

## **APPENDIX B: Summary of Comments from the Public Issue Scoping Meetings (Feb. and Mar. of 2009)**

In February and March of 2009, the MUCC and the DNR hosted eight public meetings throughout the state to discuss the development of a deer management plan for Michigan. Each meeting consisted of two sessions: an afternoon session with individuals and representatives of groups identified as critical stakeholders by local DNR and MUCC staff; and an evening session open to the public. The purpose of the meetings was to provide the public with an opportunity to identify important issues and express opinions regarding deer and deer management in Michigan. Issues and opinions were used to generate discussion topics for the DAT and were considered for inclusion in the Deer Management Plan.

### **Cadillac, February 17, 2009**

Afternoon session- 9 Organizations

- Improve habitat management on public lands for deer food and cover
- Population reductions on agriculture land, development of adequate population estimates, improve sex/age ratios
- Base management units ecologically by habitat and land use
- Define responsible hunters by those who hunt does
- Allow recreational feeding and recreational baiting, compensate agriculture community for deer damage done to crops

Evening session- 25 Participants

- Give wildlife managers an increased role and profile in forest management decisions
- Need for improved communication and relationships between sportsmen, land owners and wildlife managers
- Increase public understanding on harvesting does
- Manage against disease spread, more control over captive animals
- Base deer management units on ecosystems
- One buck per season
- Mandatory deer check
- Wildlife enthusiasts hurt by bait ban
- Restoration of QDM process based on successes experienced to date

### **Midland, February 17, 2009**

Afternoon session- 10 organizations

- Herd management needs focused on reducing populations in agriculture areas
- DNR and agriculture industry need to work to match up landowners with hunters
- Baiting regulations need to be defined better. Enforcement should be reasonable
- More news articles, better DNR website, more user friendly DNR, more neutral sources of information to public
- More antlerless licenses for private land

- Farm Bureau polices need to support deer management
- License fee increase is needed
- Healthy deer herd is a priority
- Survey the public to find out priorities

Evening session- 45 participants

- Need to improve sex ratios
- Harvest pressure is too heavy on bucks, too light on antlerless deer
- Low deer population in UP
- Need to reduce herd in agriculture areas
- CWD containment should be a priority
- Youth hunt should be for antlerless deer only
- Protect young bucks, antler point restrictions, one deer per season
- Youth hunt needs to be regulated: age limit, four point minimum
- Require medical form for crossbow
- More restrictions on younger deer, button bucks should be protected
- No antler point restrictions on first buck
- Mandatory tele-check
- Crossbows should be legal during archery season
- More gun hunting days and longer, earlier muzzle loader season
- Early antlerless season is too early
- No coyote hunting during deer season
- Keep bait ban
- Get rid of bait ban
- Baiting is the same as using a food plot
- Crop damage is excessive
- More enforcement, they are still selling bait in the LP
- Implement QDM principles by habitat type and herd size instead of DMUs
- No clear cutting, leave some habitat in clear cuts
- More effort towards education of hunters and non-hunters
- Private deer farms need more regulations

**Crystal Falls, February 17, 2009**

Afternoon session- 8 organizations

- Deer yards are in bad condition
- Deer populations are negatively impacting forest regeneration
- Educate private landowners on habitat management
- Provide incentives for good habitat management
- State forests do not provide adequate deer yards since logging practices have changed. Need planning at the landscape level
- Deer population is too high for this region- reflected by condition of deer yards
- Concerned with how many are deer are being fed
- Better make up of buck populations (numbers and ages)

- DNR should consider hunter success rates
- Have mandatory deer check
- DMUs are too large
- Renew supplemental feeding, maintain feeding in UP for harsh winters
- Supplemental feeding may contribute to overpopulation
- Let biologists manage the deer herd
- Farm Service Agencies and NRCS application process and certification are overzealous- forest stewardship needs to be modernized
- Deer Range Improvement Project(DRIP)-need new forests, better winter habitat
- Only one deer license per hunter- either buck or antlerless
- CFA lands should be considered private in regards to antlerless licenses
- DMAP permits were set up for farmers but don't allow for foresters
- Implement earn-a-buck regulations to encourage people to shoot does
- Should implement Quality Deer Management
- One buck tag per hunter. Combo tag encourages illegal use of other peoples tags
- Too many car/deer collisions
- Don't raise license fees
- Deer increase property value, quality hunting will increase value even more
- Local hunters spend a lot on equipment, land, bait and vehicles
- Poor quality of herd is decreasing license sales, we are not the best hunting state
- Should increase license fees – they are lower than other states
- DNR staff need education too-work with media
- Need better access to private land. CFA land is a great opportunity
- Poor representation for this area-DNR should form a team to meet with locals
- Use snow zone charts to develop deer management units
- Focus on scientific management
- Balance social concerns with science
- Sell a Conservation License to raise money to maintain roads like Montana
- Remember that hunting and fishing pay for things, not tax dollars

#### Evening session, 33 Participants

- One buck per season, back to original buck license, original combo license
- Keep Antler Point Restrictions (APR) as they are good for age structure
- Limit tags sold to private land owners
- One buck per person state wide on public lands or limit tags by lottery
- Current regulations ruining experience
- 2008 combo license works, one deer of hunters choice
- Regulations should not be statewide
- Old two buck system worked
- New buck regulations to protect yearlings
- Eliminate baiting for rifle season
- Does only during archery and bucks during rifle
- Do away with youth hunt, or let them shoot does
- Deer season is too long

- Flip-flop bow/muzzleloader season each year
- Youth hunt is only way to get a buck
- Archery season- buck or doe, shorten bow season
- Support youth hunt- we need the youth to hunt in the future
- Youth hunt should only get does
- New technology helps retain older bow hunters, age 62 or 65 can use a crossbow
- Need more information on how populations are measured
- We are over-harvesting bucks -- bad sex ratios, get more deer and older deer
- Not enough deer – get rid of doe season, too many young being harvested
- Sex ratio is fine but we need to increase age class diversity
- Limit buck kill to even out the sex ratio
- Use science to manage deer- not opinion
- Hard to age a deer properly while hunting
- DMU size is too large- need a lot of smaller units that reflect populations
- Feed deer in heavy snow areas but limit where baiting can occur
- Get rid of baiting and feeding
- Bring back supplemental feeding, eliminate baiting for gun hunting
- Baiting distracts from a quality hunt and allows for disease transmission
- Need to improve winter habitat
- Control wolves, coyotes and bear- we have more wolves than deer
- Trappers should be able to take wolves
- Need better access to CFA lands
- Review Law Division management structure
- Too many bucks killed during youth hunt, some illegally
- Slow response from DNR on baiting complaints
- Just want to enjoy nature and the natural resources- trophy hunting gives wrong impression to non-hunters
- Need to retain and attract hunters
- Stop baiting only in CWD areas
- Brow tine exception

### **Hillman, February 18, 2009**

Afternoon session- 8 organizations

- Manage for quality and healthy deer herd, bigger bucks and herd balance
- Size matters, hunters want bigger bucks and balanced sex ratio, reduce number of does
- Need a definition of what a healthy herd looks like
- Tourism is impacted by deer numbers, we want hunters to travel here
- Mandatory deer registration is too expensive
- Cattle and dairy industries are hurting because of bovine tuberculosis in deer
- Need for more and better educational efforts by DNR
- DNR should work with deer management co-ops
- Need to evaluate all aspects of the baiting ban

- Design DMUs to better impact harvest
- Need to encourage antlerless hunting
- Enforce baiting ban
- Continue early and late antlerless seasons
- Move opening day of firearm season to a Saturday
- Increase hunter access to private lands
- Deer plan and regulations should be simple and consistent
- DNR does not see themselves as hunter/angler supported- they see a broader mission
- The resource is the first priority
- Stay ahead of deer diseases, human health and safety is important
- Need better deer distribution
- Need better communication from DNR on what they are doing
- DNR and Department of Agriculture need to work together
- Whoever pays DNR salaries should get a say in management efforts
- Red pine forests manage re-growth
- Consider biodiversity and ecology when managing deer
- Deer season should be the biggest week of the year - like it used to be

#### Evening session- 24 participants

- The DNR wants to eradicate deer.
- The baiting ban has had a big effect on small businesses in this area
- Need more enforcement of baiting/feeding ban. Farmers leave hay to attract deer
- Baiting herds deer - but winter feeding does too
- No difference between a food plot and a bait pile
- Supports baiting ban- need to communicate better about baiting rules
- Against baiting ban- CWD is a long ways away
- We don't see deer when we don't bait. Limit baiting instead of ending it
- Need better communication between the people and DNR
- There is a mistrust of DNR - we can correct this by having more meetings
- DNR has lost touch with hunters- being upset with DNR may not be appropriate
- Face-to-face interaction with DNR is important
- CWD was found in only one deer, how much money is being spent testing
- Need to make sure we don't get CWD by enforcing regulations
- DNR is killing off the deer in non-TB areas
- Need information on how to age deer, safety education for the older population
- Sex ratios are out of whack
- We have poor population estimates
- Need to look at the healthy amount of deer for a habitat
- Poor quality deer herd means the State loses money
- Need to have population goals
- Need better access to private lands to shoot antlerless deer
- Cut too much forest at one time – not good for habitat
- Regions are too big to use as deer management units

- The NRC has become a political entity, need more access to the NRC

### **Kalamazoo, February 24, 2009**

Afternoon session- 11 Organizations

- Deer populations are too high in agriculture areas, deer herd reduction will increase deer quality including age/sex ratios
- Majority of deer are not easily accessible to hunting community
- Use of damage permits is not effective enough
- Deer Management Units should be based on science, biology and ecosystems
- Improve communication between managers and users
- Too many deer and too much development and fragmentation make habitat management difficult

Evening session- 30 Participants

- Too many deer in this area need. Hunters need additional controls
- DNR needs to collect more deer harvest data and should manage herd by size/age/sex ratios
- Need to create a “responsible hunters shoot antlerless deer” mentality
- Public needs to understand importance of disease control and the threat presented by confined animal operations
- Need better communication and educational opportunities between resource managers and citizens
- Deer Management Units should be based on ecology, habitat, land use and population levels
- There should be more incentives to harvest antlerless deer on private lands

### **Rochester, February 24, 2009**

Afternoon session-12 organizations

- Balance deer density with habitat and consider carrying capacity in each DMU
- Need accurate deer counts
- Balance culture v. carrying capacity
- Management must be science-based and include crop damage and disease control
- Anti-hunters adversely affecting our management
- Maintain hunting opportunity and expand late season hunt to benefit tourism
- Private habitat work on public land to improve habitat
- 450’ safety zone should not apply to bow hunters
- Educate hunters and change behavior through regulations
- DNR is influenced by special interest groups
- More transparency with the NRC
- More printed information and education material in local papers
- Get articles to clubs for them to print and distribute, give both sides of issues
- More public meetings
- Manage bovine tuberculosis in Shiawassee County

- Kensington park deer damage is a concern

Evening session- 74 participants

- Need for non-lethal methods to balance the deer herd
- Drivers are at risk- danger to citizens, destroying urban habitat and effects other species
- Killing deer is unnecessary, Kensington culling doesn't work- use non-lethal methods. Move urban deer to appropriate habitat
- Slower speed limits, better deer signage where deer are common
- Urban deer managed differently- hunting has been banned in Rochester for 30 years
- Streetlight reflectors are effective for deer/car accidents- more funding needed
- Need more access to NRC
- Private deer farms should be eliminated- supports hunting, but not private facilities
- Deer management information should be available to land owners and non-hunters
- Need to consider input from non-hunters during process
- Management should vary by region of the state, one size does not fit all
- Supports an early muzzle loader season and allowance of crossbows

**Newberry, March 2, 2009**

Afternoon session- 8 organizations

- Some deer yards browsed out
- Not so much habitat issues as it is weather
- It takes 200 years to replicate hemlock that has been cleared- poor winter habitat
- Need to have concise management goals, local issues need to be handled locally
- Wolves and coyotes spreading deer out
- Baiting increases disease transmission
- Feeding has created a population of welfare deer, started small- now everyone does it
- Feeding gives quality nutrients for deer
- No feeding, we want to hunt deer- not farm them, taking away instinct to yard
- Get rid of private deer farms- not enough staff to enforce regulations
- Hunting is important- tourism and nature are big
- Hunting helps reduce deer impact on agriculture
- People are trying to get crop damage permits for food plots
- DNR cannot help people as much now so work with consultants
- DRIP money should be used to buy winter land and pay for plantings in the EUP
- Work with U.S. Forest Service more deer management
- QDM helps- but is not what is needed
- Split DMU 049
- No one-size-fits-all strategies

- Youth hunt should only be antlerless
- Establish population goals
- Population density is not a problem in the EUP- it has been lower
- Maintain lower populations because of an increased snow belt
- Need better communication, use TV, newspaper, radio- few people have internet
- Keep an eye out for baiting/feeding violators

#### Evening session- 39 participants

- Make sure deer get fed on state and federal lands
- Habitat is being degraded by deer
- Paper companies should be helping the habitat- balance winter habitat with the herd
- 100% of the deer go to 16% of the land during the winter
- We need to be the premier hunting state again
- Manage wolf populations
- Against baiting, restrict it more
- Don't want to hunt unless we can bait
- Feeding is needed to keep population up- want to feed hay in winter for survival
- If we can't feed deer in winter - let people plant corn
- Need to improve winter habitat
- Can't plant Sugar Maple because of deer
- Regulations are for the deer's benefit
- There are places where feeding is necessary- hay increases nose-to-nose contact but silage bales work better to spread
- Want information on how license money is spent- should be used where they are bought
- DMUs are too large
- Need more mature deer
- Not very many deer on Sugar Island, deer will come back – they are tough
- Communication between DNR and Tribes
- People are getting tired of talking but not getting listened to, need more advance notice on DNR meetings- use the community calendar for local notices
- One deer per hunter, one buck per person
- Allow crossbows
- Get better information about harvest
- Should have regulations on what can be planted on public lands to keep invasives out
- Old combo license was better, create a new combo license
- Too many deer passing diseases around
- Need information to help people create better winter habitat
- Need landowner assistance from consultants to assist with forestry and wildlife

## **Lansing, March 3, 2009**

### Afternoon session- 9 Organizations

- Need to be concerned about disease issues
- Too many deer some places, too few in others (distribution problem)
- People buy licenses and not use them so DNR can not use license sales to judge populations
- Use dead deer on the side of the road as an indication of the population
- Not enough places to hunt and deer congregate in safe areas
- Too much private land and no access for most hunters
- Not enough public land in the southern part of the state
- Good hunting land is hard to find as liability issues, litter and ORV damage have ruined access
- DNR and hunters still promoting a buck mentality, need to emphasize antlerless deer harvest and look at the issues as economics and life style not just a recreational opportunity
- Hunters need to work together, not fight with each other, we need to be careful about what traditions we follow.
- There are many different definitions of “quality”
- Acceptance of antlerless hunting is increasing, but there is still some resistance to doe hunting
- Hunters don't have realistic expectations on what they should see out there
- A negative view towards deer is growing and must be changed
- Captive deer farms are not sufficiently regulated
- Oppose the baiting ban because it helped distribute deer-too much crop damage
- Less focus on hunter education and more on stewardship education
- Set regulations on 3 year cycles
- Need rules and regulations that promote fair chase
- Should have “earn-a-buck” or some similar regulation
- Regulations and restrictions must be supported by the people they impact
- Rotate seasons (bow, gun, muzzleloader)--hunt with guns early and bows later
- Natural Resources Commission system works too slow
- Too many deer, too much crop and vehicle damage
- Early antlerless season good for businesses
- Allow more bucks tags to provide more recreation
- Raise license fees \$5, charge out of state hunters more
- Trespass laws must protect landowners from liability
- Deer management co-ops work well as hunters work together and with the DNR
- Should be able to buy public antlerless licenses over the counter
- Use sound scientific management
- Consider economic impacts of deer
- Implement the deer management plan
- Create a larger DMU for southern Michigan

### Evening session- 20 Participants

- Reduce size of area affected by baiting ban
- Too many deer/vehicles collisions
- Make sure the DNR is self sustaining
- Too many deer in parks
- Balance herd with the habitat
- Go to QDM approach, need a better quality herd including older deer
- Management urban and suburban deer
- Biologists think Michigan's system is state of the art but need mandatory check
- Too much winter kill in the UP
- Quit killing button bucks
- Need earn-a-buck regulations
- Need a new combo license in the UP, what is not shot ends up being eaten by wolves Cross bow hunting for senior citizens
- Keep 2 buck limit, increase doe permits but not unlimited, too hard to get a doe permit. Mandatory deer check
- More deer check stations
- Hunter management rather than deer management
- Deer are important to people – DNR manages them for everyone
- Need a comprehensive habitat plan
- Habitat destruction in nature preserves
- Increase license fees and use more General Fund money--no problem paying more but spending needs to be transparent
- Hunter education in schools
- Close schools on Opening Day
- Provide better access to good deer hunting areas on private land
- Focus on hunter recruitment, lower the minimum age and continue apprentice program
- Use website for communication along with emails and news
- Use free fishing weekend model to promote small game hunting to kids
- Use science to explain and address issues, more involvement with local biologists
- Support/promote deer management co-ops as they help people work together