

WILDLIFE COMMITTEE MEETING
January 26, 2008

We discussed AB672 Youth Hunting Bill, the same bill we supported last legislative session; 10 yr. old participation, 1 gun, within arms reach, etc. Motion to support, passed unanimously.

Wisconsin has finally signed on to address the lawsuit on beginning the action necessary to fight the efforts of the Humane Society to overturn the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service handing over wolf management to the states of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. We requested this sign on action in early April of 2007. The State has now answered our requests. A motion was made to re-affirm our stand on wolf population figures and harvest of them (hunt or trapping) on public or private land, with the development of a working Committee or Coalition also made up of state organizations and statewide agencies to oversee population levels and growth. Unanimously approved.

AB703, a bill requires in 2014 that at least one DNR. Board member have an agricultural background and at least three members of such board have held a hunting, fishing or trapping license in at least 7 of 10 yrs. before year of nomination. Voted to support, passed unanimously.

AB602, a bill to allow non-residents over the age of 65 to use a crossbow for hunting. Currently, residents 65 or older can use a crossbow. Motion to support, passed unanimously.

AB716 - This bill prohibits a person who, under current law, is prohibited from possessing a firearm from obtaining a hunting license that authorizes the person to hunt with a firearm, such as a small game hunting license or a deer hunting license (hunting license). The bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to annually request that the Department of Justice conduct a firearms restrictions record search with respect to every person to who DNR issued a hunting license. We felt this bill should be addressed by the Department of Justice and not held by action of the DNR. A motion to oppose was passed unanimously.

Keith Warnke, from the DNR, was at our meeting and assisting the Committee with questions regarding deer hunting 2008 and other big game issues. A review of 2007 and years passed harvest percentages was reviewed and what if anything could be done to extend the current non-October gun deer hunt (T-Zone). The concept on access to private lands and more harvesting of deer was discussed. In the current Farm Bill, there is a proposed open fields policy to pay private landowners a per acre fee to allow hunting on their land. The Committee voted that a resolution be submitted to this year's WWF Annual Meeting addressing and supporting for the field's policy. So passed.

Next discussed was 2008 bear harvest; a 10% increase in harvests; 6% increase in bear harvest permits with most increase in management Zone B. The elimination of Zone 1A is now Zone D.

An open discussion on SAK Committee recommendations and future changes was discussed. We could possibly see them recommend combining of current deer management into larger areas of management. (Report to be released)

Also, the state's CWD was meeting today (Jan. 26, 2008) for their final meeting and recommendations to the DNR Board. (Report to be released)

Puppy Mills and our participation into a new structured piece of legislation was talked about. Rep. Wickert (Appleton) has been gathering input into such a rewrite and our participation has been current. Hearing on Monday to continue and firm up a possible bill. Later report due.

A possible elimination of trapping in a wildlife area around the Town of Seymour was brought to the Committee by Committee member Marj Roach. Seems three dogs over a period of time were caught in trapping devices legally set; of which 1 was off area boundaries, and all were not on leashes and running with horse riders. Final decision of this hearing is forthcoming. Marj will contact me.

Stewardship was passed with a financial package of \$860 Million dollars, being \$80 Million dollars per year for land acquisition. Also, a written plan for land management of future and current lands owned by the state. A more guaranteed access for hunting on purchased lands.

With costs of operating DNR lands & facilities rising, it was felt that an alternate supplement funding be developed so all state users pay for upkeep and this burden not totally be removed from Sportsmen's fees.

A motion to develop a resolution for WWF Annual Meeting which will provide new supplemental funding for increased management of DNR managed lands (parking lots, toilets, signs, etc.) which utilizes dedicated funds to the amount of \$6-\$10 Million. Motion passed unanimously.

We then discuss the revised Bobcat Season structure, an issue that we have been involved in since the beginning of this process to the current date. We've supported this restructuring with all parties involved. This issue will appear on the DNR Spring Questionnaire. It was moved that we support the restructuring. Motion passed.

A motion was made to re-open the coyote hunting during the gun deer season. Motion passed.

A discussion arose on the applying of special hunting, fishing and trapping licenses, and how this is accomplished throughout the year as seasons approach. A motion was made to have DNR provide a method to apply for limited issue hunting, fishing and trapping permits by March 1st when licenses expire and new licenses are sold. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph R. Fritsch
Chairman