

TOWN OF HARVARD DEER MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

***ZOOM MEETING 7:00pm – 8:30 pm
Monday March 20, 2023***

**Committee members present
Ben Urquhart, Bob Douglas, Joe Pulido, Tom Cotton**

7pm

Bob gave the opening and introduced State Deer Biologist Dr. Martin Feehan.

Martin introduced Meghan Crawford the new Community Engagement Biologist – as an outreach person.

Statewide – “Amazing Harvest”. Several new records. All but one zones had an increase. A big season. Removed harvest cap on does on 10 and 11.

He introduced the Share the Harvest program. 1500 meals were donated to food for Vets.

He gave the Harvest statistics for the town of Harvard. 72 Harvested.

Private Land 52

Public Land 13

Town Hunt reported 2

Other Controlled hunt 5

Joe Pulido gave his statistics for our program 4 does on Conservation Property.

Marty said there may have been some missed check boxes in the self reporting. Bob said we will give firm guidance to next year’s hunting crew on how to report. “Yes on Controlled hunt – then - Go to Other”

Bob asked if there were any Questions.

Don Osmer asked total Deer taken by Bow numbers. Answer 7214 total Massachusetts. 45 in Harvard.

Bob asked about deer density studies.

Oak sentinels had been discussed.

Feehan: Possible UMass study. Difficult to procure at the State level.

Highly quantitative. Always use red oak. All seedlings same height. Controls with wire. Some available to be eaten by deer. Measurements taken of individuals on average. Simple method (Measure height). Measured over months. Compare height to protected seedlings.

AVID Deer protocol is one they may steer communities for assessments. Aviddeer.com is a reference.
More of a learning curve – but you don't have to grow seedlings.

Twig-it is also a good method, but tough to learn.

Bob asked about *Pellet Count* surveys.
Feehan said he is trying to get agencies away from this method. He finds they are biased.

Bob said he is glad to hear there are other methods.

Brian McClain (Harvard Conservation Stewardship and American Chestnut grower) is assisting DMS. He asked about seeds in the fridge. Bob said his were set outside.

Brian offered to stratify next years nuts in peat in his fridge.

Feehan said they state study uses refrigeration. They plant at 4 inches tall.

We could go 10 to 20 at site. Looking at differential growth rates.

Important to keep track which seedling is measured.

Bob is looking to do a test experiment.

Brian described two site Stewardship has selected. Both have oaks present.

Non hunted site is Claps Gorey

Another site (hunted) Barret off Mass Ave.

Feehan discussed experiment lay out.

Oak sentinels work in high canopy area.

Same conditions for both wire cage and exposed should be the same.

Metal tags were buried to inventory in the field.

Feehan offered his help in our efforts.

Bob asked about distribution of hunters. It's a meritocracy – hunters that hunt more are rewarded.

Dr. Feehan – Controlled hunt – Increase harvest is a goal. Do whatever you have to. Harvard program has doubled each year. More properties open more deer taken. Its working. Doubling effect.

Joe Pulido. Some hunters did not hunt as much as they wanted for different reasons.

Feehan: Consider a set amount of time in the Stands – then those properties can be available to other hunters especially in the Rut. Especially in October.

Osmer: Good for longevity so each hunter over the course of the years knows and understand the numbers and locations of deer and how they move throughout the year.

McClain asked about the Sentinel study in hunting area.

Feehan explained that the Sentinel study is over by the time the Season arrives in the Fall.

Feehan asked about team hunting.

Joe explained we had two hunter teams this year. One of the teams got the first doe.

Feehan said this method can be very successful.

Martin gave compliments to the DMS team. “You should be proud of yourselves”. You should continue “without a doubt.” It all sounds great.

Bob said there was no hunter harassment. Town Police caught some poachers. Our hunters find bait and unpermitted stands.

Bob asked about Report Review and that numbers from the survey be added. Joe is working on it. Drafts should be sent to Tom. Survey data coming in. Tom will add numbers consolidated before next Tuesday.

Thursday night meeting never opened – frustrating to for all involved.

Conservation Chairman had asked DMS to come up with ideas on reporting Hunter information. Bob is working on this and in contact with EPO and HPD.

Bob said next meeting on Monday. Ben offered to help.

Jan 11, 2023 Minutes were moved by Tom to be accepted and seconded by Joe – passed unanimously.

No new info from Scouts Greg and Don.

Any questions from Guests?

Dan Tracey: “No questions Bob, Thanks” (56:36)

Eve Wittenberg: “No thanks” (56:43)

Tom Motion to adjourn, Second Joe. Motion passed.