

Greetings all

I hope this email finds in good health in fairly high spirits considering the Governor's "Safe at Home" edict.

Anyway, the DNRs Spring Hearings are on Tuesday, April 7th. And again, due to the COVID-19, the DNR is encouraging everybody to vote on line.

Jim Swanson has done a fabulous job summarizing the Spring Hearing as it pertains to Deer Hunting Seasons and the use of lead projectiles.

Excellent read. He also provided links to the DNR sites.

I'll be sending another email cancelling all WMLA events, at least, through the end of May 2020.

Take care of yourselves. I hope to see you sometime this summer or fall. Mark

DEER HUNTING THE FOCUS OF MAJOR QUESTIONS AT THE SPRING HEARINGS

jimds swanson [1] conservation and environment [2], Uncategorized [3]
March 5, 2020 6 Minutes

Many major changes are being proposed to Wisconsin's hunting and fishing regulations at the Spring Hearings this year. Some of the proposed changes include a non-toxic ammo requirement on DNR lands, a baiting and feeding ban, longer gun deer season options, and a spring bear season. The Hearings will be held on Monday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. The Dunn County hearing will be held at the Dunn County Fish and Game Club House. Citizens can attend the hearings or use an on-line option to cast their votes on the questions.

THE PROPOSED QUESTIONS

Questions 1-7 require the use of non-toxic ammunition on state owned or managed lands. Each of the seven questions asks about the use of non-toxic shot in different situations. Question 1 asks about the general use of non-toxic shot. Question 2 would require the use of non-toxic bullets and slugs. Questions 3-7 ask about using non-toxic shot and or ammo on various game species including, doves, pheasants, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and small game.

Multiple questions deal with the issue of baiting and feeding in Wisconsin. Question 8 would restrict the use of artificial water sources in areas with CWD. Baiting is already prohibited in areas with CWD and this question would make artificial water sources a type of bait. Question 16 in the Natural Resources Board section of the Hearing calls for prohibiting baiting and feeding of deer statewide. This ban is designed to help stop the spread of CWD and other diseases like bovine tuberculosis. Questions 20 and 21 ask if CDACs can have authority to make recommendations on baiting and feeding. Currently baiting and feeding can only be restricted within a certain area if

CWD is detected, and the restriction can only last for a limited time. Question 21 asks if the DNR should have greater authority to determine baiting and feeding regulations. Question 22 queries if CDACs should have the ability to regulate baiting and feeding in their counties.

Question 9 suggests using a raffle to award a new type of hunting license and tag. This question proposes to create a special license awarded through a statewide raffle that would allow the holder to hunt critters that have a long wait period like elk, and bear, plus possibly other species like turkey, bobcat, and waterfowl hunts in access restricted areas. The funds from the license raffle would go to fund wildlife habitat restoration and management.

Questions 10-17 suggest major changes to the current structure of the deer hunting season and have been placed on the Spring Hearing Questionnaire by the Natural Resources Board. Some of these questions will radically change the way deer hunting is conducted in the state. Question 10 suggests adding 10 days of hunting onto the end of the current nine day season to create a 19 day season. This proposal would also eliminate the muzzle loader season. Hunters could use rifles, shotguns with slugs, crossbows and bows during the 19 day season. Question 11 calls for the elimination of the antlerless-only holiday hunts. Eliminating the holiday hunt is being proposed because of the possible change in the season length proposed in Question 10. Question 12 surveys participants to see if they would like to establish a 2-day or a 5-day no-hunting period prior to the opening of the gun deer season. All hunting seasons, except for waterfowl hunting would be closed during this no-hunting period. Question 13 is a bit confusing as it invalidates archery and crossbow tags during the gun deer and muzzle loader seasons. However, hunters could still use bow or crossbows during the gun deer season but only to fill gun deer tags. Question 14 would limit the use of crossbows for hunting from October 1 to October 31 and then again after the gun deer season is over. Hunters with a disabled license or over the age of 60 would still be able to hunt with crossbows during the entire archery season. This rule is being suggested because some feel that crossbow hunters are killing more than their share of bucks. Question 15 seeks to eliminate the current 4 deer management zones (Northern Forest, Central Farm Land, Central Forest and Southern Farm Land). If this question passes, all deer management questions would be decided at the county level by the CDACs. Question 17 calls for closing the crossbow season during the month of November. Question 17 differs from Question 14 by opening the crossbow season up during the months of September and October but closing it during the month of November. The implications of Questions 10-17 are profound for deer hunting in the state. Every deer hunter in the state should vote on these questions.

Question 18 seeks to establish a spring bear hunting season that would most likely last between two to three weeks. While not known for sure, baiting and spot and stalk hunting would be most likely methods used to hunt bears in the spring. Harvesting cubs or a sow with cubs would be illegal in the proposed spring hunt. Hunters would be issued only one tag and could use the tag either in the spring or the fall.

Questions 19 to 55 are being posed by the Conservation Congress. The Congress generates its questions either from citizen resolutions that are introduced at prior spring hearings or through the work of its committees. Passage of resolutions on this portion of the Questionnaire could result in changes to laws and regulations at a future date. Many of the Conservation Congress Questions deal with local issue like bag limits on specific lakes.

Questions 19 and 20 do have a statewide impact on deer hunting. Both questions ask if the state should bring back the Earn-a-Buck program. Proponents of Earn-a-Buck note that it was very effective in reducing the deer population in areas where the deer exceeded population goals. However, many hunters despised Earn-a-Buck because it made it difficult to harvest a buck and thought that there should be more deer rather than fewer deer. Question 19 asks if the DNR should have the authority to use Earn-a-Buck, and Question 20 asks if county CDACs should have the authority to use Earn-A-Buck in setting up hunting seasons.

Question 23 proposes that CDACs be given the ability to designate portions of deer hunting season as antlerless only.

Question 24 is a two part change to the structure of the deer season. The question lengthens the season to 16 days and opens the season up approximately one week earlier by moving opening day to the Saturday closest to November 15. Currently the opening is determined as the Saturday immediately preceding the 4th Thursday (Thanksgiving) in November.

Questions 25 and 26 deal with the topic of bear baiting. Question 25 would allow the use of man made containers for bear bait on private land, but not public land. Question 26 would allow bear baiters to nail bottoms on the hollow logs that they use for bear baiting to keep unwanted critters out of the bear bait.

Question 28 Opposes the propose Back Forty Mine metallic sulfide mine on the Menominee River. The mine would be located on the Michigan side of this outstanding border rive but pollution would effect Wisconsin

sports men and women who use the river and contaminate Green Bay.

Question 31 seeks to establish an experimental Badger trapping season with a limited harvest.

Question 49 looks to protect native Buffalo fish by ending their rough fish status and setting up harvest parameters.

Question 50 asks for a legislative change in boating regulations so that operating a boat at speeds in excess of slow and no wake could only occur on lake that are larger than 50 or more acres.

Question 50 seeks legislative change so that DNR game wardens would have the ability to enforce trespass laws.

Expanding the funding sources from license and stamp fees to other potential revenue streams is the goal of Question 55.

HOW TO VOTE IN THE SPRING HEARINGS.

Citizens can vote on the questions by either attending the Spring hearing on April 13 or by going on line. Meeting attendees can choose to fill out the forms immediately, or stay and give input on each individual question. The input from citizens is then part of the public record. The on-line option goes live at 7:00 PM on April 13. Individuals who want to complete the form on-line can go to the Spring Hearing and get a code (VRN-Variable Random Number) that verifies that they are a resident of a specific county so their vote will be included in the official tally for that county. Or they can just go on line and vote. Their votes will be listed as a county resident but in a separate tally for that county. The on-line voting portal can be found at [4]<https://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/springhearing.html> [5] or go to DNR.WI.GOV [6] and search keywords "Spring Hearings."

COUNTY CONSERVATION DELEGATES SELECTED.

The delegates who represent each county are also selected at the Spring Hearing. Every year, one delegate is selected for a 2 year term and one is selected for a 3 year term on the Conservation Congress. To vote for the Conservation Congress delegates one must attend the hearing.

The entire spring questionnaire can be found at [7]https://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/Documents/spring_hearing/2020/2020_Spring_Questionnaire.pdf [8]

Links:

[1] <https://jimswansonmanofthewoods.wordpress.com/author/jimdswanson/>

[2]

<https://jimswansonmanofthewoods.wordpress.com/category/conservation-and-environment/>

[3]

<https://jimswansonmanofthewoods.wordpress.com/category/uncategorized/>

[4] <https://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/springhearing.html>

[5] <https://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/springhearing.html>

[6] <http://DNR.WI.GOV>

[7]

https://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/Documents/spring_hearing/2020/2020_Spring_Questionnaire.pdf

[8]

https://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/Documents/spring_hearing/2020/2020_Spring_Questionnaire.pdf