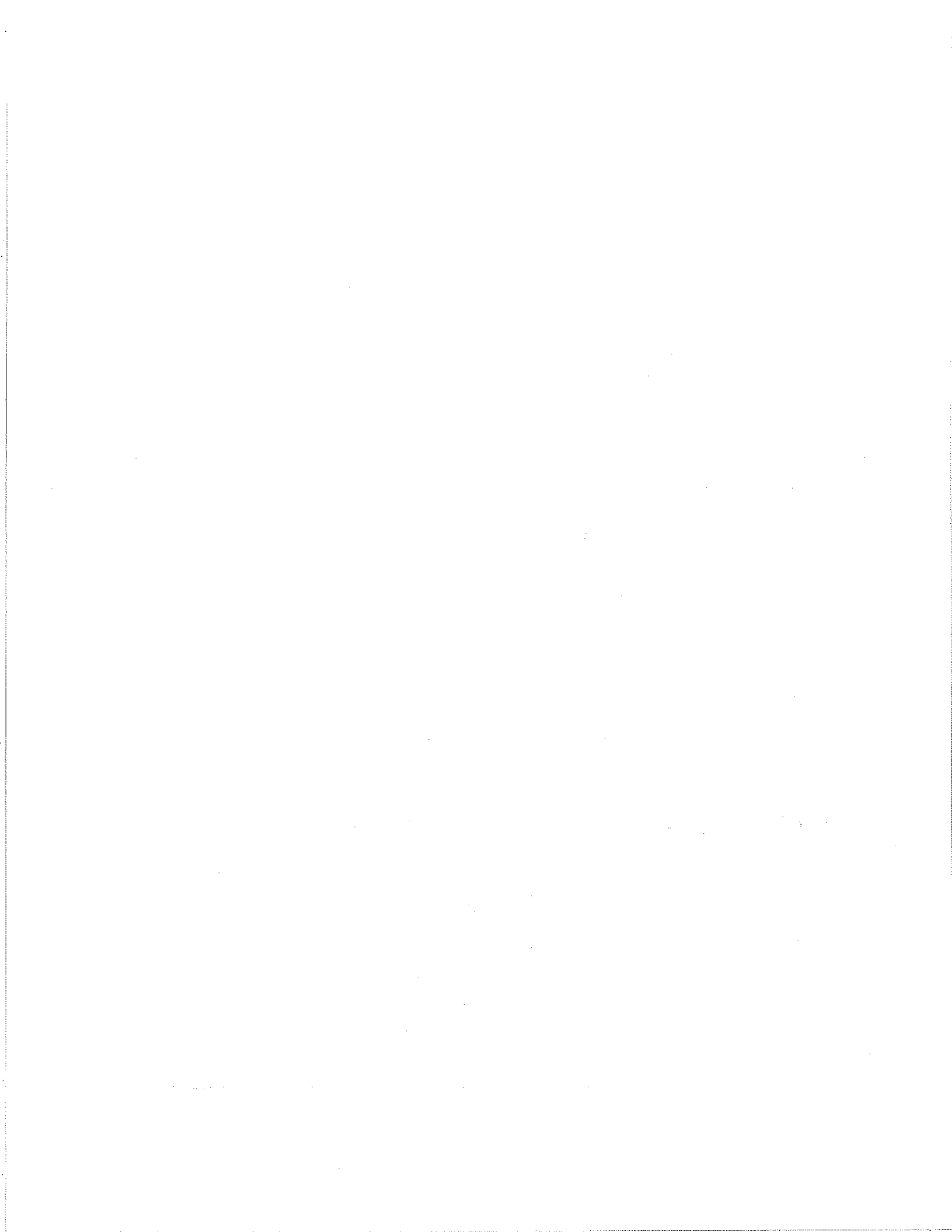
2nd Highest Car/Deer per VMT on record but also 2nd highest Gun/Buck harvest on spite of low VMT compared to today

Highest Car/Deer per VMT on record but also highest ever Gun/Buck harvest in spite of the low VMT compared to today

Up 1% from 2008*

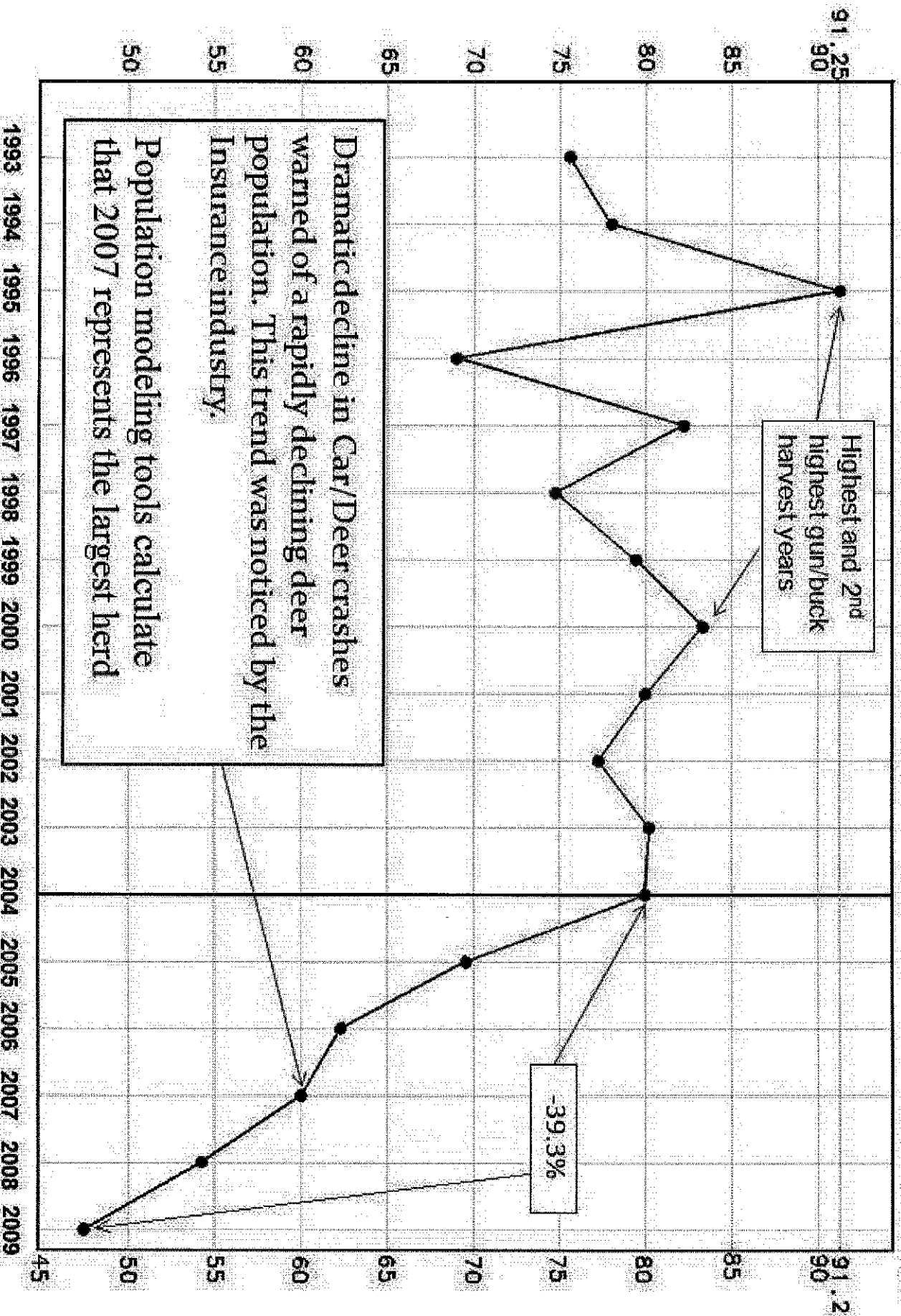
VMT Average for 1980 thru 1983 = 33.4 million

* VMT as of Oct. 2009

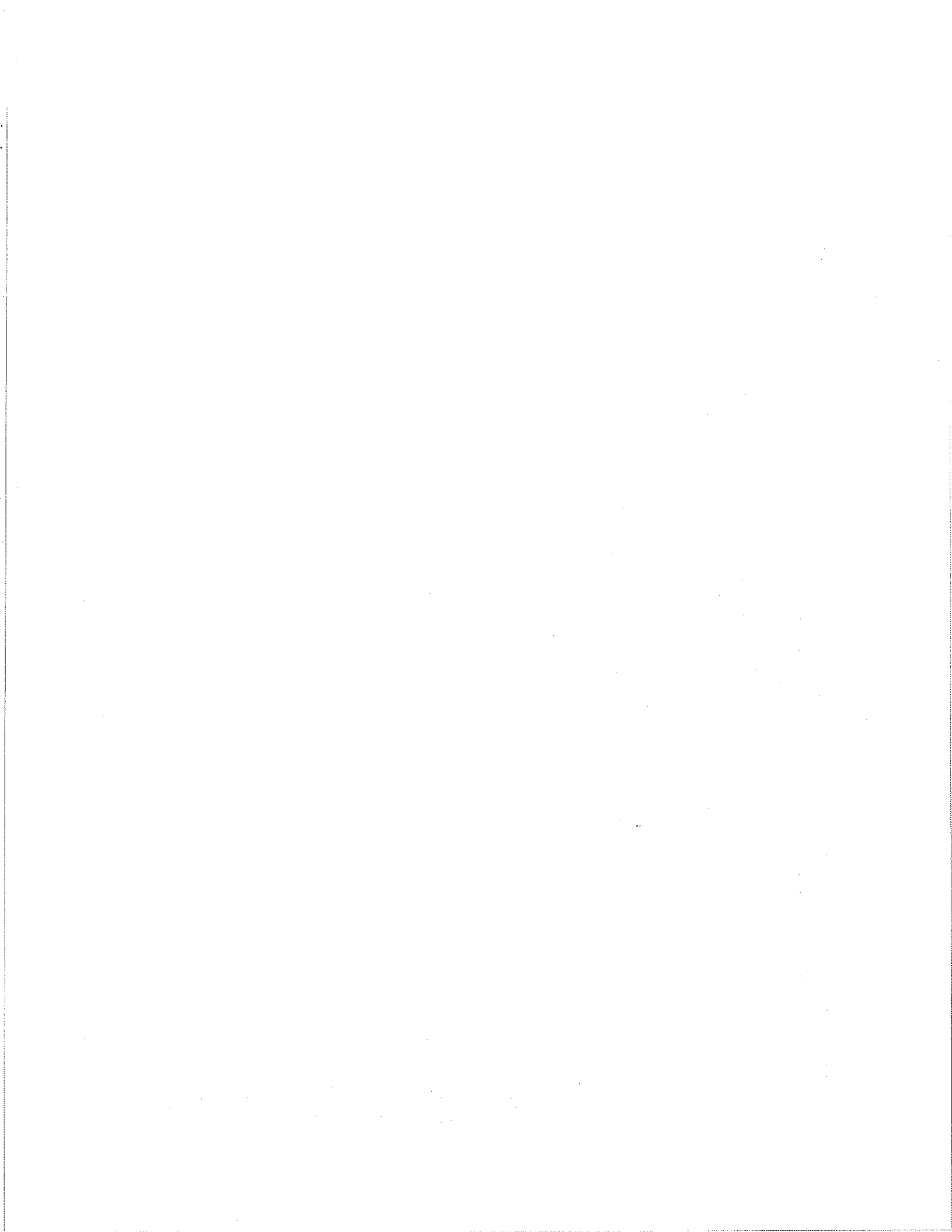


Car/Deer Crashes Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled

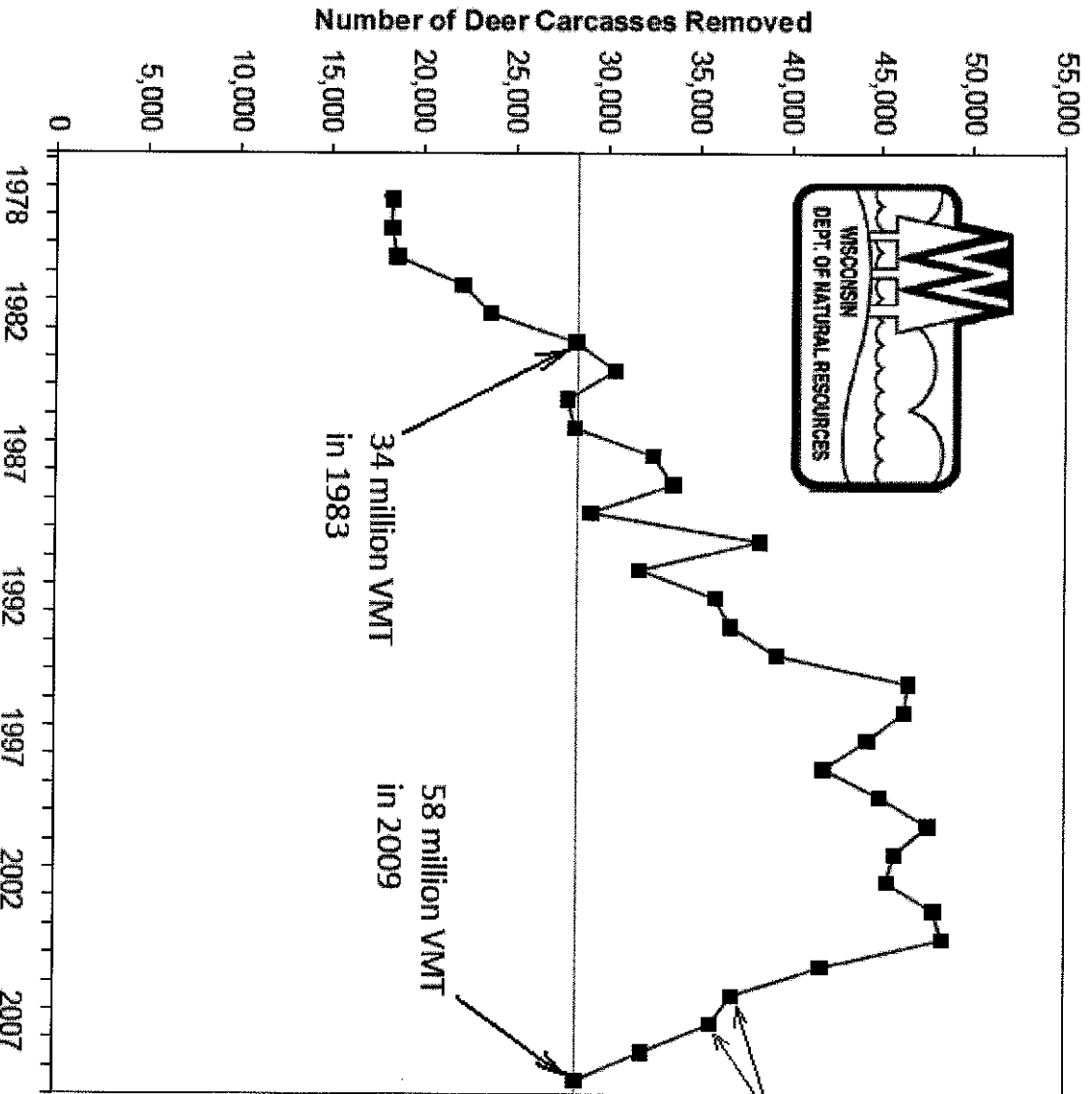
Data Source: WDOT



Dramatic decline in Car/Deer crashes warned of a rapidly declining deer population. This trend was noticed by the Insurance industry.
 Population modeling tools calculate that 2007 represents the largest herd

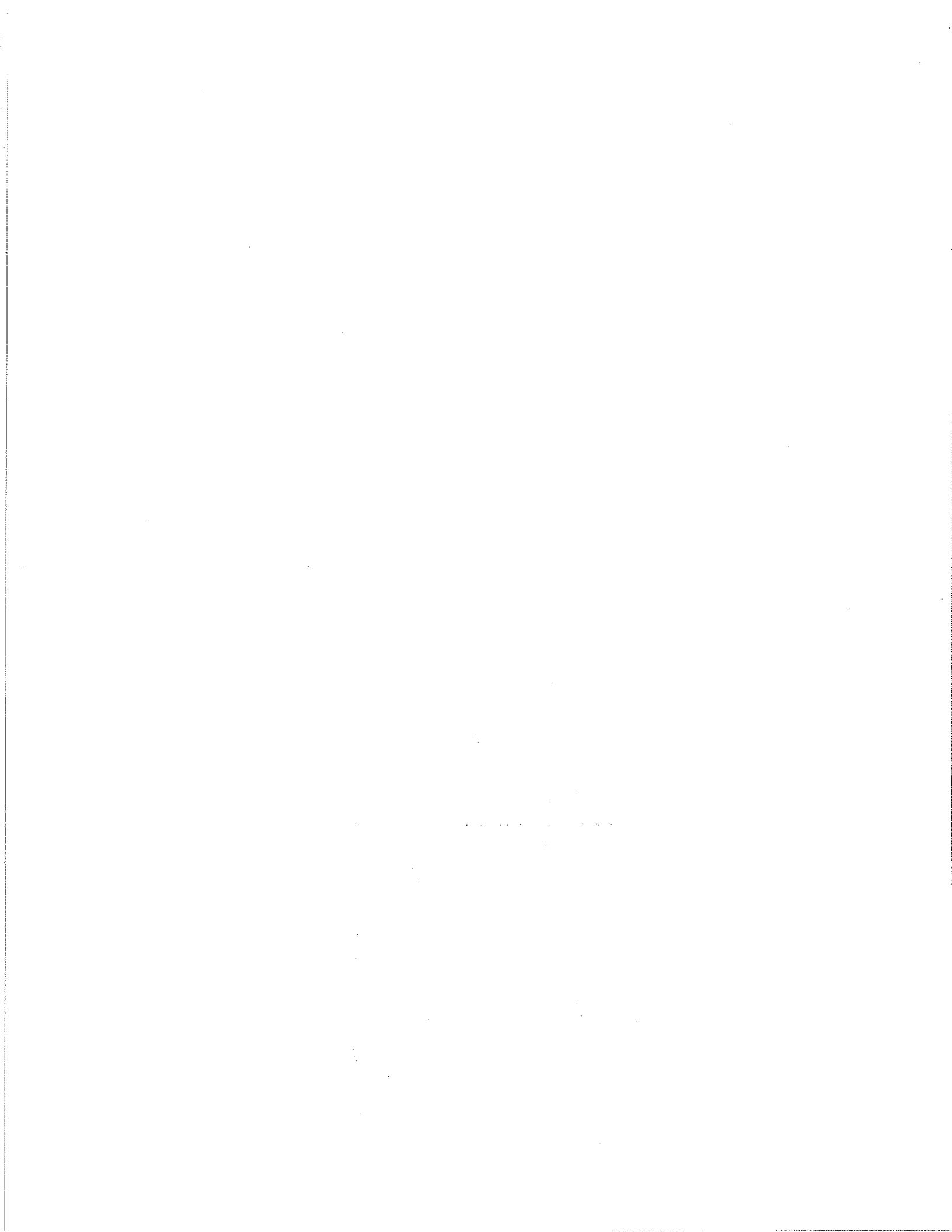


**DNR - Wisconsin Deer Carcass Removals by
Contractors and Salvage Permits - FY 1978-2009**



Population modeling tools indicate that the 06 and 07 deer herds are at record highs

41% drop in car/deer collisions from 2004. We are hitting deer at 1983 levels despite the fact we drove 24 million more miles in 2009 than 08



Prehunt and Posthunt Deer Population Estimates and Harvests, 1981-2006

Year	Total harvest (gun,bow,tribal,etc)	Prehunt Population	Statewide Posthunt	Fawn Recruitment	Expansion Rate %	Historic buck Harvests
1980	160,578	749,920	565,255			81,041
1981	195,756	871,173	646,054	305,918	54.1	99,034
1982	213,565	848,668	603,068	202,614	31.4	97,534
1983	231,119	851,705	585,918	248,637	41.2	96,628
1984	295,305	1,048,083	708,482	462,165	78.9	117,197
1985	316,426	1,018,049	654,159	309,567	43.7	112,701
1986	301,875	1,023,246	676,090	369,087	56.4	117,886
1987	296,010	1,092,295	751,883	416,205	61.6	116,881
1988	309,187	1,193,082	837,517	441,199	58.7	121,536
1989	360,330	1,299,553	885,173	462,036	55.2	139,651
1990	403,173	1,362,348	898,699	477,175	53.9	140,726
1991	424,556	1,289,781	801,542	391,082	43.5	120,009
1992	351,838	1,095,748	691,134	294,206	36.7	111,476
1993	273,056	1,152,128	838,114	460,994	66.7	116,507
1994	377,520	1,383,001	948,853	544,887	65.0	135,574
1995	472,196	1,664,725	1,121,700	715,872	75.4	171,891
1996	465,079	1,423,441	888,600	301,741	26.9	138,622
1997	362,975	1,226,321	808,900	337,721	38.0	121,050
1998	411,519	1,494,247	1,021,000	685,347	84.7	151,575
1999	497,670	1,662,987	1,090,666	641,987	62.9	159,296
2000	618,274	1,818,015	1,107,000	727,349	66.7	171,753
2001	446,957	1,503,365	989,364	396,365	35.8	141,942
2002	373,926	1,344,904	914,889	355,540	35.9	126,470
2003	485,965	1,663,485	1,106,036	748,596	81.8	147,436
2004	517,366	1,643,082	1,047,525	537,046	48.6	133,223
2005	465,760	1,623,736	1,088,720	576,211	55.0	147,622
2006	507,224	1,809,400	1,224,470	720,680	66.2	137,278
2007	518,573	1,816,288	1,216,680	591,818	48.3	133,131
2008	453,000	1,523,800	1,005,006	307,120	25.2	103,845
2009						88,000*

10 year high expansion rate = +81.8%

10 year low expansion rate = +25.2%

10 year average expansion rate = +52.6%

Last year's calculated post hunt population was 1,005,006

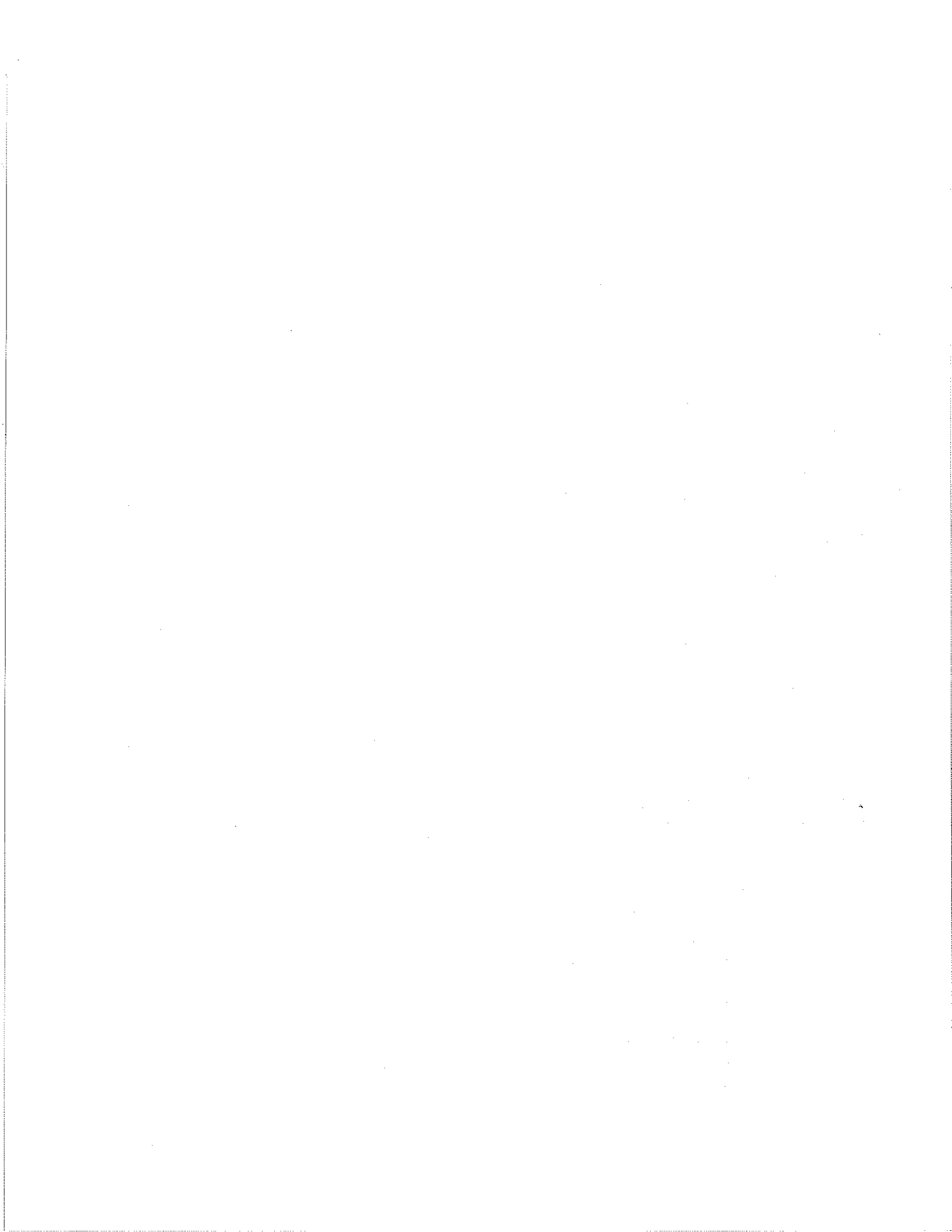
2009 Pre hunt population is 2008 post hunt plus average expansion rate (+53%) SAK will estimate 1,536,639

2009 Pre hunt population is 2008 post hunt plus highest expansion rate (+25.2%) SAK will estimate 1,258,267

2009 Pre hunt population is 2008 post hunt plus lowest expansion rate (+81.8%) SAK will estimate 1,827,100

Either population modeling was wrong in the 80's or it's wrong in the mid to late 2000's

Current population modeling tools indicate that 50% of the state is over goal based on the Departments most recent comparison of the herd to goals



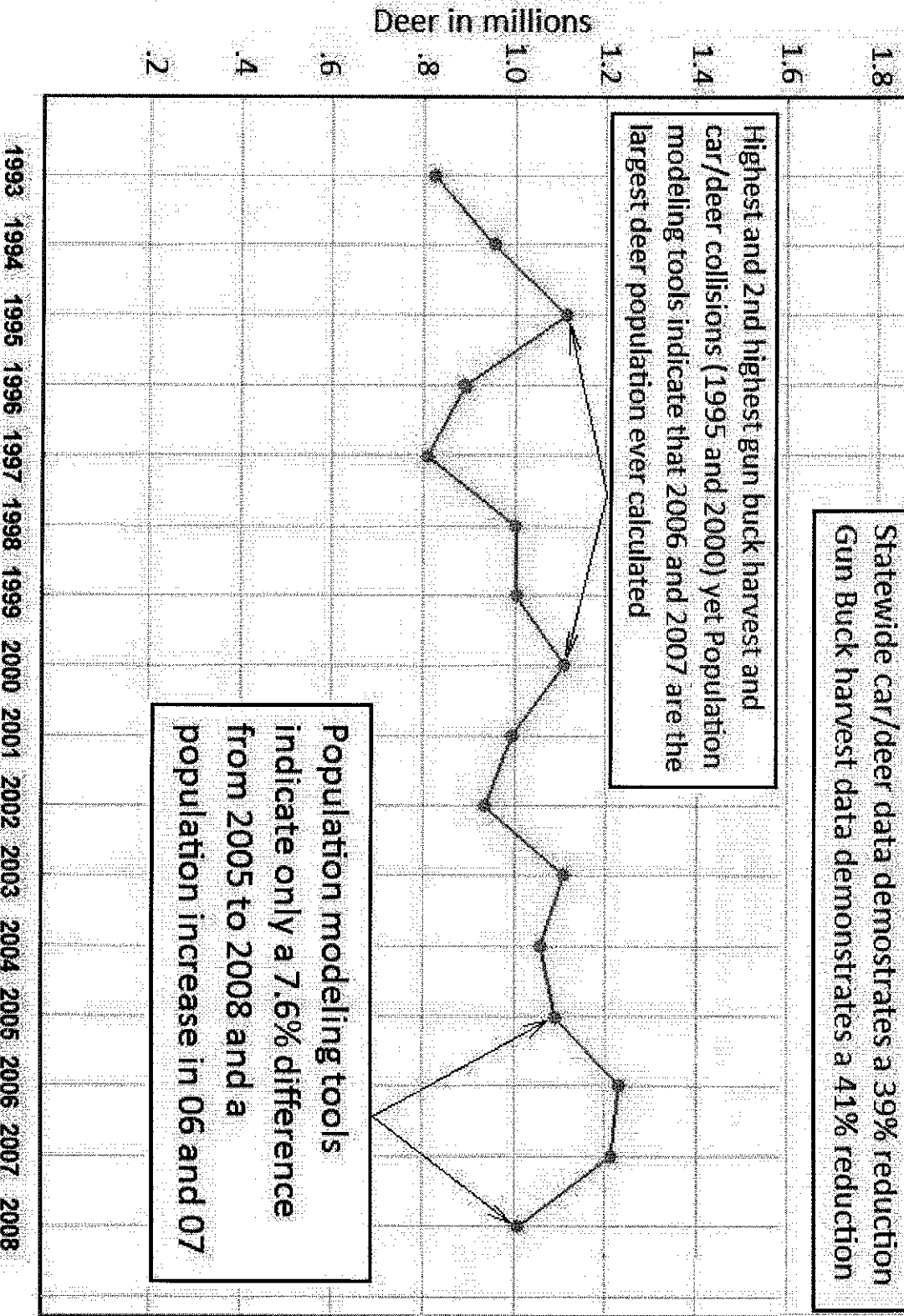
Post-Hunt Population Estimate

Data Source: WDNMR

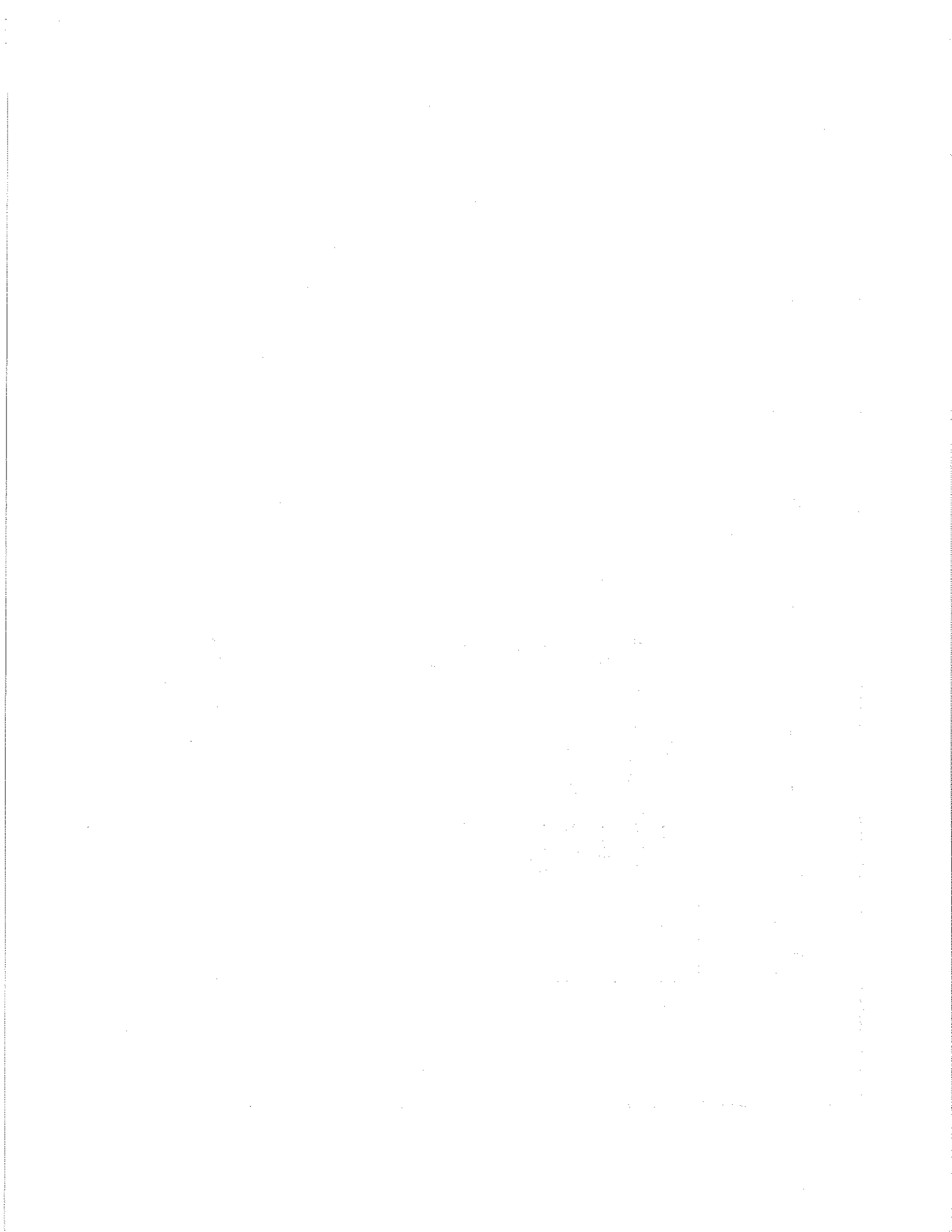
From 2005 to 2008

Statewide car/deer data demonstrates a 39% reduction
Gun Buck harvest data demonstrates a 41% reduction

Highest and 2nd highest gun buck harvest and
car/deer collisions (1995 and 2000) yet Population
modeling tools indicate that 2006 and 2007 are the
largest deer population ever calculated



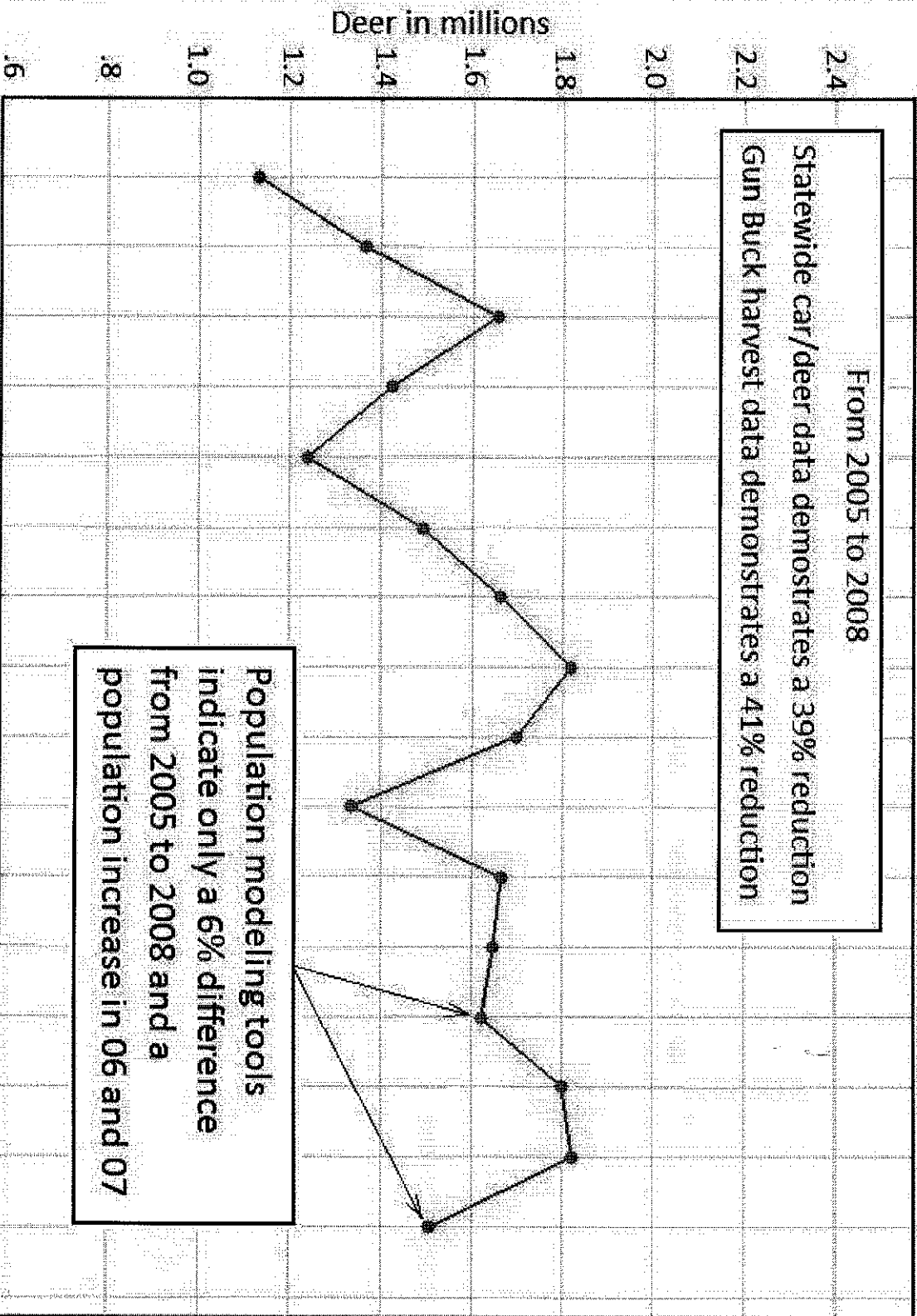
Population modeling tools
indicate only a 7.6% difference
from 2005 to 2008 and a
population increase in 06 and 07



Pre-Hunt Population Estimate

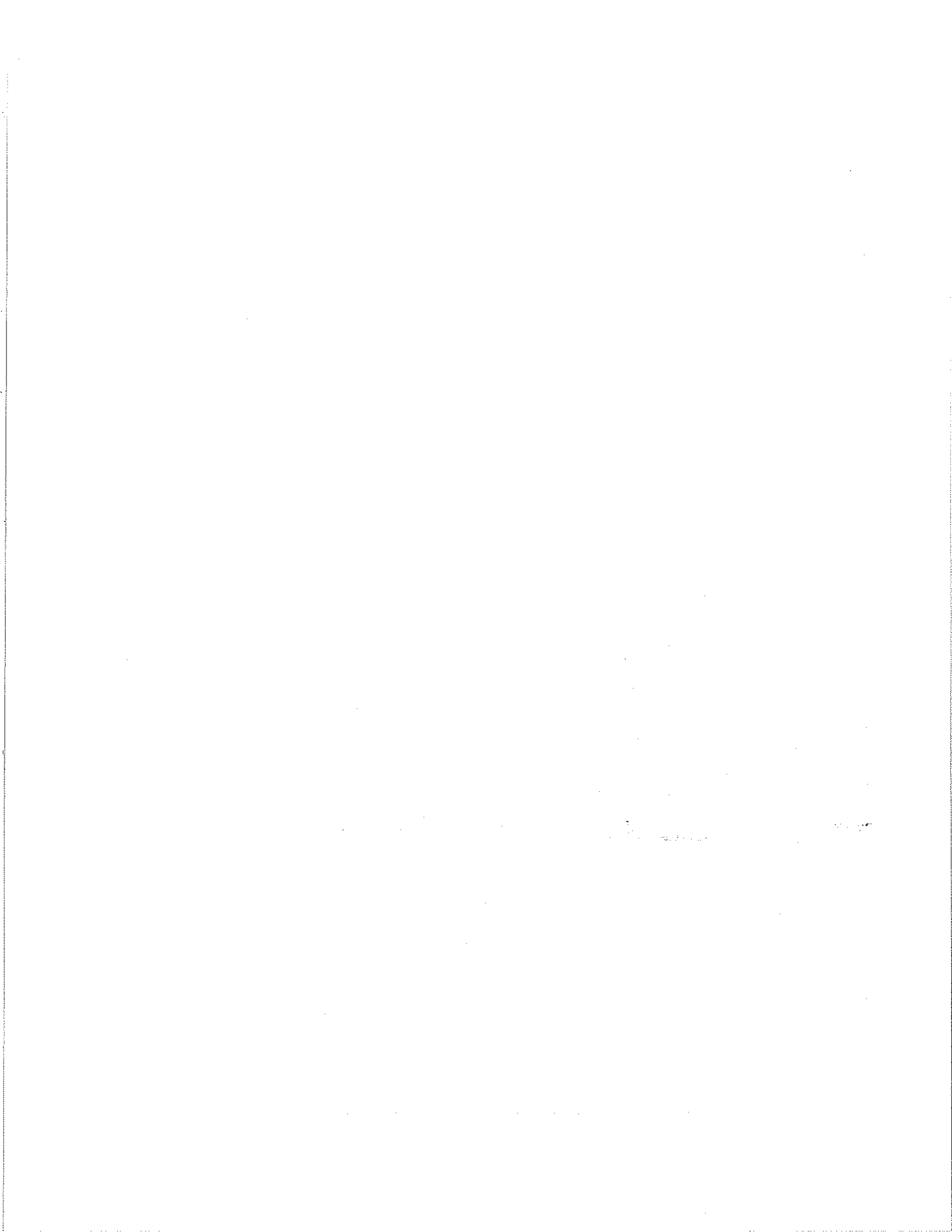
Data Source: WDNR

From 2005 to 2008
Statewide car/deer data demonstrates a 39% reduction
Gun Buck harvest data demonstrates a 41% reduction



Population modeling tools indicate only a 6% difference from 2005 to 2008 and a population increase in 06 and 07

1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008



With the Department indicating winters classified as mild in 07 and 08, how can the lowest expansion rate in decades be explained?

Year	Calculated pre-hunt pop.
1994 (preceded the highest gun buck and car/deer crash year)	1,383,001
1999 (preceded the 2nd Highest gun buck and car/deer crash year)	1,662,987
2003 (preceded the expanded use of EAB in 2004)	1,663,485
2008 (preceded this year's hunting season)	1,523,800

Population modeling tools calculated the 08 pre-hunt population was larger than 94's and within 8% of 1999 and 2003 while gun buck and car/deer numbers show a 40% decline.

Excerpt of letter from Rep. Hraychuck and Sen. Holperin to DNR Sec. (April 21, 2009)

"Therefore, it is our recommendation that EAB be suspended indefinitely, except in chronic wasting disease deer management units (DMU). Second, there is widespread skepticism (especially recently) over the Department's estimates of the statewide deer herd population and, by extension, the deer count in specific DMUs. Consequently, we further recommend that the Sex Age Kill (SAK) census model currently used by the Department be modified in the following ways:

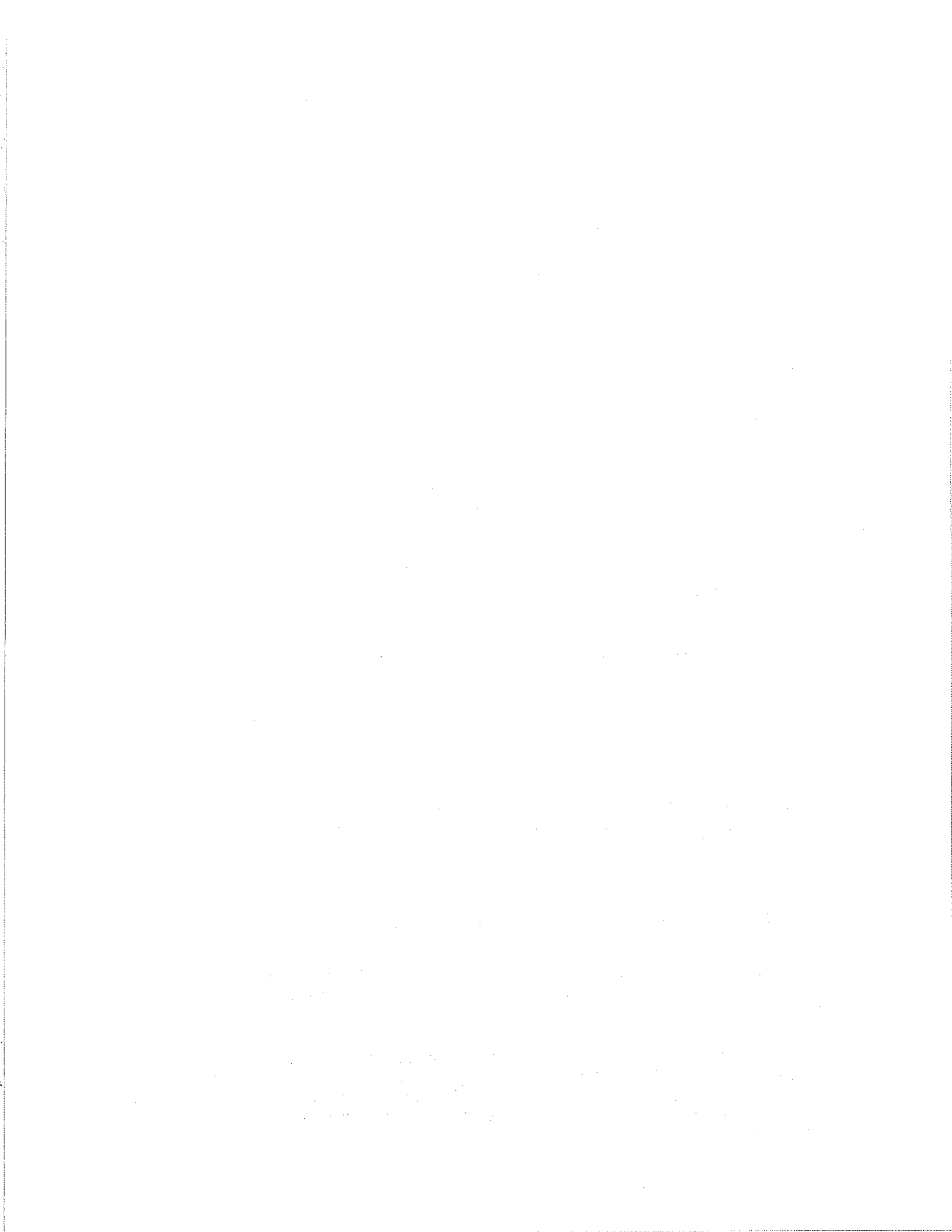
- Implement some, and eventually all, of the modifications to the SAK model recommended by a 2006 audit of the program.*
- Incorporate, or give greater weight, to the following factors: predation; car kills; fawn mortality; winter severity; tracks.*
- Authorize one or more outside organizations to use a methodology of their choosing to conduct independent deer herd counts in up to 5 DMUs in order to compare the accuracy of SAK to alternate methods.*

Finally, we recommend additional Department communication with deer hunters throughout the year, particularly regarding developments which are anticipated to affect deer mortality, movements, herd health or other factors that might impact herd numbers or harvest success."

Recommendations to improve goal reaching and a return to good hunting.

- 1. Bring in outside experts to recalculate current population estimates along with hunter and hunting group involvement to determine if we are properly managing the herd to get to goal.**

To gain credibility with hunters this must be done in a similar fashion to the recently completed bear study. It must be conducted by experts from outside the state and include involvement from the hunting community. It must be ongoing for a period of several years until. With the recent windfall in Pittman Robertson funds available to the state we would hope this project would take precedence over other proposed studies.



- 2. Eliminate all additional Herd Control seasons and EAB and return to a 9 day gun season statewide for a period of sufficient duration to allow the SAK formula the needed time to stabilize. This calibration will let managers know what the true population is.**

Two consecutive years of dramatically falling buck harvest indicate populations are far below DNR estimates. The last year the gun season recorded a buck harvest of less than 90,000 deer was in 1980. The statewide post hunt population in 1980 was 565,255 deer. This is 25% below current statewide population goals. SAK calculations require 5 year averages of consistent buck harvest. With inconsistent seasons and Earn-a-Buck accurate population estimates are impossible. The dramatic decline in antlerless harvest in '09 indicates the deer aren't there and hunters are electing to forgo venison in the freezer and not shoot the few they see. This also led to the dismal Oct. harvest of 11,000 deer total including the CWD zones where hunters still had to qualify for a buck tag. This year's Oct. gun harvest was little more than archers harvested during the same 4-day period in '06 and '07. CWD units are also managed to goals and the dramatic decline in those units indicates the aerial survey model is also flawed and populations may already be at or below current goals. It is also demonstrated in historical harvest data that hunters can and will shoot adequate numbers of antlerless deer in a 9-day season if the deer are there and adequate tags are issued.

- 3. During this period of re-establishing population modeling tool accuracy and precision, the suggested tool to reduce populations in units still determined to be more than 20% over goal, the Department should Issue free and/or \$2 Herd Control tags, including the Public/Private land tag proposal from EAB Alternative rule to minimize the risk of overharvest on public land.**

This provides hunters the tools to harvest antlerless deer where local populations may be abundant without forcing hunters to harvest antlerless deer in areas where local populations may be depleted. It will also limit tags on public land where hunters are less vested and less likely to make the assessment that populations are low. It is continually stated by the DNR that deer are not dispersed equally over the landscape so a one size fits all approach to address a few hot spot areas within a management unit also risks over harvest in many local areas where deer are less abundant. The key component of the record harvests of the last decade was the availability of free antlerless tags. The most successful harvest season was in 2000 when hunters were provided 2 free tags with the purchase of a license. Of the 528,494 deer harvested in the gun seasons just under 90% of them were harvested during the regular 9-day gun season.

- 4. Enact the recommended population modeling tool improvements from the 2006 SAK audit**

A study of the buck recovery rate as well as a fawn mortality study should be conducted as a way of improving the robustness and precision of population modeling tools. A study of the effects of hunter attitudes in regards to harvest selection should also be conducted to better understand there effects on the SAK tool.

