

Mark Schink
629 Maple St
Neenah, WI.
54956

06

Dear Judith

I am writing you this letter to let you know of my heart felt opposition to the proposed Deer 2000 program. I do not think that the December deer hunt would benefit the most people. I also feel that the Deer 2000 plan is too partial to the Wisconsin Deer Hunter. They (the Hunters) seem to get plenty of time to exercise their right to hunt.

I thank you for your time, and hope that this letter and my time make a difference.

Sincerely

Mark E. Schink

1-3-02

P.S. Let us also consider the needs and wants of future Deer Hunters. The child of today deserves to have the right to hunt tomorrow.



December 27, 2001

Senator Judith Robson
Senate Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Rules
Room 15 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson:

As a member of the Easton Sno-Seekers snowmobile club, I strongly oppose the Department of Natural Resources staff recommendation to establish a gun deer-hunting season in all 72 counties of Wisconsin during December of 2002, 2003, and 2004.

There are clear alternative hunting seasons available to control deer herds in the State now. Our snowmobiling season is short enough as we have had to keep our trails closed for the second year in a row until after the T-zone hunting season that occurred this December. Also not knowing how much snow we will receive, when or where, limits the enjoyment of our sport even more.

I, therefore, ask that you and the other Senate members not approve the gun deer-hunting seasons for December 2002, 2003, and 2004.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George P. Pletz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "G".

Member, Easton Sno-Seekers
1106 Fern Avenue
Grand Marsh, WI 53936-9635



December 27, 2001

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Senate Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Rules
Room 15 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
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I, therefore, ask that you and the other Senate members not approve the gun deer-hunting seasons for December 2002, 2003, and 2004.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marilyn Burdick". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

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1106 Fern Avenue
Grand Marsh, WI 53936-9635



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Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcia Hoch". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Member, Easton Sno-Seekers
1106 Fern Avenue
Grand Marsh, WI 53936-9635



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Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley M. Wiest".

Member, Easton Sno-Seekers
1106 Fern Avenue
Grand Marsh, WI 53936-9635



RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

December 27, 2001

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Room 15 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

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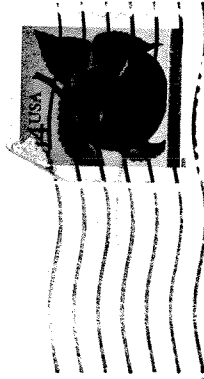
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Mark J. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Member, Easton Sno-Seekers
1106 Fern Avenue
Grand Marsh, WI 53936-9635



Marcus J. Korth
1050 Woodbrides Ct.
Fond du Lac, WI 53029-2701



Senator Judith Robson
P.O. Box 7882
Room 15 South, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707-7882

5370747882



December 27, 2001

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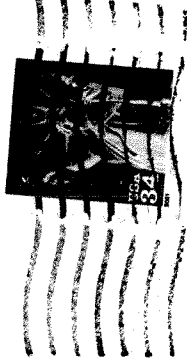
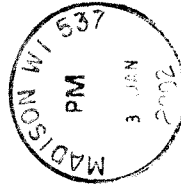
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Sincerely,

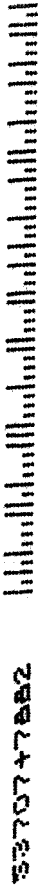
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan M. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Member, Easton Sno-Seekers
1106 Fern Avenue
Grand Marsh, WI 53936-9635

Edwin J. Burdick
1059 Ember Ave.
Adams, WI 53910-9790



Senator Judith Robson
Senate Co-Chair, Joint Committee on
Rules
Room 15 South State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882



53707-7882

Respectively Submitted by the Exeland Rod & Gun Club and The Birchwood Sportsman's Club.

THE DEER 2000 PROJECT...T-ZONE DISASTER!

The 2001 Deer Season is history. All the pre-season predictions, DNR deer population data, the final statistics, and the inevitable post season DNR inventory list of descriptive **reasons and excuses**, are now all part of the season's history. Dedicated sportsmen throughout the state who closely monitor the DNR's deer management program are recognizing that history is being repeated.

Once again, the big game managers have been forced to dig deep into their archives to retrieve that imaginary file folder labeled "**POST DEER SEASON – REASONS AND EXCUSES**". As in the past, some game managers are scrambling to salvage their credibility now that their pre-season predictions and unit population figures were undeniably way off the mark!

With several noteworthy exceptions, this year's DNR post-season propaganda is all too familiar. 1992 was another year when the sportsman's warnings fell on deaf ears. Except that year, post-season DNR excuses reached a new level of desperation. This was the year DNR wildlife experts announced that "Post Rut Syndrome" was to blame for the low deer harvest.

There is, however one big game manager who has earned, and deserves the respect of area hunters. Dave Evenson, wildlife supervisor for the northern region, has again been the first to step forward to comment honestly on the low deer harvest in the Northern third of the state. Evenson is a straightforward, down to earth sort of guy who has already gone on record stating that "possibly the deer were not out there".

Rusk County warden Jeremy Peery, a highly successful community oriented officer, issued a statement that supports his findings, which were gathered out in the field during the last 10 months. Peery, referring to Unit 18, clearly contributed the low deer kill to "previous over harvest and a severe winter".

What magnifies this blatant miscalculation of the northern deer population and really places "a burr under the DNR's saddle", is the fact that sportsmen's groups, such as the Birchwood Sportsman's Club and the Exeland Rod & Gun Club, accurately predicted there would be at least a 30% reduction in the deer harvest within the Units in their area. T-Zone (over harvest) and winter severity, respectively, were cited as the reasons for the decline.

Months before the first shot was ever fired, club members repeatedly met with DNR game managers to share the information that the rod & gun organizations had compiled. This data was produced from a wide variety of **local** resources.

A bush plane, designed exclusively for slow flying observation work was then utilized to fly numerous deer survey missions. The late winter aerial survey confirmed the rod & gun club member's suspicions. The numbers were not there! Amazingly, the Exeland Rod & Gun Club pre-season estimates were closer to 16-18 deer per square mile vs. the DNR's computer predicted 36 per square mile in units 17 & 18.

A succession of mild winters allowed the DNR to increase their number of quota permits. Thousands of "either or" tags were issued per unit. The very nature of this procedure produced an increased kill as hunters no longer had to identify their target prior to shooting. In some units many more permits were available than were ever sold. This brought one to question where the "management" concept fit in. For the DNR, it has basically been a "sell all we can-kill all we can" attitude in the Northern units.

The post-season individual unit deer population depended entirely on the quality of the people hunting a particular area. Some sportsmen showed restraint and a moderate number of deer were left in that sector, while others followed the DNR's promoted "brown its down" theory and the unit was decimated.

The increase in tags unfortunately attracted more hunters to the area. This meant the unit received more hunting pressure than it should have been exposed to, based on the **actual** deer population. Intense hunting pressure in that unit initiated an over harvest. Then, based on the "record breaking" kill, the Madison wildlife managers and their master computer mistakenly assumed there must be an incredible amount of deer still out there.

This policy also allowed the buck kill to exceed the normal ratio. Hunters shooting at anything without identifying their target, many times ended up killing a buck that they initially thought was an antlerless deer. This shooting before identifying the target is becoming a real safety concern. In fact, it is the very reason people are being shot! Hunters have tags to cover anything and some shoot at movement without having to identify their target. Excessive hunters choice (antlerless/bonus) tags undisputedly creates unsafe hunting conditions!

Inevitably in the North, nature occasionally brings us back to reality in the form of a severe winter, in this case, however it has been over-harvest via T-ZONES. In either case, far too many fawns are lost and in some units that consist of predominately (open) public lands, the decimation of the adult doe population occurs, thus they are not available to reproduce and replenish the herd. The Madison wildlife staff further fail to realize that the reproduction cycle and fawn mortality rate in the northern third of the state is a "world apart" from that in the central or southern areas. Subsequently, the deer population drops off significantly, but the DNR traditionally continues to rely almost entirely on their S.A.K. formula to estimate the herd. They also increasingly drift away from the essential custom of managing by the individual unit. Based on the previous year's buck harvest, they again increase the number of bonus tags or designate misplaced T-Zones. Local sportsmen and other dedicated hunters caution the DNR and desperately try to slow the antlerless harvest. No one is listening, not until there is a 30-50% drop in

the kill, then, ...out of the file cabinet comes that same old folder "**POST DEER SEASON-REASONS & EXCUSES**".

This year, weather definitely tops the DNR list of reasons for the low deer kill. According to most game managers, especially the "experts" in Madison, the low deer harvest was strictly due to a warm, wet, foggy, and brown season. When the DNR was promoting their Zone-T hunt, they listed the warmer fall weather as "a big advantage – a real plus" to hunting early. They insisted more hunters would be attracted to the warm October temperatures. They said this will bring an increased number of hunters out, and they will remain in the woods longer if they are comfortable. It was also naturally accepted that the early T-Zone would be hunted on bare ground. A "brown season"!

Now, when the harvest they predicted is not achieved, the warm weather suddenly becomes a detriment to hunting. Citing warm weather as a reason for such a significant drop in the harvest is rather confusing considering people always prefer to spend more time outdoors when the weather is pleasant. During the 9-day gun season we usually do experience a day or two of poor hunting conditions. A few hours of morning fog or afternoon of rain in some areas is not going to drop the overall kill in the North by 30-40%.

But now, the game experts say the warm weather was a bad thing? They say the deer were not moving when the fact is they were. This year the rut was going strong during the 9-day season. Bucks were motivated to move by way of their own natural instincts. Had the rut not been peaking in the regular season, the buck kill (in the North) would have been much lower. This caused a higher than the normal ratio of the available bucks to be taken. A factor that will throw the DNR's S.A.K. formula into producing more inaccurate calculations for the next year.

Lack of snow certainly contributes to the number of wounded deer that are not retrieved. There have also been numerous other years when we've hunted on bare ground. It may affect the harvest slightly but not to the extent of 2001 decline. Especially considering the fact that many people are now hunting over corn piles!

The weather factor is being extremely over exaggerated. The game managers are simply using the weather as a cover to hide the fact that they once again, have grossly over estimated the Northern deer population. The real truth is, they were actually compelled to adjust their S.A.K. formula and inflate the deer numbers on paper. It was necessary to justify the T-Zones in the North.

This agency has a proven track record of providing the public with inaccurate or misleading information. This well deserved reputation is so widely recognized, that the majority of veteran hunters in Northern Wisconsin have long since discontinued attending the DNR hosted meetings. Their protests that "nobody is listening" are both accurate and valid.

Without question, the most disappointing event for most Northern hunters was the transformation that was to occur within the DNR with the implementation of Deer 2000. It briefly appeared as if the DNR at last, finally understood what community oriented problem solving was all about. DNR literature billed the Deer 2000 transition as a new deer managing policy that would be designed almost exclusively by (stakeholders) the public. Sadly, but not surprisingly, we soon discovered Deer 2000, to be simply another "DNR stacked deck". Once again, they only went through the motions of "pretending to listen", then proceeding with their original plan. A DNR tradition!

The "Deer 2000" project cost the taxpayers nearly one million dollars. It has been a preposterous waste of funds that basically accomplished nothing. Had an affair similar to this taken place in the private sector, someone at the "top" would have been immediately dismissed. Above all, it is essential to recognize that this is not a one-time blunder by the DNR. We have endured decades of "being fed" false information that through the years has insulted some of Northern Wisconsin's finest outdoor veterans. It trails back to the severe winter of 1969 in the Sawyer County Alder Creek deer yard, when the DNR "experts" informed Leo Hoefft that it was dogs killing the deer, not coyotes as Hoefft claimed. We believe Leo Hoefft, a nationally recognized, lifetime trapper would undoubtedly be able to tell the difference between coyote and dog tracks.

It leads us back to the severe winter of 1981 in Couderay's Lost Lake deer yard when the "experts" informed George Mattis that deer cannot digest hay and corn. Mattis, a nationally recognized writer and author of the best-selling book, "The whitetail", believed otherwise. George Mattis spent much of his life out in the woods, studying the habits, the survival instincts and the winter range of the deer. Mattis understood the whitetail deer.

Both men, Mattis and Hoefft, are highly respected outdoor veterans and recognized as genuine, unquestionable experts in their own field, yet the DNR wildlife staff at that time lacked the good sense to accept the knowledge these men offered. These are only two examples in a collection of many that have been documented through the years.

DNR game managers have become particularly ingenious in pretending to solicit public opinion and then altering it to correlate with their original agenda. As in the past, DNR regulated hearings are still formatted so as to artfully tailor the hunters responses. Their information gathering process always appears initially genuine, but inevitably the hunter's advice is inverted and subsequently discarded.

In summary we surmise that DNR deer population figures have proven to be far too fallacious to justify their demand for either a 16 day season or T-Zone hunting in the Northern third of the state. We suggest the following:

1. Bring deer management back to the unit level and sincerely employ local citizen input.
2. Recognize the necessity of separation in management practices of North vs. South.

3. Accept the fact that actual observations are more reliable than a computer generated S.A.K.
4. Acknowledge that in the North, winter severity can still dramatically impact deer herd reproduction and substantial fawn losses can occur.
5. Recognize the field warden as an instrumental character in the front line information gathering process.
6. Encourage and respect citizen participation in establishing unit deer population goals.
7. **Stop the T-Zones immediately!!**

The majority of hunters in the North not only rejected the Northern T-Zone plan, they also disagreed with the DNR's deer population figures. Hunters repeatedly stated they knew better than a DNR computer in Madison, how many deer were in their backyards.

**Hunting season is now history and the numbers are in.
The hunters were right!! Is anyone listening???**

"Democracy is safest in the hands of a people who love and conserve their out-of-doors"
Wisconsin Conservation Department - 1949

Any response may be addressed to: Exeland Rod & Gun Club
P.O. Box 56
Exeland, Wi. 54835



December 27, 2001

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Senate Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Rules
Room 15 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

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I, therefore, ask that you and the other Senate members not approve the gun deer-hunting seasons for December 2002, 2003, and 2004.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Oscar Hensler

Member, Easton Sno-Seekers
1106 Fern Avenue
Grand Marsh, WI 53936-9635

Dick Gjerde

4485 Beale Street, Madison, Wis. 53711

(608) 221-9750 Fax (608) 223-1409

E-mail sjcrouch@chorus.net

C:\WORDRLG\LegislativeRule00-154-02a.RLGxxx

Date: January 12, 2002

Re: Clearing Rule 00-154

Dear Senator Judith Robson,

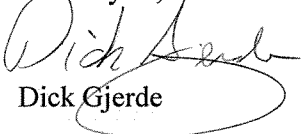
I am asking you to **support the Deer 2000 rule as approved by the Natural Resources Board** and override the objections of the assembly Natural Resource Committee.

Over the last several years I have participated in several Deer 2000 meetings and completed their questionnaire. I believe the compromises and recommendations made as a result of this process represent the people who made the effort to get involved.

There are a lot of different interest group represented in the Deer 2000 results. I don't agree with all the issues but I do agree that the final results do a good job of trying to meet the needs of everyone involved.

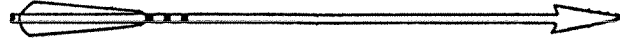
There was a lot of time and effort put into this process. Let's not mess it up.

Thank you,



Dick Gjerde

MOULDY'S Archery & Tackle



Pro Shop and Lanes

Bowhunters Headquarters • Specialists in Musky Tackle

1/8/02

DEAR LEGISLATOR:

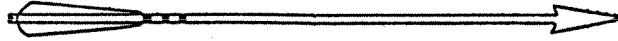
BEING SELF-EMPLOYED, AND MAKING MOST OF MY LIVING SELLING ARCHERY EQUIPMENT TO DEER HUNTERS, I AM VERY CONCERNED AT WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE DEER POPULATION IN THE NORTHERN HALF OF OUR STATE AS A RESULT OF THE LIBERAL T-ZONE SEASONS.

I SPENT THE LAST WEEK OF DECEMBER HUNTING IN MANAGEMENT UNIT SQ (WESTERN CLARK CO., EASTERN EAU CLAIRE CO.) THERE WAS APPROXIMATELY 2" OF SNOW COVER. I HAVE HUNTED ALL OVER THIS AREA FOR OVER 30 YEARS. WHAT I SAW THIS LAST WEEK OF DECEMBER HAS LEFT ME IN SHOCK! I WOULD SAY THAT THE DEER SIGN I ENCOUNTERED WAS THE POOREST IN 30 YEARS. I COULD DRIVE OR WALK THROUGH LARGE AREAS AND FIND ABSOLUTELY NO TRACKS. THERE IS DEFINITELY A PROBLEM HERE. THE HABITAT IN THIS AREA COULD EASILY SUPPORT 35-40 DEER PER SQ MILE. ANOTHER T-ZONE HUNT IN THIS AREA, AND, IN MANY UNITS IN THE NORTH WEST IS GOING TO BE DEVASTATING.

DEER HUNTING IN WISCONSIN IS A BILLION DOLLAR PLUS BUSINESS. WE ARE KNOWN FOR OUR DEER. LOTS OF DEER IS GOOD! WHY ARE WE TRYING TO KILL THEM ALL OFF. WE ARE CUTTING OFF OUR NOSES TO SPITE OUR FACES. PLEASE STOP THIS INSANITY BEFORE ONE OF WISCONSIN'S GREATEST BUSINESSES, AND RESOURCE, GOES DOWN THE TUBE.

12127 County Hwy OO - Chippewa Falls, WI 54729 - (715) 723-3607

MOULDY'S Archery & Tackle



Pro Shop and Lanes

Bowhunters Headquarters • Specialists in Musky Tackle

1/8/02

WE HAVE GONE TOO FAR DOWN THE ROAD ON THE
"THERE'S TOO MANY DEER" BANDWAGON. IT'S TIME
TO GET OFF. WE HAVE GREAT HABITAT
THAT BEGS FOR MORE DEER.

MORE DEER = MORE HUNTING = MORE DOLLARS SPENT =
MORE TAXES = GOOD ECONOMY = HAPPY CONSTITUENTS
(REVENUE FOR STATE PROGRAMS)

LESS DEER = LESS HUNTING = LESS DOLLARS SPENT =
LESS TAXES = POOR ECONOMY = UNHAPPY CONSTITUENTS
(REVENUE FOR STATE PROGRAMS)

Sincerely:

A CONCERNED BUSINESS OWNER
AND DEER HUNTER

1/11/2002

Dear Senator Robson,

I am an avid bow hunter and a member of the Wisconsin Bow hunters Association. I am asking you to support the Dec 2000 rule as approved by the Natural Resources Board and override the objections of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee.

Thank you

Mark C. Stache
W2002 Teardrop Ln.
Kaukauna, WI 54130
920-788-3926

State Representative Scott Gunderson
Chair, Assembly Subcommittee on Deer and Deer Management

FAX #608-282-3683

Representative Gunderson,

I was able to attend your hearing in Rhinelander on Friday, January 18, 2002 but due to time restraints and the large number of people in attendance, I was unable to speak to your subcommittee.

I do however, thank you and the rest of the committee for your time spent on this controversial issue.

I just completed hunting in my 50th deer season and have hunted with both gun and bow. I am a snowmobiler and have been since 1963. I want to go on record as follows:

Opposing all baiting

Opposing any further T-Zone hunts, before or after the regular season

Opposing any and all added days to the already too long Bow season

Opposing any hunting season for whitetail that goes beyond the end of muzzleloader season in the northern portion of the state where the seasons, either gun or bow, conflict with the opening of snowmobile trails and the logging operations that in many cases use the same roads. I am however, in favor of having the current 9 day season discontinued and going to a 16 day season starting the Saturday nearest November 15th and immediately after the 16 day season, starting a 7 day or a 9 day muzzleloader hunt.

A Saturday opening for the regular gun season is very important in my opinion to give all the gun hunters an equal opportunity for the opening. If a Saturday opening is not approved, I do not believe that the 16 day season will fly with the hunters of the state. It will also create a hardship on the many businesses in the state trying to coordinate the employee vacations that in many cases provides the only recreation that many of the states hardworking families enjoy.

I want to say that up until the last few years, I was strongly opposed to a 16 day season but have changed my mind for the following reasons.

A 16 day season will spread the hunters over a longer period of time to enjoy the outdoors in a much less crowded environment, at a time when more and more private land is being posted. This is only going to get much worse considering the fact that in the last 2 years approximately 75% of the large blocks of industrial land, especially in the Northern portion of the state, has changed hands. A substantial amount of this land is

now being broken up into smaller blocks and whereas it was normally open to public hunting is now being taken off the "OPEN" list.

In conversations with many large and small private landowners in the last 2 years, they have told me that if the current T-Zone and Bow hunting seasons continue, they are going to post their lands to hunting or gate the properties or both.

We do not need this as the U.S.F.S. with almost 3 million acres in the State has already closed a substantial portion of these lands to Walk In Only and as the deer hunter ages this reduces the areas they will be able to hunt.


We also must be concerned about those with disabilities who cannot walk the miles to get where the Deer are.

It would appear that the Deer damage issue and the Deer population problem lies more in the southern or Agricultural areas of the State. As I have said many times in the past and will say again, manage the lower 2/3 of the State with a longer season. This will give the bow hunters, who seem to need 4 months of hunting, the opportunity to harvest the Deer herd and bring it within the goals prescribed by the DNR. Continuing the bow season after the close of the muzzleloader season in the Northern portion of the state will continue to cause serious problems and further divide the recreationists-namely gun hunters, cross country skiers, snowmobilers and the number one industry in the state, the Forest Products and paper industry.

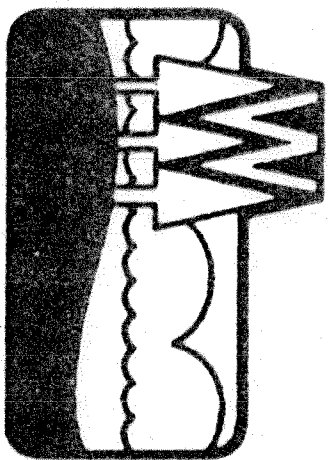
Any Bow Season that extends past the last day of the Muzzleloader season in any portion of the state should be confined to Antlerless only hunting. We need to improve the Buck to Doe ratio and this would be a step in that direction.

I may add that I am a large land-owner in the State and feel I am speaking with knowledge of the over-all situation and want to thank you for the time you are taking to find answers to this very important game management and economic issue.

Sincerely,



Richard Krawze
4671 Elm Street
Laona, WI 54541



State of Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources

Printed on
Recycled Paper

KURT A. THIEDE

Regulation Policy and Outreach Specialist
Bureau of Wildlife Management

101 S. Webster St., P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

(608) 267-2452
FAX (608) 267-7857

E-MAIL: thiedk@dnr.state.wi.us

David -

These people
called last week
about the
Deer 2000 rule,
for your records.

CF

Support Deer 2000

Chuck Matyska, Cecil

Opposed to Deer 2000

not opposed to 15-day deer hunt

Steve Zignego, Milw.

Ora Mason Chilton

Oppose Deer 2000 rule

David + Diane Beck

Stunt event

Lisa + Benjamin Beck

Opposed to Dec. deer hunt

Tom + Jan Paulson

Ladysmith ~~opposed~~

Elizabeth Icks

Cable, WI

no

Jim Greenwood, Skier
Two Rivers opposed to Deer 2000

Jerry Wagner support Deer 2000
proposal

Ronald Miller, Dane, Support
rule

Joel Brennan
414-476-2002
cell 414-708-5635

Mary Huchan, Manitowish
waters
opposed to Deer 2000

Mary Schwister, Pewaukee
opposed

Marty Cooper Wasaukee opposed

John Oefstreichner Yes
Sheboygan

Larry Dorich opposed
Rhinelander

Tiane Christ - Wausaukee

Against ^{Deer} 2000 proposal

- Joyce Smith, Eau Claire
- Mr. Erdman, Mountain WI
- Chelsea Klauer, Jefferson
Helenville Hittoppers
- Doug Schawnz
Presque Isle, 54557 - Snowbunnies
- Jim Kaul, Grafton ▲

In favor: Tom McCartan,
of Deer 2000 Menomonee Falls
his first love is hunting.

Kelly Christianson ^{opposed to}
Deer 2000

Judy Leuth ^{ditto}
Manomette Cnty

Sharon Flynn Lakewood ^{Opposed to}
business owner ^{Deer 2000}

Opposed to Deer 2000 rule
We XX ski \$400 in Eagle River
Rob Richards - Chicago Magazine
Skidare, Ill.

Paul,

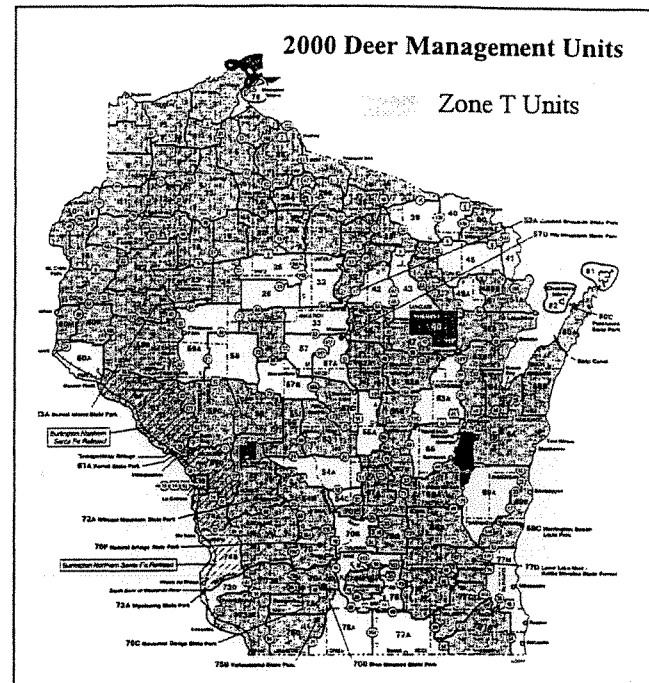
Additional Info. Re:

Deer 2000 that you
may find helpful.

Please contact me if
you have any questions.

WDNR Deer 2000 Hearing Comments and Related Information on December Gun Season

- **Accidents** - There were no reported hunter / winter recreationist accidents
- **Hunting Pressure** - Regional biologists and wardens reported low to moderate hunting pressure
- **Trail Closures** - State Trails were open, however there were cases of County Trail closings
- **Economic Impact** - Of the 695 attendees and 358 public comments, the Department only received two public comments during the December 2000 public hearings reporting a loss of business due to the Zone T season.
- **Trail Grooming Conflicts** - Only one report was received of trails opening late due to the Zone T
- **Trail Degradation** - Two public comments were made regarding hunters ruining groomed ski trails with ATVs
- **Trail Openings** -
 - Vilas, Oneida, Marinette, and Florence Counties: Avg. Dec. 16 - Dec. 20
 - North of Hwy. 10 and south of Hwy. 8: Avg. Late December
- **Weather Conditions** -
 - North of Hwy. 8: 2 out of every 7 years provides adequate snow for opening snowmobile trails
 - South of Hwy 8. & North of Hwy. 54: 1 out of every 7 years provides adequate snow for trail opening
- **Cooperation** -
 - For years muzzleloader hunters have hunted into December with no reported conflicts between user groups.
 - Archers have shared the woods for the entire month of December without conflict.
 - Small Game hunters, deer hunters, waterfowl hunters, hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists have shared the fall woods and countryside for decades.
 - No user group has exclusive rights to any one season or resource in the state of Wisconsin. Cross-country skiers and snowmobilers share the woods. Fishermen, skiers, and sailboats share the water. Through cooperation we do not anticipate 4 days of gun hunting in December will result in any added conflict or loss.





Deer 2000 Design Team

Dave Ladd, Chairman
Dodgeville

Les Strunk - Vice Chairman
Oconomowoc

Kurt Thiede - Coordinator
Madison

Jerry Aulik
Irma

Norm Blohm
Seymour

Charles Blood
Richland Center

Jim Cahill
Oshkosh

Raleigh Fox
Iron River

Allan Gerber
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Harold Grandaw
Peshigo

Mark Houslet
Oxford

Allen Jacobson
Hixton

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Cecil

Maynard Kuehl
Kewaunee

Marlin Laidlaw
Marshfield

David Nowak
Fredonia

Steve Oestreich
Harshaw

Glen Ogle
Medford

Joe Pozarski
Rhineland

Ohne Raasch
Lake Mills

Dennis Roehrborn
Plymouth

Herb Schotz
Irma

Gary Severson
West Salem

Dan Trainer
Stevens Point

George Wand
Gratiot

November 16, 2001

Subject: Deer 2000 Hunting Rule Update

Dear Deer 2000 Participant:

The Deer 2000 hunting season rule (clearinghouse rule 00-154) is currently being reviewed by the Joint Committee on Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR; see attached list of legislative members). The Assembly Natural Resources Committee objected to 4 items in the proposed rule. If the rule objections are not acted on in December by JCRAR, legislative review could extend through the next 3 years, suspending implementation until parts of the rule have expired. The JCRAR has not yet scheduled a meeting for December. If you have concerns about this, you can contact your legislators and/or the JCRAR members. Please read on for background information.

Assembly Natural Resources Committee Objections

This committee objected to the following rule components:

- 1) **They objected to the Deer 2000 mid-December, 4-day, antlerless deer gun season with harvest limited by permits.** This season was proposed to give more opportunity to hunters, encourage increased harvests of antlerless deer, and give hunters a last chance to avoid a Zone T hunt the following year. This is a time of year when many landowners will let hunters on their land to harvest antlerless deer, following the 9-day gun season.
- 2) **They objected to the Deer 2000 timing of the October Zone T hunt for units with herd control needs.** The Deer 2000 proposed timing would be the weekend after the pheasant season opener every year, which would be on the weekend of the southern teacher's convention about half the time and be a week earlier about half the time...always starting the Thursday closest to October 22. This allows for a consistent date for rules and causes less conflict with archers hunting the rut in some years. The objection will mean that the youth gun hunt will be on a different weekend than the Zone T gun hunt in some years...on consecutive weekends.
- 3) **They objected to the Deer 2000 extension of the early archery season by 4 days.** This has been a compromise that was adopted by the Natural Resources Board for a number of years already to compensate archers for the 4-day Zone T hunt restrictions and to offer additional hunting opportunity at a time when no deer hunting had been allowed.
- 4) **They objected to the requirement of registering all deer in the unit of harvest or an adjacent unit.** We now have different rules for bucks and does, which are confusing. The Deer 2000 proposal makes buck registration the same as does. The proposed rule makes the most sense for getting the best data and least misinformation on unit of harvest. The objection would allow hunters to register gun (not bow) killed deer anywhere in the state.

Honoring Deer 2000's Incredible Public Involvement

I want to thank you for all the effort you put into the Deer 2000 process. This volunteer effort included almost 11,000 survey participants, an average of 140 meeting participants, 145 meetings, 20,000 hours, and 160,000 miles driven. We are proud of many of the recommendations that you helped forge. However, 4 of the recommendations may not be endorsed or voted down in the legislature for a couple years if the JCRAR does not act on them in December.

Opponents of the Deer 2000 Recommendations

Over a year ago, we brought your final Deer 2000 hunting season framework recommendations to the Natural Resources Board. These recommendations were meant to increase hunting opportunity for gun, archery, and muzzleloader hunters as well as increase deer harvests. (As you may know, our deer herd has grown tremendously since 1960, but our restrictive deer hunting seasons still reflect the low deer populations of 40 years ago.) Hearings were then held at 12 locations across Wisconsin.

The greatest opposition to the deer hunting season proposal came from snow recreationists who were concerned that longer gun and bow seasons would mean they couldn't get access to trails for marking, preparation and use for snowmobiling and skiing. They also claimed that gun hunting would thereby hurt the economy of the state by reducing snowmobiling activity, in particular. These recreationists depend on private lands for their trail loops. They do not want landowners and their guests to have the opportunity to decide to hunt, which could mean that they won't let trail users on their property until the hunt is done.

You can see in the attached flier that we heard few of these concerns from the 358 comments we received about the December gun deer hunt at and immediately following the 12 hearings.

Compromises Made Already

In response to the controversy, the Natural Resources Board made compromises including 1) shortening the extension of the late bow season from a closing date of the Sunday closest to January 15 to January 3 (now only 3 extra days), and 2) placing a 3-year sunset provision on the 4-day mid-December gun deer season (antlerless only). During the next 3 years, DNR pledges to evaluate impacts of the December gun season and to work with snowmobilers and landowners to try to resolve conflicts. The mid-December gun season would cease after 2004 unless the Natural Resources Board adopts another rule to make it permanent. If this happens, the legislature has another opportunity to review the rule and has another opportunity to object once the evaluation is complete.

Sharing the Woods and Fields

Our message through all these negotiations and compromises has been that we need to find a way to share the woods and fields. With limited resources and many recreationists, we cannot afford to allow any group to have exclusive use of the fields and woods at any time of the year. We cannot tell landowners that they cannot participate in their preferred recreational activity just because another group wants to use their land. Although we anticipate a few problems or conflicts, we need to find a way to share the outdoors in December.

I hope you have a safe and successful deer hunt this year.

Sincerely,



Dave Ladd
Chairman, Deer Management 2000 and Beyond



WISCONSIN CONSERVATION

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Dear Fellow Congress Members and Deer 2000 Participants,

We need your help! As you know the Deer 2000 process is now complete, but the implementation work is just beginning. We must not let all the hours and good recommendations be put on the shelf. We need to make sure they become part of Wisconsin's deer management program. Unfortunately we are already facing an effort to push aside Deer 2000 recommendations.

Deer 2000 season changes were advanced in administrative rule order WM-40-00. In addition to all the Deer 2000 meetings, DNR held 12 public hearings on the rule around the state. The Natural Resources Board (NRB) adopted WM-40-00 at their January 2001 meeting. After Board adoption, both the Assembly and Senate Natural Resources committees also held a public hearing on WM-40-00. At these hearings the snowmobile associations showed up in force. These committees in turn requested modifications for the NRB to consider. The NRB Lands committee met with the DNR and Conservation Congress leadership to consider the legislative recommendations, including a 16-day season and no December 4-day antlerless season. As a result, the NRB made four amendments to the original rule order which included a 3-year sunset date on the 4-day December season North of Hwy. 3 and ending the late bow season on January 3rd rather than the Sunday nearest January 15.

Despite these concessions, certain interest groups and legislators remain opposed to the rule order. Snowmobile interest groups claim that the December deer hunt will cause some sections of trails to close because private landowners will not allow snowmobile travel on their land until after the December season. Some legislators are pushing for a 16-day firearm season instead of the traditional 9-day season. These legislators believe that the 4-day December season is ineffective in deer herd management and that it will hurt businesses in northern Wisconsin due to loss of winter snowmobile recreation.

The Natural Resources Board and the Conservation Congress have attempted to work with the snowmobilers and the legislature to work out a compromise that all parties could live with. On October 24th, Natural Resources Board will meet in Neenah, the Board will offer their final compromise for the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources to consider. The NRB will be modifying WM-40-00 to treat the 4-day December hunt as an "experimental" season that will be evaluated after 3 years. This will allow everyone to gather facts on the deer season and snowmobile issues. If the Assembly Committee objects to this compromise, then the Deer 2000 rule order will be delayed and the deer season changes will not go into effect for the 2002-2003 deer hunting seasons. More importantly the rule would be forwarded to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules. At this point the rule could be delayed indefinitely or modified, as the Legislature would work to develop a bill relating to the deer season structure and other Deer 2000 recommendations.

You and our fellow conservation-minded citizens of this state who participated in Deer 2000 have put too much time and effort into this process to see our work dismantled and delayed by special interests who have not put the time and resources into understanding the complex issues associated with deer season frameworks. I suggest that this is not the time for personal agendas to get in the way of public desires.

I would ask each of you in the next few weeks to contact your district Representatives and Senators, as well as the members of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and let them know the following facts regarding the proposed December 4-Day antlerless gun season, which is the major area of disagreement amongst the Legislature, winter recreationists, the Conservation Congress, and the NRB:

1. **Access to Private Land** - The public identified access to private lands as one of the major, if not the most important issue facing the deer hunters and the herd in the state of Wisconsin. The Deer 2000 Herd Size committee looked closely at this issue after much discussion and research the Herd Size committee concluded that the 4-Day December antlerless season, following the regular 9-day gun season would best increase the opportunities for hunters to gain access to private lands. Landowners would have already had the chance to harvest deer on their properties and they would not have to worry about bucks being shot on their property. Landowners and hunters agreed this was the top rated alternative.
2. **Increased Opportunity for Gun Hunters** - Currently firearm hunters only have nine days to hunt in a state that is known across the nation and around the world for its hunting opportunities. All that Deer 2000 has recommended is an extra four days at a time of year that has little conflict with the peak seasons of other interest groups.
3. **Opportunity to Stay out of Special Herd Control Seasons** - By allowing hunters an extra opportunity to harvest antlerless deer in December it will allow units more opportunity to avoid special herd control hunts (which are often unpopular with hunters) in following years, by increasing the antlerless harvest.
4. **Public Support** - The timing of this permanent statewide antlerless deer gun season received the most support of the options presented (59% support and 28% oppose; supported in all regions of state) in the June Deer 2000 questionnaire.
5. **Sunset Compromise** - In order to address the concerns of critics to this expanded gun hunting opportunity, the Board has recommended that a 3-year sunset date be instituted statewide. This would allow the Department and the Board to analyze the hunt's effectiveness and document any controversy or conflict that may develop with other user groups. We have indicated Congress support for this approach.
6. **Limited Conflict** - Last year's hunt provided an example of how snowmobilers and gun hunters could co-exist across Wisconsin when the state experienced an unusually early and abundant snowfall. It wasn't until the season was being proposed as becoming permanent did the complaints of conflict and trail closures surface. In addition, by outlining a process for registering complaints experienced during the season, the Department and the NRB will effectively be able to analyze the existence of any conflict. We feel the two sports can co-exist as archery, muzzleloader deer hunting, and snowmobiling have done for years.

I've attached sheets that will identify who to contact in your district and on the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources. Thank you in advance for your continued support. Dave and I will continue to keep you informed as the Administrative Rule process proceeds.

Sincerely,



Steve Oestreicher, Chair
Wisconsin Conservation Congress



Dave Ladd, Chair
Deer 2000 and Beyond

The Country Today - Editorial - 01/02/02

Simplify Wisconsin hunting seasons

By Scott Schultz

Assistant Editor

Let's see if we have this right. If you're hunting in a Zone T area during a special Zone T hunt, you may harvest an antlerless deer and tag it with either your gun deer tag or a bonus tag or an archery deer tag. And, if you harvest one with a bow and arrow during the archery season, you also may use any of your available tags; in either case leaving you with the possibility of not leaving your gun deer tag available for harvesting a deer with antlers of 3 inches or more (which still could make it OK to hunt during the gun deer season, because you still could use any bonus tags that you might have).

Factor in your hunter's choice permit -- don't forget to take your card with you -- and you have a... well, you have a confusing mess.

Wisconsin's deer hunting situation is quickly sliding to the level of being little more than a maze in the eyes of the average citizen. Most hunters no longer have a real grasp on what tags they may use in a particular harvest situation. Some have difficulty remembering which season is open when and where and for what.

And, don't even get us started on whether we think there is any scientific accuracy involved in deer counts or rhyme or reason for the establishment of Zone T hunts and issuance of bonus permits.

Somewhere out there is a wildlife manager who's saying, "It's a simple system; we've put it all down in black and white for you to read." What that person isn't seeing is that they've had "on the job training" of sorts -- because they work daily with deer harvest issues, the system sort of "grew" on them. The average citizen, meanwhile, only has time to occasionally think about such matters -- sometimes just weeks or days or hours before heading into the woods.

It's just becoming too confusing.

If there's any doubt about confusion, ask the family of a Stanley woman who was killed in the week after the "regular" nine-day gun deer season. She made the mistake of wearing a white hat while going for a walk with her dog in a wooded area near her home. A deer hunter mistook the hat for a deer's tail and shot her.

That incident occurred during the muzzleloader deer hunt in that week following the regular gun deer season and the hunter was using a muzzleloader.

Family members have said she certainly would have worn a blaze orange cap on that walk had she only realized that there was a muzzleloader hunt going on in Wisconsin then.

Fortunately, most confusion about the hunts doesn't lead to anything nearly as tragic. But, that is about the most graphic example of how, unless you're an avid student of Wisconsin hunting regulations, confusion reigns supreme when it comes to controlling the state's deer population.

Now, there's talk of extending the gun deer season into December and adding even more twists to when and where antlerless deer may be harvested.

We don't need more added on to an already-discombobulated system. In a carpenter's terminology, we've already created a "cobble job" system -- with each addition creating odd twists and turns onto once was a nice and simple-looking "building."

Granted, hunters to some extent have brought the system onto themselves. Bow hunters want a separate season during the rut and muzzleloader hunters want consideration of a "wilderness-style" hunt. Anyone who has hunted with bow and arrow knows that their hunt is pretty much over once hundreds of thousands of gun-toting hunters enter the woods. That's understandable.

But start adding in the likes of the Zone T hunts and a thoroughly confusing tag system quickly makes what once seemed so simple anything but that.

We challenge conservationists throughout Wisconsin to scrap the entire deer hunting system as we know it and devise a clean, clear-cut system that everyone can understand.

It would help if hunters and wildlife managers also stopped digging in their heels where deer population numbers are involved. It's obvious to many that the numbers aren't as high as the "official" state count would suggest and not as low as many hunters would believe. Find a counting system that works and many of the problems that we're addressing would take care of themselves.

While we're at it, let's not stop with deer hunting. Let's do the same with hunts for other species -- waterfowl hunters who are close to abandoning the sport because they can't keep track of when the season is open might appreciate that. It would also be nice to have more statewide uniform size and bag limits for fish, especially trout.

The wildlife conservation world keeps wondering what would happen to animal populations were it not for hunters. Give hunters too much more to be confused and frustrated about, and we'll find that answer much sooner than expected.

(END)