

Minutes
Bar Harbor Deer Herd Control Task Force
January 9, 2014
Upstairs Conference Room-Municipal Building
93 Cottage Street
4:30 pm

I. Call to Order

In attendance, Robert Kelley, Shaun Farrar, Bruce Connery, Jesse Wheeler, Robert Burgess, Tom Schaeffer, Chuck Starr.

II. Absences

Robert Jordan

III. Approval of the Minutes

No previous minutes, the sole business of last meeting in October 2013 was to count property owner surveys, and results of that meeting were presented to the town council and posted on the town website.

IV. Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda adopted by 7-0 vote.

Sgt. Shaun Farrar introduced to the task force as the law enforcement representative. Also noted that Tom Schaeffer of Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is now a task force member.

A summary of our previous findings and results was presented for the benefit of Tom and Shaun, an subsequent email included the IFW policy on deer management, the property owner survey, and the results of that survey, as well as a link to the deer task force page on the town website.

General timeline: plan herd control methods, try for a vote at the June 2014 town meeting with two public information meetings before, if that proves too aggressive, delay to November 2014 election.

Next steps: Tom Schaeffer clarified that making a change to the hunting laws no longer has to go through the legislature, but can be made by the IFW Commissioner contingent upon demonstration of substantial agreement in favor of the change by town residents. This process came out of legislation introduced by Jill Goldthwait when deer hunting was reinstated on the Cranberries and Swans Islands.

Therefore, the next step is to develop a management plan that will be effective, will be accepted by IFW, and will be acceptable to residents. Tom pointed out many options that have been used in Maine recently. Non-starters with the State include contraception and trap and relocate because of cost, non-sustainability, lack of proven effectiveness, and high mortality (trap and relocate). In the long term,

numbers should be maintained at acceptable levels through a hunting season (for instance, archery or expanded archery if archery proves insufficient). In the short term (1-5 years), numbers should be reduced to an acceptable level. Options available for short term reductions include sharp shooters, issuing permits to residents or designees for appropriate numbers of deer, general hunting seasons and more. Methods are similarly flexible, including archery, shotguns (or even buckshot) only, muzzleloaders, or center fire rifles. The make up of hunters, seasons, permits and methods can be blended to best suit public preference, effectiveness and safety.

Metrics for determining “acceptable levels” were discussed, since an accurate deer census is not available. Straightforward measures would include the number of car deer accidents and the number of nuisance permit requests. Measurement of Lyme disease incidence may or may not be possible at the town level, and tick numbers may not be a good surrogate measure given the complexity of the tick life cycle and environmental variability. In most areas of the State, deer population and management is extrapolated from hunting harvest data.

Given the diversity of possibilities, it was decided that our next meeting examine how other towns have dealt with this issue, Tom suggested Islesboro as a model.

V. Old Business

VI. New Business

VII. Items for Next Agenda

Consider models of deer control from other towns.

VIII. Adjournment

6:15 by unanimous consent.