

Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 1A Final Report

April 8, 2009



Pennsylvania Game
Commission

Governor's Office of
Administration



PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

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 1A, participants communicated population goal recommendations based on input actively solicited and obtained from individuals within each representative's stakeholder group. This is not the easiest of tasks as attested to by the CAC members.

After recruiting stakeholder representatives from individuals recommended by PGC field staff and other outside organizations as well as people 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 4, 2009. OSS staff asked CAC members to attempt to communicate with at least 10 representatives from each of their respective stakeholder groups. OSS facilitated a subsequent meeting on March 4, 2009, for the purpose of representatives providing stakeholder feedback, collectively discussing summaries of stakeholder perspectives, and reaching consensus, if possible, regarding a deer population goal recommendation for WMU 1A. CAC membership and attendance at both meetings is shown in Exhibit 1. Nine different stakeholder groups were represented. CAC members collected input from 382 people. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. In the case of 1A, this resulted in 15 CAC members. Primary members were identified for each stakeholder group and were responsible for coordinating their results with their partner. Attendance at the second meeting was optional for the secondary member. They were encouraged to attend to participate in the discussion. Primary members reported the combined results and held the decision making power of the group they represented.

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 consensus process that led to the CAC recommendation of a deer population goal for WMU 1A over the next five years:

Eight of nine attending CAC primary members recommended a 30% to 40% increase to the WMU 1A deer herd.

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.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

First Meeting Summary

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

Exhibit 1			
List of CAC Stakeholder Groups/Representatives and Attendance at Meetings			
Stakeholder Group	Representative (*Primary Member)	February 4	March 4
1. Ag-Commercial Nurseries/Orchards	Donald Miller*	✓	✓
2. Ag-Commercial Nurseries/Orchards	Calvin Ernst	✓	✓
3. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop	Kenneth Woods*	✓	✓
4. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop	David McCullough	✓	✓
5. Business-Indirect	Richard Faler, Jr*	✓	✓
6. Business-Direct	Paul Lamping*	✓	✓
7. Business-Direct	Charles Cagno	✓	✓
8. Conservationist	Ralph Martone*	✓	✓
9. Forest Industry	Mark Bodamer*	✓	✓
10. Homeowner Developed	Ted Farren	✓	
11. Homeowner Developed	Fred Bauer*	✓	✓
12. Rural Non-Farm Landowner	Ken Manko*	✓	✓
13. Rural Non-Farm Landowner	Dennis Anderson	✓	
14. Sportsman-Resident	Todd Shipton	✓	✓
15. Sportsman-Resident	Richard Briggs*	✓	✓

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 information.

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.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

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.

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 in conjunction with 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 and habitat data for WMU 1A was presented.

Members were provided with 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 Exhibits 2.

Exhibit 2

Topics During the Questions and Comment Period, February 4, 2009

1. Forest regeneration data details regarding the methods for assessing and the timeline.
2. Clarification on the low percentage of public land for 1A and its composition.
3. Factors taken into consideration to determine forest health including tree species and other factors.
4. Comment that more land is being posted; more people want control over their land.
5. Comment that vehicle collisions are down in 1A.
6. Comment questioning the wisdom of concurrent seasons with too many does being taken.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

Second Meeting Summary

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

For each stakeholder group, four questions were posed for the members to answer. In addition, members were asked to collect comments to answer why those among their stakeholder group feel the way they do. The individual stakeholder reports are included as Appendix A.

The questions are as follows:

- A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) 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 1A) increase or decrease?

At the beginning of this discussion, OSS tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 4 meeting and displayed it on a table that was subsequently compared to the results of CAC member sentiment that they provided at the beginning of the February 4 meeting. As indicated in Table 1, the results shifted from a mixed perception to a predominate view that the herd is decreasing and too low.

The individual reports showed that most view the deer herd as decreasing with a corresponding majority of stakeholder groups recommending an increase in the herd with one group recommending the herd remain the same (Appendix A).

Question	February 4, 2009	March 4, 2009	March 4, 2009
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results ²	Consensus Decision
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU1A increasing, decreasing, or stable?			
○ Increasing	1	0	
○ Decreasing	2	8	
○ Stable	3	1	
○ Do Not Know	0	0	
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU1A too high, too low, or about right?			

² Totals for first three questions are based on the majority of survey respondents. In some instances, stakeholder reports included percentage values for both increases and decreases. See Appendix A for individual stakeholder reports.

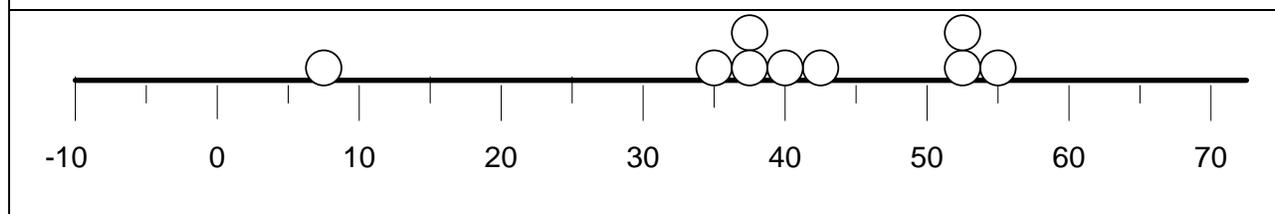
Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

Table 1
CAC Voting Summary for WMU 1A Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision

Question	February 4, 2009	March 4, 2009	March 4, 2009
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results ²	Consensus Decision
<input type="radio"/> Too High	1	0	
<input type="radio"/> Too Low	2	8	
<input type="radio"/> About Right	3	1	
<input type="radio"/> Do Not Know	0	0	
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 1A should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			
<input type="radio"/> Increase	2	8	X
<input type="radio"/> Decrease	1	0	
<input type="radio"/> Remain The Same	3	1	
<input type="radio"/> Do Not Know	0	0	
Increase by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	20, 20-50, 35, 38, 50, 53, 54, 95	30 to 40
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	35	
Number of present CAC members	15	13	
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members	Not Applicable	382	

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. This is illustrated in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3
Graphical Depiction of Voting by Dots on Percentage of Increase/Decrease



One common theme among the feedback received by CAC members was concern over not seeing deer in WMU 1A as well as concern over the impact on youth hunting. Those advocating staying the same cited concern over forest regeneration for the WMU.

Once various points were discussed, the group started the process of determining if they could reach a consensus decision. Exhibit 3 shows the large gap between the present primary members. A series of percentage increases were offered and discussed along with different range options.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

Those advocating an increase had difficulty considering lower percentage increases below what came to be the consensus decision. The Forest Industry representative was willing to agree to an increase recommendation, even beyond the approximate eight percent shown in Exhibit 3, but could not agree with the final range of 30% to 40% considered by the CAC. Some of the key “whys” of the discussion are included in Appendix B.

The following is the consensus decision:

Eight of nine attending CAC primary members recommended a 30% to 40% increase to the WMU 1A deer herd.

The Forest Industry primary member could not agree to this because all of his survey respondents advocated remaining the same (12) or even a decrease (2, with an average recommended decrease of 35%) as well as the 30% to 40% increase being beyond any increase he could consider in representing his stakeholder group.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports

1. Conservation– Ralph Martone (23 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 3 Decreasing = 16 Stable = 4 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 2 Too Low = 14 About Right = 7 Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 16 Decrease = 3 Remain Same = 4 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 20 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Already harvested too many antlerless deer
- Habitat in good conditional/forest regeneration occurring
- Concerns for hunter recruitment

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

2. Sportsmen – Resident – Richards Briggs (120 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 2 Decreasing = 101 Stable = 15 Do Not Know = 2

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 108 About Right = 10 Do Not Know = 2

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

Increase = 114 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 5 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 52.8 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Want to see deer, want the herd to increase
- Not seeing deer sign
- Concern for future generations; continuation of hunting
- People will quit hunting meaning a loss of revenue for the PGC

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

3. Forest Industry – Mark Bodamer (14 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 1 Decreasing = 2 Stable = 9 Do Not Know = 2

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 2 Too Low = 0 About Right = 12 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 = 12 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 35 (Average of two in C)

Whys

- Browsing is less severe
- More regeneration of desirable and preferred species of trees
- Still seeing deer even though population is down from 5 plus years ago
- Seeing a closer buck/doe ratio
- Variation of deer herd density has been observed across the wildlife management unit

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

4. Agriculture – Livestock/Cash Crop – Kenneth Woods (88 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 6 Decreasing = 55 Stable = 20 Do Not Know = 7

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 9 Too Low = 58 About Right = 21 Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 58 Decrease = 9 Remain Same = 20 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 95 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Not experiencing any significant crop damage due to deer
- Enjoy watching deer
- People are not seeing many anymore
- If hunters saw more deer, it would be more enjoyable and rewarding

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

5. Agriculture – Commercial Nurseries/Orchards – Donald Miller (27 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 3 Decreasing = 24 Stable = 0 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 3 Too Low = 24 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 = 24 Decrease = 2 Remain Same = 1 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 50 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 20 (Average)

Whys

- Did not see any deer during hunting season
- The number seen in the summer has dropped dramatically
- An increase is needed to promote hunting for grandkids

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

6. Rural Non-Farm Landowner – Ken Manko (25 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 1 Decreasing = 21 Stable = 3 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 21 About Right = 4 Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 23 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 2 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 53.8 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Habitat can support more deer
- Hunters need more opportunity to harvest deer
- Youth need to see more deer to hold interest

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

7. Business -Direct – Paul Lamping (27 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 19 Stable = 8 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 22 About Right = 5 Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 24 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 3 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 20 to 50 (Average range) Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Archery license sales off 25%
- Hunter rifle sales off by 50%
- Processor sales off by 33%
- Too few hunters; recruitment and retention of hunters is not working
- Not seeing deer
- More deer seen = more hunters = more business
- Seasons are too liberal resulting in the doe harvest being too high

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

8. Business - Indirect – Richard Faler, Jr. (10 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 5 Stable = 4 Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 7 About Right = 2 Do Not Know = 1

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

Increase = 6 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 3 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 38 (Average)

Range was 10 to 60

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- More hunting opportunities
- More non-hunter opportunities to see deer
- Generate more equipment sales

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

9. Homeowners – Developed – Fred Bauer (48 responses, plus five added for one Homeowners Association contact)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 6 Decreasing = 39 Stable = 6 Do Not Know = 2

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 2 Too Low = 39 About Right = 6 Do Not Know = 1

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

Increase = 38 Decrease = 4 Remain Same = 9 Do Not Know = 2

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 1A) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 35 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Not seeing enough deer
- Reduction of deer gone too far
- Hard to develop interest for youth hunters

Total response for all stakeholder groups = 382

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 1A

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.

- Wide spread reports from among stakeholder groups of not seeing deer.
- This was countered by reports from those surveyed for the Forestry Stakeholder Group which agreed the deer population is down, but reported still seeing deer.
- Given people are not seeing deer, there were concerns expressed how this has and will continue to effect:
 - Continued interest in hunting, in particular among the youth.
 - Hunting license sales and the negative impact on the PGC.
 - Business impact through declining license and equipment sales.
- Both categories of agriculture stakeholder groups support an increase to the herd, in part, due to cash crop/livestock farmers not experiencing significant crop damage due to deer.
- Reports by some groups that the habitat can sustain more deer.
- Forest regeneration takes time and can be quickly negatively effected by a significant increase in the deer population.

Conclusion: *Eight of nine attending CAC primary members recommended a 30% to 40% increase to the WMU 1A deer herd.*