

Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 4C Final Report

June 3, 2008



**Pennsylvania Game
Commission**

**Governor's Office of
Administration**



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Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

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 4C, 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 6, 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 13, 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 4C. CAC membership and attendance at both meetings is shown in Exhibit 1. Eight different stakeholder groups were represented. CAC members collected input from 116 people. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. In the case of 4C, this resulted in eleven CAC members since three were not able to attend any of the meetings. 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 4C over the next five years:

Six of seven attending CAC primary members recommended a 20% increase to the WMU 4C deer herd.

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 4C. BMC staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 4C. This is presented as part of Table 1, which includes the complete voting history. The first meetings agenda is shown in Exhibit 2.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

Exhibit 1			
List of CAC Stakeholder Groups/Representatives and Attendance at Meetings			
Stakeholder Group	Representative (*Primary Member)	February 6	March 13
1. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crops	Dale Frederick*	✓	Note ¹
2. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crops	Kenneth Heffelfinger		
3. Business-Direct	Cyril Shikora*	✓	✓
4. Conservationist	Charles Perich	✓	
5. Conservationist	Sean Delaney*	✓	✓
6. Forest Industry	Joseph Schott		
7. Forest Industry	Paul Shealer*	✓	✓
8. Highway Safety	Eugene Bond	✓	✓
9. Highway Safety	Joseph Racho*	✓	✓
10. Homeowner-Developed	Bruce McClintick*	✓	✓
11. Rural Non-Farm Landowner	Bob Ehle		
12. Rural Non-Farm Landowner	Richard Klepper*		✓
13. Sportsman-Resident	Wayne Potts	✓	✓
14. Sportsman-Resident	Charles Kahler*	✓	✓

Exhibit 2	
Meeting Agenda, February 6, 2008	
<p>I. Introduction A. Stakeholder introductions</p> <p>II. Overview of the CAC Process A. Background & Purpose B. Objectives C. Process/Consensus D. Role of Participants, PGC Staff, and Facilitators E. Meeting Ground Rules F. Operational Ground Rules G. Questions About the CAC Process</p> <p>III. Present Tabulation of Initial Thoughts</p>	<p>IV. PGC Presentations A. PGC responsibilities and mission B. History of deer management in Pennsylvania C. Deer resource information and management system D. Consequences of biological and social management at different deer population levels E. Questions</p> <p>V. Preparation Work for Second Meeting A. Consensus B. Stakeholder Opinion Worksheet C. Presentation Template for Stakeholder Summaries D. Agenda for second meeting 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.

¹ Unfortunately, the Agriculture – Livestock/Cash Crops representative who was able to attend the first meeting was not able to the make the second meeting.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

- 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 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 4C 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.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

Exhibit 3

Topics During the Questions and Comment Period, February 6, 2008

1. Hunter education.
2. Harvest data collection process.
3. Hunter success rate.
4. Hunter report card response rate.
5. Clarification of 4C deer harvest trends.
6. Check stations.
7. Illinois automated reporting procedure.
8. Average number of embryos considered to equal good deer health.
9. Timing of US Forest Service habitat data.
10. Current habitat data collection method dates from 2001.
11. Habitat rating scale.
12. Habitat ratings based on five years of data.
13. Factors other than deer affecting forest regeneration.
14. Use of species diversity in evaluating forest health.
15. Chestnut tree development by Penn State.
16. Number of CAC's statewide to date.
17. Scope of CAC recommendation in the deer doe license allocation for the WMU.
18. Extent Commissioners allocation decisions have aligned with CAC recommendations.
19. Mentor program.
20. Red tag program: methods used for issuing red tags and locating available red tags.
21. Reporting prior years harvest when purchasing a license.
22. Use of CAC process by PGC to gather information on crop damage.

Exhibit 4

Primary/Secondary Member Designation for the Second CAC Meeting, March 13, 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	Sean Delaney	Charles Perich
2. Highway Safety	Joseph Racho	Eugene Bond
3. Sportsman-Resident	Charles Kahler	Wayne Potts

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.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

Exhibit 5 Meeting Agenda, March 13, 2008

<p>I. Quick review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Review of CAC handout documentB. Process for this meeting <p>II. Interest Group Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. PresentationsB. ClarificationC. Initial tally of interest group positions <p>Break</p> <p>III. Discussion/Consensus</p>	<p>IV. Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. BMC completes summary of proceedingsB. Summary is sent to CAC members and Game Commission staffC. PGC staff presents the summary to the Commissioners <p>V. Questions and Comments</p> <p>VI. Evaluation of the Process</p>
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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 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.

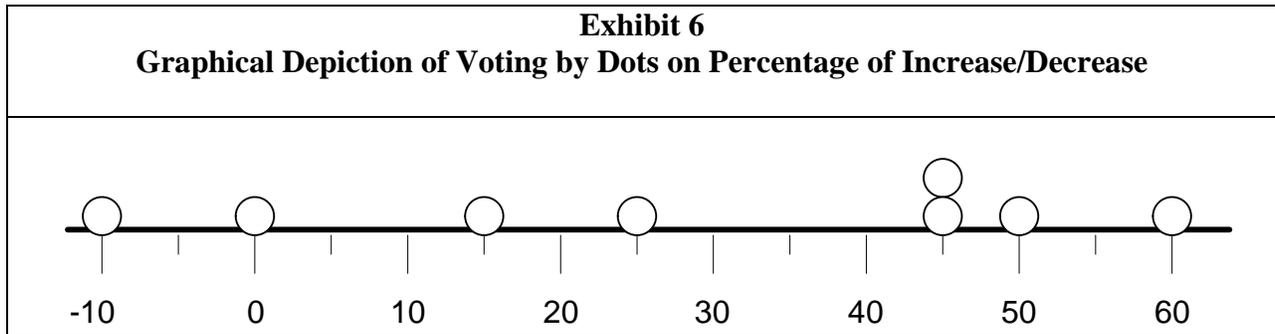
The questions are as follows:

- A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) 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 4C) increase or decrease?

At the beginning of this discussion, BMC tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 13 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 6 meeting. As indicated in Table 1, some results were unchanged and some demonstrated variance.

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.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C



The percentage of change agreed to by the CAC provides PGC with guidance on how far the current deer population is from where the group would like for it to be. A 50% increase was first considered, however there was concern that too drastic of an increase may result in a pendulum swing in five years to drastically decrease the herd. Also, there was discussion on whether the environment was able to support that type of an increase.

A range of 15-25% was also considered, however it was decided that due to the +/-5% variance that exists around the recommendation, 20% would cover both ends of the range. It was also thought that a hard number may provide a better measurement for the next CAC to revisit in five years. Thus, the CAC came to consensus on a 20% increase based on 6 to 1 agreement. The representative of the Rural Non-Farm Landowners stakeholder group disagreed with the group’s recommendation and dissented. He felt the percentage of increase was too low. Some additional points from the discussion are included in Appendix B.

PGC reminded the group that they have not yet received the habitat information from the Forest Service. Thus, a large increase may not be possible the first of the five years depending on the data that comes back on the condition of the habitat.

The following is the consensus decision:

Six of seven attending CAC primary members recommended a 20% increase to the WMU 4C deer herd.

Table 1 CAC Voting Summary for WMU 4C Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision			
Question	February 6, 2008	March 13, 2008	March 13, 2008
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results	Consensus Decision
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU4D increasing, decreasing, or stable?			
o Increasing	1	0	
o Decreasing	6	6	
o Stable	3	1	
o Do Not Know	0	0	

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

Table 1
CAC Voting Summary for WMU 4C Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision

Question	February 6, 2008	March 13, 2008	March 13, 2008
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results	Consensus Decision
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU4D too high, too low, or about right?			
o Too High	1	0	
o Too Low	6	5	
o About Right	3	2	
o Do Not Know	0	0	
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 4D should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			
o Increase	5	5	X
o Decrease	2	0	
o Remain The Same	1	2	
o Do Not Know	2	0	
Increase by approximately how much (percent)?		27, 35, 45, 50, 100	20
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?			
Number of present CAC members	10	8	
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members		116	

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports

1. Business-Direct – Cyril Shikora (15 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 15 Stable = 0 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 14 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 = 15 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 0 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 100 Percent Decrease = 0

Whys

- Worried about the future for the youth
- Do more on Game Lands to keep deer there rather than in fields
- More hunters going out of state to hunt
- Concern with the future of businesses

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 12

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

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

2. Conservationist – Sean Delaney (33 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 2 Decreasing = 5 Stable = 15 Do Not Know = 11

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 7 Too Low = 6 About Right = 14 Do Not Know = 6

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

Increase = 5 Decrease = 5 Remain Same = 8 Do Not Know = 11

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 15

Percent Decrease = 12.5

Whys

- For a Decrease:
 - Loss of cover and habitat
 - Too many deer
- For an Increase:
 - See fewer deer

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

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

3. Forest Industry – Paul Shealer (13 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 1 Decreasing = 5 Stable = 7 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 1 Too Low = 4 About Right = 8 Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 3 Decrease = 2 Remain Same = 7 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 0

Percent Decrease = 15

Whys

- Herd is about right
- Too much crop damage
- No bucks and fawns
- Nursery stock damage
- Regeneration
- Invasive species

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: Not reported

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

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

4. Highway Safety – Joseph Racho (28 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 20 Stable = 4 Do Not Know = 4

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 15 About Right = 6 Do Not Know = 7

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 = 4

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 27 Percent Decrease = 60

Whys

- Less deer/automobile accidents
- Less citing of deer feeding along interstates
- See fewer deer
- Good balance because deer have migrated

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 16

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

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

5. Homeowner-Developed – Bruce McClintick (12 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 9 Stable = 3 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 6 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 = 8 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 3 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 35 Percent Decrease = 0

Whys

- Want to see more deer (4 respondents)
- The habitat can support it (4 respondents)
- Improved hunting opportunities (3 respondents)

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

- A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 6
- B. Number not willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 2 – They are concerned with reduced regeneration

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

6. Rural Non-Farm Landowner – Richard Klepper (12 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 9 Stable = 3 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 10 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 = 10 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 2 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 4C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 50 Percent Decrease = 0

Whys

- See little wildlife around property and want to see more
- Think there are few negative interactions

Of Those Wanting an Increase:

- A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 10
B. Number not willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 0

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 4C

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. In addition to the “whys” captured in Appendix A, the following points were shared:

- Possible impact of other animals on the deer herd and the habitat.
- Too drastic of an increase may result in a pendulum swing in five years to drastically decrease the herd
- There were differing opinions on if the environment could support a large increase.
- It is believed that deer may be in developments and on private, posted land. In these locations the deer are unavailable and sometimes unseen by hunters.

Additional Issues included:

- The CAC members had the benefit of the educational presentation at the first meeting that the survey respondents did not have.
- There is a hunter’s bias within the process. The CAC members are hunters and many of the survey respondents were hunters. A suggested reason for this was that hunters having an interest in the topic and thus an interest in participating in the process.
- By hunters changing their habits, they may see more deer. For example, hunt in a different location or walk a little further into the woods.
- It was wondered if the decrease in license sales is due to hunters going out of state to hunt.

Conclusion: Six of seven attending CAC primary members recommended a 20% increase to the WMU 4C deer herd.