



Management, by definition, implies a system of processes purposefully designed and implemented to achieve a set of desired results. The DEC is charged with maximizing hunter satisfaction while remaining compliant with its legal mandate to “promote natural propagation and maintenance of desirable species in ecological balance” (ECL §11-0303).

This requires the flexibility to change strategies quickly in response to evolving environments. Such capability is not inherent in a “one-size-fits-all” statute that is difficult and time consuming to change. Antler restrictions are only one alternative among many. A management plan can only be implemented effectively when the managers can alter methodologies in response to changes in the real world environment.

We believe that the most effective means of achieving the desired population structure is through hunter education and in implementing a regulatory structure that emphasizes achieving desired management goals. Different hunters have different objectives. But today’s hunters, taken as a group, are supportive of efforts they see as structured to achieve legitimate wildlife management objectives.

The DEC has developed its management plan to include a variety of strategies to reduce the harvest of young bucks while remaining in harmony with hunter desire. This includes educating hunters on their role in affecting local deer populations and herd composition as well as encouraging those hunters who want to take older bucks to give a pass to young, small-antlered bucks.

There has been a trend toward voluntary participation by the hunting community as a whole in reducing the kill of young bucks. Young bucks currently comprise about 55% of the buck take as compared to 70% a decade ago. Education and free choice appear to be doing the job and we see no need for a complex, brute force mandate.

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