

Beaver Management Public Informational Meeting
La Crosse, WI
September 20, 2011

Poster session from 6:30 to 7:00 PM. Seven (7) folks in attendance in addition to 6 presenters/facilitators.

7:04PM Debbie Beyer walked through corrections to the survey with attendees.

7:06PM Debbie discussed the Beaver Task Force with attendees. Membership, list of representatives, and charge of the task force. Attempt to gather input related to beaver management in Wisconsin, and associated issues. Survey will be available on the internet.

Introductions of those in attendance. Debbie Beyer (UW Extension – Facilitator), John Olson (WDNR Wildlife Management), Jason Suckow (USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services), Dave MacFarland (WDNR – Wildlife Research), Matt Mitro (WDNR – Fisheries Research), Brian Stemper (USFWS – Big River), and Shawn Rossler (WDNR – Wildlife Management).

Brief discussion on how the meeting was advertised. General consensus - not a lot of notification.

Dick - notified by trout unlimited, but mainly here because of trapping issues.

Taryn - here because of beaver dam on her property. She couldn't believe the diversity of animals around her beaver pond.

Junior – beaver trapper, waterfowl hunter, and trout angler. Feels beaver population has been hit too hard in the state of Wisconsin. Feels population has decreased enough.

Ray – while canoeing in the St. Croix watershed he sees a lot of beaver damage. Thinks there's a man made imbalance and it's up to man to bring things back into balance. Thinks there needs to be a conversation about opening beaver trapping on upper Miss a few days before the duck season ends. In recent history, duck seasons have been extended to ice conditions.

Brian – Refuge management plan, relied on States to provide guidance for season dates. In the late 80s early 90s, opportunity for trappers to harvest furbearers was decreased due to longer duck seasons. Brian discussed benefits of trappers to decrease damage to refuge infrastructure.

Many more duck hunters than trappers on the refuge. Snaring and cable restraints are not allowed on the refuge. Haven't had many incidents compared to inland.

Ray – trappers could think out of the box. Different restrictions to allow trapping before close of duck season. Under water 330 sets for example. We need to think creatively on how duck hunters and trappers can coexist.

Brian – have discussed micromanagement, but that’s not the way they want to go.

Money versus political decisions influencing the final decisions.

Deb redirected the group, and gave everyone a chance to pass along a message.

Junior – trappers only know the areas they live in. WDNR has to deal with the entire state. Beaver population is in trouble in large portions of WI, difficult to manage the entire state...not just the local level.

John – Trapping is only way to effectively manage beaver. Beaver are not bad, but will be continued need to reduce damage, but also need to highlight the benefits beaver provide to ecosystems.

Old plan – reduce population, we’ve been successful, but need to have additional information in the new plan. Mention of reproductive rates of beaver – can expand populations at very fast rate.

Jon - Some streams that I fish have damage caused by beavers (large trees, siltation, stream bank), but there’s nothing more beautiful than a beaver pond.

John – discussed the process we plan to follow when rewriting the plan.

Ray – seems to be regional difference in each region of the state. Has concern with reducing the number of beaver management zones. Having only one zone bothers him a little bit. He cautions against reducing the number of beaver management zones.

Need to recruit some younger trappers. If duck season continues to increase, need to make sure other users are not being alienated.

Don Heidel – relationship of the DNR with the public is sometimes hairy. Falls on side of duck hunter, believes duck hunting should trump trapping. If something can be done to reduce conflict with dogs, would support. Relationship with WI waterfowl association is good, need to keep up good work.

Taryn – question about trout fishing. She likes fish, likes eating fish, but she doesn’t fish. She’s talked with several folks and has come to the conclusion - If you want big trout, leave the pond. If you want small trout, take out the dam. Difference in opinions within the trout world.

Here she sees information stating beaver “destroy” the environment – suggests changing wording to “alter” the environment. Public attitude is changing, more protective.

Stephanie Hanna – appreciates the DNR is trying to strike a balance. Do a program on beaver and their adaptations.

Dave MacFarland – thanked everyone for coming. Will incorporate science into the plan, hard to make decision solely based on science. Diversity of managing beaver across an entire system. Fortunately, beaver make more beaver efficiently.

Jason Suckow – also thanked everyone. Real balancing act when dealing with wildlife. Science is really important, need to teach everyone. Siltation and water warming – trout might grow to be big, but the system will eventually fail. How do we go through and analyze different aspects, and try to do the right thing for all resources.

Matt Mitro – 54,000 (?) miles of streams in the state, only target 2,000 miles for trout stream management. Recognize trout streams are very site specific...need to strike a balance.

John Olson – dismayed that not so many folks here for a reason. This was similar to a focus group.

Dave MacFarland – When you talk to your groups – not a once and one thing, will still be opportunity to give input...other ways folks can give input.

Deb shared website – <http://fyi.uwex.edu/beaver/>

Suggestion to publicize on trapperman.com

Suggestion webinar should be in the evening on non-packer gameday. Suggestion to have Friends groups to join.

Want folks that shun organizations as well.

Conservation organizations, clubs, all around.

Junior Prudlick – keep plan open-ended, incorporate harvest into the population estimate