

PRESS RELEASE

Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association

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Snowmobile Association Wrong to Oppose Deer Hunting

The DNR's 06-07 deer season proposal that has received widespread support among hunting groups including the Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association (WDHA), Wisconsin Conservation Congress and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation is being attacked by the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC). The 2-year trial program would simplify regulations and the season framework with the traditional 9-day season followed by a 7-day muzzleloader season and following that, a statewide 4-day antlerless only season ending no later than December 14. The AWSC is against this proposal because they believe the 4-day antlerless season might interfere with access to private lands although there is no reason or evidence to suggest it will. "The level of support for this proposal is unheard of in the deer hunting community" says WDHA president Mark Toso. "We worked long and hard to come up with a compromise proposal to test some ideas that will hopefully help reduce the deer population and the need for T-zones and earn a buck regulations. To have the snowmobile clubs step in an try to derail this proposal without any evidence is absurd" he continues.

The Michigan Snowmobile Association reports no trail closure or conflicts with their 14 day antlerless deer season that typically runs late December into January. This is despite that fact that Michigan relies on more private land for snowmobile trail access than we do. "There is no reason to think that the situation will be any different in Wisconsin," says Toso.

The additional deer hunting opportunity provided by the proposal will bring an added economic boost to northern Wisconsin during a period of time when there is rarely enough snow for snowmobiling. "In fact, ask the AWSC how many counties opened their trails during the time the proposed late antlerless season would have been held this year? Or even the for the last 10 years?" says Toso.

This widely supported 2-year proposal should be given a chance to see if it can provide an adequate deer harvest. During this period any conflicts that may arise during the December 4 day antlerless season can be closely monitored. "If there's any conflict we can make adjustments, but we cannot just assume there will be any without any concrete facts. After all there hasn't been any in other parts of the state with the December hunt, even in years with enough snow" continues Toso.

The WDHA believes that the 4-day December antlerless hunt is one tool that might allow hunter access to harvest antlerless deer on some private lands. It is these lands, after all, that cause management units to be over population goals and results in controversial regulations like the October T-zones and earn a buck. "Thus the very reason we hope this proposal will work is that private landowners will be more willing to open their lands, not close them," says Toso. "The AWSC insists that they set the deer season framework, and that hunters and the DNR have no say when we can hunt deer. Even though the snowmobile clubs suggest there maybe trail access issues under this proposal, if they continue to oppose deer hunting and insist on telling landowners when they can and cannot hunt I guarantee there will be trail closures".

The WDHA is a statewide group of conservation minded deer enthusiasts whose mission is to promote scientific and ecological based deer management in Wisconsin. Our philosophy is do what's best for the deer herd, as we believe that is ultimately what's best for the deer hunter.

For more information contact:

Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association

P.O. Box 255

Roberts WI 54023

Phone: 715-781-4887

Email: WDHA@wideerhunters.org

Web: <http://www.wideerhunters.org>