

**TOWN OF HARVARD
DEER MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
ZOOM MEETING 5:30-6:00pm
Thursday November 19, 2020**

Members present:

Jason Cole (chair for the meeting), Tom Cotton, Ben Urquhart, Paul Willard

Public Present:

Eve Wittenberg, Sue McCarthy (DFW), Cody Floerchinger, Joe Pulido

Called to Order 5:35 PM by Jason.

New Business:

Survey of Hunters –

13 responses to survey so far

Fewer than half hunting; those who are hunting say they have visited all lands equally

Critical comments from survey: checking in with dispatch difficult, accessibility difficult, need more land; hunter density high

9 hunters have hunted DS

7 Perini

6 Barrett

5 Willard/Poitras

3 Rodriquez (surveys say difficult to get to, not good deer habitat)

7 say they plan to increase their hunting during the remainder of the season

Hunters say it would be helpful to have more land, bigger parcels

Work/family issues have contributed to low participation

No mentions of COVID, short scouting season as reasons for low participation

Cody: lack of scouting time an issue, he sees stands in the woods and seems like prime spots have been taken. Can we coordinate to use same area on different days? Regarding scent from more people - can mask it, do things to work around the issue, which will allow more hunters to use the same areas.

Jason reiterated the stats up through our last meeting (21 hunters actively enrolled, 11 have posted in log; 4 of them have gone out more than a couple times each).

Sue: these numbers represent a low effort on the part of hunters so far; general hunter success rate (attaining harvest) around 20%; have to incorporate effort, time in the field to get accurate rate.

Cody: in my experience: hunted 9 days, got 1 deer in ideal hunting.

Jason: We put together the hunting team late (Sept/Oct) – is short scouting period a factor?

Sue: yes, more familiarity brings better chance of success. Program conservation land competing with private access that hunters can hunt... familiarity, access, deer numbers contribute to their choice of where to hunt. Not knowing until Sept that they would have access to program lands, most hunters probably scouted elsewhere.

Eve: how many hunters are from Harvard?

Jason: around 7-9. Are active people locals?

Tom: agree, can figure it out.

Sue: having a stand in the woods doesn't mean the hunter owns the spot; hunters should coordinate.

Eve: could assign to parcels, that way people would know who would be there.

Jason: could let hunters contact each other and work out cooperative use of areas.

Sue: hunters would not like assigned parcels; sharing info would be good, get their permission first.

Cody: got in touch with another hunter this way on Perini - very good experience.

Joe: good to know when other guys are in a parcel - will work around their schedule, wait for scent to dissipate.

Ben: easy to set up version of log so hunters can see data; asking for more hunters is not the right course of action.

We will not ask ConCom for more hunters.

Jason: Sue, what is MA deer harvest looking like this season so far?

Sue: Overall MA deer harvest is high this year as well, attributed to people spending more time outdoors during pandemic.

Field Audit

Jason: Rodriquez yesterday 4:45pm, no cars.

Tom: Nothing at Barret.

Paul: Nothing at Willard.

Approval of Minutes:

Jason: Can we vote to approve 10/22 and last week's minutes?

The group has not had time to read yet; will do at next meeting.

Cody: to encourage participation, don't publish hunter contact info outside hunting group.

Jason: To do for the group:

- 1) Reach out to hunters, encourage them to get out; tell them how little the forest is being used.**
- 2) Put hunters in touch with each other; ask permission to create contact list; No one "owns" the good spots - they can coordinate who will use these spots at what time.**
- 3) Post the log or a version of it so hunters can see which areas being used and when.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Motion by Ben to adjourn, seconded by Tom, unanimous.