

WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FROM: WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
SUBJECT: 2014 DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY
DATE: 3/26/2015

Weston Conservation Commission completed the third 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. In addition, four deer exclosures are being monitored by Brandeis University students. In November of 2014, a deer exclosure was installed near the middle school. Two high school teachers are interested in using the deer exclosure to study, with their students, the effects of deer on vegetation.



Deer at Dickson Fields

Below, please find the summary from the 2014 hunting season, and the recommendations for 2015.

Results based on Hunter Log Database

- The following six properties were open to regulated hunting: Blaney Aquifer, Dickson Fields, Highland Forest (new this year), Ogilvie Town Forest, Jericho Town Forest, and Sears Land
- A total of 25 deer were harvested from 32 hunters – 17 does and 8 bucks.
- A total of 311 hunting days were reported from 28 hunters (a hunter day reflects a hunting event entered into the electronic hunter log database). On average, each of the hunters participated in 11 hunting days during the season.
- Hunters donated a total of 33 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.
- No hunting complaints from Weston residents were reported to the Police Department, the Conservation Commission or the Massachusetts Environmental Police.



Turkeys at Blaney Conservation Area

Other 2014 Deer Population Impacts

- 34 deer-car collisions were reported to the Weston Police Dept.
- According to the MA Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife, 19 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 three years, 63 deer have been harvested on town conservation land (and an additional 59 on private land). No conflicts between hunters and other recreational users of the land have been reported.



Buck at Blaney Conservation Area

In addition to continuing the regulated deer hunting at the six properties discussed above, on March 24, 2015, the Commission unanimously voted to expand the program as follows:

- Open Coburn Meadows and Doublet Hill to limited hunting in 2015.
- 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
Deer/car collisions	36	28	26	24	23	34
Deer harvested on conservation land	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	20	25
Deer harvested on private land	11	18	12	18	22	19
Total	47	46	38	60	65	78



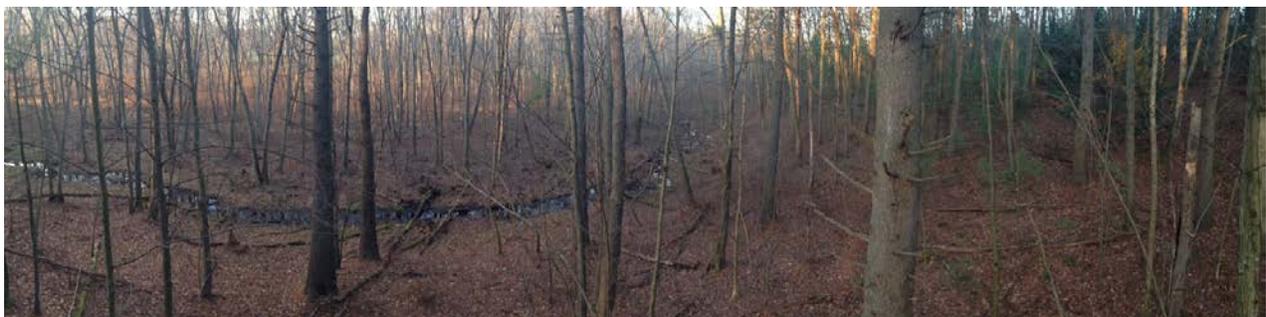
Coyote in Ogilvie Town Forest



Dog Chasing Deer



Sparring Bucks at Jericho Forest



View from a Hunter's Tree Stand – Ogilvie Town Forest