

# Harvard Deer Management Subcommittee Minutes

Feb 6, 2020

Harvard Town Hall

645pm

In attendance: Paul Willard, Tom Cotton,  
Jason Cole, Bob Douglas, Ben Urquhart

Tom Phillipo - guest

Topics Discussed:

Bob called the meeting to order and reminded those present that proceedings were being recorded by HarvardTV.

Should anyone want to make their own recording of the public meeting, they are welcome to do so, however, they must inform those assembled before hand.

Jason Cole gave a report on status of unauthorized deer stands on Conservation Land. A number of stands found unlawfully on Conservation Lands were tagged last year, some have been removed likely by the owners and some were removed by DMS – with notification that the owner should contact HPD and/or the Harvard Conservation office. He has spoken with both the State Environmental Police and the HBD about the disposition of the stands.

Bob brought up monitoring methods. Pellet counts may be a good approach, its used by the larger land managers in the state including Quabbin and is now the preferred methodology at Blue Hills.

Ben: The counts are do-able, the methodology is probably something we could do ourselves. Done between leaf-

drop in the fall and leaf-out in the spring. Curious if in winters like this (warm/thaw) if the pellets will degrade.

Tom: Its relatively cheap.

Jason: We should get guidance from someone out first time. Jason contacted David Stainbrook, who offered to train us, help us design transects, process data and possibly conduct this year's pellet surveys for us, provided that his team has the time to do so. There is also a software, "PELLET," an excel-based software program, that would be helpful.

Bob discussed Deer Biologist David Stainbrook's offer to train us and do transects, and discussed another offer we had from a scientist we could fly in for the project. Tom made a motion to go with Stainbrook. The motion was seconded by Jason and was passed unanimously. Bob

will report to the ConCom later tonight, and get further clarification on the project and services by Stainbrook.

Bob brought up cameras as a means of monitoring, as it had been recommended by one of a peer group. The method was to place cameras and use an algorithm to estimate the number of deer. Bob added, that should we be saving money by using Stainbrook for free, we may wish to ask the ConCom if they would consider purchasing Trail Cams for this purpose. Ben mentioned the use of Cameras should be noticed, and signs installed. Tom stated that he felt it would be a good way to keep track of our local herds, with photos you can actually get a better idea of the health of the animals. All agreed this would not be the main method of monitoring, but could serve another tool to estimate deer numbers.

Bob discussed the spring. We will have to recruit hunters, qualify them. We will need to get our monitoring in place.

Primarily we will want to get rolling on the pellet monitoring. Ben said if we had to break into groups to cover more territory. He could lead one. We discussed the deCalesta paper and Jason mentioned he liked that the observations of amateurs were tested as well, and it showed that people recently trained in the method were accurate observers. We checked all of our March schedules to see availability Ben said he may be away the third week. Brief discussion on the Quals. We need to reach out to local sportsmen's clubs for range use. Ben said we should get all our procedures down. Jason will contact Dan at the Harvard Sportsmen's Club to ask if we can use their facilities.

Public Outreach was discussed. Jason

mentioned that there has been interest in venison and mentioned it might be good to have an event where people could try it. Jason contacted the Lion's Club, and, unfortunately, they would not be able to serve hunted venison due to food safety regulations.

Bob mentioned there was interest by the Garden Club, and they may be helpful in the pellet counts, ten-tallest method, and especially the lady slipper survey. Bob will reach out to their President.

Jason: we may wish to do another letter to the Press at some point in the next few months with updates regarding tree stand confiscations, pellet surveys and qualification events.

Bob briefly discussed some town's request/requirement that hunters fulfill a community service project for the

opportunity to hunt. Bob mentioned that this may not be lawful as it could be construed as paying for hunting privileges.

Tom made a motion to close the meeting, it was seconded and passed unanimously.

Adjourned 800pm