

Submitted by Norm Webber Small Game Committee Member

Subject: Extension of Deer Season

My opinion ... not in favor of extension. If a late December deer season is tacked on remove the 2 weeks beginning on October 1. I might be more supportive if that occurred and if there was an effective process to open access to hunting on private land as well. The ... “no you can’t hunt here anymore; deer opens October 1 now” ... “Hey, you know I’m hunting deer in there where you’re headed (heading into brush with shotgun and birds dog on public land)” ... I’ve leased the property for deer and they don’t want anyone else in there” ... “you’re disturbing my deer when you walk in there” ... comments and messages have affected me. Whitetail groups advocate lease and close off access. The unintended consequences of season extensions and the whitetail hunting season focus is substantial.

October 1 to mid December deer seasons affect all other hunting seasons, some trapping seasons, and other recreational uses as well. Small game, waterfowl, and trapping all rely on access. One consequence of these extended deer seasons seems to be more and more leasing, posting, and poorer access for small game hunting and or trapping. We are being squeezed into the locations still available, driving farther and farther to find opportunities, and having less access on private properties. It also seems there has been an increase in deer nuisance issues as more land is placed off limits to most hunters. You can’t manage deer if you can’t access the land they use. This extended season will exacerbate the spacial competition on public lands and will not gain more access, it could/will lead to less. The emphasis on extending deer seasons and the conversion of the primitive weapons to higher tech more affective hunting implements has gone hand and hand with increased posting and leasing. It has not increased overall hunting numbers.

What we need for more recreational opportunity (and better deer management) is more access to private property. Furthermore, I do not think it is coincidence that DEC is advocating for what the NYS Forest Owners and the Farm Bureau want ... longer deer seasons with an increased deer kill. Yet, are they opening the land they control to the public for deer hunting (or small game hunting)? No. Where is this season extension linked to more private property access opportunity? Hunting, and small game hunting in particular are declining in part (a large part in my opinion) because there are few places other than the public lands open for our use. You don’t sit in a tree stand in a limited general area/acreage day after day to hunt most small game.

There were reasons why snow machine use was off limits until the later deer seasons ended. If that was an issue/problem in November to mid December why is it not an issue in late December? It would seem to be more of an issue then. How about the unintended consequence of people gunning deer from snow machines? Just what is needed publicity wise.

I am a small game hunter who hunts pretty much exclusively on public land ... mid day hours, not prime time for deer (or small game for that matter)0 ... I try to avoid “bothering” the bow, crossbow, muzzleloaders whose deer hunting seasons got extended from November through all of October (additional days in December as well). I do hunt deer with a gun and used to hunt

deer with a recurve bow until my focus became small game with dogs. I do not hunt small game at all during the deer regular gun season. Now the end of December gets added on?

Enough is enough. Let's focus on opening up the private land to hunting, getting something like the western states "walk in hunting areas", and tie in nuisance deer permits to access, and getting the hunting age lowered.