Constituent support and input is an essential component of a successful deer management. As an additional step to engage constituents, specifically deer hunters, NCWRC staff conducted public deer forums in each of nine NCWRC Administrative Districts. All constituents were invited to attend these forums to hear results from the 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters and discuss potential management options that were developed based on survey results and a biological evaluation that was detailed in public forums in June 2015. A handout summary was provided to attendees (Appendix I).

Attendees were informed prior to, during, and in some cases after the presentation that forums were not public hearings, and management options presented had not been developed into proposed regulations. Development of proposed regulations will be based on all information gathered through this multi-year deer season frameworks evaluation. If developed, proposed regulations will be presented at public hearings in January 2018 and, if approved by the Commission, will be effective for the 2018/19 season.

We used interactive technology (iClicker®) during the presentations to allow attendees to anonymously comment on questions. This technology enabled staff biologists to pose questions to the audience during the presentation and discussion portions of the meetings. The use of this technology continues to be well received by attendees and provides staff and everyone in attendance the ability to ascertain the diversity of opinions within the audience.

Herein, we provide the results of the audience’s participation with answers to questions that were asked during the meetings. Because discussions evolved and differing attitudes and concerns were elicited during each meeting, the number of questions asked evolved as well. Staff asked certain predetermined questions at every forum, however questions were adaptively added as issues arose and the forums progressed; therefore, not all questions were asked in each district.

It is important to recognize that the responses to these questions represent the opinions of the 401 forum attendees (average 45 per district). While interaction with attendees provided a valuable opportunity for staff to receive feedback on specific management options, responses to our questions should not be interpreted as a statistically valid representation of deer hunters across the state or within a district. The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters, which received responses from 33,750 big-game license holders from across the state and conducted at the county level (average 307 deer hunters per county), was a rigorous scientific survey, and the results of which are statistically representative of the desires, expectations, and level of support for management strategies of the larger deer hunter population.
District, Date, Location, and Number of Constituents in Attendance at 2017 Deer Forums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-Jun</td>
<td>Williamston</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>31-May</td>
<td>New Bern</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30-May</td>
<td>Rocky Mount</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25-May</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>24-May</td>
<td>Graham</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23-May</td>
<td>Albemarle</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>18-May</td>
<td>Wilkesboro</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17-May</td>
<td>Morganton</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16-May</td>
<td>Clyde</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of attendees is based off the highest number of responses from any given question. This is a close but conservative estimate of the total constituent attendance. The average number of constituents in attendance per forum was 44.6 and ranged from 16 (D8) to 88 (D6).

Presentation Segment of the Forum – General Attendee Information

Questions were posed throughout the presentation to engage the audience, gather feedback, and gauge the composition of the attendance. The first set of questions were intended in part to familiarize attendees with the interactive technology.

Are you a deer hunter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, the results of first question indicated the overwhelming majority of attendees were deer hunters in all districts.
If you deer hunt, how many days do you deer hunt in a typical season?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-21</th>
<th>&gt;21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 29% of deer hunters indicated they hunted >21 days when asked this question in the 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters. The results of this question at the forums (65% statewide hunt >21 days) indicate hunters in attendance were notably more avid than the average deer hunter, and therefore opinions on some issues may vary considerably from the average hunter.

Have you seen the Biological Deer Management Units before tonight?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes, I saw them at the forums in 2015</th>
<th>Yes, I saw them online or in a handout</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The NCWRC made efforts through the 2015 Public Deer Forums and other presentations, web posts, social media, email blasts, news releases, media contacts, outdoor expos, and direct contact between staff and constituents to publicize information about the statewide biological evaluation of the herd and development of Biological Deer Management Units. Despite these efforts, most attendees at the forums indicated they had not seen the BDMUs prior to the presentation.
Did you participate in the 2016 internet survey of deer hunters?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the big-game license holders that were contacted through email and/or post-card to participate in the 2016 survey, 17% responded. Almost half of attendees at the forums participated in the survey. There could be several explanations for this, but one likely explanation is that hunters that take the time to complete the survey are also more likely to take the time to attend a public forum.

Which of these attributes of a deer season is most important to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Gun length</th>
<th>Blackpowder length</th>
<th>Timing of gun</th>
<th>Antlered bag</th>
<th>Antlerless bag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five key regulatory attributes of a deer season were identified by NCWRC biologists and were incorporated in the trade-off evaluations portion of the 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters. Results from the trade-off evaluation indicate that the length of gun season is consistently the most important attribute to hunters across the state. Though measured less meticulously in forum settings, attendees at the forums rated gun season length as the most important attribute statewide, and this rating was consistent across most districts. Gun season length was not rated as most important by attendees in District 7 and 8 which could be attributed to the small sample of hunters (30 and 14) and the avidity of those hunters compared to the average deer hunter.
How many of these potential season zones do you deer hunt?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five potential deer season zones were developed based on data from the 2015 Biological Evaluation of Deer Hunting Season Structures and Management Units and the 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters. These potential season zones were presented to attendees at the forum. Most attendees indicated they hunt in one (53%) or two (34%) of these zones.

**Potential Deer Season Zones Presented at Forums**

In which of these zones do you have the most interest in deer management?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>NW</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendees tended to have the most interest in the zone where the forum was taking place. Districts 1 and 8 had some of the greatest diversity of interest between zones. Of the 15 attendees at the D8 forum that responded to this question, nine were mostly interested in the potential Western Season Zone, and six in the Northwestern Season Zone. District 1 included members from hunt clubs that would be split by the potential creation of the Northeastern and Southeastern Deer Season Zones. Thirty-one of the 50 attendees who answered the question indicated their highest interest was in the Northeastern Season Zone, and 14 were mostly interested in the Southeastern Season Zone.

**Presentation Segment of the Forum – Balanced Options**

Using the best available science and for each potential Deer Season Zone, we developed an option that would balance hunter preferences and the biologically optimum management of the deer herd. The balanced option only addresses the five key regulatory attributes of a deer season used in the trade-off evaluations portion of the 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters.

### Balanced Options Presented at Forums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEASON ATTRIBUTE</th>
<th>Potential Deer Season Zones (Peak Breeding Dates)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western (Dec. 2(^{nd}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening of Blackpowder</td>
<td>Saturday before Thanksgiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Blackpowder</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening of Gun</td>
<td>Saturday after Thanksgiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Gun</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing of Gun</td>
<td>1st Sunday in January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antlerless Bag</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antlered Bag</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do you think about the balanced option in the potential Western Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Good balance</th>
<th>Leans too much towards hunter preference</th>
<th>Leans too much towards biological optimum</th>
<th>No preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td><strong>373</strong></td>
<td><strong>37%</strong></td>
<td><strong>13%</strong></td>
<td><strong>6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most attendees at the D8 and D9 forums indicated they had the most interest in the potential Western Season Zone. Of the 33 attendees that answered this question in these districts, 39% thought the balanced option is a good approach in the potential Western Season Zone, 45% thought it leans too much towards hunter preference, and 12% thought it leans too much towards the biological optimum. During the discussion portion of the forum, attendees were asked in what way does the balanced option lean too much towards hunter preference. No explanation was given by anyone in attendance in D9. Several D8 attendees vocalized we should do what is biologically appropriate with respect to season timing, length and bag limits even if it does not align with hunter preference.

What do you think about the balanced option in the potential Northwestern Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Good balance</th>
<th>Leans too much towards hunter preference</th>
<th>Leans too much towards biological optimum</th>
<th>No preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td><strong>377</strong></td>
<td><strong>42%</strong></td>
<td><strong>11%</strong></td>
<td><strong>8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all attendees at the D7 forum and 40% of attendees at the D8 forum indicated they have the most interest in the potential Northwestern Season Zone. Of the 46 attendees in these districts that responded to this question, 48% thought the balanced option was a good approach in the potential Northwestern Season Zone, 41% thought it leans too much towards hunter preference, and 6% though it leans too much towards biological optimum.
What do you think about the balanced option in the potential Central Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Good balance</th>
<th>Leans too much towards hunter preference</th>
<th>Leans too much towards biological optimum</th>
<th>No preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than 80% of attendees in the D5 and D6 forums indicated they are most interested in the potential Central Deer Season Zone. Of the 120 attendees in these districts that responded to this question, 64% thought the balanced option in the Central Season Zone was a good approach, 24% thought it leans too much towards hunter preference, and 7% thought it leans too much towards biological optimum. This question was not asked in D7 or D8 due to the lack of interest in the Central Season Zone and to provide more time for discussion following the presentation.

What do you think about the balanced option in the potential Northeastern Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Good balance</th>
<th>Leans too much towards hunter preference</th>
<th>Leans too much towards biological optimum</th>
<th>No preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most attendees at the D1 and D3 forums indicated their primary interest was in the Northeastern Season Zone. Of the 115 attendees that answered this question in these districts, 42% thought the balanced option in the potential Northeastern Season Zone is a good approach, 10% thought it leans too much towards hunter preference, and 43% thought it leans too much towards biological optimum. This question was not asked in D7 or D8 due to the lack of interest in the Northeastern Season Zone and to provide more time for discussion following the presentation.
What do you think about the balanced option in the potential Southeastern Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Good balance</th>
<th>Leans too much towards hunter preference</th>
<th>Leans too much towards biological optimum</th>
<th>No preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td><strong>344</strong></td>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
<td><strong>10%</strong></td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
<td><strong>16%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most attendees at the D2 and D4 forums indicated their primary interest was in the Southeastern Season Zone. Of the 85 attendees that answered this question in these districts, 53% thought the balanced option in the potential Southeastern Season Zone is a good approach, 15% thought it leans too much towards hunter preference, and 25% thought it leans too much towards biological optimum. This question was not asked in D7 or D8 due to the lack of interest in the Southeastern Season Zone and to provide more time for discussion following the presentation.

In the area you hunt most often, do you prefer the balanced option over the current regulations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>I'm OK with it if it helps the deer herd</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td><strong>390</strong></td>
<td><strong>41%</strong></td>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statewide, a strong majority of attendees supported (prefer it or are OK with it) the balanced option over the current regulations, and strong support was consistent across all districts, except D1. Hunters in the potential Northeastern Season Zone (primarily D1 and D3) would make some of the biggest trade-offs to bag limits, season timing, and season lengths under the balanced option presented because there is an opportunity to make notable biological improvements in this part of the state. Of the 55 attendees at the D1 forum, 27 supported the balanced option over the current regulations and 28 did not. Numerous individuals in attendance represented two clubs from Weyerhaeuser leases that primarily hunt with dogs on club lands that span across both potential Northeastern and Southeastern Deer Season Zones. Several hunters vocally opposed splitting the current Eastern Season Zone to avoid dividing club land and generally opposed all potential changes presented in the balanced option, including reducing the buck bag limit.
antlerless bag limit, and season length. Fifty-one percent (28) of hunters in attendance indicated they only hunt with dogs (see “Do you hunt deer with dogs?” in Discussion Segment of Forum below). The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters indicated that deer hunters that only hunt with dogs make up 2% of all hunters in the current Eastern Season. The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters also indicates hunters that only hunt with dogs tend to be slightly less supportive of changes in regulations to improve the condition of the deer herd than the average hunter. Even so, almost half (49%) of those in attendance supported the balanced option at the D1 forum.

Presentation Segment of the Forum – Other Considerations

Do you small game hunt or trap in most years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes, small game</th>
<th>Yes, trap</th>
<th>Yes, both</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td><strong>394</strong></td>
<td><strong>59%</strong></td>
<td><strong>2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17%</strong></td>
<td><strong>23%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most attendees statewide indicated they small game hunt. Nineteen percent either trap or both trap and small game hunt.

If you small game hunt or trap, do you support extending season to 1st Sunday in January statewide?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>I prefer current dates, but OK with it</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td><strong>346</strong></td>
<td><strong>58%</strong></td>
<td><strong>16%</strong></td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
<td><strong>6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extending the season into January may impact small game hunters and trappers who have limited access to private property during the deer firearms season. Most attendees statewide that indicated they small game hunt or trap support extending the season to the 1st Sunday in January. It should be noted that almost all attendees were avid deer hunters and sportsmen that
exclusively trap or small game hunt may have opinions that differ from those in attendance at the deer forum. Interestingly, of the 20 respondents to this question in D7, 65% oppose this idea. The response in D7 may attributed to the deer hunting avidity of the attendees and their general preference for a shorter gun season length.

If you hunt deer or bear in the Western Season Zone, which best explains your view?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Bear and deer seasons should not overlap</th>
<th>Willing to accept some overlap</th>
<th>I have no preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To reduce potential conflicts between user groups, particularly in national forests, Western bear and deer seasons currently do not overlap. Under the balanced option, blackpowder season for deer would overlap with the last day of the first bear season split, and deer gun season would overlap with the entire second split of the bear season. Most attendees at the deer forums in the mountain districts are willing to accept some overlap. Much like the small game scenario, these were deer forums, so those in attendance were primarily avid deer hunters and opinions may differ from bear hunters. Multiple bear hunters as well as some deer hunters in attendance at the D9 forum vocally expressed significant concern for conflicts that they believe will arise if Western bear and deer seasons overlap.

Do you hunt deer in an organized club?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statewide about half of hunters indicated they hunt in an organized club. More than half of attendees in D1, 2, 3 and 4 hunt in a club, and less than half of attendees in D5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 hunt in a club. The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters results indicated that 88% of deer hunters statewide hunt on properties less than 1,000 acres, the minimum acreage needed for club rules to be effective at obtaining club deer management objectives.
If you hunt in a club, are club rules more restrictive than WRC regulations for bucks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>53%</strong></td>
<td><strong>47%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About half of attendees that hunt in a club have club rules more restrictive than WRC regulations for bucks. This question was not asked in D7 because only one person indicated that they hunt in a club.

If you hunt in a club, are club rules more restrictive than WRC regulations for does?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>243</strong></td>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
<td><strong>61%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less than half of attendees that hunt in a club have club rules more restrictive than WRC regulations for does. This question was not asked in D7 because only one person indicated that they hunt in a club.

**Discussion Segment of the Forum**

Numerous topics were introduced by both staff and the attendees during the discussion segment of the forums. These topics generated discussion and allowed staff to answer general questions about deer management and get detailed feedback on the information and management options presented. As previously stated, questions evolved and were added to the forums as we progressed across the state, thus some questions were not asked at every district.

With the use of the iClicker® technology, we could show the attendees how difficult it can be to satisfy everyone when it comes to deer management. While many times the room seemed to be in unison on a topic, use of the iClicker® often demonstrated that there is a diversity of opinions.
Do you agree the county you most often hunt is in the correct potential Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td><strong>358</strong></td>
<td><strong>82%</strong></td>
<td><strong>12%</strong></td>
<td><strong>6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statewide, most attendees thought the county they had the most interest in was in the correct potential Deer Season Zone. As previously mentioned, several representatives in attendance at the D1 forum from two dog hunt clubs that span across both potential Northeastern and Southeastern Deer Season Zones vocally opposed splitting the current Eastern Season Zone. However, more attendees at the D1 forum agreed than disagreed the county they most often hunt is in the correct potential Deer Season Zone.

If you hunt in Moore County, which season zone do you prefer under the balanced option?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Southeastern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Biologically, Moore County is a better fit in the potential Central Deer Season Zone under the balanced option. This is largely due to fact that the timing of peak breeding aligns with the average peak breeding date in the Central Deer Season Zone, and the timing of harvest in the Central Deer Season Zone is a much better biological fit. The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters indicated most hunters in Moore County prefer their current 11-week gun season (current Eastern Season) over the 8-week gun season in the Central Season Zone under the balanced option. While biologically aligning with the Central Season Zone, Moore County was placed in the potential Southeastern Deer Season Zone to maintain or increase hunter satisfaction through maintaining an 11-week gun season. Most of Moore County was in the Central Deer Season prior to 2010, and was moved to the Eastern Deer Season, not for biological reasons, but at the request of a group of hunters that wanted to increase hunting opportunity. Numerous hunters vocally expressed an interest in moving all of Moore County back to the Central Deer Season Zone at the D6 forum to uphold pre-2010 hunting traditions, and to do what is biologically ideal for managing the herd. Of the 30 attendees at the D6 Forum that had an interest in deer management in Moore County, 83% thought Moore County belonged in the Central Deer Season Zone under the balanced option.
If you hunt in Cleveland, Rutherford or Polk County, do you agree with moving these counties to the NW Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Biologically, Rutherford and Polk Counties are a better fit in the potential Western Deer Season Zone. Cleveland County is a better fit biologically in the Northwestern Deer Season Zone. Cleveland, Rutherford and Polk Counties are currently connected in a special season under the current Western Deer Season frameworks. This special season was developed in 1999, and over the years has become more and more like the current Northwestern Season, particularly the timing and length of gun season. The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters indicated hunters in these counties prefer the timing of the opening of the Northwestern Season and a longer gun season. These counties were placed in the Northwestern Deer Season Zone under the potential zones presented at the forums not for biological reasons, but to maintain or increase hunter satisfaction. A few hunters vocally expressed concern over moving these counties to the Northwestern Season Zone at the D8 forum, and preferred to align these counties with the Western Deer Season Zone under the balanced option to do what is more biologically appropriate, even if it goes against what hunters most prefer. Of the eight respondents to this question, 75% did not agree with moving these counties to the Northwestern Deer Season Zone under the balanced option.

If you hunt in Cleveland Co., do you agree with moving this county to the NW Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters indicated Cleveland County hunters have a strong preference for the Northwestern Deer Season Zone. Unlike Rutherford and Polk Counties, there is no biological justification for keeping Cleveland County in the Western Deer Season Zone, so, this question was asked separately for Cleveland County, and then asked again for Rutherford and Polk Counties. Of the three respondents, two agreed with moving Cleveland County to the Northwestern Deer Season Zone.

If you hunt in Rutherford or Polk, do you agree with moving these counties to the NW Season Zone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters indicated Rutherford and Polk County hunters prefer the Northwestern Deer Season Zone. There is biological justification for keeping these counties in the Western Deer Season Zone under the balanced option. Of the six respondents, one agreed with moving Rutherford and Polk Counties from the Western Deer Season to the Northwestern Deer Season Zone under the balanced option.
Which do you prefer for closing date of gun season?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Jan. 1</th>
<th>1st Sun. in Jan</th>
<th>1st Sat. in Jan.</th>
<th>No preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>163</strong></td>
<td><strong>31%</strong></td>
<td><strong>27%</strong></td>
<td><strong>38%</strong></td>
<td><strong>4%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A hunter in the D5 forum expressed concern with closing the season on the first Sunday in January statewide under the balanced option. The hunter felt closing on Saturday was a better option because hunting deer with dogs is prohibited on Sundays by NC General Statute. A couple of hunters in both D3 and D4 expressed concern over extending the season into January as it may increase the number of adult antlerless bucks and button bucks harvested. Additionally, some hunters morally opposed extending harvest later in the season as pregnant does would be further along in gestation. Of the 163 attendees that responded to this question, 65% preferred closing on the first weekend in January over January 1, and slightly preferred closing on Saturday rather than Sunday. This question was derived after the D5 forum, so unfortunately we do not have results from D5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 attendees. It is conceivable that opinions could differ in areas of the state where dog hunting is not permitted.

Which type of equipment is most important to you for deer hunting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Bow</th>
<th>Crossbow</th>
<th>Blackpowder</th>
<th>Gun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
<td><strong>23%</strong></td>
<td><strong>3%</strong></td>
<td><strong>9%</strong></td>
<td><strong>64%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most hunters who were asked this question indicated gun was the most important equipment for deer hunting. However, a notable percentage (36%) chose something other than gun, which could be another indicator of the avidity of the deer hunters that attended the forums. It was noted that that in District 7, less than half of hunters chose gun as most important which could have contributed to their opposition to extending the gun season to the first weekend in January.

Hunters at several forums had questions about the impact the balanced option might have on archery season. Harvest rates are relatively low during archery season. Therefore, from a management perspective, archery season is a way to provide hunting opportunity with minimal impact to the resource. Under the balanced option presented, the current opening date for archery season would not change. Archery season by default would be extended if blackpowder season is shortened and gun season is shifted back in parts of the state. Most hunters vocally supported this general idea while some perceived an equitability issue between archery, blackpowder, and gun hunters.
Which do you prefer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Keep 2 weeks of blackpowder but shift back 1 week</th>
<th>1 week blackpowder and no change in gun (balanced)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hunters in the D7 Forum expressed concern over losing a week of blackpowder. We note that in the previous question, less than half of the hunters at the D7 forum indicated that gun was the most important equipment for deer hunting. Of the 27 attendees that responded to this question, two-thirds indicated they would rather keep two weeks of blackpowder season and shift the opening of blackpowder back 1-week rather than take a week off the front of blackpowder as presented in the balanced option. However, the option preferred by most in attendance at the forum may not be preferred by most Northwestern Deer Season Zone hunters because it would eliminate gun season for deer hunters during Thanksgiving week.

Do you hunt deer with dogs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Half the time</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of 13,515 deer hunters in the potential Northeastern and Southeastern Deer Season Zones that responded to this question in the 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters, 2% indicated they “always hunt with dogs,” and 74% indicated they “never hunt with dogs.” The portion of hunters that “always hunt with dogs” was higher at district forums where this question was asked, most notably in District 1.

What buck limit do you prefer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Don’t %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reducing the antlered buck bag limit from four to two in the potential Northeastern and Southeastern Deer Season Zones was not discussed by attendees in Districts 2 and 4. Several hunters in District 1 and one hunter in District 3 expressed concern over reducing the buck bag limit. When the audience was asked for their buck bag limit preference, the majority in D3 preferred a buck limit of two, and less than half preferred a buck bag limit of four in D1. Over 13,000 deer hunters in the Northeastern and Southeastern Deer Season Zones responded to the 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters. Based on their responses hunters in these two potential season zones most prefer a 2-antlered buck limit.

The biological benefits of reducing the buck bag limit in these two zones and creating a consistent statewide bag limit of two conceivably would have biological benefits across the state. Hunters west of the 4-buck limit line that travel east and may currently kill more than two bucks may become more selective with buck harvest in the areas they hunt both east and west of the
current 4-buck limit line. And conversely, hunters that travel west of the line would become more selective both east and west of the current 4-buck limit line. A consistent statewide buck bag limit also increases enforceability of bag limits, which may increase reporting compliance, which could result in biological improvements in herd management.

Several attendees in D7 expressed a preference for a 1-buck limit. The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters indicated hunters in all potential zones most prefer a 2-buck limit. Based on survey results, a 1-buck limit is not supported by hunters in any area of the state.

Antler restrictions were discussed at several of the district forums. We explained the challenges of implementing state mandated antler restrictions on private lands given the variation in habitats across regions and sometimes within a county. Ideally, antler restrictions should be specific to site productivity and the antler growth potential at the site. Additionally, the 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters revealed that there is no clear support from hunters anywhere in the state to implement antler restrictions on private lands. However, survey results indicated that there is support to implement further restrictions on antlered bucks on game lands.

### Do you support hunting with bait?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some attendees at the D3 forum expressed valid concerns over the negative biological impacts of baiting. The 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters indicates that statewide 65% of deer hunters support baiting, 19% do not support it, and 12% are neutral. Similarly, there was support for baiting among the attendees of the forum.

### What is your approach for managing coyotes where you hunt?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>I don't do anything</th>
<th>Shoot them when I see them</th>
<th>Actively hunt</th>
<th>Trap</th>
<th>Hunt and trap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>228</strong></td>
<td><strong>4%</strong></td>
<td><strong>61%</strong></td>
<td><strong>9%</strong></td>
<td><strong>2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>24%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this question was to ask and understand what deer hunters are currently doing to address coyotes on the properties they hunt. Most attendees indicated they manage coyotes on their property by shooting them when they see them. Only 26% trap or allow trapping where they hunt. Trapping is generally considered a more effective means of harvesting coyotes. In all, 96% of attendees take coyotes by some method on properties they hunt.
The topic of coyotes was brought up by attendees in 7 of 9 forums and this question was specifically asked in 6 forums. Interestingly, the topic of coyotes did not come up in D8 or D9. Coyotes have existed longer in D8 and D9 than anywhere else in the state, and these two districts are also the only districts where deer harvest and deer numbers are generally increasing.

Are you actively managing the habitat where you hunt beyond planting food plots or supplemental feeding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Habitat is a critical but often overlooked component of deer management. NCWRC private lands biologists in attendance at the D2, 3 and 4 forums recommended adding a couple of questions to generate discussion about habitat management, and to encourage interested attendees to contact them for one on one assistance on their property. About half of attendees indicated they are currently managing habitat through practices like prescribed burning, managing for early successional (fallow) areas, promoting mast producing trees and shrubs, and actively managing timber.

If you own the land you hunt on, are you interested in habitat enhancements other than food plots and supplemental feeding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I do not own the land I hunt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half of attendees do not own the land they hunt, and may be willing, but do not have the authority to enhance habitat where they hunt. Of those that own the property they hunt a strong majority were interested in habitat enhancements. Constituents in attendance were introduced to and encouraged to contact private lands biologists in attendance.

Was this forum helpful?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>92%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>96%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall the forum was well received and was beneficial for constituents and NCWRC staff in attendance. Most attendees were complementary and appreciative of the work the NCWRC has done, and may not completely agree, but mostly support the management options presented. Along with results of the 2015 Biological Evaluation of the Herd, the 2015 Deer Forums, and 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters, input from the 2017 Deer Forums will be a vital component in development of proposed deer regulations going forward.

Staff Observations and Perspective

Overall, deer hunters that attended the forums were supportive of our NCWRC’s efforts to address deer management and, as the 2016 survey results indicated, they were receptive to some possibility of change. Given the purpose of the forums, of greatest importance was the response to the question “In the area you hunt most often, do you prefer the balanced option over the current regulations?” Eighty percent (80%) of respondents indicated that they either supported the balanced option or were ok with it if it helps management of the deer herd.

Deer hunters statewide acknowledge and understand that deer densities have been trending downward over the last few years in many areas. The extent of concern and the perception of the declines did vary across districts. For example, hunters attending the D9 forum recognized that deer numbers are increasing on private lands in the west. With exception of forums conducted in D8 and 9, much discussion centered around sources of deer mortality that hunters believe are contributing to population declines.

There are several primary sources of deer mortality across our state (hunting, poaching, predation, disease, agriculture depredation shooting, and road kills) and hunters obviously recognize these. Much of the discussion portion at several forums involved the frustration hunters feel regarding mortality caused by predators, specifically coyotes, and agriculture depredation shooting, two sources which they perceive the NCWRC can control. What was surprising was that the most heated and passionate debate regarding these issues revolved around agriculture depredation shooting. We believe that hunters focused on this mortality source because it is human caused and they believe that the NCWRC can control it. They understand that the NCWRC can’t control disease or road kill and many are beginning to understand the limits of our ability to control predation. It was obvious that hunters prefer to reduce mortality on deer by any controllable source other than reducing their own harvest to address current downward population trends. In actuality, the only mortality source that the NCWRC can control through regulation is hunter harvest.

NCWRC biologists explained to attendees the challenges of reducing coyote numbers to a level that would lead to a positive response by the deer herd. Staff also discussed the inefficiency of focusing on coyote control as the primary method to increase deer numbers. Coyotes and other predators can have significant impacts on fawn recruitment but these impacts are highly variable across time and the landscape, and intensive removals, even at small scales, can be extremely
costly in both time and money. Additionally, research shows there is no guarantee intensive removals will improve fawn recruitment rates.

Hunting and trapping of coyotes should be promoted, but hunters should not expect that predator removal alone will increase deer numbers. We explained that improving the timing of harvest under the balanced option presented will improve the adult deer sex ratio prior to peak breeding, which could improve fawn survival and condition. We also clarified that habitat improvement can improve deer productivity and offset losses of fawns to coyotes. Finally, we explained that reducing doe harvest is by far the most effective way to increase or stabilize deer numbers where deer numbers are declining due to coyotes and other factors. This explanation appeared to be understood by most but frustration with the idea that hunters would have to change their doe harvest strategies remains.

Hunters in most districts perceived depredation harvest by farmers to be a major contributing factor to deer declines in the area that they hunt. These hunters also expressed concern over what they perceived to be an elevated number of depredation kills occurring, as well as underreporting of the depredation kill. It is likely that the depredation kill has not increased but rather more attention has been given to depredation shooting in areas where deer numbers are declining. At a landscape scale, the proportion of deer taken in the act of causing damage (unknown) or through depredation permits (1% of total harvest) is believed to be small, but could have visible impacts at a local level. Hunters at a local level could have valid concerns about the impact of depredation harvest on the herd in the area they hunt.

We explained the NCWRC has no authority over the long-standing statute passed by the NC Legislature that allows a landholder to shoot an animal in the act of causing damage. We also explained that the NCWRC has authority over depredation permits, and clarified the process, restrictions, and reporting requirements that go along with those permits. We explained that NCWRC biologists annually monitor trends in our hunter harvest survey, hunter observation survey, reported harvest, and biological data collections (age, weights, antler measurements, reproductive measures) to account for unknown non-harvest mortalities such as depredation, poaching, disease, roadkill, and predation.

Few comments were received regarding conflicts with other user groups, except for potential conflicts with western bear season hunters. A few comments were received about zones in which certain counties should be placed, but overall hunters seemed satisfied with the arrangement of the new season zones and the balanced options for seasons presented.
Appendix I – 2017 Deer Forum Handout

2017 Deer Forums
Hunter Survey Results and Potential Management Options

Purpose of these Forums
This is not a public hearing; management options discussed are ideas, not proposed regulations. Staff Biologists will present survey results and discuss potential management options. Development of proposed regulations will be based on all information gathered through this multi-year evaluation. If developed, they will be presented at public hearings in January 2018, and if approved by the Commission will be effective for the 2018/19 season.

Evaluation of Deer Herd
Presented at Public Deer Forums in 2015. The condition of the herd can be improved by varying degrees across the state by 1) reducing young buck harvest, 2) shifting the timing of buck harvest later, and 3) adjusting doe harvest rates. www.ncwildlife.org/deerstudy

Evaluation of Deer Hunter Desires
2016 Survey of Deer Hunters: 196,770 contacted, 33,750 responded (17%)

Antlered Buck Management:
- 88% hunt on <1,000 acres; minimum needed to meet their objectives
- 68% believe we have too few mature bucks (2.5+ years of age)
- 55% oppose further restricting buck harvest on private lands

Doe Management:
- Many hunters believe deer numbers have declined in parts of the state
- Hunters want deer numbers to increase (48%) or remain stable (31%)
- Support for reducing doe harvest to increase/stabilize deer numbers unclear

Support for Change:
- Hunter satisfaction has declined
- 81% of hunters are willing to make changes
- What trade-offs are hunters willing to make to improve herd condition?

Importance of Attributes to Hunters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gun length</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackpowder length</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening of gun</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antlered bag limit</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antlerless bag limit</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gun Season Length – Most important to hunters; trade-offs using this attribute limited

Antlerless Bag Limit – Statewide bag limit of 4 could help address hunter’s desire to stabilize/increase deer numbers in areas

Antlered Bag Limit – Bag limit of 2 is preferred and aligns with biological improvements in East

Blackpowder – 1-week season is a viable trade-off to improve timing of harvest relative to peak breeding

Opening of Gun – Least important to hunters; small shifts to open later would improve harvest timing
Potential Management Options

Using the best available science, a balanced option was developed for five potential season zones. This balanced option increases the number of biological objectives met for a “well managed herd” from 33-50% to 66-100% while minimizing negative trade-offs to hunting opportunities and traditions. The balanced option could help stabilize/increase deer herds and improve the buck age structure in parts of the state. The balanced option would improve timing of the harvest relative to peak breeding across the state, which not only has numerous biological benefits, but can magnify overall rutting activity and improve hunter experiences.

Potential Deer Season Zones

These potential deer season zones would create a split in the current Eastern Season to better account for biological variability in deer herds, and would merge the special season created for Cleveland, Rutherford and Polk Counties with counties in the current Northwestern Season.

Potential Balanced Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEASON ATTRIBUTE</th>
<th>Western (Dec. 2nd)</th>
<th>Northwestern (Nov. 25th)</th>
<th>Central (Nov. 15th)</th>
<th>Northeastern (Nov. 7th)</th>
<th>Southeastern (Oct. 27th)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening of Blackpowder</td>
<td>Saturday before Thanksgiving</td>
<td>2 Saturdays before Thanksgiving</td>
<td>3 Saturdays before Thanksgiving</td>
<td>Saturday nearest Oct. 22nd</td>
<td>Saturday nearest Oct. 15th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Blackpowder</td>
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<td>1 week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening of Gun</td>
<td>Saturday after Thanksgiving</td>
<td>Saturday before Thanksgiving</td>
<td>2 Saturdays before Thanksgiving</td>
<td>Saturday nearest Oct. 29th</td>
<td>Saturday nearest Oct. 22nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Gun</td>
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<td>10 weeks</td>
<td>11 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing of Gun</td>
<td>1st Sunday in January</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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