

Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 2D Final Report

March 30, 2011



Pennsylvania Game
Commission

Governor's Office of
Administration



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Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 2D

Introduction and Overview

An objective in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's (PGC) deer management plan was to use 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 2D, participants communicated population goal recommendations based on input actively solicited and obtained from individuals within stakeholder groups. This is not the easiest of tasks as attested to by the CAC members. CAC membership and attendance is shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1			
List of CAC Stakeholder Groups/Representatives and Attendance at Meetings			
Stakeholder Group	Representative (*Primary Member)	February 7	March 7
1. Agriculture	Andrew Kimmel*	✓	✓
2. Conservationist	Nick Pinozzotto*	✓	✓
3. Conservationist	Thomas Rossman	✓	
4. Forest Industry	Larry Fulton*	✓	✓
5. Highway Safety	Frank Wolbert*	✓	✓
6. Public Landowner	Gary Gilmore* ¹		✓
7. Rural Non-farm Landowner	Christopher Smith	✓	
8. Rural Non-farm Landowner	John Repasky*	✓	✓
9. Sportsman-Resident	Gene Rearick	✓	
10. Sportsman-Resident	Gregory Walter*	✓	✓

After recruiting stakeholder representatives from individuals recommended by PGC field staff, outside organizations and people requesting to be considered through the volunteer nomination process, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)² staff convened and facilitated an introductory meeting on February 7, 2011. OSS facilitated a subsequent meeting on March 7, 2011, to gather stakeholder feedback, discuss stakeholder perspectives, and reach consensus, if possible, regarding a deer population trend recommendation for WMU 2D.

Seven stakeholder groups were represented. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. In the case of 2D, this resulted in ten CAC members. Primary members were identified for each stakeholder group and were responsible for coordinating results with their partner. OSS staff asked CAC members to attempt to communicate with at least 10 representatives from each of their respective stakeholder groups. Attendance at the second meeting was optional but encouraged, for secondary members to attend to participate in the discussion. Primary members reported the combined results and held the decision making power of the group they represented. Across the seven stakeholder groups, CAC members collected input from 307 people.

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 2D over the next five years:

¹ Mr. Gilmore was unable to attend the first meeting, and as such was not prepared to take part in the second meeting. He did, however, attend the March 7th meeting but declined to take part in the consensus discussion.

² 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.

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The deer herd in WMU 2D should remain the same or decrease up to 10% over the next 5 years.

First Meeting Summary

Prior to the first meeting, members received a document entitled "Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), Objectives and Process Overview," which explained a number of agenda items under a worksheet and template. Highlights from the first meeting included reviewing the following:

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 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.

The purpose of the first meeting was to provide information to the members about the CAC process as well as background on deer management, statewide and within WMU 2D. OSS staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 2D. This is presented in Table 1, which includes the complete voting history.

PGC staff provided an overview of the mission and history of the Commission, as well as details about the deer management program including the goals of maintaining a healthy

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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, habitat, and land use data for WMU 2D was presented.

Members were provided 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 7, 2010
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Number of doe tags required to harvest a deer and trends.2. Number of forest plots in WMU 2D used to determine habitat health.3. The number of deer harvested through DMAP statewide and for WMU 2D.4. Deer fetus number and distribution for WMU 2D.

Second Meeting Summary

The purpose of the second meeting was for members to present their findings, ask questions of one another, and attempt to reach consensus.

For each stakeholder group, four questions were posed. In addition, members were asked to collect comments to discern why those among their stakeholder group feel the way they do. Individual stakeholder reports are included in Appendix A.

The questions were:

- A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) 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 2D) increase or decrease?

OSS tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at the March 1 meeting and displayed it on a table that was subsequently compared to the results of CAC member sentiment provided at the February 7 meeting.

As indicated in Table 1, the individual reports showed a split between those viewing the deer herd as decreasing or stable. Regarding a recommendation, two stakeholder groups advocated an increase, two advocated a decrease, and the remaining two advocated having the herd stay the same size (see Appendix A for details).

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**Table 1
CAC Voting Summary for WMU 2D Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision**

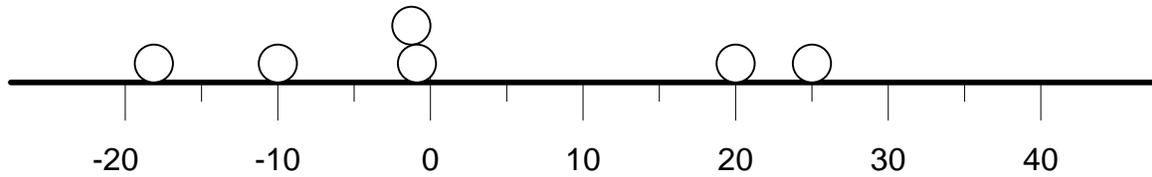
Question	February 7, 2011	March 7, 2011	March 7, 2011
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results ³	Consensus Decision
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU2D increasing, decreasing, or stable?			
o Increasing	1	1	
o Decreasing	3	3	
o Stable	4	2	
o Do Not Know	0	0	
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU2D too high, too low, or about right?			
o Too High	3	1	
o Too Low	2	2	
o About Right	3	3	
o Do Not Know	0	0	
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 2D should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			Remain the same or decrease 10%
o Increase	3	2	1
o Decrease	3	2	
o Remain The Same	2	2	5
o Do Not Know	0	0	
Increase by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	25, 25	
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?	Not Applicable	15-20, 20, 15-25,	
Number of present CAC members	8	6	
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members	Not Applicable	307	

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. Results of this exercise are shown in Exhibit 3.

³ Totals for first three questions are based on the *majority* of survey respondents. See Appendix A for individual stakeholder reports.

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Exhibit 3 Graphical Depiction of Voting by Dots on Percentage of Increase/Decrease



While there was agreement that the deer population is down in 2D, there was a split on whether the trend has leveled out. Some members said many among those surveyed believe the decline in the herd is continuing. There was some discussion about variations within 2D with certain areas holding significantly more or less deer. The habitat data and trends were also discussed again.

Once various points were discussed, the group started to determine if they could reach consensus. Discussion opened with the sportsmen representative offering a 25% increase as a starting point. Discussion quickly focused on the health of the habitat, and the losses that agriculture is sustaining since degraded habitat has been causing deer to move to agricultural areas for food. The group offered a proposal to have the deer herd remain the same over the next five years, with the acknowledgement that the sportsman's interest would likely be the dissenting vote in the move to consensus.

Further discussion on the significance of the losses being felt by agricultural interests in the room, joined by points made by conservationists and rural non-farm landowners ensued. The group began to consider a decrease as part of their deliberations.

The idea of a range was offered as a compromise. The group reached consensus on the deer herd staying the same or decreasing up to 10% over the next 5 years. The sportsman's representative could not support this consensus decision.

The following is the conclusion of the CAC:

The deer herd in WMU 2D should stay the same or decrease up to 10% over the next 5 years.

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APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports

1. Agriculture – Andrew Kimmel (15 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

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

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 15 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 = 0 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 15-20

Whys

- Economic/commodity loss

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2. Conservationist – Nick Pinozzotto (20 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 5 Decreasing = 4 **Stable = 10** Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 9 Too Low = 1 **About Right = 9** Do Not Know = 1

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

Increase = 1 **Decrease = 10** Remain Same = 8 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increase or decrease?

Remain the same.

Percent Increase = N/A

Percent Decrease = 20

Whys

- Habitat depletion
- Buck/doe ratio not optimal
- Crop damage concern

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3. Rural Non-farm Landowners – John Repasky (102 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 28 Decreasing = 26 **Stable = 48** Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 33 Too Low = 15 **About Right = 53** Do Not Know = 1

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

Increase = 16 Decrease = 39 **Remain Same = 46** Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 15-20

Percent Decrease = 5-15

Whys

Stay the same

- Damage is down
- Want to see more deer
- Environment supports deer

Increase

- Want to see more deer
- Concern over getting kids interested in hunting

Decrease

- Property damage
- Deer health in concentrated areas
- Seeing more deer

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4. Sportsman-Resident – Gregory Walter (137 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 15 **Decreasing = 85** Stable = 37 Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 10 **Too Low = 89** About Right = 37 Do Not Know = 1

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

Increase = 93 Decrease = 7 Remain Same = 36 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 25-50, average 25 Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Develop more interest, preserve hunting
- Habitat can support more deer
- Generate more dollars for PGC

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5. Forestry – Larry Fulton (11 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

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

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) too high, too low, or About right?

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

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = Not reported

Percent Decrease = 15-25

Whys

Stay the same

- Seeing a browse line
- No oak regeneration
- Posted land

Increase

- Regeneration is OK
- Habitat can support
- Believe that farmers are feeding the deer

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6. Highway Safety – Frank Wolbert (22 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 **Decreasing = 16** Stable = 6 Do Not Know = 0

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 **Too Low = 18** 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 = 16 Decrease = 1 Remain Same = 5 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 2D) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 25 (average) Percent Decrease = N/A

Whys

- Crashes down
- While numbers of deer are going down, they are still found by the roads
- Herd numbers are down, driving remains normal

Total response for all stakeholder groups = 307

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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.

- There was a split among participants on whether the herd was increasing, decreasing or stable.
- The Public Landowner and Forestry stakeholder representatives expressed concern over the habitat being able to support more deer. While there has been some regeneration, the overall habitat rating for 2D is still fair.
- Deer herd differences within WMU 2D were discussed with less deer being in certain areas within the WMU.
- The discussion surrounding losses being absorbed by agricultural interests was a driving force on having CAC members reduce their desire to increase the herd over the next 5 years.
- Because of these factors, a recommendation was made to have the herd remain the same or decrease by up to 10% over the next 5 years.

Conclusion: *The 2D CAC reached a consensus decision with five stakeholder groups agreeing that the herd should remain the same or decrease up to 10% over the next 5 years. The resident sportsman group could not agree with this recommendation.*