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For many years, the Congress had received resolutions from various counties asking for a longer, later bobcat season. Hound hunters have wanted the season longer and later for some time because they want snow during the season. Under the old framework, they would often have what basically amounted to a one or two week season.

The 2008 questionnaire included a Congress advisory question which proposed a longer, later bobcat season. The question was the latest in a series of such resolutions and advisory questions, which only varied in detail. All of these questions passed, handily. All were rejected by the Department Fur Committee. Regardless, **Tom Hauge** agreed to forward this question to the Department Wildlife Rules Committee and Ed Harvey, then Chair of the WCC, personally attended the meeting. The Wildlife Rules Committee also rejected the question. However, the Department agreed to hold a meeting, in advance of the Congress Fur Harvest Committee meeting to identify the issues in the proposed rule. The "Bobcat Summit" held in November of 2008 was attended by a wide range of organizations interested in bobcat rules and was expertly facilitated by **Bill Vander Zowen**.

The outcome of that meeting was a new and innovative season framework. **Tom Hauge** called Ed from his car, on his way to work the following Monday morning. By the evening, the question was set, pending Natural Resources Board approval, to appear as a proposed Department rule change on the 2009 questionnaire. As a spin off to this proposal, it was agreed that if a study to determine the presence and density of bobcats outside of the current harvest zone supported it, a new harvest zone will be opened within three years of the new season structure having taken effect. To fund the study, a \$3.00 increase in the bobcat permit application fee was proposed. That increase is the **only** license fee increase on the governor's proposed budget **because the Conservation Congress requested it!**

The proposed rule change passed in 2009. The new season framework started in 2010 with some conservative quotas and the hunter success rate was fairly high (60% in 2010, 52% in 2011). The late season of this split season structure has had a nearly 70% success rates both years.

The Congress has been at the forefront of this initiative to hold a bobcat season later in the year and this compromise has proven successful. We have never had a statewide vote that did not support a later bobcat season and the Conservation Congress supports making this season structure permanent.

Rob Bohmann, Chair
Wisconsin Conservation Congress

As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.