

**TOWN OF HARVARD
DEER MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
ZOOM MEETING 6:30pm – 7:25pm
Thursday JULY 15, 2021**

DMS Bob Douglas, Joe Pulido, Ben Urquhart, Paul Willard.
Also attended: Don Osmer, Daniel Tracey, Eve Wittenberg
Martin Feehan, Massachusetts State Deer Biologist.

Bob covered information related to the DMS charge and goals.

Minutes:

March 25, April 1, July 6 (2021) minutes were approved with edits.

Bob introduced Martin Feehan, the Massachusetts State Deer Biologist. Martin has experience in Urban Deer Management. Research and PhD from Cornell.

Bob asked for feedback on list, Paul valued getting quality sites and thought the concom may cut the number. Ben agreed and looked for increasing the number of sites.

Bob asked Martin, he said hunters may desire to be spread out a bit more – and be more engaged. Bob supported an “elbow room effect”. Joe, “advocate for the more space I have the more successful we will be at the hunt”. Don Osmer; recommend propose all locations found with deer during scouting and let ConCom/stewardship select. I would not limit us.

Bob asked Martin about the distribution of hunters on properties.

Cornell hunters based on what you take – you get priority to sign up the following year. Some sites, the small ones, have one or two hunters assigned.

Ft. Drum had a lottery for smaller sites. Larger sites hunters assign themselves.

Downside is if hunters don't go out due to taking an early deer or tagging out.

Assignment allows people in the area know who is in the area – they get used to individual in the area.

In the Cornell site – very successful in rewarding hunters with strong participation in the previous season. Bob asked a question on scouting and the disturbance of deer. Martin spoke of the change in deer movements with hunters on the property. Using GPS collars on deer you can see the change in their movements. *“The more you have people spread out - the higher success rate are likely to be – just because in general the deer will feel more comfortable”*.

Joe asked about spooking deer. Deer become more nocturnal during the hunting season. You want to decrease the impact on the deer to make them feel more comfortable.

Some discussion of the Cornell campus experiments with the hunt.

Don asked a question about walking trails and the public.

A lot of people have left the city and may be seeing in for the first time.

Bob asked Dan Tracey if he had any questions “No thanks all set”. 29:50

Update on Monitoring

Bob asked on Ten Tallest browse survey. Judge of impacts of browsing and regeneration.

Martin used oak sentinel method which does show population. More quantitative.

Ben, monitoring oak sentinels in interesting. Martin gave brief description and correlation with known populations. Comparison paper will be out later this year. Planting is tricky, but anyone can measure once plated. DMS members expressed interest. Seedlings planted in May and

checked monthly. In NY, people propagate the acorns themselves starting in February. Marty is looking to do a 4 year rotation. Always use red oak. Moderately favored by deer.

Joe mentioned vetting hunters and hoped we can have hunters begin scouting late August. He would like to have decision soon. We need to have an idea what the final numbers of hunters will be.

Some discussion on the Cornell model and how it might apply to Harvard. "*The more rules you set - often the less engaged hunters will be.*" Joe mentioned knowledge of hunter activity is important due to spooked deer - and it would be helpful to know the movement of other hunters. Don Osmer said, most of these sites are small, we have the time to pattern the deer and it is less desirable to have other people he is not aware of in there - due to scent control and movement.

Tom made a motion to adjourn seconded by Joe.