

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

MEETING OF THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2011, 4:30 PM, PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE

MINUTES

Present: Pete Anderson, Jacob Bethune, Andrew Coombs, Linda Gillies, Philo Hutcheson, Don Johnson, Carol Macaulay (via speaker phone), Gilbert Rivera, Scott Sienkiewicz, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Fred Thomas (chair), William Tilden

Absent: Paul Hatch, Jr.

Fred Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

Approval of Minutes, Meeting of December 1, 2011. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Report on Meeting of 12/14/11 with IF&W. Fred summarized the meeting, which was attended by Jim Connolly, Lee Kantar (by phone for part of the meeting), Keel Kemper, Kendall Marden from IF&W and Pete Anderson, Bud Bethune, Linda Gillies, Gil Rivera, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Fred Thomas from DRC.

- Special Hunt. Jim Connolly confirmed that under Title 12, Section 11402 of the Maine State Statutes, IF&W is able to authorize a hunting season that is separate from the regular season. The IF&W term for such a season is “special hunt.” Fred said that the DRC has been referring to the season as a “cull.”
- Increased Hunting Opportunity on Islesboro. Jim said that Islesboro should encourage more hunting during the regular extended archery season through increased access to land and incentives such as free licenses or a butchering operation during the regular season.
- The Culling Season.
 - Islesboro Hunters. Fred said he estimated there were about 20 qualified licensed local hunters who could participate in a cull. Lee Kantar said there should be no limit to the number of hunters.
 - Hunter Qualifications/Screening. Jim said that hunters should have a valid hunting license and be able to show proficiency (hit a target). The screening process is best done locally (not by IF&W) and should be fair, aiming to include all qualified hunters. This work can be done by a sub-committee of the DRC.
 - Education. Pete said that cull hunters could participate in a hunter safety class.
 - Regulations. Keel said that regular hunting regulations are followed during a cull. There can be no baiting or pre-baiting, which is restricted to sharpshooters.
 - Weaponry. Keel Kemper said that reaching the goal of 10 deer per square mile on Islesboro will be a very big job, and that firearms will be required. There have been

- studies indicating that the rifle can be safer than the shotgun; he acknowledged that this can be a hard sell to the public.
- Bucks/does. Lee said that a moratorium on bucks can be problematic. The regulations could stipulate that the first deer should be a doe or could be set up on a doe/buck percentage basis. Whatever the regulations, they should be simple to administer.
 - Public Information. Jim said that the Town should make a couple of people available to answer islanders' questions during the cull.
 - Season length. Pete suggested that in view of the large number of deer to be culled, perhaps the season should be extended to 3 weeks.
 - Evaluation. Jim said after two trial seasons DRC should evaluate the program and make adjustments if necessary.
- Butchering. Kendall Martin said there were alternatives to Windham Butchers; he suggested Thin Blue Line in Rockland.
 - Biological Information. Lee said that Matson's Laboratory in Montana charges \$5 per deer for analysis, a cost that would be paid by the Town of Islesboro. It's possible that some of this work could be done by Randy at IF&W.
 - IF&W Approval Process.
 - March - DRC submits written plan to IF&W.
 - April - Jim Connolly's office informs Advisory Council, gets "buy-in."
 - May - Plan voted on at Town Meeting.
 - June - August - Advisory Council approves separate Rule.
 - Public Relations. Jim suggested that in an effort to disseminate accurate information about the Islesboro deer reduction effort, DRC should contact the hunting journalist Harry Vanderweide early in the process.

Budget for Survey/Letter to Selectmen. Pete Anderson circulated a draft letter to the Selectmen requesting \$1,382.24 from the Town's capital reserve account for the printing and mailing of the survey.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the survey budget and letter to the Selectman were approved.

Landowner Survey. Pete circulated the draft of a survey, to be sent in mid-January. He is working on a cover letter that will explain the purpose of the survey and give background information. Several points relating to the survey were made:

- Before the survey is sent out, the Islesboro community should be informed of progress made/information gathered by the DRC. In early January there should be a boxholder mailing (sent to summer residents at their winter addresses as well); there could also be a link on the Town website. Linda Gillies will prepare a draft of the boxholder mailing. The information could include a report currently being prepared by Scott Sienkiewicz

about various weapons. Going forward, there should be articles about the DRC's work in the Islesboro Island News; Maggy Aston could be asked to DRC meetings.

- The survey will be accompanied by a cover letter that includes a variety of information about the survey and the cull:
 - what the survey is trying to accomplish.
 - background information, such as the differences between the regular extended archery season and the culling season and a description of different kinds of weapons (shotgun, rifle, etc.).
 - DRC's conclusion that some type of firearm will have to be used.
 - DRC's recognition that small properties are not appropriate for cull hunting.
 - DRC's resolve to have island resident hunters only (except for 700 Acre Island).
- The large amount of information that will come out of the survey should be put into some kind of database. Linda will investigate possibilities.

The Cull

- Hunters.
 - Philo Hutcheson suggested that non-resident hunters who have hunted on Islesboro for years at the invitation of landowners could be included. Fred disagreed, saying that if a few were allowed to participate in the cull, others would want to come. Linda mentioned that Carol Macaulay would like to invite a group of hunters who have hunted with her for years on 700 Acre Island. It was agreed that as no Islesboro hunters are familiar with Acre, this would be agreeable. Carol could be in charge of the screening process.
 - Fred said he thought there would be enough hunters, especially as a number of hunters who do not like bow hunting may be willing to participate with firearms.
- Firearms. Scott, Pete and Don Johnson advised specifying "firearms," rather than specific weapons. DRC should keep it simple; there's no way to enforce what specific firearms are used.
- Does/Bucks. Bill suggested that while there should be no moratorium on bucks, hunters could be encouraged to focus on does.
- Rules.
 - Several committee members commented that IF&W's stipulation that a cull must follow regular hunting rules (no pre-baiting or baiting, which can only be used by sharpshooters) will make the Islesboro cull much more tough.
 - Bill Tilden asked if it might be possible for IF&W to train Islesboro hunters in sharpshooter techniques, so that they would be able to use methods such as pre-baiting or baiting. Linda said she would ask Jim Connolly.
- Map. DRC should provide a map to the community indicating where hunting during the cull is allowed.

Formation of a DRC Sub-Committee. Fred brought up the possibility of forming a sub-committee to address the “nuts and bolts” of the cull, including hunter recruitment, screening and training, the logistics of the cull, etc. The sub-committee could bring on a couple of people who are not on the DRC but would be suited to this work. Philo Hutcheson said there could be a mandatory 2-4 hour hunter safety course for those participating in the cull; a proficiency test could be given at the same time. It was suggested that Philo could run the hunter safety course.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the establishment of a sub-committee of the Deer Reduction Committee was approved.

Old Business/New Business

- The Health Center should begin planning for the dissemination of Lyme-disease prevention measures in 2012, including putting this information on their section of the Town website. Linda will bring this up at a forthcoming Health Center Advisory Board meeting.
- It was agreed to change the date for the next DRC meeting to January 5, 2012 (rather than January 12th). The agenda will include review/approval of the texts of the boxholder mailing to be sent in advance of the survey, the survey and its cover letter.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies

Follow-Up

- Get cost information from Thin Blue Line . (LG)
- Investigate possibilities for survey database. (LG)
- Prepare draft of cover letter for survey; continue work on survey. (PA)
- Prepare draft of boxholder mailing. (LG)
- Ask Jim Connolly about the possibility of training Islesboro hunters as in sharpshooter techniques. (LG)
- Contact Health Center about 2012 Lyme disease prevention program. (LG)

12/16/11