

WISCONSIN BOWHUNTERS ASSOCIATION®

President's Message

Summer 2014

It's almost time. Well actually, opening day is still over a month away, but it's coming fast and I can't wait. I like to think that the hunt has already begun, just not the shoot'n part. Scouting, checking stands, checking arrows and broadheads, perhaps upgrading bows and other equipment, and of course, practicing – it's all happening now. Those that have trail cameras out are anxiously checking each image in hopes of a glimpse of a monster buck in their area.

I really believe preparing for the hunt is half the fun. At this point it's all good. We're all thinking it may be the year for our chance at that deer of a lifetime, not the broken-horned spike we may be happy to take come next December. We envision our shots to be straight and true, and we don't think much about mid-November when we're shivering uncontrollably, but refuse to get down because we promised ourselves we would sit till noon during the rut.

I have the added privilege this year of helping provide the opportunity for two young teenagers to hunt bears. The baiting has already begun, and it really is part of the hunt. The kids are pumped, and of course, the bears they plan to take are the two biggest ones to show up on the bait cameras (never mind that both are coming in during the middle of the night) at this point all dreams are big – as they should be.

WBH, with some of our directors and several members took part in the Outdoor Heritage Youth Expo this Spring. The Expo was moved from Beaver Dam to Poynette this year for financial and other reasons. It has always been a great event, introducing thousands of school kids to archery and other hunting-related activities. WBH, with the help and support of a lot of our members, has always been a part of it and hopefully will be for many years to come. Thanks to all that help with this. For those that take part, you already know how rewarding it is to be involved with these kids. This year DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp stopped by and we made sure she got proper archery instruction.

As most of you know, we will be sharing the deer woods this Fall with crossbow hunters. We don't know how many at this point. But please understand that the crossbow hunters you meet almost certainly aren't who was responsible for the attempt to "hijack" the archery season; they are hunters, just like ourselves, that choose to hunt with a different weapon than we do. They should be respected as we would respect any hunter. As for the question about WBH offering awards for crossbow kills – we don't. WBH is a bowhunting organization. We applaud everyone, including WBH members for taking game with a weapon besides archery equipment, but it's not up to us to recognize it. As a bowhunting organization we don't provide recognition for firearm, crossbow or muzzleloader harvest.

A quirk to the new law is that someone could buy a crossbow license and an archery license, although they would only be able to harvest one buck between the two licenses. While we don't anticipate this happening often, we are concerned that it provides the potential for abusing the system. If you become aware of anyone improperly tagging or reporting a crossbow or archery kill incorrectly, please advise our

office or the DNR Hotline. We have asked the Department to review all harvest from these “dual license holders” for verification and comparison harvest analysis. As specified in the law that passed, the crossbow season will be held over the same time period as the archery season for the first two years. After that, if analysis of the harvest verifies that crossbows are more effective than archery equipment, that season can be shortened by the DNR.

The WBH Forum has been discontinued. While we appreciate that some of our members enjoyed this opportunity to share information and opinions on-line, it proved to be very time consuming to administer, didn't generate the anticipated boost in membership, and in some cases led to conflicts that created hard feelings between members. While this didn't work out for our organization, the Board will continue to look for meaningful ways to provide new opportunities for our members.

In a separate article, I discuss wolves and their impact in Wisconsin. One of the biggest problems with wolves here is that we really don't know how many are in the state, even at their minimum level at the end of winter. Many of you help by advising the DNR of trail camera pictures, sightings, tracks, howls, etc., but unfortunately, most of this comes before the time window when wolf populations are calculated in late winter; so much of the information we provide isn't necessarily factored into the DNR official calculation of the count. If you are interested in helping with the over-winter count, that forms the basis on how we manage wolves, there will be DNR training sessions coming up this Fall.

Another thing to be aware of is your county's new “deer committee”. They are being formed now in each county in conjunction with your Conservation Congress delegates. Even if you aren't serving on one of these committees, it will be important that you find out who is and let them know your feelings about the deer population in your county. As I've said before, this is our chance to have the deer herd we want, but only if we get involved or appear before these county committees.

Finally, it's raffle time. WBH is in the middle of our big Support Our Sport raffle, culminating at our broadhead shoot in September. It's a great raffle with a lot of great prizes. Don't miss out. If you don't have tickets or know a member that's selling them, just call the office and they can get you tickets to buy and/or sell. Also, with this issue we are kicking off our annual ATV raffle. The ATV raffle continues until our convention in March and has always been a great fundraiser for us – and is always a big thrill for the winner, who drives away with a brand new 4 wheeler – and trailer.

So, even with all this going on, if you haven't already begun, it's time to start preparing for the upcoming bow season. This is the “dreaming” stage. Dream big and good luck!

- Mike Brust



