

Winter Newsletter 2010

Deer Hunting 2010, what will it be?

I believe this is the first time that I can remember that we have no idea what the fall deer season will be. Basically, the DNR ignored comments from hunters about the size of the size of the deer herd. They were totally wrong in their estimates of the size of the herd. Those of you get the Wisconsin Outdoor News probably noticed an article about a new group that was formed because of comments from the Natural Resources Board and the DNR. The comments included (1) Sharpshooters shooting deer over bait; (2) Use of helicopters to shoot deer; and (3) Shooting deer on private land.

The DNR is also considering a marketing firm to educate the public about CWD and its possibilities. Education of hunters and the non-hunting public would be a great idea but--. Do you remember an old slogan, "What if they gave a war and No One showed up"? I think this would be the same thing, if the DNR sponsors an education program on deer management would any one believe it? The credibility of the DNR has taken a massive hit in the last few years. It will take many years to repair the damage.

There are numbers of state politicians that want to get involved in the deer management problem. This could be probably a very negative move. If the legislature gets involved, it might for a while follow what hunters want. In a few years they will follow the money, (Milwaukee and Madison), the hunters could be ignored.

Education about deer and all of our natural resources should be taught in the school system and should be mandatory. I suggest that you go on the internet and check out River Crossing Charter School and what they have done.

The number of rifle deer hunting license sales dropped 14% in 2009. I am hoping that this will be a wake up call to the DNR. This will not only reduce the money from licenses lost but it will reduce the money that the U. S. Federal Wildlife sends to Wisconsin. The amount of money that is sent to the states is pro-rated by license sales. This year and next year, there will be an above normal amount of money collected from PR funds. The reason is many people were afraid that President Obama would try to restrict firearms and ammunition. This money flow is slowing down. There will be programs that will be cut in the future.

CAMO Coalition

"As our state becomes increasingly populated and more urbanized, the impact of hunters and anglers is declining. Our hunting and fishing heritage is not being passed on to the next generations. The legislative power base is shifting from rural areas to cities and suburbs, and every year laws are being made that threaten our natural resources. Recent examples have been the raiding of the habitat stamp funds and the threatened loss of public hunting, fishing and trapping access on Stewardship Lands.

What can you do to make sure Wisconsin remains one of the best places to hunt and fish?"

This quotation is from the CAMO Coalition's web page. Its intent is to organize sportsmen and women to act quickly if there is issue affecting wildlife management or outdoor recreation interests. Membership is free. The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation received a grant that was used to create this coalition. It is necessary for us to be contacted about laws and rulings that might impact us. Sometimes there are under the table deals are made that would be blocked if they were known in time. This web page is just starting so sign up and keep informed.

Hunter Education and the future

Wisconsin is losing hunters, less people are buying less licenses and it looks like it will continue. It is highly probable that in 2010, there will be a drop in license sales. Hunters are frustrated with not seeing any deer, the arrogant attitude of the DNR, and concern of the conflicting numbers of all deer, bear and wolves as reported by the DNR. When one of these frustrated hunters quits, this is bad. If the hunter is a parent, this usually means that this youth will probably not hunt either. We have lost 2 or more hunters. Are we recruiting new hunters in our sport? Probably not.

Last fall, we tried to put ourselves in some one else's shoes; the person that has never touched a gun. The person that does not know anything about hunting or wild life management or the outdoors will probably not hunt. Do they learn enough in the class to get them interested in buying a license? Probably not.

Hunter Education classes and content will not change; there is a continuous push to spend less time for these classes. What is the major reason that these potential hunters do not continue and become hunters after they graduate from a Hunter Education Course? The biggest reason seems to be that they are not satisfied with the amount of actual shooting and training with firearms they receive. They do not get high quality firearms instruction; they do not have a chance to try various guns, actions and calibers before they spend a lot of money on equipment and clothing.

Studies from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the National Shooting Sports Foundation suggest that the potential for recruiting and retaining new shooters is a very large market. If these people that are interested enough to try shooting, some of them will become hunters. Wisconsin needs a low cost, fun program for shooting.

The State organization of Wisconsin Deerhunters, Inc. is organized as a 501C3, non-profit organization. As such we must have some projects. In the past years, the Deerhunters have contributed for sending local teams to compete in National air rifle activities. These programs are established and will continue in the future. Other organizations are helping with travel expenses.