

Politics and Deer Management

With the first half of 2010 in the record books, I'm referring to the Politics for Hunting Regulations for the next two seasons and Sunday Hunting Bills at the counties and state levels. Many hunters and/or groups have voiced concerns "Does Maryland's Hunters have any voice at all"?

Some groups have called out for increasing member's numbers along with consolidating groups to increase their influence in these matters. Articles have been written claiming some of these groups alienate themselves from others and some say they have more clout. But after the smoke clears where are we? While some may be satisfied and others dissatisfied we all may have received a lesson in "politics". By design the stakeholder's input may or may not be considered or incorporated within the plan for changes in regulations and public hearing input then is collected for consideration of the changes. Then the proposal is presented to committee. The point is you don't know how anything is going to turn out till it's over. On the other hand when proposed changes in counties or state hunting related bills are "going to" be presented (like Sunday Hunting), most stakeholders do not hear about them until it's too late (Baltimore Co. Sunday Hunting Bill).

As I and many of the other deer hunters I've talked with get frustrated with the "political arena", but as hunters /managers we do have to present our views related to our deer hunting heritage and values of being dedicated to ethical hunting and sound deer management. The way to achieve this is by taking part in this management decision making process as much and whenever you can.

As a Stakeholder, the Maryland State Chapter of QDMA does participate in the deer management decision making process. Whether at the state and/or county, Federal and private lands where deer hunters/managers are faced with challenges, whenever possible we do respond to concerns as documented in our letters posted on www.marylandqdma.com and archived in the articles page. Maryland QDMA members are kept informed also through our email newsletter in regards to management issues within our state. Many challenges are being faced by Maryland Deer Hunters/Managers. The QDMA has faced each new challenge head-on and will continue to do so while pursuing our mission as always been on education, research and on-the ground management. As revealed in past letters, all of proposed changes or decisions are based on QDM philosophy with a management goal supported by harvest data and science. The QDMA also partners with federal and state wildlife agencies, conservation organizations and other groups locally and nationwide, the Maryland State Chapter of QDMA offers memberships to anyone with the desire to maximize the quality of their deer herd they hunt and/or manage. We, the Maryland State Chapter QDMA support other local and statewide groups by offering seminars and display booth at their events, in fact many are members of QDMA already. By joining QDMA you will receive the bimonthly journal "Quality Whitetails", which is the most comprehensive source of practical, reliable information on food plots, habitat, nutrition, whitetail management and much more. We encourage everyone to stop by a display booth at an event and take a look at a copy of Quality Whitetails. This information may help when

you and your group is putting together a proposal for future changes to management regulation and/or plans.

By Definition: Politics, (1) the science or art of political government. (4) Political methods or maneuvers. (5) Political principles or opinions. (6) Use of intrigue or strategy in obtaining any position of power or control.

By Definition: Science, (1) a branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of facts or truths systematically arranged and showing the operation of law. (2) systematized knowledge of the physical or material world....

With all of that being said, it's my "political opinion" that the state has an incredible job in balancing the politics while maintaining a successful deer management program. The State's Deer Project provides all of us with the second part of the 10 year Deer Plans now for 2009-2018. DNR Deer Project is responsible for providing an Annual Deer Report in this report harvest data is listed and much more. Yet it seems the balance leans towards Politics rather than Science. So what effect will Changes made for 2010-2011 regulations have on Maryland Deer Hunters/Managers? If you and/or your group are managing your hunting property under QDM guidelines or a part of a QDM Co-op, not much if any. But if not, science will measure results in the Annual Deer report, while political opinions will monitor the accomplishments of changes.

The take home message is as deer hunters and managers your voice is most important to future of Maryland Deer Hunting Heritage so make sure you take part in the future of Deer Hunting and Management. You make a management decision every time you harvest a deer. Don't let others make decisions that will have an effect on your future of deer hunting and management. Support local QDMA Branches, groups and organizations that will make a positive contribution to the future of deer management and deer hunting. After all it's your voice and you do make the final decision!

Respectfully,

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