

**WATCHUNG BOROUGH
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2015-2016 DEER HERD MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION**

"White tailed deer have reached problematic numbers in numerous suburban communities in New Jersey. Increased deer-vehicle collisions, damage to ornamental plantings and gardens, damage to agricultural crops and destruction of the natural forest ecosystem are some of the problems associated with high deer populations:" is the lead paragraph in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Fish & Wildlife (DEP) WEB Site posting. The DEP Community-Based Deer Management posting continues to point out that the New Jersey deer herd was historically managed through sports hunting. However, where traditional hunting has not been able to control the size of the deer herd the DEP has taken additional steps to manage the deer population by lengthening the hunting season, increasing the number of deer taken and issuing special hunting permits know as CBDMP's (Community Based Deer Management Permits) .

In addition to authorizing the CBDMP program, which employs non-traditional culling such as paid marksmen and capture and euthanization, the DEP introduced a program authorizing the use of the crossbow in 2010 to help manage the deer herd size. The approved bow hunting regulations require a safety zone between hunting site and building of 150 feet compared to 450 feet for gun hunting. The reduced distance can be very helpful in achieving deer management objectives. And thus, a DEP posting on their WEB site included the following: "Crossbows can be a practical alternative in populated areas where firearm discharge has been restricted by local ordinance. This will assist Fish and Wildlife to achieve deer management objectives where hunter access has been limited."

Therefore, in order to reverse the increased, deer-vehicle collision rate, damage to ornamentals and the " destruction of the natural forest ecosystem" by high deer populations as identified by the DEP; the Committee recommends that the Borough of Watchung, for 2015-2016, adopt a Community Based Deer Management Program incorporating all the principals advocated by the DEP. That would include the recommendations to allow culling by firearm as well as crossbow, as permitted by State authorization, and not stand in opposition to State regulation permitting bow use in areas in which the distance between hunting site and building is 150 feet or more.

This recommendation for the 2015-2016 is not only based on the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Fish and Game Council, who have the "responsibility to manage deer populations in areas of the state where traditional deer hunting programs may not be the most effective method of deer population control", but also gleaned from almost 10 years of prior Committee experience which include observing or witnessing the following.

- 1) The increasing deer population has resulted in increased deer-vehicle collisions, increasing the potential of fatal incidents. When culling was most active(2008 period), auto incidents dropped to a range of 8 to 9 per year as compared to 20 to 45 for other years. During this period Watchung received CBDMP permits from the DEP, used paid agents and culled 120 to 150 deer per year compared to the approximate 50 per year now.
- 2) The eight (8) sites secured for hunting in 2014 were strongly influenced by the need to secure approvals for hunting within 450 foot of an inhabited building. The adoption of crossbow hunting

would result in reducing the approval zone required to 150 foot, thus making many more sites available for culling.

3) Watchung has had three(3) surveys of the residents over a ten (10) year period, to measure their attitude regarding the size of the deer population. In each survey the residents overwhelmingly agreed with the DEP that white tailed deer have reached problematic numbers in their neighborhood. In addition the residents support culling the herd and they support use of the crossbow. The Committee is puzzled by the lack of consideration given by the Council regarding the expressed wishes of the residents to manage the herd.

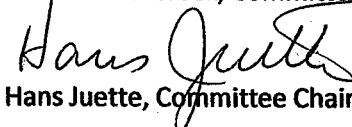
In summary, The DEP has determined that high deer populations cause increased deer-vehicle collisions, damage to ornamentals, gardens and agriculture, but also cause the destruction of the natural forest ecosystem. The DEP has also determined that the crossbow can be a practical alternative in performing culling and can actually help the DEP's objective to achieve proper deer population management. Therefore, given the findings of the DEP and the other material presented above, the Committee unanimously recommends that the Council (1) Incorporate the recommendations of the DEP in Watchung's Deer Management Program and (2) End its, self approved, five (5) year ban on the use of the crossbow by Watchung residents and by paid agents. Thus standing with the DEP to protect our forest ecosystem and not oppose the DEP in its effort to protect the environment.

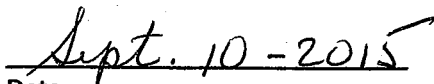
Recommended:


Allan Carroll, Committee Member


Paul Michaelis, Committee Member


Richard Wellbrock, Committee Member


Hans Juetz, Committee Chairman


Date