

DEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
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TOWN HALL
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Wilton, Connecticut 06897

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**Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2018**

Committee members in attendance: Mike Russnok, Chairman, Ben Couch, Scott MacQuarrie, Loretta Foley, Jeff Lapnow

Staff in attendance: Mike Conklin, Director of Environmental Affairs

- I. Chairman Russnok called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.
- II. Public Comment – None
- III. Scott Rowland – Wilton Resident – Not present
- IV. Hunt Update and Survey Response Questions – Russnok reviewed the 2017 Hunter Questionnaire Summary. 70 deer were harvested from the parcels of land associated with the controlled hunt. Lapnow asked if there was a specific reason why more deer were harvested from certain parcels of land and less from other sites. Russnok explained he cannot determine a specific reason for the distribution of harvested deer. Russnok explained that several parcels from the Aspetuck Land Trust were added to the controlled hunt and 2 deer were harvested from that land; a success for a first year of hunting that land. Russnok explained that 3 deer were not recovered by separate hunters who had reported losing the track. Russnok reported that the CT DEEP has not yet published the final deer harvest numbers for this deer season so a final number is unknown at this time. He also noted that we had another successful year without any injuries or safety incidents.

Foley explained the homeowner match had 4 property owners participate this year. Out of the 4, one property was not suitable for hunting and a lack of communication between the homeowner and the hunter left both unhappy. Foley noted that it is the responsibility of each party in the program to communicate with each other and better communication should be stressed in the future. Russnok noted the homeowner match program has dwindled from over 40 properties several years ago to just 4 this year. Foley asked about continuing the homeowner match program. Russnok confirmed it can be addressed at the next meeting.

- V. Ground Blind Clarification – Russnok explained there are two ground blinds in use by hunters involved in the controlled hunt. One ground blind is used in a field where there are no suitable trees for a tree stand and the other is used where hunters will be shooting in a downward direction into a hillside.

MacQuarrie MOVED to formally accept the use of ground blinds by hunters in fields where no suitable trees exist for a tree stand and in places where the land provides a shooting backstop so that all shots from the ground blind are taken in a trajectory that will enter the ground, SECONDED by Mr. Couch and CARRIED 5-0-0.

- VI. 2018 Meeting Schedule - Foley MOVED to accept the 2018 Meeting Schedule as being the second Tuesday in the months of May, June, August, November and December, SECONDED by Mr. Lapnow and CARRIED 5-0-0.
- VII. 2018 Elections - MacQuarrie MOVED to nominate Mr. Russnok as Chairman of the Committee for the year 2018, SECONDED by Ms. Foley and CARRIED 5-0-0. Russnok MOVED to nominate Mr. MacQuarrie as Vice Chairman of the Committee for the year 2018, SECONDED by Ms. Foley and CARRIED 5-0-0.
- VIII. Approval of Minutes - Couch MOVED to approve the meeting minutes of May 9, 2017, September 5, 2017 and November 14, 2017, SECONDED by Mr. Lapnow and CARRIED 4-0-1 (Foley abstained)
- IX. Adjourn - MacQuarrie MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:25pm, SECONDED by Ms. Foley and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Wilton Deer Committee
Controlled Hunt
2017 Hunter Questions – Summary 43 responses (46 hunters)

1. Which properties did you hunt and how many deer did you harvest in Wilton? Please exclude the number harvested on private property if any:

	# of does	# of bucks	Total	Last Year
City Lake	6	4	10	11
Sackett	2	2	4	1
Comstock	9	13	22	15
Vista Road	1	1	2	3
Gregg / Belknap	1	3	4	8
Diversion Parcel	1	1	2	4
Crystal Lake	5	2	7	7
Slaughter Field	3	1	4	0
Wrens Thicket	0	0	0	1
Tito Lane	0	0	0	0
Wild Duck	2	0	2	0
Coulhane	2	0	2	2
Popes Pond	2	3	5	10
Chessor	0	0	0	1
St. Johns / Chicken Street	1	0	1	1
Seeley Road / Pen Central	0	2	2	1
Quail Ridge / Honey Hill	0	0	0	0
Thayer Pond	0	0	0	0
Aspetuck Land Trust	1	1	2	N/A
Middlebrook Farm Rd.	0	1	1	N/A
Total	36	34	70	65

Note: prior year excludes 3 deer from transfer station.

2. Did you have any deer that you were not able to recover / confirm harvest? If yes, please provide details (number of deer, property, etc).

1 doe and 1 buck were not recovered at Popes Pond

1 doe at City Lake

Aware of incident off of Wild Duck where deer was recovered after interaction with DEEP.

3. How often did you hunt?

a. 1-2 times per week

c) 1-2 times per month

b. More than 3 times per week

d) Rarely

Majority of hunters responded with a or b. Some hunters less time due to lack of deer sign or work commitments.

Nothing unusual to report.

4. Did you hunt during the following seasons and which implement did you use? Mark all that apply.

September 15 through November 15
Rifle Season (November 15 through December 5)
Muzzleloader (December 6 through December 31)
January

Bow/Cross bow	Rifle/Shotgun	Muzzleloader
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	
	N/A	N/A

If you did not, use a hunting implement noted above please note why you did not take the opportunity to utilize it:

Nothing unusual to report back.

5. Did you hunt in January (if the property you were assigned to was not open for January hunting please mark as not applicable)? If the property you were assigned had the opportunity to hunt in January and you didn't hunt, please explain why you didn't hunt and why you think you should be invited back to participate in next year's hunt.

Several hunters noted very little daytime activity on camera during January.

6. Did you utilize bait? If no, why not?

Nothing unusual to report back. Appears that hunters have continued to embrace using bait.

7. Did you utilize a mechanical feeder as was encouraged by the Deer Committee during our kick off meeting? If no, why not?

Nothing unusual to report back as majority of hunters using mechanical feeders.

8. If applicable, how often did you communicate with the surrounding property owners?

Nothing unusual to report.

9. Did you have trouble gaining full access to the properties you had permission to hunt? If yes, please explain.

Nothing unusual to report.

10. Were there any impediments to a more successful season? Please specify.

City Lake – coyote activity

City Lake – tracks of trespassers (cross country skiers) but no incidents to report

Tito Lane – difficult piece of land to hunt due to terrain.

Comstock – trespassers noted by several hunters which impacted hunt. Perhaps additional no trespassing signs would help?

Popes Pond – trespassers noted on NW corner, use of ATV, another hunter (not part of program noted once)

Vista – walkers on property made it difficult to pattern deer

11. Did you have any problems / confrontations with trespassers (please be as detailed as possible to provide insight into how we can try to limit these in the future)?

See above in response #10.

12. Did you notice any significant coyote activity and do you think that had any effect on the hunt? Any other observations of other animals that would be of interest?

City Lake – significant coyote activity / group of 4 around one hunting site in particular that rendered bait site useless.

Crystal Lake – northern part of parcel had significant coyote activity

Popes – NW corner noted significant coyote activity

13. Any suggestions for the Deer Committee to consider on improvements to the program?

City Lake – down trees on Old Sunken Road, if able to remove will allow for improved access (by Church)

14. Are you planning to participate in this program again next year? If no, why not?

One hunter will not participate due to family commitments.

One hunter on fence (son who used to hunt with moved 40 minutes away so hard to get bait into stands)

15. Other general comments / observations / suggestions?

Provide corn for bait (2 hunters)

City Lake – a number of gates by Church are locked and not accessible by hunters. If able to increase access points would be helpful to hunt.

