

WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FROM: WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
SUBJECT: 2015 DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY
DATE: 6/17/2016

Weston Conservation Commission completed the fourth year of its Deer Management Program. This multifaceted program includes studying the effects of deer on Weston's forests, educating residents on Lyme disease and deer tick prevention, and reducing the deer population to ecologically appropriate levels.

The Conservation Commission has established several vegetation monitoring programs to assess the long-term effects of deer browse on Weston's forests. With help from the Weston Garden Clubs, lady slipper abundance was assessed at several conservation lands. A total of ten deer exclosures are being monitored by Brandeis University students and Harvard Forest. In September 2015, one of the ten deer exclosures was installed near the elementary schools. Two high school teachers are utilizing a deer exclosure by the Middle School to study, with their students, the effects of deer on vegetation.

Below, please find the summary from the 2015 hunting season, and our recommendations for 2016.

Results based on Hunter Log Database

- The following eight properties were open to regulated hunting: Blaney Aquifer, Coburn Meadows (new this year), Dickson Fields, Doublet Hill (new this year), Highland Forest, Ogilvie Town Forest, Jericho Town Forest, and Sears Land.
- A total of 26 deer were harvested from 32 hunters – 13 does and 13 bucks.
- A total of 408 hunting days were reported from 32 hunters (a hunter day reflects a hunting event entered into the electronic hunter log database). On average, each of the hunters participated in 13 hunting days during the season.
- Hunters donated a total of 63 hours of land management work clearing trails, removing signage, looking for illegal deer stands, and picking up trash/litter.
- Several hunters observed deer being chased by unleashed dogs. Other wildlife observed by hunters included red-tailed hawk, fisher, owl, coyotes, red fox, turkey, chipmunks, squirrels.
- Hunter/resident interaction – Hunters reported many positive interactions with residents.



Other 2015 Deer Population Impacts

- 28 deer-car collisions were reported to the Weston Police Dept.
- According to the MA Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife, 14 additional deer were harvested on private land in Weston.

Conservation Commission Recommendation

The Commission deems that the program, including preparation, implementation, and follow-up, was successful. Over the course of four years, 88 deer have been harvested on town conservation land (and an additional 73 on private land).

In addition to continuing the regulated deer hunting at the eight properties discussed above, on May 31, 2016, the Commission unanimously voted to expand the program as follows:

- Open appropriate portions of College Conservation Area to limited hunting in 2016.
- Begin discussions with MWRA to determine their interest in opening Norumbega Reservoir to hunting
- Assess various options the town can pursue regarding major deer damage experienced by Land's Sake Inc. at 40-acre field and other fields they farm in town.

The Commission is available to meet with the Selectmen to discuss this summary and recommendation.

Cause of Deer Morality in Weston	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Deer/car collisions	36	28	26	24	23	34	28
Deer harvested on conservation land	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	20	25	26
Deer harvested on private land	11	18	12	18	22	19	14
Total	47	46	38	60	65	78	68

Conservation Land	Huntable acres	# hunters	# deer harvested
Blaney Aquifer	23	3	5
Coburn Meadows	5	1	0
Dickson Fields	23	3	2
Doublet Hill	24	2	2
Highland Forest	203	4	2
Jericho Town Forest	572	12	10
Ogilvie Town Forest	197	5	2
Sears Land	87	2	3
Total	727	32	26