

Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 2F Final Report

March 30, 2011



Pennsylvania Game
Commission

Governor's Office of
Administration



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Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 2F

Introduction and Overview

An objective in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's (PGC) deer management plan was the use of local stakeholder groups to recommend a Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) specific deer population goal. Through a local Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), comprised of representatives of stakeholder groups within WMU 2F, participants communicated population goal recommendations based on input actively solicited from individuals within each stakeholder groups. CAC membership and attendance is shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1			
List of CAC Stakeholder Groups/Representatives and Attendance at Meetings			
Stakeholder Group	Representative (*Primary Member)	February 9	March 2
1. Agriculture	Willard Kline*	✓	✓
2. Conservationist	Leslie Haas	✓	✓
3. Conservationist	George Johnson*	✓	✓
4. Forest Industry	James Chapman*	✓	✓
5. Highway Safety	Doug Wolbert*	✓	✓
6. Homeowner-developed	Michael Bleech*	✓	✓
7. Public Landowner	Anthony Scardina*	✓	✓
8. Rural non-farm Landowner	Duane Vicini	✓	✓
9. Rural non-farm Landowner	Mary Hosmer*	✓	✓
10. Sportsman-Nonresident	Mark Rozum*	✓	✓
11. Sportsman-Resident	John Sain	✓	✓
12. Sportsman-Resident	Stanley Furman*	✓	✓

After recruiting stakeholder representatives from individuals recommended by PGC field staff, outside organizations, and those requesting to be considered through the volunteer nomination process, Office of Strategic Services (OSS)¹ staff convened and facilitated an introductory and educational meeting on February 9, 2011.

OSS facilitated a subsequent meeting on March 2, 2011, to gather stakeholder feedback, discuss summaries of stakeholder perspectives, and reach consensus, if possible, regarding a deer population trend recommendation for WMU 2F.

Nine different stakeholder groups were represented. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. In the case of 2F, this resulted in twelve CAC members. Primary members were identified for each stakeholder group and were responsible for coordinating results with their partner. Attendance at the second meeting was optional, but encouraged, for secondary members to attend to participate in the discussion. Primary members reported the combined results and held the decision making power of the group they represented. CAC members collected input from 347 people.

The following report explains the CAC process for this WMU. It includes a description of the meeting, information provided by PGC staff, topics discussed, stakeholder representative findings, the context of various perspectives, and the resulting consensus process that led to the CAC recommendation of a deer population trend for WMU 2F over the next five years:

Consensus was reached to increase the deer herd in WMU 2F by 15% over the next five years. This recommendation was made with two caveats. First,

¹ OSS is a service agency within the Office of Administration and has provided facilitation services to the PGC since the inception of the CAC process when piloted in 2006.

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the deer management assistance program (DMAP) needs to be returned to its 2009 status, and second, the deer herd can only increase if the habitat can support the increase.

First Meeting Summary

Prior to the first meeting, members received a document entitled "Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), Objectives and Process Overview," which explained each of the items under the second area covered in the agenda and the worksheet and template listed in the fifth area of the agenda. Highlights from the first meeting included reviewing the following:

PGC Deer Management Program Goals:

1. Manage deer for a healthy and sustainable deer herd.
2. Maintain deer-human conflicts at safe and acceptable levels.
3. Manage deer for healthy and sustainable forest habitat.
4. Manage deer to provide recreational opportunities.
5. Improve public's knowledge and understanding of deer and the deer management program.

Objectives of CAC's:

1. They provide an opportunity for the Game Commission to understand stakeholder values regarding deer management.
2. They provide an opportunity for stakeholders to interact with one another, facilitate communication among, and increase understanding of different stakeholder values and concerns.
3. They provide an opportunity for stakeholders to have direct input concerning deer population goals that ultimately affect all Pennsylvanians.
4. They provide an opportunity to inform stakeholders on the mission of the Game Commission, complexities of deer management, and the importance of proper management.

Outcome of CAC proceedings:

1. The goal is to build consensus among the committee and agree on a recommendation to increase, decrease, or stabilize the deer population in their WMU.
2. Definition of consensus: Consensus is reached if all but one member agrees with the other members.
3. If a consensus has been reached, OSS will present the recommendation to the Game Commission in a written format that explains how each stakeholder group's concerns were considered in the decision.
4. If a consensus cannot be reached among committee members, a recommendation will be made following the guidelines given in the first meeting.

The purpose of the first meeting was to provide information to the members about the CAC process as well as background on deer management, statewide and within WMU 2F. OSS staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 2F. This is presented in Table 1, which includes the complete voting history.

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PGC staff grounded the process in an overview of the mission and history of the Commission, as well as details about the deer management program including the goals of maintaining a healthy deer herd and a healthy forest habitat. Especially effective was the historical perspective on how deer management has been an emotional and controversial issue going back to the origins of the Commission. Specific deer, habitat, and land use data for WMU 2F was presented.

Members were provided forms to collect opinions from other people within their stakeholder area as well as to summarize the results into an overall report. For each stakeholder group, the goal was to speak with at least 10 other people. The meeting ended with questions and comments, as shown in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2
Topics During the Questions and Comment Period, February 9, 2011
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Number of doe tags required to harvest a deer and trends.2. Species that deer displace.3. Number of forest plots in WMU 2F used to determine habitat health.4. Process and timing of Commissioners receiving CAC reports.5. The number of deer harvested through DMAP statewide and for WMU 2F.6. Deer aging process.7. Deer fetus number and distribution for WMU 2F.8. Highway safety data involving deer for WMU 2F.

Second Meeting Summary

The purpose of the second meeting was for members to present their findings, ask questions of one another, and attempt to reach consensus.

For each stakeholder group, four questions were posed. In addition, members were asked to collect comments to discern why those among their stakeholder group feel the way they do. Individual stakeholder reports are included in Appendix A.

The questions were:

- A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or about right?
- C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?
- D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

OSS tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 2 meeting and displayed it on a table that was subsequently compared to the results of CAC member sentiment provided at the February 9 meeting.

As indicated in Table 1, the individual reports showed a split between those viewing the deer herd as decreasing or stable. Regarding a recommendation, six stakeholder groups

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advocated an increase, two recommended a decrease, and one supported the herd remaining the same (see Appendix A for details).

Question	February 9, 2011	March 2, 2011	March 2, 2011
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results ²	Consensus Decision
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU 2F increasing, decreasing, or stable?			
○ Increasing	2		
○ Decreasing	5	7	
○ Stable	5	2	
○ Do Not Know	0		
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU 2F too high, too low, or about right?			
○ Too High	2		
○ Too Low	7	6	
○ About Right	3	3	
○ Do Not Know	0		
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 2F should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			
○ Increase	7	6	15%
○ Decrease	2	2	
○ Remain The Same	3	1	
○ Do Not Know	0	0	
Increase by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable		
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable		
Number of present CAC members	12	9	
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members	Not Applicable	347	

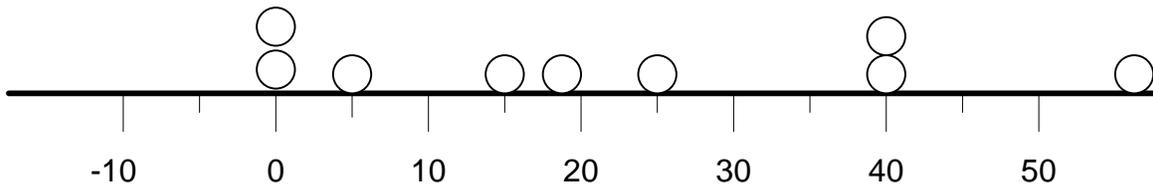
A second exercise provided each stakeholder the opportunity to place a dot on a graph at the place they felt best represented the type of increase or decrease that should take place, if any, based on their experience within their stakeholder group, what they learned during the survey process, and what they learned from PGC and each other during the course of the two meetings. This graphical depiction provided the stakeholders with a starting point for their discussion. Results of this exercise are shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3

² Totals for first three questions are based on the *majority* of survey respondents. See Appendix A for individual stakeholder reports.

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Graphical Depiction of Voting by Dots on Percentage of Increase/Decrease



While there was agreement that the deer population is down in 2F, there was wide variation on whether and by how much the deer herd would be allowed to increase over the next five years. Sportsman advocated for a rather robust increase, but were met with an initial counter by the agricultural representative, who were seeking a recommendation of remain the same. An initial proposal of a 25% increase was met with resistance on both sides of the issue. Discussion seemed to bring out a number of valid points, including a desire to put forth a recommendation with a caveat dealing with the habitat concerns in the CAC.

The group remained deadlocked between forestry and public landowner interests seeking status quo, and the resident and non-resident sportsman's interest in expanding the deer population. At this point a side bar discussion surrounding a number of issues developed. The group talked through the impact of DMAP, especially its impact on the Allegheny National Forest since changes had been made to the program in 2009. A proposal for a caveat dealing with DMAP was discussed and agreed upon by the CAC. Basically, the CAC wished to see the DMAP program returned to its configuration of 2009.

Upon deliberation, the public landowner member asked for the opportunity to speak privately with several of the other stakeholder representative. Once this caucus had broken up, it became apparent that a consensus decision of a 15% increase over the next five years with two caveats was reached by the group. The two caveats were; first, DMAP needs to be returned to its 2009 status, and second, the deer herd can only increase if the habitat can support the increase. The conservationist stakeholder group did not agree with this recommendation.

The following is the conclusion of the CAC:

Consensus was reached to increase the deer herd in WMU 2F by 15% over the next five years. The recommendation was made with two caveats. First, DMAP needs to be returned to its 2009 status, and second the deer herd can only increase if the habitat can support the increase.

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APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports

1. Sportsman-Nonresident – Mark Rozum (76 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 8 **Decreasing = 67** Stable = 1 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 **Too Low = 75** About Right = 0 Do Not Know = 1

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 74 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 1 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 100+

Percent Decrease = n/a

Whys

- Increase of hunting
- Local economy
- PGC needs to give back to the hunters

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2. Conservation – George Johnson (38 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 8 **Decreasing = 28** Stable = 1 Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 10 **Too Low = 26** About Right = 1 Do Not Know = 1

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 28 Decrease = 8 Remain Same = 1 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 43.5

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Interest in the youth hunter
- Economy
- Increase license sales
- Less scenic beauty

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3. Highway Safety – Doug Wolbert (14 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 **Decreasing = 14** Stable = 0 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 **Too Low = 14** About Right = 0 Do Not Know = 0

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 12 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 2 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 18 Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Increase would not effect accidents at this point
- Most problems experienced during the rut
- Noted that most policemen are hunters as well

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4. Rural Non-Farm Landowner – Mary Hosmer (44 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 3 **Decreasing = 27** Stable = 12 Do Not Know = 2

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 2 **Too Low = 31** About Right = 9 Do Not Know = 2

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 31 Decrease = 4 Remain Same = 7 Do Not Know = 2

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 30 (median) 25 (mode) Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

Increase

- Frustrated hunters, especially the younger hunters
- Economic impact
- Antlerless licenses need to be managed better

Decrease

- Habitat health and deer health should determine number of deer

Stable

- Seeing regeneration and larger bodied deer

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5. Homeowner – Michael Bleech (42 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 4 **Decreasing = 27** Stable = 6 Do Not Know = 5

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 2 **Too Low = 31** About Right = 5 Do Not Know = 4

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 30 Decrease = 3 Remain Same = 6 Do Not Know = 3

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 22

Percent Decrease = 1.7 (Average of all values)

Whys

- Young hunter concerns; would like to see more deer
- Help local economy
- Not enough deer

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6. Agriculture – Willard Kline (28 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 0 **Stable = 28** Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 0 **About Right = 28** Do Not Know = 0

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 0 Decrease = 0 **Remain Same = 28** Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Some damage
- Good communications with hunters
- More trouble being experienced with bear and turkey

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7. Forest Industry – James Chapman (12 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 5 Decreasing = 0 **Stable = 7** Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 5 Too Low = 1 **About Right = 6** Do Not Know = 0

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 1 Decrease = 4 **Remain Same = 7** Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 4.6

Whys

- Regeneration OK at current levels
- Getting desired levels of regeneration
- Deer and habitat seem balanced

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8. Sportsman-Resident – Stanley Furman (89 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 1 **Decreasing = 83** Stable = 4 Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 1 **Too Low = 83** About Right = 2 Do Not Know = 3

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 78 Decrease = 3 Remain Same = 3 Do Not Know = 2

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 40

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Want to see more deer
- Youth concern
- Concern for local economy

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9. Public Landowner – Anthony Scardina (4 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 1 Decreasing = 1 **Stable = 2** Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 2 Too Low = 0 **About Right = 2** Do Not Know = 0

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 0 **Decrease = 2** **Remain Same = 2** Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2F) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = n/a

Percent Decrease = 5-50

Whys

- Deer density less than 15 per square mile is OK
- Lower deer levels equal regeneration and improved deer health
- Regeneration, while slow, is coming back, leading to the deer population to come back. There is concern if the deer population returns to previous level.

Total response for all stakeholder groups = 347

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APPENDIX B: CAC Member Points During Consensus Discussion and Decision

The focus of the discussion was on the “whys” underlying opinions to increase or decrease the deer herd.

- Most members agreed that a caveat regarding the habitat being able to support the increase in deer was necessary.
- A number of CAC members spoke about the increased diversity in the forest that has resulted after the deer population was reduced. Seeing more wildflowers was mentioned as a positive of the ecosystem being more in balance.
- Members reported spotty instances of 20-30 deer per square mile and the fact that deer populations were not uniform across the WMU.
- Discussion ensued around the need to build conservation into part of the hunting ethic.
- The factor of hunter interest was explored by the group, and it was made known that more deer on the ground were needed for the sport of hunting and to ensure sufficient license sales going forward.
- The agriculture interest expressed that some deer damage is tolerable in the WMU.
- Discussion surrounding the impact of Marcellus shale drilling and the fact that every well leads to a 7-10 acre opening every square mile in the woods was brought up.
- Considerable discussion was held surrounding the DMAP allocation before consensus was agreed upon. The group agreed to consensus with a series of DMAP driven caveats; taking DMAP out of the base allocation; removing the cap on DMAP; allowing DMAP on leased land for those producing timber – with the exception of the last all were existing conditions prior to 2010.

Conclusion: *Consensus was reached to increase the deer herd in WMU 2F by 15% over the next five years. The recommendation was made with two caveats. First, DMAP needs to be returned to its 2009 status, and second the deer herd can only increase if the habitat can support the increase.*