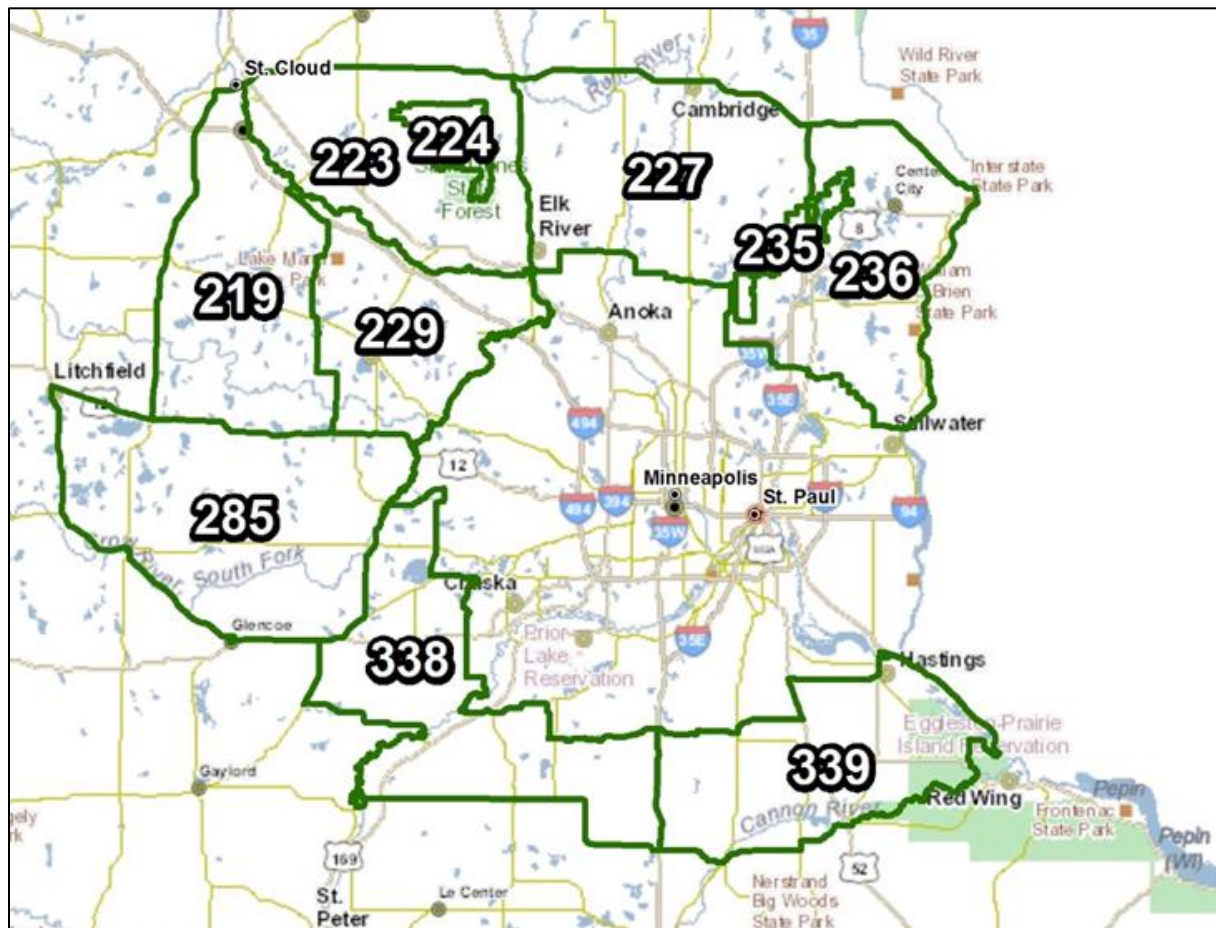


2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer advisory team recommendations – Block 5: Sand Plain – Big Woods

The following pages represent deer population goals recommended by the 2015 deer advisory team for Block 5: Sand Plain – Big Woods (permit areas 219, 223, 224, 227, 229, 235, 236, 285, 338 & 339). 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 219

Team recommendation:

Increase population by 25%

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 4 "Support", 8 "OK", 3 "No

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- 62% of hunters want an increase in the deer population
- A majority of all people surveyed believe the herd has declined
- Low harvest numbers
- Hunters want more deer
- Current population is too low
- Public input supports a slight population increase

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

- The data does not indicate a clear direction for change in this area
- Harvest numbers are stable
- Hunter satisfaction is relatively good
- Prefer "No Change" in population
- Current population is consistent with previously set goal
- Hunter and landowner surveys support little or no change to the deer population
- Prefer a 50% increase in population
- I will accept a 25% increase in order to reach consensus

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 223

Team recommendation:

No team recommendation – see individual preferences below

Individual preferences:

- 1 team member prefers a population decrease of 25%
- 6 team members prefer no change in the population
- 3 team members prefer a population increase of 25%
- 5 team members prefer a population increase of 50%

Factors cited by team members in their individual preferences:

- This area buffers Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge and has a density approaching 30% of Biological Carrying Capacity
- Concerned about protecting high quality native plant communities in Sherburne NWR, including Oak Savanna, one of the most threatened habitats in North America
- Hunters in this area are generally satisfied, so no increase is needed
- DNR population model estimates and harvest data suggest the deer population here is stable, no need to increase
- Buck harvest is currently above the 10-year average
- Hunter success rates are ~44%
- Hunter success rates in this area are likely skewed by high deer population around Elk River
- Harvest rates are sufficient
- The mild winter of 2014-2015 is already increasing the population
- Current population is consistent with previously set goals
- Public comment suggests the public is satisfied with the current population.
- Deer population is high around Elk River, but otherwise very low
- A 25% increase is a good compromise between those who want more deer and those who are satisfied with current populations
- Local residents, including hunters and landowners, report the herd has declined in this area
- The 2014 deer population is low and a 50% increase is justified
- This area could support an increase of >50%
- Harvest numbers (total and buck harvest) have declined

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 224 (Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge)

Team recommendation:

Increase population by 50%

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 7 "Support", 4 "OK", 2 "No", 2 "Abstain"

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- Deer population has decreased significantly in this area
- Most hunters in this area believe the deer population is too low
- The population should be increased as much as possible here
- Visitors to the Refuge would like to view more deer
- This area can support a 50% increase
- Buck harvest is steadily decreasing
- High hunting pressure
- Low hunter satisfaction
- Increasing deer population would help improve habitat for waterfowl and migratory birds

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

- Prefer a 25% increase or less
- Prefer "No Change"
- Sherburne Wildlife Refuge is not primarily managed for deer; a more cautious approach is warranted
- Concerned about protecting high quality native plant communities in Sherburne NWR, including Oak Savanna, one of the most threatened habitats in North America
- According to DNR population estimates, the deer population is already at 15 deer per square mile
- A 50% increase is too high for this area

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 227

Team recommendation:

No change in the population

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 10 "Support", 4 "OK", 1 "No"

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- Current deer population is sufficient or above the previously set goal
- Mild winter
- Great habitat
- Data supports "No change"
- Buck harvest is stable
- Hunter success rates are >35%
- Hunters in this area are generally satisfied
- Deer damage is evident in this area

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

- Prefer decreasing population by at least 25%
- This area could support a 25% increase
- Prefer an increase of >25%
- Concerned about biodiversity in this area given the current population, which DNR estimates to be near 15 deer per square mile
- Would not want the population to decrease in this area

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 229

Team recommendation:

Increase population by 25%

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 5 "Support", 7 "OK", 3 "No"

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- Harvest numbers have decreased over last 10 years
- The deer population should increase, but not more than 25%
- Hunter success rate is ~30%
- Hunters and landowners support an increased population
- A 25% increase will likely not threaten native plant communities here

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

- Public input, harvest data, and land use do not support a 25% increase
- Prefer "No change" in population
- Prefer little to no increase, but willing to compromise to reach consensus
- A 10% increase would be acceptable, but a 25% increase would suit the public and hunters more fairly
- Prefer a population increase of 50%
- Population level, buck harvest, and hunting pressure suggest an increase of >50% would be appropriate

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 235

Team recommendation:

Increase population by 25%

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 4 "Support", 8 "OK", 3 "No"

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- Hunter and landowner surveys support a 25% increase
- The deer population has decreased below the previously set goal
- Public input supports increasing the deer population
- Low hunter satisfaction
- Hunting pressure has increased
- 84% of hunters surveyed prefer an increase in the deer population
- Willing to support at 25% increase to reach consensus

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

- Prefer "No change" in population
- A slight increase in the population is acceptable
- Harvest data do not support an increase in the population
- Concerned about deer damage to ecosystems
- A 25% increase is hard to justify given the biodiversity of the Wildlife Management Area
- Current deer populations are already approaching 15 deer per square mile

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 236

Team recommendation:

Increase population by 25%

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 3 "Support", 9 "OK", 2 "No", 1 "Abstain"

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- Hunters want more opportunity
- Hunter and landowner survey data support a 25% increase in the population
- Prefer a 25% increase over a 50% increase
- This area has great habitat that can support an increase in the deer population per hunter requests
- Mild winter
- Good habitat
- Buck harvest is below the 10-year average and decreasing
- A 25% increase is acceptable, but anything higher would not be
- This area could support a 50% increase, but 25% is acceptable to accommodate both farmers and hunters
- Herd numbers need to increase to encourage youth hunting

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

- Prefer "No Change"
- Prefer little to no increase, but willing to compromise to reach consensus
- Harvest numbers and hunter satisfaction suggest no increase is needed
- Many landowner surveys report deer damage to crops, gardens and landscaping
- Forest regeneration will be threatened if the deer population increases here
- A majority of hunters feel the herd is too low; a 25% increase is not sufficient
- A 25% increase in the northern end of the zone is ok

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 285

Team recommendation:

Increase population by 25%

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 6 "Support", 6 "OK", 3 "No"

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- Deer population is too low
- Current deer population is below previously set goal
- Public input supports a population increase of at least 25%
- Hunter success rate is 30%
- Hunters are split between being satisfied/dissatisfied
- Stable harvest numbers
- A population increase of 25% is acceptable as there are few intact native plant communities and a lot of conversion and fragmentation
- Prefer little to no increase, but willing to compromise to reach consensus
- There is no need to increase the population here, but a 25% increase will only raise the deer density 1-1.5 deer per square mile

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

- Prefer "No Change"
- Data supports "No Change"
- An increase of more than 25% would be too much
- Current deer population is above previously set goals
- Data do not support any amount of increase in the population
- Habitat in this area is poor and cannot support more deer
- Prefer a 50% increase
- A majority of hunters believe the herd needs to increase more than 25%
- Public input supports a more substantial increase in this area
- Buck harvest has declined

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 338

Team recommendation:

No team recommendation – see individual preferences below

Individual preferences:

- 1 team member prefers a population decrease of 25%
- 4 team members prefer no change in the population
- 5 team members prefer a population increase of 25%
- 5 team members prefer a population increase of 50%

Factors cited by team members in their individual preferences:

- Deer population is volatile and management has changed while habitat has decreased
- Current population is consistent with previously set goal
- Habitat is limited, an increase in the deer population will lead to degradation of remaining habitat
- The current deer population is sufficient
- Hunters prefer an increase in the deer population
- A 25% increase is a good compromise to satisfy hunters while reducing volatility in harvest trends
- Buck harvest has decreased
- Hunter success rate has decreased
- Current population is below previously set goal
- Prefer an increase of < 25%
- 2014 had the second lowest harvest in 10 years
- 2014 had lowest buck harvest even after APR
- Survey data supports a substantial increase; a 25% increase is not enough
- Public comment supports increasing the deer herd drastically
- Concerned the public will lose interest in hunting if the deer population is not increased
- This area should have a population increase of at least 50%
- Hunting pressure is stable or increasing

2015 Deer Population Goal Setting

Deer Permit Area 339

Team recommendation:

Increase population by 25%

Support for recommendation:

Consensus by 80% supermajority: 4 “Support”, 9 “OK”, 2 “No”, 1 “Abstain”

Factors cited by team members in their recommendation:

- Public comment supports an increase in the deer population
- Hunter and landowner survey data support an increase in the deer population
- Public input supports a population increase
- The deer population has declined due to loss of habitat and increases in coyote predation
- Harvest numbers indicate a 25% increase is needed
- Hunter success rate is ~34%
- Buck harvest varies
- Having too few deer is more problematic than having too many – it is easier to reduce the herd than it is to increase it
- This area has only scattered native plant communities, so a 25% increase is acceptable
- Prefer a larger increase, but willing to compromise to reach consensus
- There is no need to increase the population here, but a 25% increase will only raise the deer density 1-1.5 deer per square mile

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

- Data supports “No Change” in the population
- The available habitat may not support a population increase
- Prefer “No Change” in the population, but a slight increase is acceptable
- Current deer population is consistent with previously set goals
- Prefer an increase <25%
- Prefer an increase >25%
- Prefer a 50% increase
- Concerned about habitat loss; cannot justify increasing the deer population