

**Report from DNR regarding citizen petitions to add a rule developing County Deer Advisory Councils in all 92 counties of Indiana; Administrative Cause No. 16-046D**

The Committee consisted of the DNR's Director, Cameron Clark, and Mark Reiter, the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Director.

The DNR manages the deer herd at a socially-acceptable carrying capacity using the best available science, while balancing the ecological, recreational, and economic needs of the citizens of Indiana. The DNR provides opportunities for public input on the rules governing fish and wildlife through Got INput, a biennial process in which any member of the public can submit ideas to the DFW for rule changes, as well as through regular surveys of deer hunters and landowners.

Establishing ninety-two (92) advisory councils would be at a considerable cost to the DNR. Staff would be needed to establish the committees, collect information for the committee meetings, set up and participate in the meetings, and prepare reports from each meeting. The DNR could not add these additional responsibilities to current staff without removing current responsibilities. Without additional funding, participation and management of these advisory councils would affect funding for other programs within the DNR. Therefore, additional staff would need to be hired and additional state funds secured.

One of the petitioners, Gary Walters, presented this idea to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Committee (FWCC) meeting in June of this year for their input and consideration, but the other user groups that were present did not indicate a need or support for this proposal. The petitioners were also asked to form a model county advisory board (without cost to DNR) and come back to the FWCC with their results later this year.

In conclusion, the DNR does not believe that establishing county deer management advisory councils are necessary to manage the white-tailed deer population. The DNR believes that adequate opportunities are presently available for public input on deer management. It is unlikely that the additional input gained from the creation and management of 92 county committees would be cost effective.