

Wildlife Management Unit (WMU)

Citizen Task Force on Deer Management

Gathering Stakeholder Opinions: A Guide for Task Force Members

The purpose of this guide is to suggest a way to collect opinions from stakeholders. At the next meeting, you will be asked to discuss and summarize the information you collected from stakeholders who share your interests. Read the following list before contacting stakeholders:

- (1) To obtain the widest variety of opinions, try to contact (either by telephone or in person) at least 15 people. If you would like to contact more than that, feel free to do so. If you have problems identifying enough stakeholders, ask your facilitator for assistance.
- (2) Before contacting a stakeholder, try to determine if they reside, own property, or have participated in outdoor recreation activities within the WMU. To be included, stakeholders must meet one or more of these requirements.

If people who do not meet one or more of these requirements contact you, listen to their comments, but explain that recommendations from this task force will probably not affect the deer population in their area.

- (3) If a WMU stakeholder reflecting another interest contacts you, record his/her comments separately from those of your stakeholder interest. Share these comments with the task force as additional information to consider, or relay the comments to the task force member reflecting that stakeholder interest.
- (4) When contacting stakeholders for their opinions, explain the purpose of the task force and the stakeholder interest you were chosen to reflect. In the space below, write how you would describe the task force's purpose and the stakeholder group you represent:

- (5) The following questions ask about stakeholders' preferences for a deer population level. To best reflect your stakeholders' views, consciously avoid asking questions in a leading or value-laden manner. Ask the questions using the same words and tone of voice each time you ask someone's opinion. Act unbiased and open-minded to the person's comments.
- (a) In your opinion, is this year's deer herd in your area increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- increasing
 - decreasing
 - stable
 - don't know
- (b) In your opinion, is this year's deer herd too high, too low, or about right?
- too high
 - too low
 - about right
 - don't know
- (c) Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in your area should increase, decrease, or remain stable?
- increase . . . how much? _____ %
 - decrease . . . how much? _____ %
 - stable
 - don't know
- (d) Why do you think the deer herd should (increase, decrease, remain stable)?
 [NOTE: Use the stakeholder's response given in (c) to complete the sentence.]
- (6) If you think another question would better reflect your stakeholder interest, discuss with the facilitator the possibility of adding a question.
- (7) Before the second meeting, think about and reflect upon the opinions you gathered. Make an assessment of what deer population level you think your stakeholders would recommend, based on the input they gave you.
- (8) When summarizing your findings to the task force, describe generally how you contacted people, who you contacted, the responses you received, and your recommendation in consideration of these opinions. Be prepared to communicate this in a 5B7 minute presentation.