

07hr_SC-ENR_CRule_06-131_pt01



(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2007-08

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Environment and Natural Resources (SC-ENR)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... **HR** ... **bills and resolutions** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
 - (**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
 - (**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Mike Barman (LRB) (June/2014)

Senate

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Clearinghouse Rule 06-131

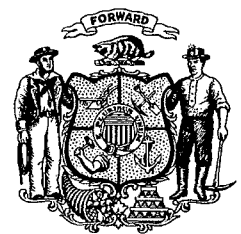
Relating to deer hunting season and permit issuance regulation changes.
Submitted by Department of Natural Resources.

March 13, 2007 Referred to Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

April 13, 2007 No action taken.



Elizabeth Bier
Committee Clerk



**NOTICE TO PRESIDING OFFICERS
OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING**

Pursuant to s. 227.19, Stats., notice is hereby given that final draft rules are being submitted to the presiding officer of each house of the legislature. The rules being submitted are:

Natural Resources Board Order No. WM-10-07

Legislative Council Rules Clearinghouse Number 06-131

Subject of Rules Deer hunting season and permit
issuance regulation changes

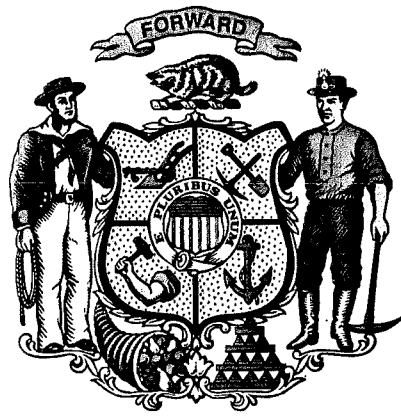
Date of Transmittal to Presiding Officers March 8, 2007

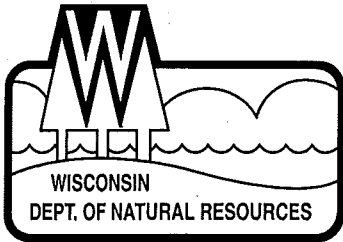
Send a copy of any correspondence or notices pertaining to this rule to:

**Carol Turner, Rules Coordinator
DNR Bureau of Legal Services
LS/5, 101 South Webster**

**Telephone: 266-1959
e-mail: turnec@dnr.state.wi.us**

An electronic copy of the proposed rule may be obtained by contacting Ms. Turner





State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor
Scott Hassett, Secretary

101 S. Webster St.
Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7921
Telephone 608-266-2621
FAX 608-267-3579
TTY Access via relay - 711

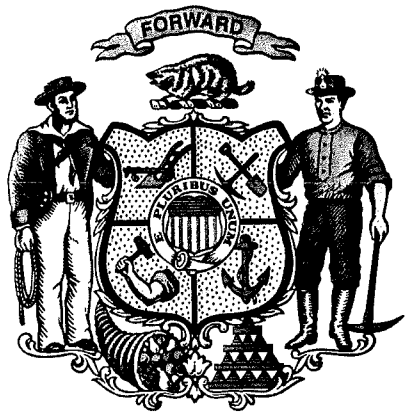
December Firearm Deer Hunt, CR 06-131 March, 2007

- Repeals sunset of experimental Dec. antlerless gun deer hunt so it can run for 4 days beginning the 2nd Thurs. after Thanksgiving; Dec. 6 – 9 in 2007.
- Proposed as a permanent season in 2006 but JCRAR requested one-year sunset north of Hwy 8 in order to evaluate conflicts with snowmobilers.
- There was no snow north of Hwy 8 and no conflicts were reported. Conflicts were not reported to DNR in other areas where trails were open.
- A concern was that hunters would block access to the people who maintain and place signs on trails prior to the snowmobile season. Snow is not needed to assess this concern and no problems were reported.
- Season provided 4 days of additional recreational opportunity to hunters.
- 4,361 antlerless deer were harvested north of Hwy 8 during the December hunt in 2006, adding 7% to the antlerless kill in that area.
- This harvest was important from a herd management standpoint.
- Hearings held in Park Falls, Rhinelander, and Madison plus two NRB meetings in Madison from December through February:

Summary of Public Hearing Attendance Support and Opposition.

	Attendance	Testimony In Favor	Registered Support	Testimony In Opposition	Registered Opposition	No Position Stated
Rhinelander	35	1	8	4	11	11
Park Falls	20	2	11	0	2	5
Fitchburg	13	2	8	0	0	3
Total	68	5	27	4	13	19

- Ideally, rules will be out of committee in May so deer hunting reg's. can be printed and distributed well in advance of the first deer season on Sept. 15.
- For information contact Keith Warnke, Big Game Biologist, 608-264-6023, keith.warnke@wisconsin.gov



REPORT TO LEGISLATURE

NR 10.01, Wis. Adm. Code
Deer hunting season and permit issuance regulation changes

Board Order No. WM-10-07
Clearinghouse Rule No. 06-131

Basis and Purpose of the Proposed Rule

Part of the 2006 deer rule package that was implemented in December, 2006 was the result of a Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules' motion requesting that the Department agree to a one-year experiment with the antlerless only December 4-day gun deer hunt north of Highway 8. As a result, the hunt was limited to a one-year trial in 2006. In order for the December gun hunt to continue in Deer Management Units north of Highway 8 beyond 2006, the Department must modify the administrative code. During the one-year trial, the Department has collected data to evaluate the effectiveness of herd control under this structure and attempted to assess whether the 4-day antlerless December gun deer hunt impacted snowmobile recreational opportunity.

Deer harvest in 2006

The 2006 December antlerless season was important from a herd management standpoint. A preliminary total of 19,000 antlerless deer were harvested from December 7 to 10 statewide. 2,800 of those deer were harvested from deer management units north of Hwy. 8, adding 7% to the total antlerless kill in that area, an average of about 100 deer per unit. The added 4 days of gun hunting provided hunters with more opportunity to hunt antlerless deer during the time period they indicated that they favored.

Conflict with snowmobilers

The 2006 December antlerless season appears not to have had any impact on snowmobile recreational opportunity. An argument made by people who are opposed to the season was that it would make access to trails for regular maintenance and signage difficult. The department received no complaints that cited specific incidences of this problem at three hearings or during the public comment period. As shown in Appendix A, B and C, snow conditions were insufficient for trails to be open in nearly all areas north of Highway 8. Trails were open in some areas of southern Wisconsin, such as Rock County, but no conflicts were reported.

The rule language authorizing the special youth gun deer hunt event is modified in this package to clarify Earn-a-buck and CWD tagging requirements during that season. This rule order also includes several housekeeping changes pertaining to deer hunting in several state parks. These portions of the rule do not establish new deer seasons, rather they correctly codify seasons that have existed in the parks in previous years. In drafting the 2006 Deer Hunting Rule, major revisions to NR 10 took place to consolidate complicated state park deer hunting rule language. During the consolidation, several drafting errors and omissions occurred. These housekeeping changes are included to correct those drafting errors.

Summary of Public Comments

All comments received at the public hearings and during the comment period related to eliminating the sunset of the December hunt north of Hwy 8. Overall; 104 people supported the proposed rule, 37 people opposed the rule, and 19 people did not register an opinion.

In addition to testimony and registrations at hearings, 72 people submitted written comments expressing support for eliminating the sunset of the December firearm season and 20 people opposed the season.

People who wrote to express opposition were split between opposing the season because of concern about conflicts with snowmobilers, they prefer to hunt in October, or they do not believe there are enough deer to support extra hunting opportunities. Resolutions of opposition from the Iron County Board of Supervisors and the Iron County Development Council focused on use of public and private lands by both hunters and snowmobilers.

Support for the proposal as a whole was widespread among most hunters. Supporters mentioned favoring a December hunt over an October hunt as one reason for supporting the proposal while others mentioned they liked the extra hunting opportunity. Hunters did not generally perceive that there was conflict between snowmobilers and hunters.

Response to Public Comments:

Comment: Additional harvest of antlerless deer is not needed in northern Wisconsin.

Department Response: The department is confident that there are enough deer in all areas north of Hwy 8 to support harvest from this season and that in certain areas additional harvest is very important. Wisconsin's deer population model has received positive reviews by many experts, deer harvest remains high and predictable year-after-year, and overharvest is very unlikely because hunting will only be possible when antlerless deer permits have been issued.

Comment: A December gun hunt will delay the start of snowmobiling.

Department response: There is currently a 10-day December gun hunt statewide (muzzleloading season) in which up to 70,000 hunters participate. South of Hwy. 8 there is a 4-day mid-December antlerless only gun deer hunt in select units. In addition, the archery season extends through the month of December and into early January across the state. There is no evidence that these hunts or any other type of hunting that occurs in December delays the start of the snowmobile season. When there has been adequate snow for snowmobiling south of Hwy. 8, snowmobile trails were open during the December deer gun hunt without reported conflicts.

Comment: Private landowners will refuse to allow snowmobile trails across their land to open if there is a December gun hunt.

Department response: Again, there is currently a 10-day December gun hunt statewide (muzzleloading season) in which up to 70,000 hunters participate, a 4-day unit specific gun deer hunt south of Hwy. 8, and a statewide archery hunt.. There is no evidence that these hunts or any other type of hunting that occurs in December affect access to private land for snowmobile trails.

Comment: Private landowners will refuse access to trails for maintenance and signing work while gun hunting is open, and a lot or a majority of trail maintenance and sign placement occurs after the close of the 9-day gun season.

Department response: Of over 6,400 hours of trail maintenance and sign placement activities reported in 2004 in Vilas, Ashland, Bayfield, Iron, and Forest counties (DNR records), 12% were recorded during November 15-30 (during the regular 9-day gun hunt), 12% during December 1-15 (muzzle-loading season and proposed 4-day gun hunt), and only 4% were recorded December 6-15 (dates which could include the proposed 4-day gun hunt). The vast majority of trail maintenance and sign work hours (88%) were recorded before December 1 in 2004.

Comment: Herd control is best done in October prior to the regular 9-day gun hunt and not in December.

Department response: Herd control is accomplished by Wisconsin deer hunters. For many hunters, December is their desired time to hunt. We agree that the October hunt is an effective tool. This proposal does not prevent the reinstatement of an October hunt if needed.

Comment: Tourism and income will be negatively impacted by the delay of the snowmobile season if the December gun hunt is approved.

Department response: There is little evidence that any of the current December deer hunting opportunities including the 10-day muzzleloader, the 4-day mid-December gun hunt south of Hwy. 8, or the late archery seasons, delays the start of the snowmobile season or impacts revenue from snowmobiling. Snowmobiling begins when adequate snow falls and the ground below is frozen regardless of whether there is deer hunting or any other hunting taking place. We do not believe that a December gun deer hunt or any other type of hunting will impact the start of the snowmobiling season.

December gun hunting may have added to the number of people visiting areas north of Hwy. 8.

Modifications Made

No modifications were made as a result of the public hearings.

Appearances at the Public Hearing

January 16, 2007 – Rhinelander

In support:

James D. Otto, Harshaw Wanderers Snowmobile Club, 4895 Jimmy Lane, Harshaw, WI 54529
Steven P. Oestreicher, 8475 N. Oneida Lake Drive, Harshaw, WI 54529
Roger Sabota, 5000 Isle View Drive, Rhinelander, WI 54801
Neil R. Putenpal, W4517 Amanda Lane, Tomahawk, WI 54487
Jean Gatton, 432 Highway F, Antigo, WI 54409
John Gatton, 432 County Road F, Antigo, WI 54409
Robert D. [last name illegible], P.O. Box 445, Boulder Junction, WI 54512
Steve Heiting, 8148 Lost Lake Drive South, Saint Germain, WI 54558
Michael Fleury, 6535 Highway K, Rhinelander, WI 54501

In opposition:

Mike Hammes, Bear Trap Inn, 6911 Thousand Island Lake Road, Land O'Lakes, WI 54540
Michael P. Keintz, 6473 Spruce Meadows Lane, P.O. Box 966, Land O'Lakes, WI 54540
Ken Anderson, P.O. Box 294, Eagle River, WI
Ron Wallfer, 3795 Meta Lake Road, Eagle River, WI 54521
John Peroutky, 935 Rolling Ridge Road, Eagle River, WI 54521
Ron Engels, 1300 Moonlite Drive, Eagle River, WI 54521
Francis Mathieu, 2166 Vista View, Eagle River, WI 54521
Ronald T. Rogers, 6103 Point Drive, Rhinelander, WI 54501
Henry R. Kosanda, President, Vilas Co. Snowmobile Alliance, P.O. Box 476, St. Germain, WI 54558
Tom Cjrostemsem, President, BoBoen Snowmobile Club, P.O. Box 399, St. Germain, WI 54558
Gary Jacobi, 7005 N. Rainbow Drive, St. Germain, WI 54558
Andrew Malecki, Jr., 1131 S. Fisk Street, Green Bay, WI 54304
Gene Dallman, 841 Highway 45, Pelican Lake, WI 54463
Tom Tomlanevich, P.O. Box 295, Eagle River, WI 54521
Orv Langohr, 14230 Pigeon River Road, Cleveland, WI

As interest may appear:

Tim Johnson, 4479 C.C. Road, Rhinelander, WI
Kurt Butler, 13643 Waubee Lake Drive, Lakewood, WI 54138
Rick Eineichner, W6906 Loup Road, Tomahawk, WI 54487

Matthew Roberts, 2281 Highway 45 South, Monico, WI 54501
Kurtis Larson, 3394 Lumber Lane, Rhinelander, WI 54501
Jerry Roberts, 1943 Highway 8 East, Rhinelander, WI
J.P. Pozarski, 4129 North Bay Road, Rhinelander, WI
Steve Doyen, 2532 Millesville Lane, Phelps, WI 54554
Dale Mayo, 3342 Highway 17 North, Conover, WI
Dave Peterson, 620 4th Street, Plover, WI 54467
Dan Balog, 6421 Forest Lake, Land O'Lakes, WI

January 17, 2007 – Park Falls

Dan C. Cobb, 10646 N. Riverside Road, Hayward, WI 54843
Gary VanderWyst, 300 W. Main Street, P.O. Box 435, Butternut, WI 54514
Yvonne Mittern, 5005 N. Musky Point Road, Mercer, WI 54547
Rich Mazol, 5005 N. Musky Point Road, Mercer, WI 54547
Chris Hoffman, 870 7th Avenue South, Park Falls, WI 54514
Vincent A. Franzen, W9484 Highway 70, Park Falls, WI 54552
James A. Schmitt, 6536 Turtle Flambeau Dam Road, Butternut, WI
Chuck Woelfel, N15831 Perch Road, Park Falls, WI 54552
Roland Peterson, 1503 9th Avenue West, Ashland, WI 54806
Bruce Prentice, 604 3rd Street West, Ashland, WI 54806
Curtis Capelle, W7494 County Road West, Phillips, WI 54555
Larry Roth, 255 Sanders Avenue, Park Falls, WI 54552
Richard Mihalek, 801 7th Avenue East, Ashland, WI

In opposition:

William Flietner, W9725 Balsam Road, Phillips, WI 54555
Terrence J. Fleming, W6931 Chada Road, Fifield, WI 54524

As interest may appear:

Barb Richter, N14268 Lofdahl Road, Fifield, WI 54524
Earl Schwarzhuber, N16096 Nehiba Road [no city given]
Al Gerber, Box 36, Radisson, WI 54867
Myron Anderson, 45851 State Highway 112, Ashland, WI 54806
Pete Bartelt, 604 S. Cyder Avenue, Phillips, WI 54555

January 23, 2007 – Fitchburg

In support:

Joe Caputo, 6320 Sighting Road, McFarland, WI 53558
Raymund Robbeloth, N9285 Wild Oak Road, Belleville, WI 53508
Al Phelan, 3628 Canter Drive, Madison, WI 53718
Jim Shurts, 2822 Chamberlain Avenue, Madison, WI 53705
Anthony Grabski, 5180 Ridge View Road, Blue Mounds, WI 53517
Gary Schenck, N4035 Ehrke Road, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538
Larrie Hazen, 7656 Big Green Road, Mount Hope, WI 53816
Michael Wenholz, 4002 Dempsey Road, Madison, WI 53716
Walter C. Herbert, 6513 Gina Lane, DeForest, WI 53532
George Meyer, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, 201 Randolph Drive, Madison, WI 53717

In opposition – none

As interest may appear:

Sam Landes, 7353 Springhelt Drive, Dane, WI 53529
Morris Nelson, 10422 N. Wallin Road, Edgerton, WI 53534
Tom Chvala, W6595 Highway V, Lake Mills, WI 53551

Changes to Rule Analysis and Fiscal Estimate

None were required.

Response to Legislative Council Rules Clearinghouse Report

The recommendations were accepted.

Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

The proposed rule pertains to deer hunting and permit issuance. These rules are applicable to individual sportspersons and impose no compliance or reporting requirements for small businesses, nor are any design or operational standards contained in the rule. Therefore, a final regulatory flexibility analysis is not required.

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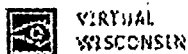
Spring

Summer

Fall



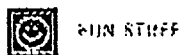
TRIP PLANNER



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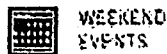
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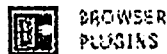
FUN STUFF



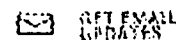
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WEEKEND EVENTS



BROWSER PLUGINS



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Snow Conditions | [Sign up to receive snow condition updates by e-mail](#)

Last Updated 12/12/2006

Snow reports for 2006 are starting to trickle in. With the temperatures dropping, watch this space for ongoing updates.

Keep in touch with the latest and greatest info - bookmark the Wisconsin Snow Condition report. Updated weekly, if not daily, during the winter months by trail groomers and other front-line weather spotters, the snow conditions report is your guide to who's getting the freshest powder, how much they're getting and what conditions you can expect for your winter sports retreat.

For more outdoor conditions, including ice conditions, visit the [Dept. of Natural Resources'](#) online report.

Ride safe this winter! Visit the [Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs](#) site for snowmobile

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[Cross Country Skiing Conditions](#)
[Snowmobiling Conditions](#)

[Downhill Skiing Conditions](#)

Central Wisconsin



Destination	Update	Base (in inches)	# of Runs Open	Condition
<u>Granite Peak Ski Area at Rib Mountain</u>	12/08/06			
<u>Kewaunee County</u>	12/06/06	0 inches	0	Closed
<u>Nordic Mountain Ski, Snowboard, and Tubing Area</u>	12/06/06	12in - 28in	7	Excellent
<u>Nutt Hill</u>	12/06/06			Closed
<u>Powers Bluff County Park</u>	12/12/06			Closed
<u>Standing Rocks Park</u>	12/06/06			Closed
<u>Whitetail Ridge Ski Area</u>	12/06/06			
<u>Winter Park Recreation Area</u>	12/06/06	0	0	Closed

North Wisconsin

Destination	Update	Base (in inches)	# of Runs Open	Condition
<u>Christic Mountain</u>	12/12/06	23-45"	8	Closed
<u>Mont du Lac</u>	12/06/06			Closed
<u>Trollhaugen Ski Resort</u>	12/06/06	12-26	6	

South Wisconsin

Destination	Update	Base (in inches)	# of Runs Open	Condition
<u>Cascade Mountain Ski & Snowboard Area</u>	12/05/06	20	5	Good
<u>Christmas Mountain Village Golf & Skiing</u>	12/05/06			Closed
<u>Little Switzerland Ski Area</u>	12/07/06	6-48	0	
<u>Sunburst Ski Area</u>	12/06/06	12-18"	9	Excellent
<u>Tyrol Basin Ski & Snowboard Area</u>	12/07/06	12-24	8	Excellent

Cross Country Skiing Conditions

Central Wisconsin

Destination	Update	Groomed	Conditions
<u>Calumet County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Chippewa County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Dunn County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Eau Claire</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Pond du Lac County</u>	12/08/06	No	Closed

Juneau County	12/05/06		Closed
La Crosse County	11/30/06		Closed
Monroe County	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Portage County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Shelbygan County</u>	12/12/06	Yes	Poor
<u>Standing Rocks Park</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
Waupaca County	12/06/06		Closed
Waushara County	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Wood County</u>	12/12/06		Closed

North Wisconsin

Destination	Update	Groomed	Conditions
<u>Asiland Area</u>	12/11/06	No	Closed
<u>Bayfield County</u>	12/05/06	No	Closed
<u>Boulder Junction Area</u>	12/12/06	No	Closed
<u>Door County</u>	12/06/06	No	Poor
<u>Douglas County</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Florence County</u>	12/11/06	No	Closed
<u>Forest County</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Hurley Area</u>	12/12/06		Closed
<u>Langlade County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Manitowish Waters Area</u>	12/12/06	No	
<u>Polk County</u>	12/12/06	No	Closed
<u>Price County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed

South Wisconsin

Destination	Update	Groomed	Conditions
Dane County	12/06/06	No	Poor
<u>Governor Dodge State Park</u>	12/12/06		Closed
<u>Governor Nelson State Park</u>	12/06/06	Yes	Closed
<u>Mirror Lake State Park</u>	12/06/06		Closed
Racine County	12/05/06		Closed
Sauk County	12/05/06		Closed
<u>Waukesha County</u>	12/06/06	Yes	Good

Snowmobiling Conditions

Central Wisconsin

Destination	Update	Groomed	Conditions
<u>Adams County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Calumet County</u>	12/07/06		Closed
<u>Chippewa County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Dunn County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Eau Claire County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Fond du Lac County</u>	12/08/06	No	Closed
<u>Green Lake County</u>	12/11/06	No	Closed
<u>Juneau County</u>	12/05/06		Closed
<u>Kewaunee County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>La Crosse County</u>	11/30/06		Closed
<u>Marquette County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Monroe County</u>	12/12/06	No	Closed
<u>Outagamie County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Portage County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Sheboygan County</u>	12/12/06	No	Closed
<u>Trempealeau County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Waupaca County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Waushara County</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Wood County</u>	12/12/06		Closed

North Wisconsin

Destination	Update	Groomed	Conditions
<u>Ashland Area</u>	12/11/06	No	Closed
<u>Barron County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Bayfield County</u>	12/05/06	No	Poor
<u>Boulder Junction Area</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Burnett County</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Door County</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Douglas County</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Eagle River Area</u>	12/12/06	No	Closed
<u>Florence County</u>	12/11/06	No	Closed
<u>Forest County</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Hudley Area</u>	12/12/06	Yes	Poor

<u>Land O' Lakes Area</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Langlade County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Manitowish Waters Area</u>	12/12/06	No	Closed
<u>Mercer Area</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>Polk County</u>	12/12/06	No	Closed
<u>Price County</u>	12/11/06	No	Poor
<u>Shawano County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed
<u>St. Germain Area</u>	12/11/06		Closed
<u>Washburn County</u>	11/22/06		Closed

South Wisconsin

Destination	Update	Groomed	Conditions
<u>Columbia County</u>	12/01/06		Closed
<u>Crawford County</u>	12/12/06		Closed
<u>Dane County</u>	12/06/06		Closed
<u>Dodge County</u>	12/12/06		Closed
<u>Governor Dodge State Park</u>	12/12/06		Closed
<u>Grant County</u>	12/07/06		Closed
<u>Lafayette County</u>	12/12/06		Closed
<u>Milwaukee County</u>	12/07/06	No	Closed
<u>Racine County</u>	12/05/06		Closed
<u>Rock County</u>	12/05/06		Closed
<u>Sauk County</u>	12/05/06		Closed
<u>Waukesha County</u>	12/06/06	No	Closed

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xc ski trails in Barron Co were open Dec 7-10

Snowmobile Trail Report during 2006 December Antlerless Hunt

County	Biologist Reporting	Were snowmobile trails open?	If trails were closed, what was the reason?	Additional Comments
Washburn	Gary Dumsdor and Nancy Christel	No	Inadequate Snow	No complaints or concerns. In the last 7 years, there was only one year that they opened before December 15 th .
Burnett	Pats Engstrom and Wanda Oustad	No	Inadequate Snow	No complaints or concerns. The trail coordinators and they typically do not open until December 10 th or 11 th and they plan to open the trails in the second week of December. If snow conditions are good, usually they plan to open the same day in conditions were good. However, because we did not have any snow.
Douglas	Greg Kessler	No	Inadequate Snow	2-4 inches of snow fell Tuesday night before the seasons. No fresh snow during the 4-day hunt. Snow on south slopes and fields mostly gone by Saturday evening due to temps and sunshine. Douglas county classifies their trails as either summer or winter trails. They plan to open-close these trails based on weather and proper preparation, regardless of deer seasons. They may add signage to warn users during years when trails are expected to be used during on ongoing gun seasons, but it will not dictate when trails are open or closed, with one exception of an easement where the landowner has stipulated that the trail will not open with less than 6 inches of snow nor until all gun deer season are completed.
Florence and Forest	Jeremy Holtz	No	Inadequate Snow	Spoke with trail coordinators for both Florence and Forest counties. Apparently these counties usually do not have open trails suitable conditions at this time of year. In fact, gun seasons are common. Both counties have good snow conditions, but county officials have been unable to open trails due to time and difficulty in getting snow machines to work. Local clubs have been unable to open trails due to time and difficulty in getting snow machines to work.
Barron and Polk	Kevin Morgan	No	Inadequate Snow	There was 1" of snow at the beginning of the antlerless hunt and basically none when it ended. No snowmobiling opportunity was missed because of the December antlerless hunt.
Prescott	Pat Beiring	No	Inadequate Snow	Jack Nedland, Barron County Forest and Recreation Administrator, is very outspoken about what he feels is a very mistaken emphasis on the "missed" snowmobiling opportunity that will occur with a December gun hunt. In the farm fringe country, they are lucky if they have snow by Christmas that allows snowmobiling on the trails. There has to be a significant snowfall and a good base before they even start grooming the trails in both Barron and Polk County and that just does not happen in early December very often even in the good years. His opinion is that shooting the deer is more important than 4 potentially missed days of snowmobiling recreation. I think most foresters would agree. Weekday hunting pressure was light but interest was pretty good on Saturday and Sunday.
Langlade	Eric Barchert	No	Inadequate Snow	Spoke with Eric Barchert, the county forest administrator for Langlade County and he said that the trails were not open. They usually do not have trails open until after the 15 th of December, but there is not enough snow for snowmobiling. They typically do not have trails open until after the 15 th of December, but there is not enough snow for snowmobiling. They typically do not have trails open until after the 15 th of December, but there is not enough snow for snowmobiling. They typically do not have trails open until after the 15 th of December, but there is not enough snow for snowmobiling. Trail opening is on going after the 15 th of December, but there is not enough snow for snowmobiling. Trail opening is on going after the 15 th of December, but there is not enough snow for snowmobiling.
				I talked with our County snowmobile trail coordinator today and she had not received any complaints from clubs regarding the hunt. In fact she said most clubs had a bulk of their trail work done prior to the gun deer season.

Bayfield	David Lindsew	Yes			Trail open by definition on Dec 1. None of the trails are frozen or packed, most are unrideable due to insufficient snow. For the most part, I don't have snow. Trails over the weekend were in the low 40's. Some of the trails open on Dec 1st. Other trails are multi-use trails and do not close just being open is not an indication of condition or usability.
Ashland and Iron	Bruce Bacon	No			Iron Co: Had several landowners request trail(s) be closed during 4 day hunt. Landowner preferred to hunt deer. Ashland Co: "Potential to upset landowners." Administrator wanted to emphasize trails were closed due to 4 day antlerless hunt! Poor snow conditions existed for snowmobiling in Ashland County. Very marginal in Iron County.
Vilas	Linda Wann	No			Snowmobile trails are no longer open. There was a foot or two of snow on the ground during the antlerless hunt. Trail signing was completed before the antlerless hunt. Temperature over the weekend were in the high 30's. Reports from hunters were that hunter pressure was very low.
Oneida	Ren Eckstein	No			Oneida County Trail Coordinator, John Bilegan, reports that all snowmobile trails were closed during the hunt. John also reports that he heard of no problems setting up trails because of the hunt. John said ever if there were a few problems in Oneida County those few places could easily be set up for snowmobiling this week. So, no concerns.
Rusk and Taylor	Mark Schmidt	No	Inadequate Snow		I talked to Snowmobile Trail Coordinators Paul Star (Rusk Co.) and Pat Rucsek (Taylor Co.). Both indicate that no trails were open in their county. A trail in Rusk County there was no trail in Taylor County. Most of the signing was already done prior to the antlerless hunt. Both counties had about a inches of fluffy snow on the ground this Saturday. In addition, the majority of trail signs are gone for the most part. West and east are in the high 30's. In the east, it is in the low 30's.
Linn	Rich Wissink	No	Inadequate Snow		I did observe parked vehicles and deer hunters each day, I would characterize hunting pressure as "light". The pleasant weather over the weekend helped encourage hunters to get out and not waste such great hunting conditions but there was not a great deal of participation.
Burnett	Robert Hansen	No	Inadequate Snow		Hunters seemed to really like the hunt. I spoke with several hunters on different days during the season and the best theme I found is the hunting capability to hunt private lands with lots of deer. Since gun time is on the ground, I would like to see more hunting areas over the weekend. There are great places to hunt, not only were the hunters to hunt the trails, but also from lands. With high deer and birds within the unit, I know, the season continues to be good. I think the snowmobiling season should be a good one. I am making an initial report. All comments in this report are positive to very positive.
Sawyer	Laine Stowell	No	Inadequate Snow		I contacted Sawyer County Forest Administrator Greg Peterson. He informed me that he is the county official responsible as the Sawyer County Snowmobile Trail Coordinator. He said there is no major trail projects going on right now and that the 2 inches of dry snow present is insufficient to even consider grooming at this time. According to Greg "until we get more snow the trails will remain closed". Looks like very few deer hunters and absolutely no snowmobilers.

Conservation Congress Delegate - December Deer Season Feedback:

We received 15 completed "Volunteer December Gun Hunt Snowmobile Trail Survey" forms as of Thursday, December 14, 2006. Below is a summary of these survey forms:

- **Counties North of Hwy. 8:**

Forest County – Trails were not open in Forest County December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions (southern Forest County only had 2" of snow).

Sawyer County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions (only about 2" of snow cover).

Polk County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions (less than 1" of snow).

Barron County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions.

Bayfield County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions (no snow).

- **Counties South of Hwy. 8:**

Pepin County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, no reason provided.

Clark County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions.

Grant County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions.

Note: Better than expected hunter participation.

Fond du Lac County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, no reason provided.

Manitowoc County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions.

Rock County – Trails were open in Rock County, and no portions of the trail were closed during the December 7 – 10 deer hunt. (Note: This is a CWD county and the season was open November 19 – December 10)

Iowa County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions (no snow).

Lincolln County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions.

Wood County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions (no snow).

Adams County – Trails were not open December 7 – 10, due to inadequate snow or poor trail conditions.

In addition to these forms, we received e-mails from 12 delegates in northern Wisconsin that provided their observations on snow cover and hunter participation:

Hayward Area - Snow conditions in and around the Hayward area was just enough for tracking. There was some shooting but minimal and there were a small number of hunters out as evidenced by those in the field and those riding around. There was not enough snow for snowmobiling.

Hayward Area - I hunted up north of Hayward by Barnes for first 4 days of Muzzle loader, did not get up there for the 4-day antlerless, as I hunted near Eau Claire. During muzzleloader season saw quite an increase in number of hunters and shots heard from last year. There was only an inch or so of snow during early Muzzleloader. I was in the area the following Thursday (beginning of 4 day hunt) for work and saw very little snow cover, patchy at best. Only saw a few hunters out on that Thursday.

Unit 39 (Northern Forest County) - There was three inches of new snow on the ground. The snowmobile trails would not have been open.

Unit 35 (Northeast Vilas County) - Thursday morning Dec 7th was 6 degrees below zero, don't think anyone went out, heard no shooting in eastern Vilas County; Friday morning was only 4 below zero and still heard no shooting. With hard ground and snow cover, especially in northwestern Vilas, trails could have opened that weekend. All trails were inspected by the county snowmobile coordinator and the official opening was announced to be at noon on Thursday, Dec 14th . . . (but with the thaw and rain Monday night and Tuesday Dec 11-12 the opening was cancelled.) Saturday morning heard one shot; Saturday afternoon heard two shots, one of which was my wife filling her antlerless tag. Talked to one registration station when we registered her deer, very few deer were brought in. The owner said about 25 at that time, compared to several hundred when the October season was on. If there is anything positive about the December season in the North, it was those antlerless deer usually shot in an October antlerless hunt were still on the landscape during the November gun season . . . and hunters saw more deer, but did not necessarily shoot them. Bottom line . . . in the North if you want us to kill more does, give us the October season regardless of

navigating or not navigating snow conditions for snowmobiling; hunting conditions are more comfortable and the harvest is a lot higher.

Washburn, Douglas and Sawyer Counties - Snow conditions in and around Hayward during the Dec. 7-10 T Zone were approx. 1.5 inches of 5 day old snow. Hunter participation was low as observed from my travels in and around Washburn, Douglas and Sawyer County. Few hunters were observed in vehicles and 3-5 hunters were observed in the field in Douglas County on the property I was working on. Snow mobile trails closed due to lack of snow and unsafe ice conditions. Not a factor concerning the late T Zone in this area.

Polk County - The snow condition in Polk County was "a fuzz" of snow for a day or two, not even good tracking snow. No snowmobile trails were open. Hunter participation was light.

Florence County - I saw very little hunter activity in Florence County Dec 7-8-9-and 10th. I have not spoken to our local DNR office or our biologist, about how many deer were registered. The weather was cold and if there was any snow left it would be in isolated locations. Snowmobile trails were certainly not an issue about being open here in Florence.

Vilas County - The snow conditions for the Muzzleloader hunt North of Hwy. 8 was terrible, below zero to -7F mornings were the norm. The weather warmed for the weekend only of the antlerless 4-day hunt; there was about 4" of snow and very high relative humidity. Is there some reason that the antlerless season could not be split at Hwy 8 so that the 4 day hunt would occur in October North of 8 and in December South of 8? My constituents (almost all of which snowmobile, some 2500 miles/season) don't like the interference of this late season with snowmobiling which is forcing many of them to travel to the UP to spend their money (which has 2' of snow in some areas). The snow cover on the ground in Vilas County (11" average) has been a bit shy that last few years, global warming is projected to increase the snowfall in this region in the future.

Burnett County - We had only enough snow to make the leaves white in Burnett County, and it was mostly gone by noon Saturday. Great weather for December, way better than most of the rifle season (much of which was too warm!). We probably shouldn't expect that as a regular occurrence, though. There seemed to be a fair number of people out, I heard more shooting than during some days of the regular season. It does seem to me that the deer are more inactive at this time of year, and aren't moving unless they're pushed, or are going to a nearby food source (corn pile). I don't like to sit over bait, and was hunting alone, so didn't see as many deer, or sign, for that matter, as I thought I might. The neat thing about a hunting opportunity like this is that you can hunt however you want to; the number of people out is substantially less, which enhances the experience, for me.

Forest County - I live in Forest Co. right on Hwy 8. We had about 2 inches of snow, perfect hunting snow, but very few hunters.

Lincoln County - I participated in the December Gun Hunt on 2 days and was grouse hunting another day during the hunt. Although I did observe parked vehicles and deer hunters each day, I would characterize hunting pressure as "light". The pleasant weather over the weekend helped encourage hunters to get out and not waste such great hunting conditions, but there was not a great deal of participation.

We were also made aware that certain counties were approached and the decision was made to close trails in specific northern counties until after the 4-day December antlerless hunt. At least Iron likely received enough snow to be open during this hunt and could have provided proof of the ability for the two pursuits to exist side-by-side. The following are excerpts from an e-mail from Chairman Harvey:

...Iron County has decided to keep snowmobile trails closed until the 11th. They claim this is out of respect for land owners. I spoke with most of our delegates from Iron County. They only know what they have seen in the papers. They indicated that the kill is down in Ashland and Iron Counties. They do not expect much participation this weekend. They also do not expect much support for any antlerless hunt, especially the October hunt.

...the Iron County Forestry Committee...is the committee that ordered the closures. He said they had to close them because two land owners have closed trails through their land. Pat and the other delegates are of the impression that people have known about this for a while, but kept it under wraps until it was too late to do anything about it. Today, Ashland and Vilas Counties closed their trails until after the December hunt as well. I did not follow up on the reasons for that. It is now too late to be calling people at home.

If I remember clearly, after the snowmobilers were successful in shutting down the Dec. T-zone, we kept track of when trails were marked in each county. The snowmobilers realized how absurd it was to argue that they would have trails open that weekend. They based their objection on the fact that they needed that weekend to mark trails. Most counties would have trails marked before gun deer season. The weekend of the

October 7-zone was often used. However, each year, Iron County would ceremoniously mark their trails on the weekend of the December hunt.

And now, the joke of the night: William Niehus is one of our Iron county delegates. He is a cross country ski trail boss. Ski trails in Iron County are on county land, but are run by ski clubs. William says that they have not been told to close ski trails, so they will not...

Also, I was able to come by some trail conditions reports from more northern counties prior to the December Antlerless Deer Hunt:

Bayfield County report: December 6, 2006 Trail Conditions: Not Rideable Snow Cover: 5-7 inches Area Report: Welcome to this site. This is my third year compiling the report for Bayfield and west to the Valhalla area in the Chequamegon National Forest. You will find that my report is valid and based on my first hand experience while riding my sled, talking to the area grooming coordinator or taking a road trip to measure the snow depth and a visual of the trails.

Due to the special antlerless deer season, trails will not open until Dec 11. Trails will not open until there is adequate snow cover.

The Bayfield Peninsula area has received some early season snow since last weekend. 10-12" LES was common but as usual, the snow depth has settled. The NWS is calling for 6-10" of LES starting tonight through Thursday evening. The heaviest amounts will likely occur in the higher terrain west of Bayfield.

Winter type temps the past week has helped freeze the ground which assists in maintaining the current snow levels. Temps are to moderate to the mid and upper 30's this Saturday through the following Wednesday with no major snow makers headed this way.

Ashland/Bayfield County report: December 4, 2006 Trail Conditions: Not Rideable Snow Cover: 0 inches Area Report:

Ashland County: Snow showers in the forecast . . . still waiting . . .

Bayfield County: Do that snow dance!

Hurley report: December 6, 2006 Trail Conditions: Trails Closed, Snow Cover: 9 inches. Area Report: We have received 18.9 inches since Dec. 1, with 9 inches currently on the ground and 43 inches received to date. Temperatures will be very cold through Thursday with highs in the teens. Friday temps will start warming into the low 30's. We are under a lake effect snow warning with 8-12 inches expected. Groomers have been out rolling and grooming the trails, preparing for the Dec. 11th opening, which was moved back from the traditional Dec 1 start, due to the special deer hunt that has been scheduled for Dec 7-10. The change was necessary out of respect for the landowners along our trail system. All ATV trails are also closed from until Dec 11. Beginning with the opening of the snowmobile season, all ATV's are to stay off the trails if temperatures are above 30 degrees due to the potential for great damage to the trail base. Watch the trail report for closures in case of warm temps as we set the base for the winter season. News and Events: Red Light Rally December 14-17! 25th Annual!

Mercer report: December 06, 2006 Trail Conditions: Trails Closed Snow Cover: 0 to 5 inches Area Report: Our lakes are freezing quite rapidly and by the time we get some snow maybe the lake trails will be flagged.. The cold weather(without snow) will be good for freezing the swampy areas also.

Minocqua report: December 6, 2006 Trail Conditions: Trails Closed; Snow Cover: 04 inches. Area Report: Cold weather is setting the lakes up nicely. Some people are ice fishing already but only the small lakes. Has been snowing with this cold air and lake snows. We will be out soon panning the trails before they open. 55 mph speed limit at night now and this will start this season.

Finally, as of December 14, here is a summary of trail openings across northern Wisconsin:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Update</u>	<u>Groomed</u>	<u>Conditions</u>
Ashland Area	12/14/06	No	Closed
Barron County	12/06/06	No	Closed
Bayfield County	12/13/06	No	Poor
Boulder Junction Area	12/07/06	No	Closed
Burnett County	12/06/06		Closed*
Cable Area	12/13/06	No	Closed
Douglas County	12/13/06		Closed
Eagle River Area	12/12/06	No	Closed
Florence County	12/11/06	No	Closed
Forest County	12/13/06		Closed
Hurley Area	12/14/06	Yes	Poor
Lac du Flambeau Area	12/13/06		Closed
Land O' Lakes Area	12/13/06		Closed
Langlade County	12/13/06	No	Closed
Manitowish Waters Area	12/13/06	No	Closed
Mercer Area	12/06/06	No	Closed**
Polk County	12/12/06	No	Closed
Price County	12/13/06	No	Poor
Sawyer County	12/14/06	No	
St. Germain Area	12/13/06		Closed

* Burnett County trails will open when snow conditions improve and snow depth exceeds 4". Currently we need more snow.

** Iron county trails were closed until after the December deer hunt, here is the most recent report:

December 12, 2006:

The snowmobile trails in Iron County are officially open, however, they are not rideable at this time.

Temperatures have been in the 40's and we recd a lot of rain today.