

**BEFORE THE
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF INDIANA**

IN THE MATTER OF:

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES GOVERNING SCHEDULED HUNTS FOR POPULATION MANAGEMENT))))	LSA Document #25-282(F)
---	------------------	--------------------------------

**REPORT ON RULE PROCESSING, PUBLIC HEARING, AND HEARING OFFICER ANALYSIS WITH
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FINAL ACTION**

1. RULE PROCESSING

For consideration as to final action, is the proposed added rule governing the addition of 312 IAC 9-1-8.5, the definition of “harvest per effort”; and 312 IAC 9-2-18 concerning schedule deer hunting in designated areas for population management that otherwise qualifies as a rule charged by the Department of Natural Resources (the “Department”).

The Natural Resources Commission (the “Commission”) gave preliminary adoption to the proposed permanent rules on May 20, 2025.

Whitney Wampler, Deputy General Counsel for the Administration Bureau for the Department submitted the proposed rule language and regulatory analysis to the Indiana Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Indiana State Budget Agency (SBA) for review and approval. By letter dated April 17, 2025, Lisa Hershman (OMB) and Chad Ranney (SBA) authorized the Department to proceed with the proposed rules as follows:

Pursuant to the provisions of IC 4-22-2-22.8, the Office of Management and Budget and State Budget Agency have reviewed the proposed rule that adds a new rule at 312 IAC 9-1-8.5 and 312 IAC 9-2-18 (OMB #2024-40R), which you originally submitted on June 5, 2024, and resubmitted on December 16, 2024. After reviewing the revised proposed rule, the recommendation of OMB and SBA is that the rule changes be approved. DNR is authorized to commence the public comment period(s).

Furthermore, if you revise the proposed rule after this approval, you must resubmit the rule to OMB and obtain a new approval pursuant to IC 4-22-2-22.8(e).

2. BUDGET COMMITTEE REVIEW

The proposed permanent rule was not required to be submitted to the Budget Committee for review under IC 4-22-2.

3. FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING

The Commission received authorization to proceed from the Indiana Register/Legislative Services Agency on May 29, 2025. The **Notice of First Comment Period** to adopt a rule was published by the Indiana Register at DIN: 20250611-IR-312250282FNA on June 11, 2025. The notice identified Anthony Sipes as the “small business regulatory coordinator” for purposes of IC 4-22-2-28.1. The **Notice of Public Hearing** was published at DIN: 20250611-IR-312250282PHA on June 11, 2025.

The Commission posted the Notice of First Comment Period, Regulatory Analysis, and Notice of Public Hearing and other information required under IC 4-22-2-22.5 on the Commission’s rulemaking docket maintained on its website at

<https://www.in.gov/nrc/rules/rulemaking-docket/>. The rulemaking docket was updated periodically as the rule adoption process progressed.

Under IC 4-22-2-28, the proposed permanent rules and regulatory analysis were submitted to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation's (IEDC) Small Business Ombudsman on June 12, 2025. According to the response from the IEDC, "As a result, the Indiana Small Business Ombudsman sees no evidence that this change would negatively impact Indiana small businesses and will remain neutral on this proposed addition to the Indiana Administrative Code."

The public hearing was held on July 11, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., at the Roosevelt Room at Fort Harrison Inn at Fort Harrison State Park, 5830 North Post Road, Indianapolis, Indiana. The meeting was also live streamed via Teams, providing members of the public the opportunity to appear in person or through the Teams application and provide comments. There were no public comments received during the meeting. Members of the public were also able to make comments through the Commission's rulemaking docket until the public commenting period closed on July 11, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. There were no comments received during the public comment period. A second public comment period and public hearing were not required.

4. A SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING WERE NOT REQUIRED.

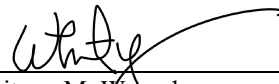
There were no changes made to the rules as a result of comments received during the second public comment period or public hearing.

5. HEARING OFFICER ANALYSIS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FINAL ADOPTION

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) (deer) have thrived in state parks since they were reintroduced to the state in the middle of the twentieth century. Mild winters, absence of natural predators, and a lack of hunting within state park boundaries resulted in excessive browsing by deer that compromised the overall composition, structure, and function of most natural communities in state parks. Browsing lines and small, malnourished deer were a common sight at most properties owned or managed by the division of state parks (division) by the late 1980s. The first scheduled hunt for population management was held in 1993 to mitigate damage to vegetation and unique habitat by the overpopulation of deer in Brown County State Park. That year, four hundred sixty-six (466) hunters harvested three hundred ninety-two (392) deer. Since 1995, as many as twenty-two (22) state parks and natural areas managed by the division have held scheduled hunts for population management during a calendar year. Scheduled hunts were historically established by the emergency rule process, which was repealed by HEA 1623-2023. Additionally, in 2024, the Department used the interim rulemaking process under IC 4-22-2-37.2 to implement scheduled hunts for population management. The proposed rules establish permanent rules for scheduled deer hunting in designated areas for population management. The proposed rules meet the requirements of IC 4-22-2 and IC 14 and should be adopted by the commission.

The proposed final rule and regulatory analysis are appropriate and are presented for final adoption and attached as *Exhibit A*.

Dated: September 29, 2025



Whitney M. Wampler
UPDATED Hearing Officer

PROPOSED FINAL RULE AND REGULATORY ANALYSIS: SCHEDULED HUNTS FOR POPULATION MANAGEMENT

PROPOSED FINAL RULE
LSA Document #25-282

SECTION 1. 312 IAC 9-1-8.5 IS ADDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

312 IAC 9-1-8.5 "Harvest per effort" defined
Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-22-2-6
Affected: IC 4-21.5; IC 14-22-6-1

Sec. 8.5. "Harvest per effort" means the ratio of the total number of deer harvested divided by the hunter effort recorded as calculated under 312 IAC 9-2-18(l). (*Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 9-1-8.5*)

SECTION 2. 312 IAC 9-2-18 IS ADDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

312 IAC 9-2-18 Designated properties; scheduled deer hunts; population management
Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-22-2-6
Affected: IC 4-21.5; IC 8-1-2-113; IC 14-22

Sec. 18. (a) An individual may apply to the department for a license to take deer during a scheduled hunt for population management under this section if the individual:

- (1) is at least eighteen (18) years of age not later than the first day of the first scheduled hunt under subsection (h); and
- (2) possesses at least one (1) of the following:

- (A) A valid resident license to take a deer issued under IC 14-22-12-1.

- (B) A lifetime comprehensive hunting license issued under IC 14-22-12-7(a)(4) (before its repeal).

- (C) A lifetime comprehensive hunting and fishing license issued under IC 14-22-12-7(a)(5) (before its repeal).

(b) Notwithstanding another provision of the Indiana Code or the Indiana Administrative Code governing taking a wild animal in a designated area, the department shall issue a license to take deer during a scheduled hunt under this section to an individual or a unit selected by a random drawing under subsection (d).

(c) The application for a license to take deer under this section must be in a form and manner prescribed by the department, including the hunter's:

- (1) name;
- (2) date of birth;
- (3) hunting license number; and
- (4) customer identification number issued by the department.

An individual participating in a scheduled hunt shall possess a license to hunt deer issued under subsection (b) during the scheduled hunt for which the individual or unit is chosen by a random drawing under subsection (d).

(d) An individual, or not more than three (3) individuals as a unit, may submit one (1) application to participate in a scheduled hunt under subsection (h)(1), or (h)(2), or both. An individual, or an individual on behalf of a unit, who submits more than one (1) application for each scheduled hunt disqualifies the individual or unit from participating in the scheduled hunt under this section for which the individual submitted multiple applications.

(e) An individual, or not more than three (3) individuals as a unit, who applies to participate in a scheduled hunt under this section will be entered into a random drawing conducted by the department to participate in a scheduled hunt under subsection (h). The department shall notify the individuals drawn that they are selected to participate in a scheduled

hunt and the details of the specific scheduled hunt for which the individual was drawn. If the number of hunters that enter the random drawing for a specific property does not meet the number of spots available for the scheduled hunt, the property manager for the property where the scheduled hunt is to occur may randomly draw additional hunters at the property before the beginning of the scheduled hunt to accommodate the number of hunters required for population management.

(f) The department shall draw one (1) hunter for:

- (1) at least six (6) acres; and
- (2) not more than twenty (20) acres;

of huntable land at a property owned or managed by the department under subsection (m)(1).

(g) The department shall draw one (1) hunter for:

- (1) at least fifteen (15) acres; and
- (2) not more than thirty-five (35) acres;

of huntable land at a property owned or managed by the department under subsection (m)(2).

(h) Except as provided in subsection (i), an individual who is issued a license to take deer under this section may participate in a scheduled hunt on the following dates:

- (1) The first scheduled hunt occurs on the first Monday and Tuesday following the opening day of the firearms season under 312 IAC 9-3-4.
- (2) The second scheduled hunt occurs on the third Monday and Tuesday following the opening day of the firearms season under 312 IAC 9-3-4.

(i) If the first Monday and Tuesday following the opening day of the firearms season under 312 IAC 9-3-4 falls during the week of Thanksgiving:

- (1) the first scheduled hunt occurs on the first Monday and Tuesday before the opening day of the firearms season under 312 IAC 9-3-4; and
- (2) the second scheduled hunt occurs on the second Monday and Tuesday following the opening day of the firearms season under 312 IAC 9-3-4.

(j) If the director of the department determines, in consultation with a professional biologist, that:

- (1) deer present within a property owned or managed by the department pose a hazard to the health or safety of persons or property; or
- (2) it is likely:

(A) deer present within a property owned or managed by the department will cause obvious and measurable damage to the ecological balance within the property, including:

- (i) a decrease in herbaceous species cover;
- (ii) a decrease in native tree seedling density;
- (iii) a decrease in native shrub seedling density;
- (iv) a decrease in native plant species diversity;
- (v) an increase in stem browsing;
- (vi) a decrease in the quality of wildlife habitat for species of conservation concern; or
- (vii) agricultural crops or property; and

(B) the ecological balance within the property will not be maintained unless action is taken to control the deer population;

the director may schedule a hunt to manage the deer population on the property under this section.

(k) The director of the department shall determine the properties owned or managed by the department under subsection (m) where an individual participating in a scheduled hunt may use a bow and arrows or a crossbow or firearms, or both, using the factors under this subsection and the calculated harvest per effort under subsection (l). A determination by the director under this section is based on the following factors:

- (1) Residential population density in the local unit where the property to be hunted is located.
- (2) The nature and use of the properties adjacent to the property to be hunted.

- (3) The size of the property to be hunted.
- (4) The number of structures or residences directly adjacent to the boundaries of the property to be hunted.
- (5) The topography of, and properties adjacent to, the property to be hunted that may or may not stop a projectile, including:
 - (A) whether there are hills or other land masses;
 - (B) tree cover and type; and
 - (C) vegetation density.
- (6) Instances of deer-human interaction that resulted in injury or property damage.
- (7) Whether the local unit where the property is located has a firearms prohibition.

(l) Harvest per effort is calculated based on the following:

STEP ONE: Determine the total number of deer harvested during both scheduled hunts.

STEP TWO: Determine the total hunter effort by the sum of the total number of individuals who participated in each day of the scheduled hunts under subsection (h)(1) and (h)(2). An individual present for one (1) day equals one (1) hunter effort. An individual present for two (2) days equals two (2) hunter effort.

STEP THREE: Determine the quotient of:

- (A) the STEP ONE result; divided by
- (B) the STEP TWO result.

(m) An individual who is issued a license to take deer under subsection (b) may take deer in a designated area, as determined by the department under subsections (k) and (l), with the permitted equipment as follows:

- (1) A property owned or managed by the department that has a harvest per effort greater than one tenth (0.10) for the scheduled hunt during the previous calendar year, and using the factors under subsection (k), an individual may hunt deer using only a bow and arrows or crossbow under 312 IAC 9-3-3.
- (2) A property owned or managed by the department that has a harvest per effort greater than twenty-two hundredths (0.22) for the scheduled hunt during the previous calendar year, and using the factors under subsection (k), an individual may hunt deer using only a firearm under 312 IAC 9-3-3.

(n) An individual who participates in a scheduled hunt may begin hunting not earlier than thirty (30) minutes before sunrise until 4:00 p.m. each day of a scheduled hunt. The department shall provide an individual under this subsection an information packet that includes the following:

- (1) The dates and times the property scheduled to be hunted closes to the public.
- (2) The time THE property will open for the scheduled hunt.
- (3) The time the property will close for the scheduled hunt.
- (4) The time hunters are required to leave the property after the scheduled hunt ends.
- (5) Hunting hours.
- (6) Parking restrictions for hunters.
- (7) The location and hours of hunter check in stations and a description of the online check in procedure.
- (8) Unit assignments, if applicable.
- (9) Information regarding zones at the property where hunters are not permitted to enter or hunt.
- (10) The equipment permitted to be used at the property during the scheduled hunt.
- (11) Restrictions, dates, and times tree stands may be installed and removed.
- (12) Indiana Administrative Code provisions explaining requirements to participate in a scheduled hunt, including:
 - (A) requirements for wearing hunter orange;
 - (B) equipment restrictions;
 - (C) bag limits;
 - (D) requirements for using flagging tape; and
 - (E) requirements for retrieving deer from safety zones and private property.
- (13) How to coordinate accessibility needs with the property.
- (14) Availability of lodging at the property to be hunted.
- (15) Additional safety restrictions to ensure adequate protection of:
 - (A) the ecological balance of the property;

- (B) the other species within the property;
 - (C) the landowners surrounding the property;
 - (D) the hunters during the scheduled hunt; and
 - (E) any other individual present at the property during the scheduled hunt.
- (16) Information regarding the specific property to be hunted, including:
- (A) use of a watercraft;
 - (B) use of bicycles; and
 - (C) information regarding possible prescribed fire areas.

hunt: (o) The following individuals may enter a property owned or managed by the department during a scheduled

- (1) An individual issued a license to take deer under this section for the scheduled hunt.
- (2) A representative of the media, in an area permitted by the department for representatives of the media under subsection (p).
- (3) An employee of the department.
- (4) An individual at least eighteen (18) years of age not later than the first day of the first scheduled hunt, who:
 - (A) is assisting an individual issued a license to hunt deer under this section who possesses a person with disabilities hunting permit under 312 IAC 9-10-10; and
 - (B) does not intend to participate in the scheduled hunt.
- (5) Any other individual with a credential issued by the department who is permitted by the department to enter the property owned or managed by the department during the scheduled hunt.

(p) The department shall designate permitted areas for representatives of the media during a scheduled hunt. Representatives of the media must be escorted to and from the areas by an employee of the department. These areas include:

- (1) the property office;
- (2) a hunter sign-in location;
- (3) a check station; or
- (4) any other area designated by the department for representatives of the media located within a safety zone while escorted by an employee of the department.

(q) Except as otherwise provided in this section, an individual may not enter a property owned or managed by the department when there is a scheduled hunt:

- (1) beginning at 8:00 p.m. the day before the first day of the first scheduled hunt and ending at 8:00 a.m. on the day following the last day of the first scheduled hunt; and
- (2) beginning at 8:00 p.m. the day before the first day of the second scheduled hunt and ending not later than 8:00 a.m. on the day following the last day of the second scheduled hunt.

(r) An individual who participates in a scheduled hunt shall enter a property owned or managed by the department only in a location designated by the department.

(s) An individual issued a license to take deer under this section may be randomly assigned:

- (1) a designated area of the property to hunt;
- (2) a designated parking space; or
- (3) both.

The individual shall comply with requirements regarding a randomly assigned designated area of the property to hunt or designated parking space set by the department.

(t) An individual issued a license to take deer under this section shall check in and check out of a designated area on each arrival to and departure from the property owned or managed by the department where the scheduled hunt occurs.

(u) An individual who participates in a scheduled hunt shall wear two (2) articles of hunter orange clothing that

meets the requirements under IC 14-22-38-7, including:

- (1) a hat or cap; and
- (2) a vest, a coat, a jacket, or coveralls.

(v) Except for property owned or managed by the department under subsection (m)(1), an individual may not use ground blinds, as defined by 312 IAC 9-1-7.6, in a designated area.

(w) An individual participating in a scheduled hunt under this section may not possess or consume an alcoholic beverage in a designated area during the scheduled hunt.

(x) An individual may take not more than three (3) deer during a scheduled hunt for population management under this section. An individual may take not more than one (1) antlered deer under this subsection.

(y) A deer taken under this section does not apply to the seasonal bag limit for taking deer under this article.

(z) An individual who takes a deer under this section shall deliver the deer to a designated check station at the property owned or managed by the department where the scheduled hunt for population management occurs before leaving the property with the deer.

(aa) If the harvest per effort is below the required thresholds under subsection (m) for a specific property where scheduled hunts occur, the department may pause scheduled hunts for one (1) hunting season. Scheduled hunts will resume at the property for the hunting season following the season in which the scheduled hunts are paused.

(bb) The department may pause scheduled hunts for population management for a specific property where scheduled hunts occur for one (1) hunting season if a provisional rule is adopted by the department to avoid:

- (1) an imminent and a substantial peril to public health, safety, or welfare;
- (2) an imminent and a material loss of federal funds for an agency program;
- (3) an imminent and a material deficit;
- (4) an imminent and a substantial violation of a state or federal law, or the terms of a federal agreement or program;
- (5) injury to the business or interests of the people or any public utility of Indiana, as determined under IC 8-1-2-113;
- (6) an imminent and a substantial peril to:
 - (A) wildlife; or
 - (B) domestic animal;health, safety, or welfare; or
- (7) the spread of invasive species, pests, or diseases affecting plants.

Scheduled hunts will resume for the hunting season following the season in which the scheduled hunts are paused. *(Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 9-2-18)*

312 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Regulatory Analysis
LSA Document #25-282

I. Description of Rule**a. History of Deer Management Hunts in Indiana State Parks**

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) (deer) have thrived in state parks since they were reintroduced to the state in the middle of the twentieth century. Mild winters, absence of natural predators, and a lack of hunting within state park boundaries resulted in excessive browsing by deer that compromised the overall composition, structure, and function of most natural communities in state parks. Browsing lines and small, malnourished deer were a common sight at most properties owned or managed by the division of state parks (division) by the late 1980s.

The first scheduled hunt for population management was held in 1993 to mitigate damage to vegetation and unique habitat by the overpopulation of deer in Brown County State Park. That year, four hundred sixty-six (466) hunters harvested three hundred ninety-two (392) deer. Since 1995, as many as twenty-two (22) state parks and natural areas managed by the division have held scheduled hunts for population management during a calendar year. Scheduled hunts were historically established by emergency rule.

The decision to start scheduled hunts at a property owned or managed by the division is supported by data from monitoring particular herbaceous species at the property. Once a property begins holding scheduled hunts, harvest data is incorporated into annual decisions regarding habitat recovery and whether a property requires a scheduled hunt for population management in the following calendar year. Research indicates that vegetation and habitat begin to recover from over-browsing when a harvest per effort (H/E) for hunting with a firearm is not more than twenty-two-hundredths (0.22), and the harvest per square mile (H/Mi²) is not more than sixteen (16) deer. The department of natural resources (department) randomly draws individuals for each property owned or managed by the division where a scheduled hunt is taking place for a density of one (1) individual hunter per at least fifteen (15) acres and not more than thirty-five (35) acres.

Properties where archery is regularly used due to urban interface or property size, have an H/E of not more than one-tenth (0.1). Mounds State Park is a property that will be included in scheduled hunts in the future. The department randomly draws individuals for each property where a scheduled hunt is taking place for a density of one (1) individual hunter per at least six (6) acres and not more than twenty (20) acres.

An individual who participates in a scheduled hunt for population management may take not more than three (3) deer, one (1) of which may be an antlered deer. A deer taken during a scheduled hunt does not count toward the statewide bag limits under [312 IAC 9](#).

In 2023, on the thirtieth anniversary of scheduled hunts for population management, one thousand five hundred (1,500) deer were harvested through four thousand five hundred eighty-three (4,583) hunter efforts. Hunter effort is calculated by one (1) hunter hunting on a property for one (1) day during a scheduled hunt.

Scheduled hunts for population management have been historically adopted via emergency rule. After the changes made to the Indiana Code under HEA 1623-2023, use of the emergency rules process is no longer permitted. The division has set forth the requirements for scheduled hunts in emergency rule for thirty (30) years beginning in 1993.

b. Scope of the Rule

Scheduled hunts for population management have previously been adopted using the emergency rules process, which is no longer possible due to the changes made to the Indiana Code under HEA 1623-2023. The proposed change adds [312 IAC 9-2-18](#) which allows for scheduled hunts for population management on designated properties owned or managed by the division with permitted hunting equipment. The proposed rule allows for scheduled hunts at properties owned or managed by the division when research and analysis of the H/E for the prior calendar year indicates a need for a scheduled hunt due to overpopulation of deer at that property. The scheduled hunts will help to ensure maintenance of

healthy herbaceous and understory vegetation levels in ecosystems of properties where a scheduled hunt occurs.

The proposed rule sets forth the requirements of an application for a license to take a deer during a scheduled hunt for population management and describes the process the department follows for the random drawing for scheduled hunts for population managements and how the department handles the situation if there are not enough hunters who apply for a random drawing. Additionally, the proposed rule sets forth the procedures by which the department determines whether a management hunt is necessary for a property owned or managed by the department, and how the department determines which properties to include in scheduled hunts each year. The proposed rule describes the information the department has a duty to provide in the information packet to a hunter participating in a scheduled hunt for population management and describes the areas designated for representatives of the media. Finally, the proposed rule sets forth the reasons why the department may pause a scheduled hunt for population management for one (1) year using a provisional rule under [IC 4-22-2-37.1](#).

c. Statement of Need

The proposed rule results from the changes to the Indiana Code by HEA 1623-2023, which no longer allow the department to establish regulations by emergency rule. Scheduled hunts for population management have been established by emergency rule for the previous thirty (30) calendar years. Without the proposed rule changes, the department will not be able to have scheduled hunts during the 2025 hunting season and beyond.

The proposed change is not the result of a federal or state statutory requirement, a court order, or an audit finding. However, the changes to the Indiana Code resulting from HEA 1623-2023 require the addition of a permanent rule for scheduled hunts for population management. The proposed changes ensure the effective control of the deer population and the impact of deer on ecosystems at properties owned or managed by the division. Without the permanent rule, the deer population will become problematic on properties and begin to destroy the ecosystems. Deer will also become malnourished due to the lack of available food at the properties.

d. Statutory Authority for the Proposed Rule

The department has the statutory authority to establish methods for taking a wild animal under [IC 14-22-2-6](#). The department is required to develop rules based upon: “(A) The welfare of the wild animal. (B) The relationship of the wild animal to other animals. (C) The welfare of the people in [IC 14-22-2-6](#).” “Wild animal” is defined in [IC 14-8-2-318](#) and includes mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. The natural resources commission (commission) has the statutory authority to adopt rules under [IC 14-10-2-4](#).

e. Fees, Fines, and Civil Penalties

The proposed changes do not change or add a fee, a fine, or a civil penalty.

II. Fiscal Impact Analysis

a. Anticipated Effective Date of the Rule

Preliminary adoption with the commission would be at the May commission meeting. If preliminary adoption is in May, the first comment period and public hearing would run until the beginning of July, and the second comment period and public hearing would run until the end of August, then final adoption of the proposed permanent rule would be at the September commission meeting. After review by the Attorney General and the Governor, the rule would likely be submitted to the Indiana Register in late November or early December. The proposed rule would be effective December 2025 or January 2026.

b. Estimated Fiscal Impact on State and Local Government

There is no fiscal impact to the state or a local government associated with this proposed rule. The administrative costs of the department may decrease due to an annual emergency rule no longer being necessary. There will be no costs to local government.

There is no expected increase or decrease in hunting license sales resulting from this change because scheduled hunts for population management have occurred annually for the last thirty (30) years. Administrative expenses include work by the division and the division of fish and wildlife to publicize and manage hunting draws, and to analyze the results

and hunt details are part of routine business. These are a part of normal operating costs for the division and the division of fish and wildlife. Additionally, these administrative expenses are the same as those for the prior thirty (30) years. No increase or decrease is expected.

No significant change in revenue is expected because of the proposed change.

c. Sources of Expenditures or Revenues Affected by the Rule

There will be no need for an appropriation and no changes in the distribution of revenue resulting from the proposed changes. Administrative work to provide information to the public regarding the proposed changes is conducted through the department's website. News releases and emails will be paid for through the current operating budget for the division and the division of fish and wildlife. These expenses are the same as the prior thirty (30) years.

III. Impacted Parties

Approximately eleven thousand one hundred five (11,105) individuals who register for the first scheduled hunt for population management, the second scheduled hunt for population management, or both may be impacted. The department does not expect any changes to the process for random drawings or conducting the scheduled hunts for population management on properties owned or managed by the division due to the proposed change.

Scheduled hunts for population management require closing the properties owned or managed by the division during the scheduled hunt. Individuals who might visit a designated property where a scheduled hunt for population management is occurring to hike, camp, or stay at an inn are impacted. However, most entrance gates are not operating during the time of year when scheduled hunts for population management occur, and overall visitation is limited in the winter months. The impact to individuals would not be significant and would be the same as the individuals experienced in the prior thirty (30) years. The value these hunts provide in managing our natural resources warrant the temporary closures.

IV. Changes in Proposed Rule

Section Number	Proposed Change
312 IAC 9-1-18.5	Defines "harvest per effort".
312 IAC 9-2-18	The proposed change establishes scheduled deer hunts for population management at designated properties owned or managed by the division with permitted hunting equipment.

V. Benefit Analysis

a. Estimate of Primary and Direct Benefits of the Rule

The direct benefit of the proposed change is an established process that permits annual scheduled hunts for population management at designated properties owned or managed by the division as determined by research, statistical results, and habitat evaluation.

An additional direct benefit is the ability of permit individuals to take not more than three (3) additional deer above the bag limits and statewide quotas for taking deer under [312 IAC 9](#) when the individual is drawn and participates in a scheduled hunt.

b. Estimate of Secondary or Indirect Benefits of the Rule

An indirect benefit of the proposed change is ensuring that the impact of deer on the herbaceous and understory layers of the forested ecosystems of properties owned or managed by the division are permanently managed.

An additional indirect benefit, although not immediately quantifiable, is the positive economic impact from individuals who participate in scheduled hunts for population management on businesses such as restaurants, gas stations, hotels, and sporting goods stores in local communities where the scheduled hunts occur.

Again, these benefits will be largely the same as they have been over the prior thirty (30) years of scheduled hunts.

c. Estimate of Any Cost Savings to Regulated Industries

There are no cost savings for any regulated industries resulting from the proposed change.

VI. Cost Analysis

a. Estimate of Compliance Costs for Regulated Entities

There are no new costs for regulated entities or businesses to comply with the proposed change. The proposed change is the same as the prior thirty (30) years. No new costs will be imposed.

b. Estimate of Administrative Expenses Imposed by the Rules

There is expected to be only minimal expenditures out of the Indiana State Parks legal/dedicated fund (39310) and the Fish and Wildlife Fund (39745) to do administrative work such as managing hunter registration for the draws, updating the website, sending out news releases, and on-site management of hunts on the designated dates. All of these are part of routine business and are normal operating costs. These costs are the same as the prior thirty (30) years.

c. The fees, fines, and civil penalties analysis required by [IC 4-22-2-19.6](#)

This rule does not increase or change fees, fines, or civil penalties.

VII. Sources of Information

a. Independent Verifications or Studies

The number of individuals who applied to participate in a random drawing for a scheduled hunt for population management in the 2023 calendar year was obtained from the database of applications provided through the division of fish and wildlife for the department. The number of individuals who participated in previous scheduled hunts and the number of deer harvested during those calendar years were obtained from annual reports related to scheduled hunts.

The method for evaluating and selecting a designated property for a scheduled hunt each calendar year was determined through research, observation, and the informed biological opinion of researchers at Purdue University and department staff.

Additional information is available regarding past annual scheduled hunts for population management at: on.IN.gov/INStateParkNaturalResources.

b. Sources Relied Upon in Determining and Calculating Costs and Benefits

The benefits and costs of the proposed changes were obtained from staff for the division.

VIII. Regulatory Analysis

There are no new costs for regulated entities or businesses due to the proposed change. Individuals who wish to participate in scheduled hunts for population management will be able to register for the random drawings, and scheduled hunts for population management will ensure that department achieves the mission of conserving and managing the natural resources of Indiana. There will be a reduction in annual administrative costs for the department, and the proposed change simplifies the processes and is warranted.

IX. Contact Information of Staff to Answer Substantive Questions

Whitney M. Wampler
Assistant General Counsel
Administration Bureau
Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Legal Division
402 W. Washington Street, Room W261
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
317-941-4338