

Minutes
Bar Harbor Deer Herd Control Task Force
March 20, 2014
Upstairs Conference Room-Municipal Building
93 Cottage Street
4:30 pm

- I. Call to Order
In attendance, Robert Kelley, Jesse Wheeler, Robert Burgess, Bruce Connery, Tom Schaeffer. Also Elissa from the National Park Service about GIS mapping and two members of the public.
- II. Absences
Robert Jordan, Chuck Starr, Shaun Farrar
- III. Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of the Feb 20, 2014 meeting approved, 5-0.
- IV. Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda adopted by 5-0 vote.

Car accident data was discussed briefly. Highest incidence occurs in November, when deer activity is highest with the rut, not in July/August, when traffic is highest. Bruce will work to get traffic count by road from DOT to coordinate with GIS map of car accidents (presented). Bruce will also be participating in a conference call with DOT concerning highway safety and deer and moose collisions, including information about signage etc.

New GIS map property set backs was presented. In Bar Harbor, 12,988 acres would be excluded from hunting being Park, school zones etc. 6767 acres would be available for hunting without concern over road or building set-backs (private land would still require landowner consent). 7179 acres would be available for hunting with landowner permission (within 100 yards of a structure). Map is an excellent start, some refinement is needed including marking structures (mapped as of 2009), better noting roads that currently appear as exclusions (houses) but where the road is not marked, distinguishing paved versus gravel roads, and noting property boundaries. Long-term option of overlaying landowners willing to grant permission to hunt is a goal.

Discussion of seasons, methods, and hunt participants was initiated.

Seasons: The normal archery season (“Special Archery”) is the month of October and allows one deer per season. The expanded archery season runs mid-Sept through mid-Dec and allows one additional antlered deer and unlimited antlerless tags. Regular firearms deer season is four weeks, ending the last Saturday of November. Muzzleloader season is the first two weeks of

December (Monday following Thanksgiving). Statewide bag limit for deer is one regardless of method except through additional tags purchased through the expanded archery season where it is in place.

Methods: Additional short-term measures to reduce deer numbers to target goals can be different than long-term measures to maintain that target population. Archery may be insufficient to actually reduce deer numbers, but adequate to maintain them. Therefore options such as sharp shooters could be considered, but are very expensive (\$65,000+ for Islesboro). Trap and relocate or immunocontraception are also expensive, not proven effective, must be done repeatedly, and are not acceptable to the State. A limited firearms season (shotguns only, muzzleloader only, special designees, special hunts, etc.) could be considered for a limited number of years. Crossbows are currently regulated like firearms for deer hunting.

Participants: Any special, short-term efforts to reduce deer numbers could also have stipulations on participation, such as residents or their designees. Special game-check stations could be operated to monitor harvest up to a target level, or total number of tags distributed could be controlled. Such restrictions at the outset also diminish influx non-local hunters.

There is the eventual (May? June?) need for public information and public feedback. The range of options needs to be made clear, but a strawman proposal needs to be presented for discussion purposes.

Bruce and Jessie participated in a large conference call concerning tick monitoring. Bruce provided information that in Hancock county, 96 Lyme disease cases were reported in 2013 (up from 43 in 2011, 59 in 2012), for an incidence of 176 cases per 100,000 people. Conference callers expressed enthusiasm for tick monitoring, with NPS and Maine CDC helping with sampling (flagging), and analysis of Lyme plus four other tick borne pathogens being done by the Dept. of Defense. The plan would be to survey twice in spring (nymphs) and twice in fall (adults). The long term potential of comparison to 1990s data, as well as establishing baselines and then examining the impact of deer reduction was noted by callers. Maine CDC would help with training and flagging. Ruth Eveland and Jessup Library were suggested as a point of contact for community volunteers. Another phone conference is schedule in three weeks, Bruce is working to get a map of potential sampling sites together that will emphasize potential human exposure, but that can also be integrated with deer considerations.

V. Old Business

None

VI. New Business

None

VII. Items for Next Agenda

Tick updates if available

Mapping update, with additional information (property boundaries etc.)

Bruce is working to contact Erica regarding pellet count information from spring 2013

Create a visual of current deer seasons (Rob B.)

Continue to flesh out who, how, where, when matrix, considering other options for near-term herd reduction.

VIII. Adjournment

6:40 by unanimous consent.