



On Tour for a limited engagement

By J. T. Fleegle PGC Wildlife Biologist

THE SUMMER CONCERT series usually brings lots of variety to the stage. Something for everyone — country, pop, alternative, and “biofunk.” I guess that’s how you’d categorize our “sound.” For the past several years, biologists in the Deer & Elk Section have been touring Game Commission offices, carrying the white-tailed tune. The deer program has changed tremendously during the past 10 years and, although those of us in the Deer & Elk Section are intimately familiar with the changes, personnel with other expertise are not. But, no matter what your job is, if you work for the Game Commission, people expect you to know about deer.

The deer program is so high profile that it has its own PR team. The team develops tour themes, ad campaigns, and schedules. Since the team began “managing the image” of our state animal, brochures have covered everything from deer food to harvest estimates, DVDs have been produced, and annual open house tours help get the information out to the public. But of all these communication innovations, the summer employee training tour is the most important.

We schlep all over the state, setting up equipment and prepping audiences. We talk to every employee of every office and field crew. It is our job to convey the details of the deer program so they may have a better understanding of the deer program and be able to answer questions posed by the public. Topics include program goals and how they are measured, harvest estimates, antler restrictions, antlerless allocations, and answers to common questions. It’s a lot to take in.

I don’t see biofunk breaking into the big time. It will likely retain a small cult following outside the walls of the agency. But within the confines of the PGC, it is mandatory listening.

After the third show, I begin to feel like a broken record. But the beat goes on. The tour is intense but short lived. After their brief time with us, agency personnel scatter back to all corners of the state, singing, we hope, a tune they’ve just heard on our exclusive deer program tour.