## Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 4E Final Report

June 3, 2008



Pennsylvania Game Commission

Governor's Office of Administration





#### **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 4E, 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 7, 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 18, 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 4E. CAC membership and attendance at both meetings is shown in Exhibit 1. Eight different stakeholder groups were represented, however only seven had representation at the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. One stakeholder group's information was shared on behalf of the representative. CAC members collected input from 264 people. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. In the case of 4E, this resulted in eleven CAC members since one was unable to attend either meeting. 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 <u>CAC recommendation of a deer population goal for WMU 4E over the next five years:</u>

Six of seven attending CAC primary members recommended a 40% increase to the WMU 4E 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 4E. BMC staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 4E. This is presented as part of Table 1, which includes the complete voting history. The first meeting's agenda is shown in Exhibit 2.

| Exhibit 1 List of CAC Stakeholder Groups/Representatives and Attendance at Meetings |                                  |            |                   |
|---|----------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Stakeholder Group   | Representative (*Primary Member) | February 7 | March 18          |
| 1. Ag-Commercial Nurseries/Orchards   | Pat Mitchell*                    | ✓          | ✓                 |
| 2. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop   | Steven Hess*                     | ✓          | ✓                 |
| 3. Business-Indirect  | Richard Hilsher*                 | ✓          | Note <sup>1</sup> |
| 4. Business-Direct  | Donald Houser*                   | ✓          | <b>√</b>          |
| 5. Conservationist  | Kevin Drewencki                  | ✓          | <b>√</b>          |
| 6. Conservationist  | Brian Pick*                      | ✓          | <b>√</b>          |
| 7. Forest Industry  | Bruce Teats, Jr.*                | ✓          | <b>√</b>          |
| 8. Forest Industry  | Robert Martynowy                 | ✓          |                   |
| 9. Highway Safety   | Steve Lohr                       |            |                   |
| 10. Rural Non-Farm Landowner  | Craig Bingman*                   | ✓          | <b>√</b>          |
| 11. Sportsman-Resident  | Nick Troutman                    | ✓          | <b>√</b>          |
| 12. Sportsman-Resident  | Robert Temple*                   | <b>√</b>   | <b>√</b>          |

| Exhibit 2  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Meeting Agenda, February 7, 2008                     |  |  |  |
| I. Introduction IV. PGC Presentations                |  |  |  |
| A. Stakeholder Introductions                         | A. PGC Responsibilities and Mission  |  |  |
| A. Stakeholder Introductions                         | *  |  |  |
| II. Overview of the process                          | <ul><li>B. History of Deer Management in Pennsylvania</li><li>C. Deer Resource Information and Management System</li></ul> |  |  |
| A. Background & Purpose                              | D. Consequences of Biological and Social Management  |  |  |
| B. Objectives  | at Different Deer Population Levels  |  |  |
| C. Process/Consensus                                 | E. Questions   |  |  |
| D. Role of Participants, PGC Staff, and Facilitators |  |  |  |
| E. Meeting Ground Rules                              | V. Preparation Work for Second Meeting   |  |  |
| F. Operational Ground Rules                          | A. Consensus   |  |  |
| F. Questions About the CAC Process                   | B. Stakeholder Opinion Worksheet   |  |  |
|  | C. Presentation Template for Stakeholder Summaries   |  |  |
| III. Present Tabulation of Initial Thoughts          | D. Agenda for Second Meeting   |  |  |
|  | E. Primary and Secondary Designation   |  |  |
|  | VI. Questions and Comments on the CAC Process  |  |  |

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 1. Manage deer for healthy deer.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Richard Hilsher was not able to attend. He provided material to Donald Houser who presented the summary report for the Business-Indirect group (see Appendix A).

Program Goals:

- 2. Manage deer for healthy forest habitat.
- 3. Mange 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 <u>direct input</u> concerning deer population goals that ultimately affect all Pennsylvanians.
- 4. They provide an opportunity to <u>inform stakeholders</u> 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 4E 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.

## Exhibit 3 Topics During the Questions and Comment Period, February 7, 2008

- 1. Red tag request trend and distribution method.
- 2. Timing of PGC decision on doe license allocations.
- 3. Life expectancy of deer.
- 4. Relationship of the prevalence of Lyme disease and deer.
- 5. Definition of public land.
- 6. PGC deer management method versus deer per square mile.
- 7. Affect of the concurrent season on buck harvest.
- 8. Impact of predators (bear and coyotes) on deer.
- 9. Chronic wasting disease.
- 10. Number of deer monitored by PGC.
- 11. Status of Elk population and future plans.
- 12. Antler restrictions (consideration of four points).
- 13. Impact of a CAC recommendation for the herd to stay the same.
- 14. WMU size.
- 15. Other states WMU sizes.
- 16. PGC license allocation decisions not based on income concerns.
- 17. Number of licenses needed to harvest a deer.

## Exhibit 4 Information Regarding the Second CAC Meeting, March 18, 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 |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Conservationist    | Brian Pick       | Kevin Drewencki  |
| Forest Industry    | Bruce Teats, Jr. | Robert Martynowy |
| Sportsman-Resident | Robert Temple    | Nick Troutman    |

#### **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<br>Meeting Agenda, March 18, 2008                                |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| I. Quick review  | IV. Next Steps   |  |  |
| A. Review of CAC Handout Document  | A. BMC Completes Summary of Proceedings                        |  |  |
| B. Process for this Meeting  | B. Summary is Sent to CAC Members and Game<br>Commission Staff |  |  |
| II. Interest Group Presentations  C. PGC Staff Presents the Summary to the |  |  |  |
| A. Presentations Commissioners   |  |  |  |
| B. Clarification   |  |  |  |
| C. Initial Tally of Interest Group Positions                               | V. Questions and Comments                                      |  |  |
| Break  | VI. Evaluation of the Process                                  |  |  |
| III. Discussion/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:

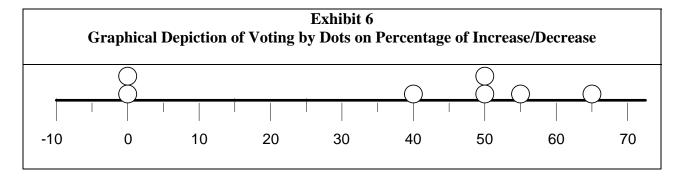
- A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4E) increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4E) too high, too low, or about right?
- C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?
- D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 4E) increase or decrease?

At the beginning of this discussion, BMC tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 18 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 7 meeting. As indicated in Table 1, the results were fairly consistent.

The individual reports showed that most view that the deer herd is decreasing with a corresponding majority of individual respondents (for six stakeholder groups) recommending an increase in the herd with the remaining two recommending staying the same (Forest Industry and Agriculture – Livestock/Cash Crop).

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.



One common theme among the feedback received by CAC members was concern over not seeing deer in WMU 4E as well as concern over the impact on youth hunting. Those advocating staying the same cited concern over forest regeneration for the WMU as well as farmers being able to tolerate just so much crop damage from deer.

Once various points were discussed, the group started the process of determining if they could reach a consensus decision. Exhibit 6 shows the large gap between seven present primary members. A series of percentage increases were offered and discussed starting with 30%. Ranges were also considered, including 37% to 50%. Those advocating an increase had difficulty considering lower percentage increases. Another proposal for consideration was made for increasing the herd by 40% over the next five years. Some of the key "whys" of the discussion are included in Appendix B.

The following is the consensus decision:

Six of seven attending CAC primary members recommended a 40% increase to the WMU 4E deer herd.

The Forest Industry primary member could not agree to this because the vast majority of his survey respondents advocated remaining the same (14) or even a decrease (9) versus those that recommended an increase (7).

| Table I                                    |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| CAC Voting Summary for WMU 4E Deer Herd Qu | uestions and Consensus Decision |

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|  | <b>February 7, 2008</b> | March 18, 2008 | March 18, 2008 |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Question   | Initial Vote            | Presentation   | Consensus      |
|  |                         | Results        | Decision       |
| In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU4E increasing, |                         |                |                |
| decreasing, or stable?                                 |                         |                |                |
| o Increasing   | 0                       | 1              |                |
| o Decreasing   | 9                       | 6              |                |
| o Stable   | 2                       | 1              |                |

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

|  | <b>February 7, 2008</b> | March 18, 2008    | March 18, 2008 |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Question   | Initial Vote            | Presentation      | Consensus      |
|  |                         | Results           | Decision       |
| o Do Not Know  | 0                       | 0                 |                |
| In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU4E too high, too |                         |                   |                |
| low, or about right?                                     |                         |                   |                |
| o Too High   | 1                       | 0                 |                |
| o Too Low  | 7                       | 6                 |                |
| o About Right  | 3                       | 2                 |                |
| o Do Not Know  | 0                       | 0                 |                |
| Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in  |                         |                   |                |
| WMU 4E should increase, decrease, or remain the same?    |                         |                   |                |
| o Increase   | 7                       | 6                 | X              |
| o Decrease   | 1                       | 0                 |                |
| o Remain The Same  | 3                       | 2                 |                |
| o Do Not Know  | 0                       | 0                 |                |
| Increase by approximately how much (percent)?            | Not Applicable          | 25 (2), 55, 65,   | 40             |
|  |                         | 67, 71            |                |
| Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?            | Not Applicable          | Not Applicable    | Not Applicable |
|  |                         |                   |                |
| Number of present CAC members                            | 11                      | 9 (seven of eight |                |
|  |                         | primary)          |                |
| Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC          | Not Applicable          | 264               |                |
| members  |                         |                   |                |

#### **APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports**

## **1. Conservation– Brian Pick** (12 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 0

Decreasing = 10

Stable = 2

Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 4E) 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 4E) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 25 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

#### Whys

- Not seeing deer.
- Increase viewing and hunting opportunities.

#### Of Those Wanting an Increase:

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

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

10 0

### **2. Sportsmen – Resident – Robert Temple** (53 responses)

## **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 0

Decreasing = 53

Stable = 0

Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 0

Too Low = 53

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 = 53

Decrease = 0

Remain Same = 0

Do Not Know = 0

53

0

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

Percent Increase = 67 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

#### Whys

- Declining levels are undesirable, especially for youth and senior hunters.
- Not seeing deer.
- Too many doe licenses have been allocated.

## Of Those Wanting an Increase:

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

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

#### <u>3. Forest Industry – Bruce Teats, Jr.</u> (30 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 0

Decreasing = 15

Stable = 15

Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 9

Too Low = 7

About Right = 14

Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 7

Decrease = 9

Remain Same = 14

Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = 52 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 25 (Average)

#### Whys

- Concern over forest regeneration (those recommending a decrease or staying the same).
- Hunting opportunities (those recommending an increase).

## Of Those Wanting an Increase:

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

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

#### <u>4. Agriculture – Livestock/Cash Crop – Steven Hess</u> (6 responses)

## **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 4

Decreasing = 0

Stable = 2

Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 3

Too Low = 0

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 = 0

Decrease = 0

Remain Same = 6

Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = N/A

#### Whys

• Farmers in general feel that they can only support or tolerate so many deer.

#### Of Those Wanting an Increase:

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

0

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

#### <u>5. Agriculture – Commercial Nurseries/Orchards – Pat Mitchell</u> (14 responses)

## **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 4

Decreasing = 7

Stable = 3

Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 4

Too Low = 5

About Right = 3

Do Not Know = 2

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

Increase = 5

Decrease = 4

Remain Same = 3

Do Not Know = 2

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

Percent Increase = 25 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 35 (Average)

#### Whys

- Some who hunt are willing to have more deer.
- Concern for youth hunting.
- Like the current level of the deer herd.

#### Of Those Wanting an Increase:

A. Number willing to tolerate an increase in negative interactions: 4

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

One person did not answer.

#### **6. Rural Non-Farm Landowner – Craig Bingman** (9 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 0

Decreasing = 7

Stable = 1

Do Not Know = 1

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

Too High = 0

Too Low = 6

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 = 2

Do Not Know = 1

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

Percent Increase = 55 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

#### Whys

- Concern for youth hunting.
- Not seeing deer.
- Decreasing number of hunters because the deer population is either declining or deer are retreating to posted land.

## 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: 0

#### <u>7. Business - Direct – Donald Houser</u> (11 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 0

Decreasing = 8

Stable = 2

Do Not Know = 1

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

Too High = 0

Too Low = 9

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 = 9

Decrease = 1

Remain Same = 1

Do Not Know = 0

8

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

Percent Increase = 71 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 20

#### Whys

The land can justify a major increase and that will only happen with better management and education of the sportsman.

#### Of Those Wanting an Increase:

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

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

One person did not answer.

#### **8. Business - Indirect – Richard Hilsher** (9 responses)

## **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 1

Decreasing = 7

Stable = 1

Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 1

Too Low = 8

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 = 8

Decrease = 0

Remain Same = 1

Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = 65 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

#### Whys

- Hunters have to leave our area in order to find sufficient deer to hunt.
- Lost interest among youth.
- Not seeing deer.
- Hunters are selling their guns.

#### **Of Those Wanting an Increase:**

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

8

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

1

Total response for all stakeholder groups = 264

#### **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.

- Farmers are concerned about maintaining their livelihood and the negative impact of deer.
- The Business Direct representative is a taxidermist. He has experienced a 45% reduction in business, with the most drastic drop within the past few years.
- Posted land is becoming more prevalent in WMU 4E and is a particular problem when it occurs next to farms.
- People are just not seeing deer. Coupled with this is concern over how it affects youth hunting and the future of the sport.
- Other programs exist to deal with isolated deer problem areas including DMAP and Red Tag.

Additional Issues included:

- WMU's are too large.
- Many orchard owners post their land.

**Conclusion:** Six of seven attending CAC primary members recommended a 40% increase to the WMU 4E deer herd.