

# **Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 5D Final Report**

**March 12, 2010**



Pennsylvania Game  
Commission

Governor's Office of  
Administration



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## Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 5D

### 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 5D, 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 2, 2010. 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 2, 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 5D. CAC membership and attendance at both meetings is shown in Exhibit 1. Nine different stakeholder groups were represented. CAC members collected input from 144 people. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. In the case of 5D, 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 resulting consensus process that led to the CAC recommendation of a deer population trend for WMU 5D over the next five years:

*Eight of nine attending CAC primary members recommended a decrease to the WMU 5D deer herd.<sup>2</sup>*

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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> While consensus was reached on the need for a decrease, the CAC could not agree to a percentage.

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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 5D. OSS staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 5D. 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 2</b>	<b>March 2</b>
1. Ag-Livestock/Cash Crop	Rick Kohl*	✓	✓
2. Business-Direct	Bill Pascale*	✓	✓
3. Business-Direct	Robert Lange	✓	
4. Business-Indirect	Brian Jones*	✓	✓
5. Conservationist	William Hartman*	✓	✓
6. Conservationist	Michael Skurecki	✓	✓
7. Forest Industry	Lloyd Casey*	✓	✓
8. Highway Safety	Russell Hittle*	✓	✓
9. Highway Safety	Michael Bryant Shepard	✓	
10. Homeowner-Developed	Christopher Lohr	✓	
11. Homeowner-Developed	Devon Happersett-Heppe*	✓	✓
12. Rural Non-Farm Landowner	James Ennis*	✓	✓
13. Sportsman-Resident	Jonathon Goldstein	✓	
14. Sportsman-Resident	Thomas O'Donnell*	✓	✓

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

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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 5D was presented. In the case of WMU 5D, there was not enough forest plot data available to present a forest health assessment.

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 2, 2010**

1. Application of trap and transfer and fertility control for deer management in developed areas.
2. Species that deer displace.
3. Lyme disease being included in the scope of the CAC proceedings.
4. CAC process being directed at the human conflict goal and the ultimate need for the CAC members to use the answers to the why question as well as their judgment in their final decision

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

At the beginning of this discussion, OSS tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 2 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 2 meeting. As indicated in Table 1, the results remained about the same from the original perception the herd is too high and needs to decrease.

The individual reports showed that most view the deer herd as increasing or stable, but with a clear majority feeling it is now too high. Regarding a recommendation, seven stakeholder groups recommended a decrease, one recommended stable, and one recommended an increase (see Appendix A for details).

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>CAC Voting Summary for WMU 5D Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision</b>			
Question	February 2, 2010	March 2, 2010	March 4, 2010
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results <sup>3</sup>	Consensus Decision
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU5D increasing, decreasing, or stable?			
○ Increasing	10	4.5	
○ Decreasing	2	1	
○ Stable	1	2.5	
○ Do Not Know	1	1	
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU5D too high, too low, or about right?			
○ Too High	9	8	

<sup>3</sup> Totals for first three questions are based on the *majority* of survey respondents. Ties are shown by the .5 values. See Appendix A for individual stakeholder reports.

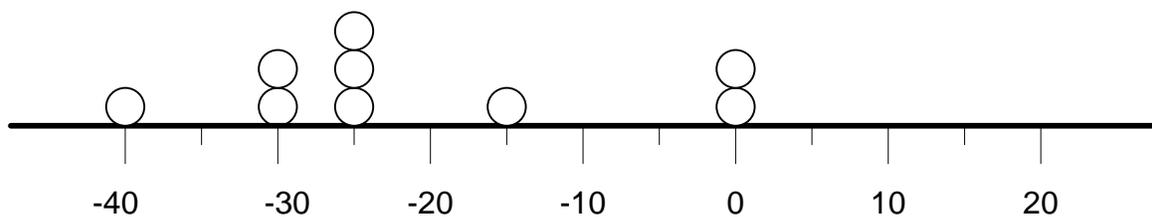
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**Table 1  
CAC Voting Summary for WMU 5D Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision**

Question	February 2, 2010	March 2, 2010	March 4, 2010
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results <sup>3</sup>	Consensus Decision
o Too Low	0	1	
o About Right	3	0	
o Do Not Know	0	0	
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 5D should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			
o Increase	2	1	
o Decrease	7	7	<b>X</b>
o Remain The Same	3	1	
o Do Not Know	2	0	
Increase by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	33	
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	20-100; 25-50; 30 (2); 40; 45-50	Consensus not reached on percent.
Number of present CAC members	14		
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members	Not Applicable		

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**



There was agreement among most members there are too many deer within the unit. Various negative effects were discussed at some length including excessive crop damage, poor forest health, and vehicle accidents including fatalities. One member said there are pockets within 5D where the herd is low, primarily the rural areas where the use of the Red Tag Program by farmers has removed a lot of deer.

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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 a decrease in the 25 to 40 percent range could not reasonably consider lower percent decrease proposals. Similarly, the two members recommending maintaining the herd at present levels could not move from their position, even when lower percent options were proposed. The Homeowner-Developed representative said that while the majority of their survey respondents saw the need for a decrease, they could not support this being done by hunting. In the end, the Rural Non-Farm Landowner representative was willing to agree to the need for a decrease, but the group could not reach consensus on a percentage. This was as much as could be agreed to despite the CAC members working late into the evening. Some of the key "whys" of the discussion are included in Appendix B.

The following is the consensus decision:

*Eight of nine attending CAC primary members recommended a decrease to the WMU 5D deer herd.*

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**APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports**

**1. Sportsman-resident – Thomas O’Donnell** (20 responses)

**Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 15      Decreasing = 4      Stable = 1      Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 15      Too Low = 3      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 = 0      Decrease = 15      Remain Same = 5      Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 25 to 50

**Whys**

- Safety
- Over population
- Smaller areas for deer to live and eat because of the increasing amounts of both commercial and residential developments.
- Lack of food supply

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### **2. Forest Industry – Lloyd Casey** (12 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 8                  Decreasing = 0                  Stable = 4                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 9                  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 = 9                  Remain Same = 3                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 15 to 75/28.5 Average  
including 3 remain the same

#### **Whys**

- Destruction of habitat, reduces regeneration, encourages invasive plants
- Road hazard
- Lyme disease

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### **3. Conservationist – William Hartman, Jr.** (16 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 2                  Decreasing = 4                  Stable = 10                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 16                  Too Low = 0                  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 = 0                  Decrease = 15                  Remain Same = 1                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 40 (Average)

#### **Whys**

- Negative impact on habitat and ability for forest regeneration to occur
- Vehicle accidents
- Lyme disease

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### **4. Agriculture - Livestock/Cash Crop - Rick Kohl** (7 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

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

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

Too High = 7                  Too Low = 0                  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 = 0                  Decrease = 7                  Remain Same = 0                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 20 to 100

#### **Whys**

- Excessive damage to crops
- Herds not balanced by hunters; too many trophy hunters
- Too many deer and not enough food supply

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### **5. Business Direct – Bill Pascale** (15 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 6                  Decreasing = 3                  Stable = 6                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 7                  Too Low = 3                  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 = 2                  Decrease = 7                  Remain Same = 6                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 30

#### **Whys**

- Loss of habitat due to housing and general development
- Concern over deer health
- Limited property access restricts hunters
- The average hunter can not shoot enough deer to maintain the balance of the herd with the habitat

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### **6. Business – Indirect – Brian Jones** (11 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

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

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

Too High = 7                  Too Low = 2                  About Right = 0                  Do Not Know = 2

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

Increase = 2                  Decrease = 7                  Remain Same = 0                  Do Not Know = 2

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

Percent Increase = 20, 50

Percent Decrease = 10 to 30

#### **Whys**

- Increase/decrease on operational costs and profitability
- Increasing financial burden on WMU residents as a result of deer impact (insurance costs, landscaping)
- Public safety concerns due to deer/vehicle collisions

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### **7. Homeowner - Developed – Devon Happersett-Heppe** (30 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 13      Decreasing = 0      Stable = 17      Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 18      Too Low = 0      About Right = 12      Do Not Know = 0

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

Increase = 0      Decrease = 16      Remain Same = 14      Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 10 to 80, most at 50

#### **Whys**

- Traffic accidents – loss of human life
- Traffic accidents – loss of deer life
- Landscape damage around homes

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### **8. Rural Non-Farm Landowner – James Ennis** (12 responses)

#### **Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 1                  Decreasing = 7                  Stable = 4                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Too High = 4                  Too Low = 6                  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 = 6                  Decrease = 3                  Remain Same = 3                  Do Not Know = 0

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

Percent Increase = 33

Percent Decrease = Not Reported

#### **Whys**

- Concern over the heritage of hunting and opportunities for youth
- Desire to see more deer
- Development pressure has negatively impacted the ability to see deer
- The Red Tag Program is taking too many deer

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**9. Highway Safety - Russell Hittle** (21 responses)

**Answers to Questions**

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

Increasing = 7                  Decreasing = 2                  Stable = 9                  Do Not Know = 3

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

Too High = 13                  Too Low = 2                  About Right = 5                  Do Not Know = 1

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

Increase = 4                  Decrease = 14                  Remain Same = 2                  Do Not Know = 1

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

Percent Increase = Not Reported                  Percent Decrease = 10 to 50; 30 Average

**Whys**

- Reduce fatal and injury accidents
- Reduce accidents
- Need to address increasing insurance costs due to vehicular damage

**Total response for all stakeholder groups = 144**

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### **APPENDIX B: CAC Member Points During Consensus Discussion and Decision**

The focus of the discussion was on the “whys” underlying opinions to increase or decrease the deer herd.

- The majority of stakeholder groups reported survey results showed a view there are too many deer and the herd needing to decrease.
- The Conservationist reported an assessment of deer density in a portion of Willistown Township revealed density’s of 44 deer per square mile.
- The 5D CAC did not have the benefit of a forest health assessment due to the US Forestry Service not having enough plot data within the wildlife management unit.
- A portion of the Rural Non-Farm Landowner survey respondents were acknowledged as also being hunters.
- While the majority of Homeowner-Developed respondents saw the need for a decrease, they requested that this be done through other means than hunting.
- A variety of decrease percents and ranges were voted on without being able to reach consensus. Those desiring a larger decrease could not support a slighter decrease, such as one proposed range, 7.5 to 22.5. Two members would not move from their stable position.
- The compromise was to vote on the basis of increase or decrease without assigning a percentage.

***Conclusion:*** *Eight of nine attending CAC primary members recommended a decrease to the WMU 5D deer herd.*