

Background

Mead Wildlife Area Rule Changes

2009 Spring Hearings

Mead Wildlife Area waterfowl hunters were invited to three meetings, which were widely publicized. The first and initial meeting was in April of 2007, a second was held in February of 2008 and another final meeting was held in November of 2008.

At the first meeting, Mead personnel opened up the opportunity for change to attending waterfowl hunters. Staff simply stated up front that if attendees wanted changes, that they would determine the approach. If they did not want change, nothing would be pursued. This was designed to be their program and an outside facilitator handled the meeting. Things went well as the attendees broke into smaller groups and came up with individual recommendations. Each group reported back to the group at large. As a final step, the entire group voted on which items and approaches would work the best. The recommendations they agreed to put forth are listed below.

1. Closure of the goose season on Mead Wildlife Area until the beginning of the statewide duck season.
2. 1:00PM closure for 16 days following the opening weekend of the duck season.
3. Increasing the sizes of the Berkhahn\Townline Reservoir Refuge and the Rice Lake\Pool Ten Refuge.
4. Request authority from the State Legislature to establish a managed hunt at the Mead. This aspect would initially only be set for the opening weekend of the duck season to reduce hunter concentration, improve hunting quality, and to retain waterfowl use of the property.

The second meeting was scheduled to bring everyone up to date and to ensure that everyone still wished to proceed. The time table from submission of rule changes to possible implementation dates was discussed.

The Final meeting in November of 2008 provided a review and outlined all rule changes as submitted.

All except # 4 should go into effect in 2010 if voted on favorably this spring. The managed hunt will hopefully go into effect at that time if approved by the state legislature.

Refuge changes are tied in with the approval of the Managed Hunt concept. Until that aspect is approved and in place, waterfowl hunters will be asked whether they desire the refuge changes to be in effect in the interim. The youth waterfowl hunt will be allowed, but only for ducks.

Items 1 and 2, as well as the managed hunt concept will sunset after three years, and can be re-approved permanently if waterfowler's are happy with the results. Attendees felt that these recommendations should be tried in an effort to improve waterfowl hunting and the ability of the area to hold birds.

All rule changes will be voted on by the public at the 2009 Spring Hearings that are held in each County of the state. This year the hearings will be held on April 13th at 7PM. Check your individual County for locations or contact your local DNR office.

For more information on these proposals contact Mead Wildlife Area at (715) 457-6771