

# **Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 3D Final Report**

**March 31, 2010**



Pennsylvania Game  
Commission

Governor's Office of  
Administration



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# Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 3D

## **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 3D, 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)<sup>1</sup> staff convened and facilitated an introductory and educational meeting on February 17, 2010.<sup>2</sup> 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 10, 2010, for the purpose of representatives providing stakeholder feedback, collectively discussing summaries of stakeholder perspectives, and reaching consensus, if possible, regarding a deer population trend recommendation for WMU 3D. CAC membership and attendance at both meetings is shown in Exhibit 1. Six different stakeholder groups were represented. CAC members collected input from 126 people. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. In the case of 3D, this resulted in 9 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 resulting consensus process that led to the CAC recommendation of a deer population trend for WMU 3D over the next five years:

*Seven of eight attending CAC primary members recommended a 10% increase to the WMU 3D deer herd over the next 5 years, assuming the habitat continues to recover.*

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Initial meeting was delayed one week due to inclement weather. This resulted in three weeks between first and second meetings, instead of the customary four weeks.

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## **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 3D. OSS staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 3D. This is presented as part of Table 1, which includes the complete voting history.

<b>Exhibit 1</b>			
<b>List of CAC Stakeholder Groups/Representatives and Attendance at Meetings</b>			
<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Representative (*Primary Member)</b>	<b>February 17</b>	<b>March 10</b>
1. Homeowner-Developed	Joe Salvero	✓	✓
2. Business-Direct	Vincent Vols, Jr.	✓	✓
3. Business-Indirect	Dennis Lee Ball, Jr.	✓	✓
4. Conservationist	Robert Engvaldsen*	✓	✓
5. Conservationist	Allan McAlpin, III	✓	✓
6. Forest Industry	Joseph Maculaitis	✓	✓
7. Public Landowner	Chuck Gould, II	✓	✓
8. Rural Non-farm Landowner	Charles Lombaerde	✓	✓
9. Sportsman-Resident	Randall Woehrle	✓	✓

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.
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*

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*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 3D 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.

<b>Exhibit 2</b> <b>Topics During the Questions and Comment Period, February 17, 2010</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Public land vs. private land deer counts.</li><li>2. Discussion surrounding the size of the WMU and it's homogeneity regarding big-woods and developed lands.</li><li>3. Fawns as a percentage of does killed in WMU 3D.</li><li>4. Lack of business as a representative on the initial deer management group.</li></ol>

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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.

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 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) 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 3D) increase or decrease?

At the beginning of this discussion, OSS tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 10 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 17 meeting. As indicated in Table 1, the results remain approximately the same, although clustered closer to the original perception that the herd is either stable or decreasing.

The individual reports showed that all viewed the deer herd as decreasing or stable. There was a split among stakeholder groups in reporting whether the deer herd was currently too high, too low, or about right. A majority of stakeholder groups recommended an increase in the herd (Appendix A).

<b>Question</b>	<b>February 17, 2010</b>	<b>March 10, 2010</b>	<b>March 10, 2010</b>
	<b>Initial Vote</b>	<b>Presentation Results<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Consensus Decision</b>
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU 3D increasing, decreasing, or stable?			
○ Increasing	2		
○ Decreasing	4	5	
○ Stable	2	3	
○ Do Not Know	1		
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU 3D too high, too low, or about right?			

<sup>3</sup> 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.

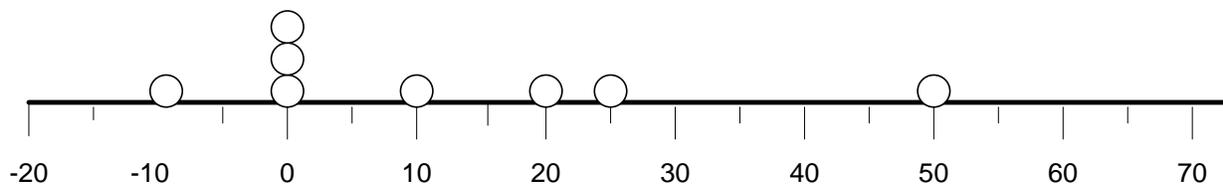
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<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>CAC Voting Summary for WMU 3D Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision</b>			
Question	February 17, 2010	March 10, 2010	March 10, 2010
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results <sup>3</sup>	Consensus Decision
<input type="radio"/> Too High	1	2	
<input type="radio"/> Too Low	3	4	
<input type="radio"/> About Right	3	2	
<input type="radio"/> Do Not Know	2		
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 3D should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			
<input type="radio"/> Increase	4	4	<b>X</b>
<input type="radio"/> Decrease	2	1	
<input type="radio"/> Remain The Same	1	3	
<input type="radio"/> Do Not Know	2		
Increase by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	24.9, 30, 50, 50	<b>10%*</b>
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	14, 50	
Number of present CAC members	9	8	
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members	Not Applicable	126	

\* Assuming the habitat continues to recover.

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 disparate deer numbers throughout the WMU. While members reported that too many refuges exist in the WMU, especially in and around developments, others indicated that areas which once had vibrant deer populations have seen a marked downswing in numbers. Those reporting on the habitat in the WMU cautioned that regeneration has begun, but it is too soon to know if this regeneration is successful.

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Once various points were discussed, the group started the process of determining if they could reach a consensus decision. Exhibit 3 shows the gap between the present primary members. A series of percentage increases were offered and discussed along with different range options. Those advocating an increase had difficulty considering lower percentage increases below what came to be the consensus decision. The Forest Industry primary member could not agree to this because all his survey respondents advocated either a reduction in the deer herd or keeping the herd stable. He would have supported a recommendation for a stable deer population, but could not support an increase. Some of the key "whys" of the discussion are included in Appendix B. The following is the consensus decision:

*Seven of eight attending CAC primary members recommended a 10% increase to the WMU 3D deer herd over the next 5 years, assuming the habitat continues to recover.*

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## APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports

### **1. Homeowners – Joe Salvero** (14 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 3                  Decreasing = 3                  Stable = 8                  Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 2                  Too Low = 5                  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 = 6                  Decrease = 2                  Remain Same = 6                  Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 30 (Average)

Percent Decrease = 27.5 (Average)

#### **Whys**

- Non-hunters do everything they can to discourage hunting
- None of the responses spoke about direct conflict from living with and around deer
- Several of the respondents mentioned enjoying seeing the deer daily and even called them "their" deer

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### **2. Business-Indirect – Dennis Lee Ball, Jr** (13 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 1                  Decreasing = 10                  Stable = 2                  Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0                  Too Low = 9                  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 = 8                  Decrease = 2                  Remain Same = 3                  Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 50% (Average)                  Percent Decrease = N/A

#### **Whys**

- No hunting occurring on public land
- The deer are in communities now
- Business community sentiment is that a 50-100% increase in deer is needed to get hunters back

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### **3. Business-Direct – Vincent Volz** (9 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

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

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0                  Too Low = 9                  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 = 9                  Decrease = 0                  Remain Same = 0                  Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 15-20 (Average)                  Percent Decrease = N/A

#### **Whys**

- Too many doe tags being offered
- Too many button bucks being killed
- No new hunters entering the ranks
- All those surveyed now hunt out-of-state
- Current plan ineffective due to the mix of public and private land (one plan does not cover all)

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### **4. Sportman-Resident – Randall Woehrle** (43 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 2                  Decreasing = 31                  Stable = 9                  Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 1                  Too Low = 38                  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 = 33                  Decrease = 4                  Remain Same = 6                  Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 10-50% (Range)                  Percent Decrease = 25% (Average)

#### **Whys**

- Herd is too low
- Greater opportunity to kill either antlered or antlerless deer
- Give youth greater opportunity to harvest animal
- Too many does being harvested

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## **5. Rural Non-Farm Landowner – Charles Lombaerde** (10 responses)

### **Answers to Questions**

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

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

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) too high, too low, or About right?

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

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = N/A

### **Whys**

- Overabundance in developments, therefore keep the deer herd the same
- Stop feeding in developments
- Deer go to safe havens when hunted
- Don't increase deer herd until habitat can support it

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## **6. Public Landowners – Chuck Gould II** (8 responses)

### **Answers to Questions**

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0                  Decreasing = 4                  Stable = 3                  Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 1                  Too Low = 1                  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 = 2                  Decrease = 1                  Remain Same = 5                  Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = N/A

### **Whys**

- Forest regeneration just getting started
- Need to protect the current forest regeneration
- Do not want to further reduce outdoor recreation opportunities
- If there are not enough deer, hunters will not come

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## **7. Forest Industry – Joseph Maculaitis** (10 responses)

### **Answers to Questions**

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 1                  Decreasing = 2                  Stable = 7                  Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 5                  Too Low = 0                  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 = 0                  Decrease = 5                  Remain Same = 5                  Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 14% Average (Range 10-50%)

### **Whys**

- Areas where deer numbers are down, saw forest regeneration success
- Much of WMU 3D has too many deer to achieve regeneration without fences
- Refuges allow too many deer (land not hunted)
- Presence of seedlings does not mean success (population needs to be low until the seedling grows out of reach of deer)

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### **8. Conservationist – Robert Engvaldsen** (19 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 3                  Decreasing = 11                  Stable = 5                  Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 8                  Too Low = 5                  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 = 7                  Remain Same = 4                  Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 3D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = N/A

#### **Whys**

- Overabundance in developments, therefore keep the deer herd the same
- Stop feeding in developments
- Deer go to safe havens when hunted
- Don't increase deer herd until habitat can support it

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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.

- Sportsman report that the herd is too low, too many doe are being harvested, and desire to give youth more hunting opportunities.
- Forest regeneration takes time and can be quickly negatively effected by a significant increase in the deer population. It was reported that much of WMU 3D still has too many deer to allow for adequate re-generation without fencing.
- Business In-Direct encountered business owners being reluctant to speak about hunting for fear of losing non-hunter business.
- Forestry industry and public landowners believed that forest re-generation is just starting in some areas, and even in areas where it is underway, the regeneration is still not established.
- The feeding of deer in refuge areas was discussed.

**Conclusion:** *Seven of eight attending CAC primary members recommended a 10% increase to the WMU 3D deer herd over the next 5 years, assuming the habitat continues to recover.*