

APPENDIX G: Summary of Comments from the Draft Deer Management Plan Public Meetings (Feb. and Mar. of 2010)

In February and March of 2010, the DNRE hosted eight public meetings throughout the state to take comments on the draft Deer Management Plan. Each meeting consisted of a short formal presentation describing the process that had been used to develop the draft version of the plan and a brief description of the plan followed by an opportunity for attendees to make comments regarding the plan. Comments were used to help complete the next version of the Deer Management Plan.

Kalamazoo, February 23, 2010- 14 attendees

- Concerned about length of seasons and dates not mentioned in plan
- Regional management units are too large
- Concerned about when changes from plan will go into effect
- The Commissioners have authority over the DNRE, not the public
- Wondered who will put the regional advisory teams together, and if those groups would slow down the changes that can be implemented from the plan
- Concerned about the start of the five year plan review
- The department wants the deer herd reduced but limits hunters to five does
- Frustrated with increase in doe tag price
- As sportsmen, we want to know how we can help fund the program
- Should implement harvesting a doe before a buck
- Private landowners are not being stopped from mandating their own regulations such as harvesting a doe before a buck. Landowners need to allow hunters on their property
- Not a fan of the early doe season, would like to see the season moved to January
- Wondered if the plan will address Quality Deer Management
- Poaching should be referenced in the plan. Higher fines, penalties and more enforcement
- Would like to see a target population of deer per square mile
- Goals were set in 2005 for each DMU, but they were never implemented
- Concerned about setting deer population goals on private lands
- People don't hunt as much because they do not have people to give the venison to
- Lower doe license fees and people can donate their meat
- I have never been asked for money – how much money gets to Sportsmen Against Hunger?
- Worried about having a quality deer plan with the closing of deer check stations decreasing the quality of the data collected, and how the budget may impact the implementation of the plan
- Not satisfied with current check system
- Want to know how to help collect data if part of a co-op
- Processors should be used to collect deer data
- Frustrated with the holdup for license fee increase
- Not satisfied with the direction the plan is taking

- Michigan has the same number of bucks it has had, but more hunters
- Will buck changes be made through education or regulations
- Concerned about the NRC adopting the plan because none of this will happen if they don't, and if we are on the same page as the NRC with this plan
- Questioned if it was the Commissioners who wanted the plan created
- We can help the DNRE by getting people to bring their deer into the check stations
- Concerned about CWD and baiting
- There is not compliance because hunters are 100 percent sure there is no CWD
- Concerned about what will happen if the goals in the plan are not met
- Would like to be able to follow the changes and implementations as they are occurring, as well as follow the regional advisory teams

Novi, February 25, 2010- 22 attendees)

- Concerned about techniques used to manage deer
- Wondered how the regions will be created
- Concerned about habitat work occurring on public lands or if there will be opportunities for helping deer on private property
- Concerned about obtaining deer yards that are in poor condition
- Concerned about Michigan getting our share back of the Pittman-Robertson money
- Fines for poaching would make a good funding source
- There are no populations goals in the plan
- Wondered about the timeline for implementation
- DNRE needs to have enough tools to handle the high deer populations
- There are no bucks out there anymore
- Wonders if an operational plan will be created
- Wonders who deals with EHD, DNRE or the Department of Agriculture
- Concerned about the plan because of the diverse nature of Michigan
- Youth season and the bow season are too long
- Need a better plan for wildlife disease (TB area) and need to have another way to reduce disease other than just taking out deer
- Concerns about the plan not addressing anti-hunters
- The reduction of car/deer crashes – have the insurance companies come up with any suggestions to help with this situation
- The plan is a step in the right direction to improve the communication gap
- I am concerned that the numbers will be inflated if the DMUs are added together
- Page 33 of the plan – action 4 – this is all in the context of preventing disease. Does this mean you are going to ban baiting in the UP? Maintain programs and regulations not expand.
- Are we making deer become nocturnal? Should look at the science.
- Urban deer management needs to be addressed
- Glad to see DNR looking at a regional approach, the education program is priority
- Appreciate a strategic plan for guidance and that it will be reviewed every 5 years

- Comment about insurance companies contacting politicians but not the DNRE
- Bait ban – should have had public input first
- Use volunteers to save the DNRE money
- The plan is a step in the right direction
- There should be more than 3 regional groups, 7 would be good
- A person from each township could be invited to be on the regional deer advisory teams
- E-mail newsletter should be created
- Wondered what brought the plan together, and why it is occurring now
- Wonders if this plan will cause an increase in staff
- Would like smaller government, more volunteers are needed
- Shorten the seasons where needed
- Not all clubs have 100 deer per square mile
- Private property should be protected, private property owners should be able to get antlerless tags
- Considering page 21, second paragraph and page 22, second paragraph, section 4.2.1: youth hunt should be antlerless only
- Keep opening season November 15
- Increase fines for poaching
- Youth hunt is good, but not needed
- Stop youth hunt, wolves are a problem, seasons are too long, no baiting
- Predators need to be taken into account in the plan
- Northeast Michigan needs to cut down harvest. Would like to implement letting younger bucks go. Private landowners should have more help with habitat since over seventy percent of deer are harvested on private land. Offer incentives to have farmers have hunters on their land.
- Youth hunt comments: how many deer are annual killed in this hunt? Why are bucks being killed? Hunting with dad in the regular season is good enough.
- Regulate county by county, support antler restrictions, youth hunt should be does only, only one buck tag
- Cut down seasons, reduce permit prices, get rid of wolves, get rid of youth hunts in September, old timers know more than DNRE about keeping the herd around
- QDM rocks! Keep up the good work.
- Buck:doe ratio beyond repair, need antler restrictions, more doe tags, no baiting

Alpena, March 2, 2010- 92 attendees

- Deer Management Plan is a lot of words but says nothing
- DNR needs to speak to the regions it is addressing at meetings like this
- Disagrees with QDM – it's not supported by science. Mandatory Antler point restrictions are not good (2 comments)
- Forest management is important, key to deer management
- Too many deer along Thunder Bay River, Alpena Co.
- Encourage DNR to take a hard stance, make the tough decisions and stick to them
- Sad how much politics are involved in DNR regulations

- Farmers are extremely negatively affected by deer, crop damage in particular
- In TB area, give out-of-state hunters a fee break
- Have to work with elected officials to address deer numbers that are too high
- Compliments on the report, not all hunters have the same experiences with deer
- Protect button bucks, must put buck tag on it. Let little deer go.
- How do you get young folks to hunt if there are no deer
- RDATs get to partake with all the changes, concerned about how regular citizens can be on the team
- Report is good
- On federal and state land you don't see deer, they're nocturnal
- Hunter safety and education is important
- Long seasons put a lot of pressure on deer and changes their behavior
- Support antler point restrictions
- QDM works
- Disappointed in number of spikes coming through check stations
- Need more meetings and at a regional level, have meetings like this for RDATs
- Baiting needs to be re-implemented to see deer
- Make a higher fine for baiting
- Farmers need to fence their property if they have trouble
- DNRE should stay off private land
- Don't believe DNR deer estimates
- Deer management is done by private individuals, the state ruins all the public land
- Important to keep public informed, and updated. Need better communication (3 comments)
- Need to communicate Bovine TB testing results
- Would go to meetings once a week if there was input into local deer management
- Food plots are the same as baiting (3 comments)
- Food plots transmit disease and small amounts of baiting should be allowed
- If there is sound scientific evidence that baiting spreads disease we'd like to see it
- Baiting makes hunters lazy.
- DNRE should encourage natural habitat improvements that benefit other wildlife
- Deer aren't spread out because of baiting and feeding so making decisions about quotas is difficult
- Change the opener to a Saturday
- Put the plan in layman's terms so everyone can understand it
- What is the future of hunting by tribes?
- Incorporate a synopsis of the plan into hunter education program
- Want to protect bucks to get them into older age classes, baiting prevents this
- Need an antlerless license to be for does only
- Quota on doe licenses to keep harvest down (Presque Isle County)
- Against the youth season (4 comments)
- Need to have cooperation with neighbors to do better management (2 comments)
- DRIP fund – don't see habitat projects on private lands for deer improvements
- Can apply for DRIP reimbursement if they have improved their private land

- Hunter recruitment is out of DNRE's control. Declining hunters due to economy
- Baiting ban being lifted would help with recruitment (2 comments)
- Look at other states for guidance
- Wildlife Management Units – people with less deer are grouped together with those that have a ton of deer
- Wildlife Management Units are too big
- Scale of management and scale of statistics are out of whack
- Deer check by phone
- Trying to digest all the information in this plan is too hard (2 comments)
- Communication to public – get materials out to sportsmen's clubs, schools, libraries ahead of time (2 comments)
- The report from deer advisory team is reflected in the plan
- The DNRE is listening if people take the time to discuss it with them
- Want regional meetings with the community
- Coyote, wolf, and cougar populations having impacts on deer. Need bounties.
- DNR is starting to come around, attempt to reach out to public is to be commended (2 comments)
- Antler restrictions – we have antler restrictions now, three inches
- Manage the deer for the health of the deer
- Browse line is immense and species of plants have been impacted and therefore all wildlife has been impacted
- Hopefully this isn't a bunch of words that won't be acted on
- We harvest too many does to supply the number of bucks we need
- Put RDATE at the WMU level rather than regional
- More share-cropping and food plots on public land
- Most people here are special-interest group: hunters, what about farmers?
- Don't discourage food plots, we've lost our small farms and impacting the bees
- Make an application for the RDATE membership
- Late doe harvest is harming buck numbers because they drop antlers early
- Youth hunt should be antlerless only
- Combo tag – should have to use their restricted tag first

Cadillac, March 3, 2010- 74 attendees

- The DRIP program is outstanding, it just needs to be implemented (2 comments)
- DMUs used to be science based but then they were changed to county based. No specifics in new plan.
- Hunters were not represented on the DAT. Does not always agree with QDM. Mentions that DNRE does do some habitat work, i.e. rye fields.
- Strategic plan should state that deer farms should have two fences to prevent native deer and captive deer cannot touch noses. "Antlerless deer" should be changed to "does," and save button bucks
- With the right habitat you will have a lot of deer. State land has good deer hunting, but lots of hunters. Feels lots of deer died last winter from starvation.

Sympathetic to baiting and feeding. With baiting you'll see twice as many deer.
Feels we are spreading disease by not feeding

- Population estimates on regional basis. Bigger management areas will limit management capabilities
- Deer are not where people can get to them (public land). Plan does not address how deer will be re-allocated to where the average person can access them.
- DNRE is not the enemy. They cannot answer to everybody, and they have to do what works. Point restrictions are tough. (2 comments)
- Has concern with the number of action items (69). Afraid things will get too complex and people won't be able to follow rules
- Two years ago wolves moved into his area- no deer now
- Concerned about funding being siphoned off to other areas of government. CWD plan was an over-reaction to one sick deer
- Are the (deer) harvest seasons addressed in the plan? Is the youth hunt addressed?
- How does this plan compare with those of Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, etc. Has the DNR looked into deer management plans from states that draw in a lot of non-resident deer hunters?
- Build it and they will come
- Need predator control
- Implement plan and do what you say you are going to do
- Concerned about protection of hunter's money
- We can't expect DNRE to do all these things while hunters spend fifteen dollars for deer tag
- We need Forest Management Division to cooperate with Wildlife Division
- Hunters have responsibility to contact legislators to increase hunting license fees
- Time to get DNRE out of legislature branch and away from control of politicians
- Frustrated the ban is still in effect even though there has been no CWD in the wild

Newberry, March 9, 2010- 71 attendees

- Page 33, section 4.5.1. What does this mean? Ban of baiting going statewide?
- We have a bunch of private landowners planting food plots, even if we bait, they have all the deer
- Page 28 talks about considering habitat needs of other species, if we are increasing deer populations, it is helping the wolf and bear
- How does the DNRE expect to sell licenses if there not any deer in the UP
- Too many wolves. DNRE needs to manage them (8 comments)
- Would like mandatory deer check. Would like commissioners at these meetings
- Scale of deer management is too large
- There should be a predator portion of the plan (3 comments)
- On paper, the plan looks good. The only problem is how it will be implemented.
- The plan is weighed heavily on managing deer – controlling the numbers. What we need here is protecting our deer herd, controlling the predators
- Concerned about how long implementation will take
- The plan mentions acquiring good winter cover. Wildlife should work better with the foresters to create better deer yards (2 comments)

- Concerned about who will make up the regional deer teams
- If habit is the answer, feeding is not increasing the herd, it is keeping what we have for breeding
- On page 25, there is no acknowledgement of the state forest land that was purchased with hunter dollars
- The DNRE has written a wolf plan and a bear. Now it is white-tails. This shows that the priority with the DNRE is the predators
- Tribes have an unfair advantage (2 comments)
- This plan should have been done years ago. People are fed up now and have already decided to hunt elsewhere
- The plan mentions rewriting the DRIP manual. I am happy to see that happening. I like what I see here. Especially about increasing quality habitat in the UP. The Lake Superior Watershed is the most critical area in the entire state
- Need more flexible regulations to meet with the conditions
- I think they should shut deer hunting down for a couple years
- To increase effectiveness in urban, cut the safety zone in half for archery hunters
- Worried about insurance agency involvement
- The plan mentions habitat management activities: providing natural browse and food plots. Should be implemented on private and public land
- DNRE clearings are not enough, need food plots on public land
- Stop baiting

Crystal Falls, March 10, 2010- 54 attendees

- The plan mentions impacts of predators but only one sentence
- Too many wolves (7 comments)
- The plan should address corporate land improvement. A lot of the corporate land up here could use habitat management
- We need something other than crop damage permits to reduce crop damage
- Proposed Deer Management Units are too large (2 comments)
- In some areas deer populations need to be increased (2 comments)
- Looking at the mission, there are obviously opposing forces: maximizing recreation opportunities while minimizing conflict
- We have too many deer (Normandy)
- Deer should be mentioned in the wolf and bear plans because of the effect they have on each other. Deer plan statement should be reversed on page 19
- Ban bait in the UP. Need to prevent CWD and TB up here.
- Go back to one buck
- Have a statewide plan, and then three different plans for the different sections of the state. Have measurements so you know if the goals are being met or not.
- On page thirty-nine funding is talked about. Would like to see the percentages of where these funds come from
- We need to build up the herd. We don't have the problems other people have
- Been a professional forester for over thirty-five years. The population goals were set in the early 1970s, and have now been surpassed. This has had an awful lot of impact on forest regeneration

- Evaluate the risk of mortality for the various diseases
- Concerned about when implementation will occur (3 comments)
- Difficult to retain young hunters in a group where they only shoot one buck
- Bring back one buck law (2 comments)
- Crossbows for 50 years of age and over
- A lot of work has been put into the plan, what if the Director does not sign it?
- One of the key ingredients of the plan should be managing predators
- Would like mandatory deer check. Check stations are always closed (4 comments)
- Restructure the current kill tags. Establish quotas for bucks and antlerless deer
Reevaluate population goals based on winter range, agriculture, forest and snow conditions
- Do not support one buck per year, or per season. Do not support antler restrictions
- One buck for bow and one for rifle season. Eliminate bow season in December

Lansing, March 16, 2010- 62 attendees

- Proposed Deer Management Units are too large (4 comments)
- Forest management is a mutual responsibility of Forestry and Wildlife so why are these under different heads under the new DNRE?
- To increase disease monitoring there should be more deer check stations
- Funding should be moved up to the number one priority
- Funding should be coordinated between private and public funds, have partners
- Need mandatory deer check and the plan does not address urban issues
- Work with organizations like MSUE and cultivate relationships between hunters and farmers. Evaluate block permit program
- The plan should address the agricultural industry
- One of the goals was about critical winter habitat. Make partnerships with agencies like the Nature Conservancy and use conservation easements
- Would like an interactive site online where people can post how many deer they have seen and where, and be able to see what other people have seen
- DMU management: Urban areas should have their own hunting plans and units, as well as a separate person to manage them
- Would like to continue to see the public open houses as the regional teams meet
- Would like to know who will be on the RDAT
- Wanted to understand the NRC's role in the plan approval process
- Would like to see a timeline for when these action items will occur
- The sales tax could increase to support funding
- Quality means different things to different people
- Our data collection is good, but our deer management is not great. Need to focus on habitat and deer improvement. Should look at other states
- With QDMA, education goes a long way and we need to retrain older hunters how to approach hunting
- Change opening day to allow youth to hunt on opening day
- Adopt a hunter where you get a free doe tag if you take a kid

- There are some things that can be done without actions and signatures like putting the fair chase thing up for people to see
- The deer plan has a lot of good ideas. I would like to see the funding portion brought to the forefront. If the plan is subject to change, fine, but we want to see where it is going
- Hold a public symposium just on funding
- I wouldn't mind paying five more dollars for a deer tag if I knew that money was going towards habitat or toward the herd. Michigan has one of the lowest costs of licenses compared to any of the Midwest states.
- In Iowa you have to report your kill within 24 hours
- Make it a priority to use innovative tools to manage populations
- DNR talks a lot about more funding but should cut expenses. We know there is limited man-power, but you can partner with organizations (2 comments)
- The plan mentions market hunting and if we do not take our job as hunters seriously, these are the things being tossed around as possibilities
- Lowering the tag price will attract younger hunters
- Should have mandatory check-in, 1-800 number
- Most states are getting away from mandatory check as compliance is low
- The current population estimate system is statistically accurate
- In Iowa, there is a board of hunters who sit in the woods and report everything they see
- Deer camp surveys are a good way to estimate populations
- The plan does not define a quality or satisfactory hunting experience
- I think the plan is very well done, and a lot of work has gone into it. I am happy with the plan, well done and very comprehensive. I would hope that you could put something in the plan as a goal or objective to help balance the adult sex ratio and a more balanced age structure, as a specific strategy to put that into the plan.
- Section 2.2 talks about experts, was the Ontario DNR included?
- Under 5.0 something should be written to say how the plan will be administered and how it will be held accountable
- Can we expect changes to be implemented this fall regarding the plan?
- What good is a deer plan if resources to meet the plan's objectives are lacking?

Midland, March 18, 2010- 116 attendees

- DNRE needs to work on recruitment and retention, people are not going to sit in the woods if they don't see deer. Many hunters are leaving Michigan every year to shoot big animals, because herd failed to be managed for quality deer
- Wolf comments (9 comments)
- There is nothing about plans to better the buck:doe ratio.
- Youth hunt should be antlerless only
- No late antlerless season since too many bucks are shot
- Suggest mandatory check
- Suggest earn-a-buck
- DNRE is there to represent deer hunters in Michigan, yet we are not represented
- Too many doe permits

- WI has earn-a-buck, five years ago program worked well for three years. But then all the does were shot (2 comments)
- Good for economy to have an earlier open to the season, more days to hunt
- Plan is very good. Most of my recommendations have to do with implementations of action plans. Implement one buck limit, move firearm start until after the rut, require mandatory check over the phone, crossbows only for disabled or older than sixty and during bow season, no baiting
- Would like to see a time line for the plan implementation
- Would like to know thirty days before decisions are made so there is time for comments
- Concerned about insurance company influences
- The season is too long, have a week between October fifteen and gun season to let the deer settle down
- Everyone wants to see more and better bucks
- What do we have the DNRE for if they cannot make the decisions?
- Habitat plays a big factor where deer migrate and move around in southern Michigan. Give farmers incentives to improve habitat
- The DNRE should publish what they have done to improve habitat
- Support the citizen advisory councils. Forestry community and hunting community needs to come together to understand each other
- The plan looks great, as a strategic plan, but it needs dates and timelines. Step up and make the changes that need to happen
- Make decisions based on science (2 comments)
- Have the National Forest people in the plan (2 comments)
- The only place CWD was found feeding/baiting is legal (in a pen)
- Quality deer hunting helps to improve the habitat and the herd. We are more conscious of when we should squeeze the trigger
- Many hunters go out of state and few non-residents hunt in Michigan
- There are no more cedar swamps where I hunt
- Logging year after year is not a good way to maintain deer. (3 comments)
- Do not support one buck rule, only five percent of people fill that second license
- One buck per person and have opening day on a Saturday
- Youth hunt should be antlerless only. I like Goal 6, education and information
- DNRE should do more with food plots on state land
- We hunt different today than we did in the 40s and 50s
- National Forest is closed off so only loggers can go in, not hunters (2 comments)
- Thank you DNRE for using this approach and having these meetings. We feel that you are receptive and listening and willing to make changes
- Large DMU regions instead of by county, manage by habitat
- When creating the RDAT meetings, remember there are two different groups: private land hunters and public land hunters
- The plan is great but look up Responsible Care Program, encouraging industry to have a management system based on: Plan, Do, Check, Act, Modify
- When you buy a deer tag, say your harvest from last year

- Glad the baiting is gone (4 comments)
- Bring in genetically altered deer like Ohio
- Stopped hunting in the WUP because we don't see any deer. Would like to see something in the plan to increase deer population in the UP
- Would like Michigan to buy the federal land from the Feds
- A lot of problems will go away if the buck:doe ratio is better
- DNRE is a tool, but we as hunters have to take responsibility too
- It is a privilege, not a right, to hunt in Michigan. The next generation will lose if we don't act better
- This is a draft, there should be public meetings for the final version too
- There are negatives to "earn-a-buck." The herd would be wiped out
- Not looking for trophies, I want good hunting on my land for my family
- Have mandatory call-in to get harvest numbers
- Have earn a buck for your second buck tag
- Should have public meetings whenever the plan is reviewed
- Sportsmen clubs are a good system to communicate between the department and the groups.
- WMUs are too big for deer management
- Black bears and coyotes eat fawns. Have a bounty on coyotes.
- Four point one side regulation, except for youth
- Population control is crucial on private land, keep giving farmers crop damage permits (2 comments)
- Allow regulated baiting
- Would like bucks to have an older age structure
- No reason for one buck rule, combo tag produces lots of money for the DNRE, NRC has always helped to increase hunting opportunities
- Current deer management system is good, keep the combo tag
- Reduce hunting pressure on bucks to improve age structure, improve sex ratio, continue and enforce the bait ban, there must be a goal definition for age distribution and sex ratio