Collaborative Deer Management Outreach Initiative

Necessity and Overview
Citizen Input in Deer Management

• DEC mission: wildlife, habitat, people
• Wildlife Management decisions usually have both biological and social considerations
• Long commitment to involving the public in Deer Management decision making
• Input process must be fair, consistent, and representative
Wildlife Management Units (WMUs)

- Deer Management Permits (DMPs)

- Each WMU has population objective
The Old System

- Developed in 1990 to obtain the public’s desires on their preferred deer population size
- Joint collaboration, DEC/Cornell
- Done by WMU at regular intervals
- Results incorporated into (DMP) quotas
The Old System

Citizen Task Force (CTF) model

- 8-12 members plus DEC, facilitator
- Each member represents different stake
- DEC presentation on deer management
- Members obtain feedback
- Reconvene at 2\textsuperscript{nd} meeting
- Each member presents their stake’s preference
- Members deliberate/compromise
- Group’s overall feedback given to DEC
How it Worked
Old System (Citizen Task Forces)

- 1st meeting: Small Group
  - Outreach
  - Input
  - public stakeholders

- 2nd meeting: Small Group
  - feedback
  - DEC Decision-making
  - DEC Education
Deficiencies of Old System

- Recruiting members and facilitators
- Meeting attendance
- Insufficient member outreach
- Difficult to “wear a single hat”
- Group’s final position often arrived at by simple averaging
- Seldom outside the box
- Inadequate dissemination of results
Pilot Process-
Partners and Collaboration

• DEC with assistance from the Cooperative Extension (CCE) and Human Dimensions Research Unit (HDRU) at Cornell University

• CCE of Seneca, Cayuga, and Tompkins Counties will assist with local implementation
Program Overview

• Strategy 1.2.1 of Deer Plan:
  “Investigate alternative mechanisms to obtain input from stakeholders on desired changes to deer populations or modifications of the CTF process that increase efficiency and save time and money.”

• We need a new approach with broader-scale public engagement

• Modern communication methods

• Concept of WMU Aggregates (Strategy 1.1.1)

• Pilot process at Aggregate level too
Aggregated Wildlife Management Units
Central Finger Lakes
Aggregate
7H, 8J & 8S
Program Overview

- Seneca and parts of surrounding Counties
- Planning started in 2013 with interviews
- Survey of Aggregate residents, spring 2015
Program Overview

• Last fall, started a broad-scale education effort to:
  • Describe new process
  • Share results of survey
  • Share information with public on deer impacts, management, and challenges

• Small group (Stakeholder Input Group or SIG) will be formed to identify and prioritize impacts in the Aggregate; volunteer participants

• Survey results plus education effort will assist small group
Program Overview

• DEC will use the small group outcome plus the survey results to define population objective for the Aggregate

• We will weigh the group’s input against data on the ecological impacts of deer in the Aggregate

• Final objective for deer population change must be compatible with existing deer impacts on forests in the Aggregate
Program Overview

- Results of the process and associated decisions will be shared broadly
- Results used to improve the process
- Process to expand to other Aggregates, with tweaks
- Implementation on routine cycle
How it Worked
Old System (Citizen Task Forces)

- **Small Group**
- **Outreach**
- **Input**
- **public stakeholders**

1st meeting

- **Small Group**

2nd meeting

- **Small Group**

DEC

Education

DEC Decision-making

feedback
How it all Works
New System

Survey Results → Small Group

Small Group → Feedback to Public

Feedback to Public → DEC

DEC → Broad Public Education
Summary

- Input from public on larger and broader scale
- Info to the public on larger and broader scale
- Use of new electronic communication methods
- Public input no longer one-on-one
- Aggregate-level more efficient for DEC and CCE
- Formally considers ecological ramifications of the small group input