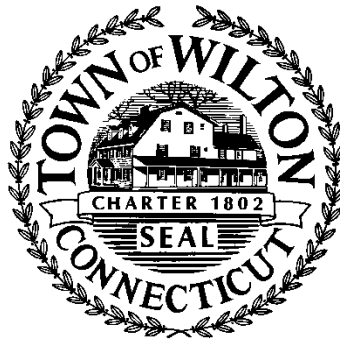


DEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
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TOWN HALL  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**Deer Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
June 11, 2013**

In attendance: Mike Russnok, Frank Mabley, Kevin Clark, Loretta Foley, Donna Merrill, Steve White

Also in attendance: Patricia Sesto, director of environmental Affairs

- I. Mike Russnok called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.
- II. Members viewed the deer enclosure at Quarry Head State Park, noting the vegetation inside the enclosure was markedly denser than outside of the fencing.
- III. Minutes  

Frank Mabley noted the minutes should be amended to indicate he was in attendance. Loretta Foley made a Motion to approve the minutes of May 13, 2013, as amended, Seconded by Kevin Clark and carried.
- IV. Ongoing Business

Action Items from DEEP Presentation:

Russnok reviewed his three take away messages from the previous meeting with Howard Kilpatrick of the CT DEEP. 1. Timed feeders for baiting. This is essential to pattern the deer to be at a predictable location at a predictable time for the hunters. 2. The population count has dropped from 69 deer per square mile to 42. 3. The importance of limiting disturbance in the woods. This disturbance can be from hikers and hunters alike. The committee has to rethink its expectation that more hunter hours in the woods will equal a stronger harvest. Instead, hunters need to go in for discreet excursions, then let the woods reset.

Foley recounted the how the level of under reporting was noteworthy. Also, taking Kilpatrick up on his offer to conduct a workshop on how to better work the woods was worthwhile. The more efficient approach will likely result in the need for fewer hunters.

Mabley felt the extended cross bow season offered the potential for an increased harvest. This change needs to be promoted. Cross bows are expensive and it will likely take a few years for hunters to work their way into making the purchase.

Patricia Sesto informed the committee of the changes in Redding, where the town team of hunters has uniformly resigned, citing their discontent with the involvement to the DEEP and the efforts they are making to increase the harvest. Sesto noted those hunters came into the program with a different mentality than she believes the Wilton hunters have. The Wilton hunters have been selected through interviews and have expressed an understanding of Wilton's goal to meaningfully reduce deer density. Reservations were expressed; some hunters may leave the Wilton program.

Donna Merrill indicated a compelling piece of information was the committee's ability to modify the hunting regulations using the Act to get a permit. This would provide options to professional sharpshooting.

#### 2013 Management Plan:

- i. Controlled hunt: The 2013 program will emphasize the use of feeders. The hunters will have to bring their own feeders and the committee will supply the corn.

The properties to be hunted are the SNEW-owned City Lake, Comstock, Crystal Lake (bow only), all of Popes Pond, and the Diversion Parcel (bow only). The Town and Land Trust properties to be hunted are Sackett/Marble-Richards-Van Haelewyn, Belknap/Gregg, Vista + WLT pieces, Slaughter Field, Tito Lane, Wrens Thicket, and Bradley Park.

Members discussed the rules regarding closure. On Kilpatrick's recommendation, the members sought complete closure on select properties and acknowledged past limited closure plans would be appropriate for several properties. Properties to be closed completely for the duration of the season, termed "hard close", were Belknap/Gregg, Tito Lane, and Slaughter. The hard close won't begin until October 1<sup>st</sup>, although baiting can start earlier. The remaining properties will have a "soft closure", meaning the properties will still be open to the public on Sunday's and designated holidays.

- ii. Members reviewed the value of the landowner match program, speculating on the effectiveness of the effort. Russnok reminded members if hunters are going to be invited to participate, the level of effort to secure properties needs to remain high in order to meet the legitimate expectations of the

hunters. The consensus was to continue with the hunter/landowner match program.

- V. Mike Russnok made a motion to adjourn at 7:50, seconded by Frank Mabley, and carried.