

Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 2A Final Report

June 3, 2008



**Pennsylvania Game
Commission**

**Governor's Office of
Administration**



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Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 2A

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 deer population goal for each Wildlife Management Unit (WMU). Through a local Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), comprised of representatives of stakeholder groups within WMU 2A, 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 PGC website, Bureau of Management Consulting (BMC) staff convened and facilitated an introductory and educational meeting on February 5, 2008. BMC staff asked CAC members to attempt to communicate with at least 10 representatives from each of their respective stakeholder groups. BMC facilitated a subsequent meeting on March 11, 2008, 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 2A. CAC membership and attendance at both meetings is shown in Exhibit 1. Six different stakeholder groups participated. CAC members collected input from 201 people. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. Primary members were identified for each stakeholder group and were responsible for coordinating their results with their counterpart. Both the primary and secondary members were invited to attend the second meeting. Only the primary members reported out the combined results and were given decision making authority for the stakeholder group.

The following is documentation relative to this process. It includes meeting agendas, information requested of and provided by PGC staff, stakeholder representative findings, the context of various perspectives, and the resulting consensus that led to the CAC recommendation of a deer population goal for WMU 2A over the next five years:

Five of six attending CAC primary members recommended no change to the WMU 2A deer population.

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 2A. BMC staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 2A. This is presented as part of Table 1, which includes the complete voting history. The first meetings agenda is shown in Exhibit 2.

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Exhibit 1			
List of CAC Stakeholder Groups/Representatives and Attendance at Meetings			
Stakeholder Group	Representative (*Primary Member)	February 5	March 11
1. Business-Indirect	Frank Pecjack*	✓	✓
2. Business-Direct	William Lehman*	✓	✓
3. Business-Direct	Michael Rohanna		
4. Conservationist	Jerry Howard	✓	✓
5. Conservationist	Katherine Davis*	✓	✓
6. Forest Industry	Bill Wentzel*	✓	✓
7. AG-Livestock/Cash Crops	Harry Herron		
8. Highway Safety	Jeffrey Breen	✓	
9. Public Landowner	Sean Benson*		✓
10. Rural Non-Farm Landowner	Kathleen Patnode	✓	
11. Sportsman-Resident	Rennie Stoy	✓	✓
12. Sportsman-Resident	James McKnight*	✓	✓

Exhibit 2	
Meeting Agenda, February 5, 2008	
<p>I. Introduction</p> <p>A. Stakeholder introductions</p> <p>II. Overview of the CAC Process</p> <p>A. Background & Purpose</p> <p>B. Objectives</p> <p>C. Process/Consensus</p> <p>D. Role of Participants, PGC Staff, and Facilitators</p> <p>E. Meeting Ground Rules</p> <p>F. Operational Ground Rules</p> <p>G. Questions About the CAC Process</p> <p>III. Present Tabulation of Initial Thoughts</p>	<p>IV. PGC Presentations</p> <p>A. PGC responsibilities and mission</p> <p>B. History of deer management in Pennsylvania</p> <p>C. Deer resource information and management system</p> <p>D. Consequences of biological and social management at different deer population levels</p> <p>E. Questions</p> <p>V. Preparation Work for Second Meeting</p> <p>A. Consensus</p> <p>B. Stakeholder Opinion Worksheet</p> <p>C. Presentation Template for Stakeholder Summaries</p> <p>D. Agenda for second meeting</p> <p>E. Primary and secondary designation</p> <p>VI. Questions and Comments on the CAC Process</p>

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 healthy deer.
 2. Manage deer for healthy forest habitat.
 3. Manage deer for reduced deer and human conflicts.

- 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

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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, BMC 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 2A 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, comments, and decisions regarding primary and secondary member's status for the second meeting as shown in Exhibits 3 and 4.

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Exhibit 3

Topics During the Question and Comment Period, February 5, 2008

1. Hunter report card return rate.
2. Antler restrictions impact on diversity.
3. Existence of a PGC database on doe tags sold.
4. PGC definition of a stable deer population.
5. PGC tracking deer per square mile replaced by population trends.
6. Details of PGC methods for estimating the deer harvest.
7. Factors used in determining WMU's.
8. Frequency of forest plot examination to measure habitat health.
9. Number of vehicle collisions with deer.
10. CAC member attendance.
11. Clarification of CAC member responsibilities regarding surveying individuals.

Exhibit 4

Primary/Secondary Member Designation for the Second CAC Meeting, March 11, 2008

The following stakeholder groups decided primary/secondary membership on the CAC as follows (for those groups with two members):

Stakeholder Group	Primary member	Secondary member
1. Conservationist	Katherine Davis	Jerry Howard
2. Sportsman-Resident	James McKnight	Rennie Stoy

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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. The agenda is shown in Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5 Meeting Agenda, March 11, 2008	
I. Quick review A. Review of CAC handout document B. Process for this meeting II. Interest Group Presentations A. Presentations B. Clarification C. Initial tally of interest group positions Break III. Discussion/Consensus	IV. Next Steps A. BMC completes summary of proceedings B. Summary is sent to CAC members and Game Commission staff C. PGC staff presents the summary to the Commissioners V. Questions and Comments VI. Evaluation of the Process

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 feels the way they do and if they were willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions if an increase was proposed. The individual stakeholder reports are included as Appendix A.

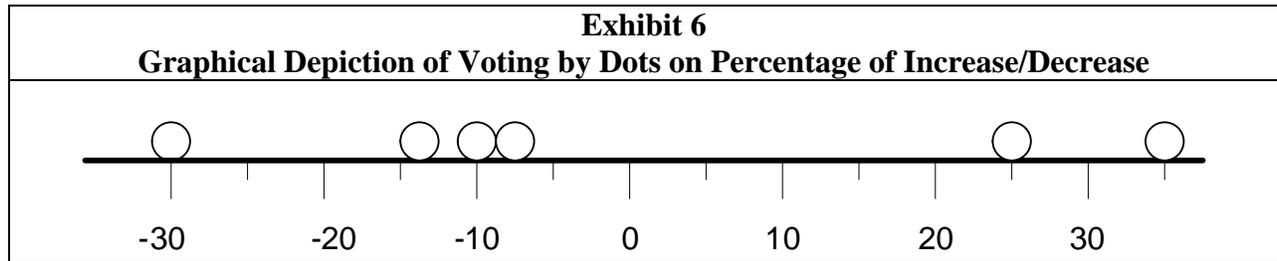
The questions are as follows:

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

At the beginning of this discussion, BMC tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 11 meeting. As indicated in Table 1, there was some change from the February 5 meeting.

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 6.

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The pattern showed a strong split between those who wanted to recommend an increase in the WMU deer population and those wanted a decrease. Following a spirited discussion, the group decided to compromise. Some of the key “whys” of the discussion are included in Appendix B.

The following is the consensus decision:

Five of six attending CAC primary members recommended no change to the WMU 2A deer population.

One member dissented. He stated that he wanted an increase of 25%.

Table 1 CAC Voting Summary for WMU 2A Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision			
Question	February 5, 2008	March 11, 2008	March 11, 2008
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results	Consensus Decision
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU2A increasing, decreasing, or stable?			
<input type="radio"/> Increasing	3	0	
<input type="radio"/> Decreasing	3	6	
<input type="radio"/> Stable	2	0	
<input type="radio"/> Do Not Know	1	0	
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU2A too high, too low, or about right?			
<input type="radio"/> Too High	4	2	
<input type="radio"/> Too Low	2	3	
<input type="radio"/> About Right	2	1	
<input type="radio"/> Do Not Know	1	0	
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 2A should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			
<input type="radio"/> Increase	2	2	
<input type="radio"/> Decrease	4	2	
<input type="radio"/> Remain The Same	2	2	X
<input type="radio"/> Do Not Know	1		
Increase by approximately how much (percent)	Not Applicable	20, 23, 30, 50 (2)	Not Applicable
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)	Not Applicable	29, 30, 35, 37, 50	Not Applicable
Number of present CAC members	9	6	
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members		201	

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APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports

1. Business-Indirect – Frank Pecjack (4 responses)

Answers to Questions

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

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

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

Too High = 3 Too Low = 0 About Right = 1 Do Not Know = 0

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

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

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

Percent Increase = No response

Percent Decrease = 35 (Average)

Whys

- Habitat
- Eating shrubs
- Damage from deer browsing
- Highway interactions

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: No response

B. Number not willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: No response

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2. Conservationist – Katherine Davis (48 responses)

Answers to Questions

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

Increasing = 4 Decreasing = 26 Stable = 18 Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 8 Too Low = 15 About Right = 27 Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 15 Decrease = 7 Remain Same = 25 Do Not Know = 1

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

Percent Increase = 23 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 29 (Average)

Whys

- Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease went in both directions
- Habitat did not recover enough
- Some areas too many, some too few
- Buck/doe ratio good

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 13

B. Number not willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 2

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3. Forest Industry – Bill Wentzel (29 responses)

Answers to Questions

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

Increasing = 8 Decreasing = 10 Stable = 11 Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 14 Too Low = 5 About Right = 9 Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 4 Decrease = 13 Remain Same = 11 Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = 20 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 37 (Average)

Whys

- Damage to forest regeneration seedlings
- Difficulty in planning new trees
- Damage to crops, ornamentals, hay fields
- Damage to wild flowers and forest shrubs

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 2

B. Number not willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 1

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4. Business-Direct – William Lehman (22 responses)

Answers to Questions

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

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

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

Too High = 1 Too Low = 21 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 = 21 Decrease = 1 Remain Same = 0 Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = 30 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 30

Whys

- Too long a doe season (back to 3 days)
- Predators
- Future of hunting for youths (no interest)
- Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 21

B. Number not willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 1

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5. Public Landowner – Sean Benson (12 responses)

Answers to Questions

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

Increasing = 2 Decreasing = 4 Stable = 6 Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 4 Too Low = 1 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 = 2 Decrease = 3 Remain Same = 7 Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = 50 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 50 (Average)

Whys

- Too many vehicle accidents
- Over browsing
- Hunters spending money elsewhere
- If you leave deer alone they will stay in their won area
- Plant more after people go in and log
- Soft and hard mast
- Keep same rules in effect
- Over density too high

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

- A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 1
B. Number not willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: No response

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6. Sportsman-Resident - James McKnight (86 responses)

Answers to Questions

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

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 84 Stable = 2 Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 0 Too Low = 83 About Right = 3 Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 83 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 3 Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = 50 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Increasing opportunity
- Future of hunting
- Concern of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 86

B. Number not willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 0

Total surveyed for all stakeholder groups = 201

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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.

- The deer are eating the seedlings. Planting is very expensive because of the browsing. If there are more deer, there will be more browsing. He believes the hunters are spoiled because they expect to see a deer. The environment needs less deer.
- With respect to voting, why do the home owners have as much say as we do?
- 98% of 2A is private property and 2% is public property.
- The hunting license has deer on it and should take priority. No over browsing in this management unit until 2004. Had good management but it is getting worse here.
- There is too much food in this area to take the deer population any lower. Need more youth involvement.
- Consideration should be given to Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease.
- One member of the group argued that the CAC votes should not be treated equally. He said that the votes of CAC members who surveyed more people should be given greater weight.
- One member contended that sportsmen votes should be given greater weight than other CAC stakeholders because sportsmen licenses are a large part of Game Commission revenue.

Additional Issues included:

- Youth mentor hunt.
- One member recommended reading the book *Deer Wars*.
- Need smaller WMUs, should also focus on small game.

Conclusion: Five of six attending CAC primary members recommended no change to the WMU 2A deer population.