

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item**

SUBJECT: Request approval of Wildlife Management's 2014 spring meeting agenda of advisory questions

FOR: January 2014 Board meeting

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Scott Loomans, Wildlife Regulation Policy Specialist

SUMMARY:

The department proposes asking advisory questions on the following wildlife related subjects in order to gauge public opinion. These advisory questions will be the subject of voting at the 2014 spring fish & wildlife meetings held jointly with the Conservation Congress on the second Monday in April.

- Modifications to the permit preference system for bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, wolf, elk, and turkeys (two questions).
- Transfers of limited draw hunting and trapping permits.
- Allow the use of foot cable restraints for harvesting furbearers.

The results of voting on these questions will be used by the department if it is called upon to provide information on proposed legislation and in the development of future policies and recommendations. The department's rule making authority in these subject areas is limited except that we could allow the use of foot cable restraints by promulgating an administrative rule.

The department will hold hearings on a spring hearing rules package again in 2015 and subsequent odd-numbered years. This timeline for rule promulgation is compatible with the requirements of ch. 227 Stats.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of Wildlife Management's 2014 spring meeting agenda of advisory questions

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Background memo | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |

Approved by	Signature	Date
Tom Hauge, Bureau Director	<i>Tom Hauge</i>	1/8/14
Kurt Thiede, Administrator	<i>SPM b24T</i>	1/10/14
Cathy Stepp, Secretary	<i>on path of Stepp</i>	1/10/14

cc: Board Liaison - AD/8

DATE: December 4, 2013

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: Secretary Cathy Stepp

SUBJECT: Approval of Wildlife Management's 2014 spring meeting agenda of advisory questions

I am requesting Natural Resources Board approval to hold public meetings on wildlife related advisory questions in order to gauge public opinion. These advisory questions will be the subject of voting at the 2014 spring fish & wildlife meetings held jointly with the Conservation Congress on the second Monday in April.

Background:

Annually the department submits proposals and advisory questions on a variety of subjects including hunting, trapping, wildlife management and the management of department lands. The statewide April spring fish & wildlife hearings/meetings are the traditional vehicle for citizen input. The origins of these questions and proposals are most often: 1) department staff specialists from the bureaus of law enforcement, wildlife management, endangered resources and customer service and licensing, 2) publicly supported Conservation Congress advisory questions from prior years that were forwarded by the congress' executive council or; 3) advisory questions suggested by the natural resources board.

In 2014, all questions asked at the hearings will be advisory-only and are not rule change proposals. The department will hold hearings on a spring hearing rules package again in 2015 and subsequent odd-numbered years. In 2015, the topics of voting will include Conservation Congress spring hearing advisory questions which were supported in voting and after congress consideration in 2013 and 2014.

Summary of Agenda Items:

The department proposes asking wildlife related advisory questions in order to gauge public opinion. These following questions will be the subject of voting at the 2014 spring fish & wildlife meetings held jointly with the Conservation Congress on April 14.

Questions 1 and 2. Modifications to the permit preference system for bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, wolf, elk, and turkeys.

Question 3. Transfers of limited draw hunting and trapping permits.

Question 4. Allow the use of foot cable restraints for harvesting furbearers.

The results of voting on these questions will be used by the department if it is called upon to provide information on proposed legislation and in the development of future policies and recommendations. The department's rule making authority in these subject areas is limited except that we could allow the use of foot cable restraints by promulgating an administrative rule.

Proposed 2014 Spring Hearing Questions:

Questions 1 and 2. Modifications to the permit preference system for bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, wolf, elk, sharp-tailed grouse and turkeys.

The demand for hunting and trapping opportunities exceeds the available opportunity for certain species. In order to assure that harvest is held to a sustainable level and to distribute hunting and trapping permits in a fair and equitable way, the legislature has established limited draw preference systems for bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, wolf, and turkey hunting management. All of these preference systems have slight variations but two rules or laws are consistent between the drawings:

- People who do not apply for three consecutive years lose any preference points they have earned in previous years when they were not successful in the permit drawing.
- The department has established deadlines by which people must apply for the permits and there are no exceptions, even for people who have missed the application deadline but would still like to apply for a preference-point only.

The loss of preference points by people who have not applied in three years may have assisted the department with maintaining current records. However, it is easier to store and access that type of information with today's modern information systems.

People who have missed application deadlines have asked the department if they could at least apply for a preference-point-only, acknowledging that they would have no chance to actually draw a permit, in order to continue building the number of preference points they will ultimately need to draw a permit. This is not allowed under current law but changing the law may be a good customer service opportunity for the department.

1. Do you support allowing people who fail to apply for limited draw hunting or trapping permits for three or more years to maintain preference points they have previously acquired?

YES _____ NO _____

2. Do you favor allowing people who have missed a limited draw permit application to still apply for a preference-point-only, providing them with an advantage in the following year's drawing?

YES _____ NO _____

Question 3. Transfers of limited draw hunting and trapping permits.

Under current law, the transfer of certain limited draw preference points for specific hunting and trapping opportunities is allowed if the transfer is to a minor in any situation or if the transfer is to a surviving spouse, personal representative, guardian, or trustee upon the death of the person who earned the preference points. These limited draw permits include bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, wolf, elk, sharp-tailed grouse and turkeys.

A person who has drawn a wolf harvesting license can also transfer their permit to any person who is legally able to hunt or trap in this state.

The department receives many requests but is not able to allow the transfer of permits in additional situations. For instance, the department has been asked to transfer permits to terminally ill individuals, senior citizens, and veterans.

Rather than expand the number of classes of people to whom a limited draw harvest permit may be transferred, it would be less complicated to simply allow the transfer of permits to any other person who is legally able to hunt or trap in this state. This is how wolf permit transfers are currently handled. A simple law allowing transfers would avoid making people prove that they have a certain illness or establish other complicated regulations. Some potential hunters and trappers would appreciate this type of customer service.

However, some people think that expanding the number of people to whom permits may be transferred will result in an increase in the number of applicants for limited draw permits and result in an over-all increase in the number of preference points that would be needed for success in the drawing. The wait required to draw a tag would likely increase. Drawing certain permits, such as for bear or bobcat, can require 5 or more years of preference points.

Through this advisory question, the department is asking people to weigh their concerns about customer service and simplicity against concerns about permit availability.

3. Do you favor simplifying the conditions for being able to transfer a limited draw harvest permit or points by simply allowing transfer to any other person who is legally able to hunt or trap in this state and not restricting transfers to minors or certain other people upon the death of the permit/point holder?

YES _____ NO _____

Question 4. Allow the use of foot cable restraints for harvesting furbearers.

A cable restraint is a device used for the live capture of furbearers. The device consists of a non-spring activated cable which includes a relaxing mechanical lock, stops, and swivel. International research on humane trap systems has documented the safe use of cable restraints on dry land, with much of the field research conducted here in Wisconsin from 2000 to 2002. Beginning in 2004 our law has allowed the statewide use of passive neck cable restraints for bobcat, coyote, fox and more recently, wolf. Use of this tool is during the latter portion of the trapping seasons beginning on December 1st, as a respectful, precautionary measure to minimize incidental contact with other wildlife and domestic dogs. This device has proven to be safe, humane and selective.

Additional trap research conducted following the same protocols has shown the foot cable restraint to pass all injury score systems for these same species, especially wolves. Use of this tool could be allowed with the same start date as currently approved for passive neck cable restraints, December 1st. Use of this tool during the latter portion of harvest seasons will minimize contact with black bear, allow careful review, and provide an additional, versatile tool for trappers.

4. Do you favor allowing the use of foot cable restraints during the latter portion of the furbearer harvest seasons, beginning on December 1st?

___ YES ___ NO