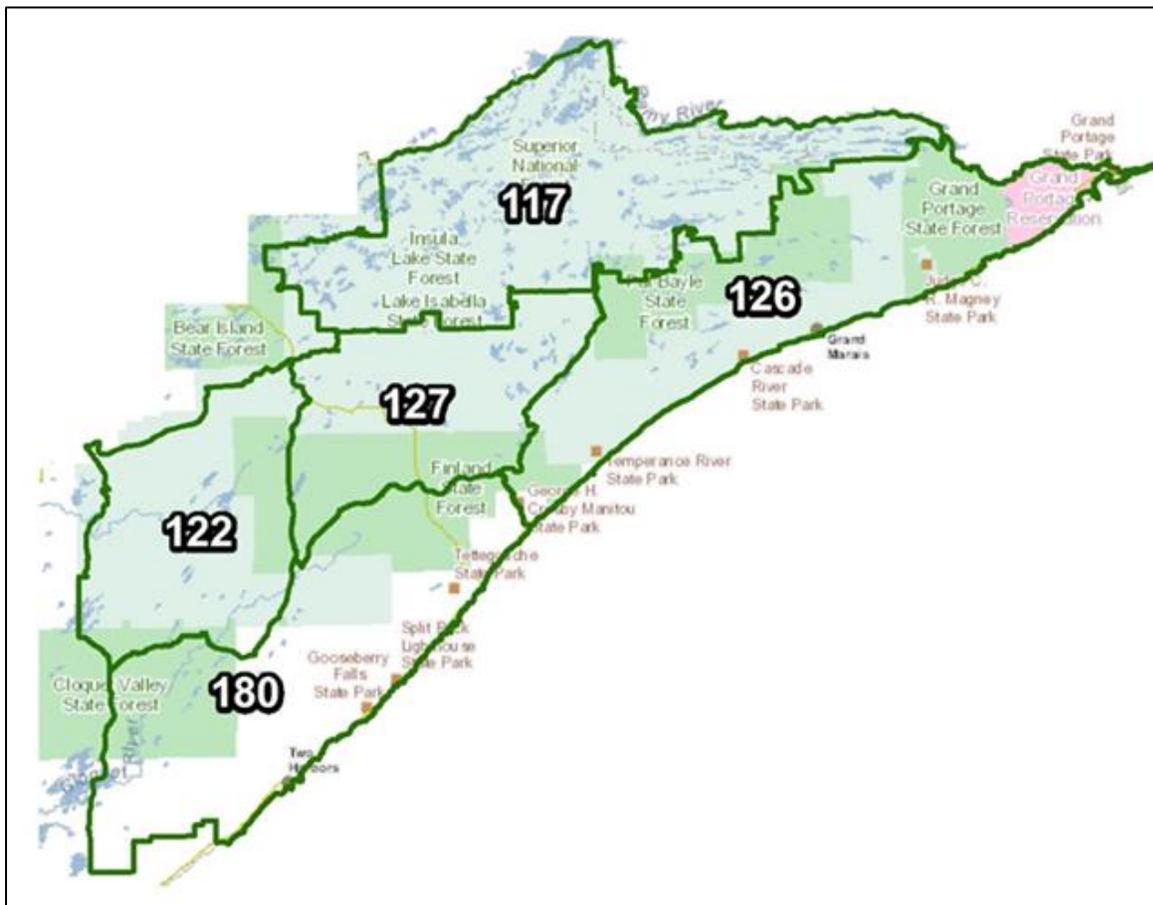


2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer advisory team recommendations – Block 1: Superior Uplands Arrowhead

The following pages represent deer population goals recommended by the 2015 deer advisory team for Block 1: Superior Uplands Arrowhead (permit areas 117, 122, 126, 127 & 180). Public comment regarding these recommendations will be accepted April 2-15, 2015. Prior to commenting on the advisory team recommendations, you may wish to review the background materials provided on the DNR Deer Management webpage (www.mndnr.gov/deer), including a description of the advisory team process.

Following each of the advisory team recommendations is a summary of factors cited by team members when making their recommendation. This information reflects the perspectives of individual team members; DNR has attempted to preserve the spirit and meaning of team members' comments and has not confirmed the accuracy of data cited.



2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 117

Team recommendation:

No change in the population

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 9 “Support”, 4 “OK”, 2 “Abstain” (via absence)

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- Deer were not historically in this area, one of the few areas in state where vegetation has not had historic deer impacts
- Area is marginal deer habitat and can't support many deer; this is primary moose habitat
- Deer in this area are controlled by snow, terrain and food resources; hunter harvest likely small influence on population
- Areas where hunting pressure occurs has higher densities and need to manage the population
- Deer hunters in this area are seeking a wilderness hunt; not necessarily high deer densities
- The moose population should be a priority in this area; this is the last stronghold of moose
- Keeping the deer population low is better for moose (e.g., as parasite hosts and supplementary wolf food); this can contribute to effort to recover moose numbers
- This permit area is mostly Boundary Waters (BWCAW); few people hunt in this area and likely never will
- Next few mild winters and forest regeneration from fires will increase deer numbers

Factors cited by team members as concerns related to this recommendation:

- Goal doesn't address either habitat change or artificial feeding; both will have significant effects on deer numbers

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 122

Team recommendation:

Increase population by 25%

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 6 "Support", 5 "OK", 2 "No", 2 "Abstain" (via absence)

Factors cited by team members in their individual preferences:

- Hunter satisfaction is low
- A 25% increase is consistent with the 2006 goal-setting process
- A 25% increase will not bring the population too high
- A 25% increase will provide better hunting opportunities
- Harvest is low, an increase is justified
- This is a balance between moose, deer and forestry concerns
- Hunters would like to take antlerless deer
- Harvest is decreasing
- Winter weather has impacted the population
- The mild 2014-2015 winter will allow a significant increase in population
- A 25% increase will send a message to deer hunters that the DNR does care and is listening to all concerned parties

Factors cited by team members as concerns related to this recommendation:

- Would be better to split northeast section in with 127 to better align with moose range
- Should revisit in 3-5 years to assess balance between forest and hunting concerns
- Need to keep populations low for moose area and forest management
- Would like to see numbers low to keep deer from migrating to DPA 180
- Finally seeing reduced impacts to vegetation; would be nice to have a few more years for vegetation to recover
- Prefer "No Change" in population
- Prefer to keep population low for moose and forestry concerns
- If the final goal is to increase by 25%, consider rezoning to remove moose range from this DPA
- Some of permit area is better for deer; boundaries should be changed to better reflect moose versus deer range
- Moose is a statewide resource and their population is 50% below what it was 10 years ago; deer should be kept low to help moose recovery
- Can't support increase; population is currently at previously set goal

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 126

Team recommendation:

No team recommendation – see individual preferences below

Individual preferences:

- 10 team members prefer no change in the population
- 2 team members prefer a population increase of 25%
- 1 team member prefers a population increase of 50%
- 2 team members abstained via absence

Factors cited by team members in their individual preferences:

- This permit area has some of the best moose habitat in the state; poor deer habitat
- Moose should be the priority in this area; with deer numbers kept low to in an effort to help moose
- Give forest a chance to regenerate a cohort of trees and reevaluate next round if increase is needed
- Majority of hunters and landowners surveyed desired “No Change” or a decrease in the population
- Of all areas in the block, this area should not have a population increase; fencing trees is expensive
- Healthy forests in this area provide more benefits than higher deer numbers
- Overbrowsing is the primary reason for habitat decline
- The current deer population is at the previously set (2006) goal
- Concerned about impacts of deer on forest plant communities, especially pine/birch (difficulty regenerating)
- Deer population will come back up with a few mild winters; vegetation recovery takes much longer
- Defer to moose or consider a separate zone along the shoreline for deer
- Hunters have been used to artificially high deer numbers
- Damage to forest is minor to moderate
- The majority of surveyed landowners think the deer population is too low
- Total harvest has declined since 2007
- A mean estimate of 3 deer per square mile is too low
- Use forest management practices to reduce deer browse impacts
- Population currently low and can handle increase to still low, manageable numbers
- Deer population is at rock bottom; an increase of 50% would bring buck harvest back to 2006 goal

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 127

Team recommendation:

No change in the population

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 10 "Support", 3 "OK", 2 "Abstain" (via absence)

Factors cited by team members in their individual preferences:

- No good reason to increase the population
- There are not many deer to start with; should keep the habitat in good shape for moose
- This is moose range; err on the side of moose
- This area doesn't have many deer hunters
- So few deer hunters, it will be tough to reduce population if it gets too high
- Keep deer numbers down to support moose recovery and conifer regeneration
- No change; no doe permits
- Poor deer habitat in northern 2/3 of this area; better moose habitat
- Current population is probably near level set by previous (2006) goal-setting process
- Majority of hunters and landowners surveyed desire *No Change*
- Public comments are split 50-50 regarding population
- Forest management also important
- I believe equilibrium will be matched with this

Factors cited by team members as concerns related to this recommendation:

- The deer population could use an increase
- The majority of hunters and landowners surveyed desire an *Increase*
- This zone should be split to separate moose and deer range

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 180

Team recommendation:

No team recommendation – see individual preferences below

Individual preferences:

- 1 team member prefers no change in the population
- 4 team members prefer a population increase of 50%
- 2 team members abstained via absence
- 8 team members did not indicate a preference because they would like to see the boundaries of the permit area altered (see comments below)

Factors cited by team members in their individual preferences:

- Landowners and hunters report the deer population is very low; a large majority want to see an increase of 25-50%, most of those want a 50% increase
- Populations are below or at megastorm levels
- *No Change* is unacceptable; harvest is considerably down
- The population has declined since 2007
- Minor-to-moderate damage to the forest
- A boundary change to DPA was recommended in the 2011 moose plan
- The southern portion of DPA is prime deer habitat; the northern portion prime moose habitat

12 (of 13) members present suggested the DPA be divided to better reflect moose range, allowing higher deer densities outside of moose range. Related comments include the following:

- Area outside of moose range should have a goal of *50% Increase* (6 members)
- Area outside of moose range should have a goal of *25% Increase* (4 members)
- *No Change* or slight *Increase* in deer densities outside of moose range (1 member)
- *Decrease* the population in moose range (2 members)
- *No Change* in population within moose range (4 members)
No Change or *25% Decrease* in deer densities inside of moose range (2 members)