

Kim Stolfer

From: PA Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs [pfsc@pa.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2007 3:15 PM
To: PFSC
Subject: PGC & Deer Management Audit Request

FYI: The following letter was sent to the Legislators.

Since there has been so much controversy and accusations about the PGC's Deer Management Program and the Data used for such, we felt it was time to call for an independent audit of the process and data. We are asking the Legislature to implement the audit, and refrain from legislative changes to the commission and wildlife management until such audit is concluded. As you will see by the signatures, we were joined by many other sportsmen & conservation organizations in support of this effort. Please contact your representative and senator and ask them to support this effort.

mz

5-10-07

Dear Representative,

At this critical time in the history of wildlife management in Pennsylvania, our organizations join you in your desire to better understand how decisions are being made by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. While the different parties interested in this topic may disagree about the goals and direction of Pennsylvania's deer management program, we can all agree that natural resource management decision-making should be made in the public eye and informed by science rather than emotion.

To that end, we are asking you and your colleagues to resist the temptation to vote on bills that would legislatively change the structure of the commission or the current deer management program, or legislate wildlife seasons and bag limits. Instead, we suggest that you call for a transparent examination of the methods and data used by the Game Commission to measure and make decisions on harvest reports and the three factors of habitat condition, deer health, and deer-human conflicts.

According to PGC Executive Director Roe, the PGC plans to roll out an educational program by early September that will be presented at public meetings to explain their methods of producing harvest data, determining habitat & deer health, and setting doe allocations. By examining this information in public forums, along with an independent review provided by the legislature, you would be able to be more informed as you decide whether to propose any legislative solutions.

We also suggest expanding this analysis to the field to examine actual habitat conditions on Game Lands and other representative properties within select Wildlife Management Units so that legislators and the public can better understand deer densities and habitat conditions. We strongly recommend that you take the time and attend at least one habitat tour provided by the PGC or other habitat groups this summer to become better educated.

Good public policy requires that the public have the opportunity to examine the methods and techniques which underlie decisions. Without an understanding of and faith in the process, skeptics will always be able to question the validity of certain decisions. The sportsmen and conservationists among our memberships would welcome the chance to join you in an open analysis of the science behind the Game Commission's decision-making.

Sincerely,

Melody Zullinger

4/26/2009

Executive Director
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

Timothy D. Schaeffer
Executive Director
Audubon Pennsylvania

PA Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation
Don Heckman, Exec. Officer

CNX Land Resources Don (Consol Energy)
Dennis Fredericks, Manager, Conservation Properties & Activities

United Bowhunters of PA
Wes Waldron, President

Ecosystem Management Project
Bryon Shissler

PA Rifle & Pistol Assoc.
Jack Lee, President

Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Matt Ehrhart

PA Sportsmen's Assoc
Harry Schneider, Chairman

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future
John Hanger, President & CEO

Allegheny Co. Sportsmen's League
Mike Maranche, President

PA Landscape & Nursery Products
Chad Forcey, Director of Government Relations

Sierra Club, PA Chapter
Jeff Schmidt, Director

Pheasants Forever
Shon Robbins, Wildlife Biologist

Ruffed Grouse Society
Mark Banker, Senior Biologist

PA Chapters (7) of Safari Club International
Craig Kauffman

Pennsylvania Grange
Betsy Huber, Grange Master

cc: All members of House & Senate
Carl Roe, PGC Executive Director

4/26/2009

PGC Commissioners
Outdoor Media

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Groups Urge House Committee to Look Before Leaping to Make Fundamental Changes at the Game Commission and in Wildlife Management Programs

Harrisburg, Pa. (May 8, 2007) – Hunting, agriculture, land management and environmental groups urged the House Game and Fisheries Committee to do an independent evaluation of Pennsylvania’s Deer Management Program before making wholesale changes in the structure of the Game Commission.

The groups made their comments in a letter to Committee Majority Chairman Edward G. Staback (D-Lackawanna) and Minority Chair Sam Rohrer (R-Berks). The Committee is set to meet Wednesday on legislation that would cut the terms of commissioners serving on the Game Commission board in half.

“We are asking the House Game and Fisheries Committee to resist the temptation to vote on bills that would change the fundamental structure of the Commission or the current deer management program without first doing an independent evaluation of Pennsylvania’s Deer Management Program,” said Melody Zullinger, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs, Inc., “At a March hearing, both the Majority and Minority Chairs of the Committee called for an independent evaluation of the methods and data used by the Game Commission to measure and make decisions that lead to setting hunting license limits. We think they should follow through on that recommendation before voting on any legislative changes.”

The Game Commission uses three factors to determine the number of hunting licenses and bag limits each season—habitat condition, deer health and deer-human conflicts.

“We agree the Game Commission is using the right factors, but good public policy requires the public have the opportunity to examine the methods and techniques which underlie their decisions,” said Timothy D. Schaeffer, PhD, Executive Director of Pennsylvania Audubon, a state office of the National Audubon Society. “Without an understanding of and faith in the process, skeptics will always be able to question the validity of certain decisions.”

The groups expressed support for an initiative by the Game Commission to hold a series of public meetings across the state in September to explain its methods of producing harvest data, determining habitat and deer herd health and setting doe license allocations.

“By examining the Game Commission information in public forums, along with following through on the suggestion for an independent review of the process and data used in the Deer Management Program by the General Assembly, we would all be in a much better position to suggest more effective solutions,” said Zullinger.

In addition to the letter, Dr. Schaeffer applauded the Game Commission for adhering to the recommendations of its biologists by approving their seasons and bag limits at the April Commission meeting.

“We also suggest the Game Commission and legislators go into the field to examine actual habitat conditions on Game Lands and other representative properties so both the public and House and Senate members have a first-hand view of habitat conditions,” said Dr. Schaeffer. “We also encourage the Committee to look at the recent study completed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources which shows widespread lack of forest regeneration due to deer over-browsing.”

The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council have sent separate letters raising similar concerns.

Contact:

Melody Zullinger

Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

717-232-3480

info@pfsc.org

or

Dr. Timothy Schaeffer

Pennsylvania Audubon

717-213-6880

717-919-1826 (cell)

tschaeffer@audubon.org

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