Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 5B Final Report

April 8, 2009



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 5B, 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 5, 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 5, 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 5B. CAC membership and attendance at both meetings is shown in Exhibit 1. Eight different stakeholder groups were represented. CAC members collected input from 174 people. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group.² In the case of 5B, this resulted in 14 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 <u>CAC</u> recommendation of a deer population goal for WMU 5B over the next five years:

No consensus was reached. Suggested population changes ranged from -20% to +5%.

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.

² During the nomination process, OSS mistakenly added a third Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop farmer. All three collected stakeholder feedback, but only one served in the primary role. See also Table 3 and Exhibit 4.

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 5B. OSS staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 5B. 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 5	March 5		
1. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop	Jeff Wenger*	✓	✓		
2. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop	Donnell Taylor	✓			
3. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop	Dennis Keith	✓	✓		
4. Ag-nursery/Orchard	James Bender*	✓	✓		
5. Conservationist	David Picarelli*	✓	✓		
6. Conservationist	Mike Creamer	✓			
7. Forest Industry	David Nelson*	✓	✓		
8. Forest Industry	Robert Girvin	✓			
9. Homeowner Developed	Scott Charney*	✓	✓		
10. Public Landowner	Steven Blazer*	✓	✓		
11. Rural Non-Farm Landowner	Patrick Klose*	✓	✓		
12. Rural Non-Farm Landowner	David Welk	✓			
13. Sportsman-Resident	Scott Huber*	✓	✓		
14. Sportsman-Resident	Edward Eckman	✓			

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 <u>understand stakeholder values</u> regarding deer management.
- 2. They provide an opportunity for stakeholders to <u>interact</u> 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, 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 5B 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 Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2 Topics During the Questions and Comment Period, February 4, 2009

- 1. Clarification of the public landowner stakeholder group in terms of who would qualify and who to contact
- 2. Current boundaries of wildlife management units
- 3. Need for smaller wildlife management units
- 4. Scientific validity of the CAC process
- 5. New initiatives with agricultural damage programs

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 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) 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 5B) increase or decrease?

At the beginning of this discussion, OSS tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 5 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 5 meeting. As indicated in Table 1, the results from both meetings were mixed.

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

Table 1
CAC Voting Summary for WMU 5B Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision

	February 4, 2009	March 4, 2009	March 4, 2009
Question	Initial Vote	Presentation Results ³	Consensus Decision ⁴
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU5B increasing,			
decreasing, or stable?			
o Increasing	0	2	
o Decreasing	3	2	
o Stable	8	3	
o Do Not Know	1	0	
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU5B too high, too			
low, or about right?			
o Too High	3	2	
o Too Low	2	2	
o About Right	7	2	

³ 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.

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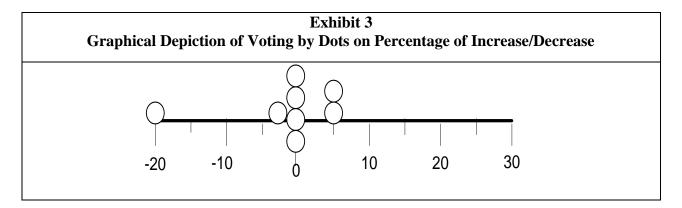
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⁴ Consensus was not reached. In addition, one stakeholder came to the meeting without their summary report and could not provide answers to the first three questions. They participated in the final voting.

Table 1
CAC Voting Summary for WMU 5B Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision

	February 4, 2009	March 4, 2009	March 4, 2009
Question	Initial Vote	Presentation Results ³	Consensus Decision ⁴
o Do Not Know	1	1	
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 5B should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			
o Increase	2	1.3	
o Decrease	4	1.3	
o Remain The Same	5	4.3	
o Do Not Know	1	0	
Increase by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	4, 7	
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	20	
Number of present CAC members	14	9	
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members	Not Applicable	174	

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.



Once various points were discussed, the group started the process of determining if they could reach a consensus decision. Exhibit 3 shows a clustering among the present primary members. A recommendation of stable was offered and discussed along with different range options. Even with the apparent common ground held by many members, a consensus agreement was not reached as two members did not agree with the remainder of the group.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 5B The following is the consensus decision: No consensus was reached. Suggested population changes ranged from -20% to +5%.

APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports

1. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop – Jeff Wenger (32 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 9

Decreasing = 5

Stable = 17

Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 8

Too Low = 13

About Right = 11

Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 9

Decrease = 6

Remain Same = 17

Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 0 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

 Current deer levels are in balance except large wooded areas and farm land around developed areas

2. Ag-nursery/Orchard – James Bender (15 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 8

Decreasing = 3

Stable = 4

Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 7

Too Low = 1

About Right = 2

Do Not Know = 5

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

Increase = 5

Decrease = 5

Remain Same = 5

Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 0 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Deer herd should remain stable
- Deer hide in residential zones

<u>3. Conservationist – David Picarelli</u> (Responses unknown)⁵

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = Decreasing = Stable = Do Not Know =

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = Too Low = About Right = Do Not Know =

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

Increase = Decrease = Remain Same = Do Not Know =

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 0 (Average) Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- People think there are enough deer
- We need to have more types of other species

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⁵ Data was not brought to the meeting for the number of survey's and the breakdown for the questions.

<u>4. Forest Industry – David Nelson</u> (15 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 8

Decreasing = 0

Stable = 7

Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 11

Too Low = 1

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 = 1

Decrease = 11

Remain Same = 3

Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 20 (Average)

Whys

- Too much urban sprawl growing deer herd
- Control deer that eat trees
- Invasive species are another factor

<u>**5. Homeowner Developed – Scott Charney**</u> (18 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 3

Decreasing = 8

Stable = 6

Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 2

Too Low = 8

About Right = 7

Do Not Know = 1

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

Increase = 11

Decrease = 3

Remain Same = 4

Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 7 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Increase: Give hunters more opportunity and encourage a younger generation to get involved with hunting
- Decrease: Shrinking habitat and need is evident for cheaper meat

<u>**6. Public Landowner – Steven Blazer**</u> (8 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0

Decreasing = 5

Stable = 0

Do Not Know = 3

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0

Too Low = 1

About Right = 3

Do Not Know = 4

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

Increase = 1

Decrease = 3

Remain Same = 4

Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 0 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

None reported

7. Rural Non-Farm Landowner – Patrick Klose (25 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 3

Decreasing = 3

Stable = 19

Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 7

Too Low = 5

About Right = 13

Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 5

Decrease = 7

Remain Same = 13

Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 0 (Average range)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Herd balanced in this area
- Food in winter sufficient to keep herd healthy
- Herd right for food availability

<u>8. Sportsmen-Resident – Scott Huber</u> (46 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 10

Decreasing = 7

Stable = 26

Do Not Know = 3

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 7

Too Low = 9

About Right = 28

Do Not Know = 2

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

Increase = 14

Decrease = 5

Remain Same = 26

Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5B) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 4 (Average)

Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Dauphin County: Too few deer
- Like to see more opportunity
- York County: Deer population high near populated areas

Total response for all stakeholder groups = 174

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.

- Some felt there is a proper balance with the herd and the habitat, including sufficient food availability in the winter.
- Current deer levels are in balance except large wooded areas and farm land around developed areas.
- Others felt there are too few deer, particularly Dauphin and York counties.
- Urban sprawl contributes to more deer in residential zones.
- Concern was expressed for getting the younger generation involved in hunting.
- Hunters need more opportunity in the wildlife management unit.

Conclusion: No consensus was reached. Suggested population changes ranged from -20% to +5%.