

Deer Management Subcommittee Minutes Town Hall – second floor - main hall

February 20, 2020 645pm

In attendance:

Jason Cole
Tom Cotton
Bob Douglas
Paul Willard
Ben Urquart

Kirstin O'Brien from Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) Liz from ConCom

Topics Discussed:

Sudbury Valley Trustees/Metrowest Conservation Alliance:

Kirsten is the coordinator of the Metrowest Conservation Alliance (MCA). She detailed a potential plan to unite metropolitan deer control efforts. The plan could include hunter logs on the Number of Hunters, deer taken, and hours put into the hunt. The group would also support programs that are just beginning and offer guidance. Most communities she had approached were enthusiastic.

She also detailed a hunting program that SVT is running near Harvard's borders on the Smith CR, which they manage in Littleton.

Jason spoke in favor of the joint effort.

She detailed that the hunters log would have the hunters' observations.

She also proposed a Hunter Ambassador might be helpful (a well spoken hunter - that can explain the program – to interact with the public).

Kristin mentioned that she would be at the Mass Land Trust Coalition with Stainbrook and Michele Grzenda (who is on the SVT stewardship committee).

She also represents the Invasive Species Group, an invasive species management group. We can ask her to send a monthly newsletter on this topic.

Jason asked what kind of mapping resources the SVT/MCA has and whether they are shared. Kristin responded that SVT has an ArcGIS subscription, and she also recommended using the state's OLIVER system, which is available for free online. She said that the SVT sponsors Americorps projects, including a guide to mapping; other similar projects are possible.

Ben moved to vote on whether to join the MCA; Jason seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. Bob suggested that Kristin use Liz Allard as her POC for the DMS, with emails cc'd to DMS members.

Note: Paul and Tom left the meeting to attend ConCom meeting. A 3 person DMS quorum remained.

Pellet Surveys:

Ben U passed on some information from the Harvard Conservation Trust meeting which occurred last night. The trust will allow pellet counts, Ladyslipper surveys, and Ten Tallest counts on their lands. They will need more discussion prior to allowing camera studies.

Jason briefed the group on David Stainbrook's communications re surveys: he will train us in March (he provided available dates), help us to design our transects, and process our data. Depending on his and his team's availability, he might be able to help us run the surveys, presumably in April. We have an email out to David and are awaiting his reply with further information.

Jason discussed potential transect locations based on an annotated map created by Marc Sevigny with his suggestions for survey locations. Marc's suggestions included the following areas:

- 1) Smith/Bellevue/Scorgie/Tufts/Willard/Postras, including a portion of the Maxant property
- 2) Prospect Hill/Tully/Barton/Bartlett/Dean's Hill
- 3) Barrett/Williams Pond/Murray Lane/Great Elms and Ernst CR

As a goal, we should consider using the following:

- areas that have been browse surveyed by MassWildlife
- areas that will be in the deer management program
- areas that will most likely never be hunted (as controls)

Area (1), above, includes Willard/Postras, which was surveyed by MassWildlife and is included in the deer management program. As Marc noted, we would need permission from the owners of Maxant for a portion of the survey area.

Area (2), above, does not include land currently in the program, but it includes lands that were surveyed by MassWildlife, and it seems possible that some lands in (2) might some day be included in the program.

Area (3), above, includes the Barrett land, which is included in the program. As Marc noted, we would need approval from Ernst owner Ann Bamford for a portion of the survey area. Murray Lane is owned by HCT, which has given us permission to conduct pellet surveys.

In addition to Marc's suggestions, we could consider the following:

- Extending the transects in (1), above, southward into Pine Swamp and West Bare Hill areas. Marc's transects are already approximately a mile long, so this might not be necessary.
- Survey Perini. This property is about 0.5 x 1 mile, which is enough area for one or two 1-mile transects. This would be our only survey area that was exclusively within a hunted property.

- Survey Bowers Springs as a control property, since it seems unlikely to be hunted in the future.
- Survey Holy Hill as a control property, since it seems unlikely to be hunted in the future.
- Survey Fruitlands as a control property, since it seems unlikely to be hunted in the future. TOTR approval would be required. TOTR does not currently allow hunting on Fruitlands, but they allow hunting on other properties, and it is possible that they could allow hunting on Fruitlands in the future. This is probably not our best option.
- Survey Oxbow, or ask MassWildlife to do so, as a hunted property control. This would probably not be the best use of our time/resources.

Ben suggested we schedule a meeting next week to process any new info from Stainbrook.

Minutes Feb 6, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously and will be sent to Liz via Jason.

Next meeting 645pm Feb 27 in the Town Hall (provided we get new info from Stainbrook)

Meeting adjourned