

September 2008

**Access for Illinois Hunters Proposal
for Joint Deer Management Task Force**

One of the issues that has been brought to the attention of the Task Force is the importance of land access for hunters if deer population control is to be achieved, and the increasing difficulty in accessing property in many parts of the state.

There are parts of Illinois in which the number of deer exceeds levels acceptable to the public. Many such counties can be identified by their rates of deer/vehicle accidents. These deer population issues cannot be resolved unless there is a commitment by commercial hunting interests and by landowners to allow hunters access to assist with adequate deer harvest. Without access to these areas to achieve a proper level of doe harvest, concerted efforts at responsible deer management in those localities will be effectively neutralized.

It has been suggested that IDNR should initiate a new program focusing on hunter access, according to the following guidelines. The program would have a staff person whose sole responsibility is to deal with access possibilities within the state. The program would have a standing committee (similar to the Habitat Stamp Committee, Duck Stamp Committee, etc.), to whom the program manager would report. This committee would be comprised of various leaders from conservation organizations, Legislative Sportsmen's caucus leaders, and others deemed appropriate.

The DNR staff person would concentrate on those areas that are known to have deer population issues, but would not be limited to only those areas. All areas of the state would have consideration. The staff person would work with different entities to develop areas and programs with access potential.