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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

RODNEY A. STOKES
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: December 12, 2011

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Mentored Youth Hunting Program
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 2 of 2012
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage wild animals in this state.

Discussion and Background:

In 2011, the Michigan Legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law, two Public Acts (PA) (109 and 120) that charged the Natural Resources Commission with establishing a mentored youth hunting program. The legislation allows youths, under the age of 10, to participate in hunting provided that they do so only accompanied by an eligible mentor, possess the mentored youth hunting license, and hunt in conformance with the program being proposed by this amendment.

Shortly after the passage of PAs 109 and 120, Natural Resources Commission Chair, Timothy Nichols called for and established the Mentored Youth Hunting Workgroup (Workgroup) to formulate recommendations for the Commission on mentored youth hunting. The Workgroup, chaired by Commissioner John Matonich, included representatives from a number of hunting and hunter safety organizations who met between August and November of 2011 to assemble those recommendations. Additionally, several of those organizations were solely represented by youth.

The members of the Workgroup were of the opinion that the program should be as simple as possible to understand and apply, which is reflected in this amendment. The requirements for mentored youth hunting are few: adhere to the statutory eligibility established for the mentor; establish the number of hunting devices for each mentor/mentored youth group; and maintain an arm's length distance when a mentored youth is in possession of a firearm.

The Workgroup also extensively discussed how to construct regulatory language that would require that a hunting device used by a mentored youth be adequately fitted to that youth. In recognition of that difficulty, the Workgroup recommends establishing a regulation requiring a mentored youth to demonstrate the safety features of the hunting device they are possessing.

The Workgroup also recommends allowing the deer kill tags issued in conjunction with the mentored youth hunting license be valid for a deer of either sex.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 2 of 2012

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by sections 40107 and 40113a of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40107 and 324.40113a, it is ordered that effective February 10, 2012, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

2.14 Mentored youth hunting program; definition, eligibility; requirements.

Sec. 2.14 (1) The mentored youth hunting program is established in accordance with MCL 324.43517.

(2) As used in this section, "hunting device" means a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow that may be lawfully used and possessed during the open season for the game species being hunted.

(3) A person may be eligible to participate as a mentor in the mentored youth hunting program only if all of the following apply:

(a) A mentor shall be at least 21 years of age.

(b) A mentor shall possess a valid license to hunt, other than an apprentice license.

(c) A mentor shall demonstrate proof of previous hunting experience in the form of a previous hunting license, other than an apprentice license, or a certificate of completion for hunter safety training issued to that individual by this state, another state, a province of Canada, or another country.

(d) A mentor shall ensure that any hunting device possessed by a mentored youth is sized appropriately to fit the physical abilities of the mentored youth.

(e) The mentor shall maintain no more than an arm's length distance from a mentored youth at all times that the mentored youth is in possession of a hunting device.

(4) A person less than 10 years old may lawfully possess a mentored youth hunting license and may hunt with a mentor only if all of the following apply:

(a) The mentored youth shall demonstrate, at the request of any law enforcement officer, the operation of their hunting device's safety features, as applicable.

(5) Not more than two hunting devices may be possessed by a mentor and mentored youth (or youths) while hunting.

(6) A deer kill tag issued under the mentored youth hunting license shall be valid for a deer of either sex.

Issued on this 9th day of February, 2012.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Timothy L. Nichols, Chairman

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Rodney A. Stokes
Director