**Shingleton Wildlife Biologist E (9/10/P11)**

**October 2024**

**Attached Writing Assignment Exercise**

**Including a written response to this assignment is required to be considers for this position (*please limit response to less than 2,000 words if possible)*:**

Wildlife managers often face many challenges based on the biology of species, resource needs, political interests, and societal needs and desires. This can be especially challenging in locations like the Shingleton unit where resident human populations are rural and relatively low but can swell during the tourist season with an influx of seasonal visitors and otherwise absentee landowners. Further complicating the situation within the Shingleton unit is a preponderance of lands accessible to the public for recreation such as State of Michigan public lands (administered by the DNR), US Hiawatha National Forest lands, Picture Rocks National Park Service, Seney National Wildlife Refuge, and Industrial Forest lands enrolled in the Commercial Forest Act. Intermixed within all this publicly accessible land is private individual ownership. This abundance of accessible public land often creates unrealistic expectations amongst the public that the DNR has control over what occurs on all ownerships. Residents often take for granted the abundance of public lands available. Seasonal visitors often have little, or no knowledge of the rules associated with different land ownership. This creates a challenging environment for wildlife staff who are charged with managing habitats and species across this broad landscape.

While there are traditional conservation groups and Non-Governmental Organizations within the areas the DNR, specifically Wildlife Division, have long standing relationships with, there is increasingly evolving public use trends. Nonconsumptive recreationalist such as mountain bikers, horseback riders, kayakers, ATV/UTV users, backcountry snowmobilers, E-bike users, bird watchers and others nontraditional users are increasing as are their demands. These nontraditional users are typically not well organized, often interface with the DNR as individual voices, and may not have utilitarian views of wildlife. Additionally, post-covid migration of people into the rural landscape from more suburban and urban environments creates unique challenges with people who may not be accustomed to living with wildlife literally in their backyard.

In this exercise given these challenges outlined above, as the Shingleton biologist you are charged with developing a long-term program to improve the quality and abundance of migratory deer yarding (otherwise referred to as Deer Winter Complexes) habitat in your work area:

* What potential barriers would you consider and how would you overcome these barriers to develop wildlife outreach that engages the broader public (traditional and non-traditional) to accomplish these habitat goals?
* What ownership considerations would you plan for when addressing landscape scale habitat management programs that encompass a broad array of landownership types? How might these considerations impact your approach?