

CHRONOLOGY  
APRIL 2012 – APRIL 2013

At a Special Town Meeting on August 24, 2011, Islesboro voters approved the following article by a vote of 100-28: *To support and establish a wildlife management plan with the goal of reducing the deer population to 10 deer per square mile and maintaining the population at that level, in order to reduce the incidence of tick-borne disease. The plan will be developed by a committee of local residents appointed by the Selectmen. The Selectmen will take said plan and any subsequent plans to the voters for approval before implementation.*

**2012**

- April 26 - Community information meeting. DRC presents proposal for a three-week Special Hunt with shotguns to be held in December 2012, 2013 and 2014. The plan had been OK'd by IF&W and the Islesboro Board of Selectmen.
- May 12 – The DRC plan is approved at Town Meeting by a voice vote.
- September – MDIF&W Advisory Council approves plan for Special Hunt.
- September–early December – extended archery season. 146 deer.
- December 10-31 – Special Hunt. Hunt goes well, without incident. 50 deer harvested.

**2013**

- Early January. Consensus with MDIF&W that 2012 deer harvest was insufficient to meet deer reduction goal of 10 per square mile.
- January 19. Meeting with hunters who participated in Special Hunt. In survey many felt that more deer could have been taken with rifles and a longer season.
- January 22. Discussion with Keel Kemper of MDIF&W about article from the Wildlife Society Bulletin, “Evaluation of Organized Hunting as a Management Technique for Overabundant White-tailed Deer in Suburban Landscapes.” Article recommends that communities and state agencies look to “alternative, non-traditional methods” in order to reduce deer to 10 per square mile. Recreational hunting does not reduce deer enough, sharpshooting does.
- February 1. Keel advises DRC to consider using sharpshooting. Introduces DRC to Anthony DeNicola of White Buffalo, Inc., the company that took 79 deer off Monhegan in 1997-1999, eliminating the herd, and 223 deer off Peak’s in 2000.

- White Buffalo (WB) is a nonprofit wildlife management and research organization founded in 1995 and dedicated to conserving native species and ecosystems through damage and population control.
  - Anthony DeNicola got his Ph.D. from Purdue University in 1996. His thesis subject was: “Control of reproduction in overabundant white-tailed deer populations.”
  - He works all over the country. As far as we can tell, this is the best organization working in the animal population control field. There simply is not another person with his range of expertise and experience.
- February 5. DRC contacts WB, who sends a proposal for sharpshooting work over three years, including training 3-4 local hunters to maintain the level of the herd on an ongoing basis. Total cost - \$177,050.
  - February 7. DRC decides: 1) to meet with WB on the phone and request a “bare bones” proposal. 2) to ask MDIF&W about extending the length of the Special Hunt, possibly by eliminating the extended archery season on Islesboro, and rifle use.
  - February 14. Keel Kemper says: 1) it will not be possible to eliminate the extended archery season just for Islesboro; 2) the season could be extended back into the regular archery season and forward into winter months, and 3) rifle use would be OK.
  - February 20. DRC members talk with WB and Keel. WB is impressed by Fred’s description of hunter skills on Islesboro. Says with local help he thinks the job could be done for \$80,000 over 3 years. Sends revised proposal.
  - February 25. DRC decides that it is too soon to change the 3-year Special Hunt plan. Motion to continue Special Hunt in 2013, keep careful track of numbers, re-assess in a year.
  - February 26. Anthony DeNicola says that, “It is a major tactical error to continue with a firearm season.” Deer get “negatively trained,” and are much more difficult to find after that. If Islesboro continues the Special Hunt and then wants to retain him, his charge would be closer to the original price, \$177,000.
  - March 11. DRC meets and is divided in their views. No vote is taken, but one view is to stick with the decision made on February 25<sup>th</sup>. All agree to report to the Selectmen, looking for their guidance.
  - March 13. DRC reports to Selectmen. They too are divided in their views. Recommend:
    - Putting \$16,500 (the cost of the Special Hunt) into Town budget as a “placeholder.”
    - Informing the community at an Information Meeting in April.
    - Scheduling a Special Town Meeting for a vote on the two options: continuing the Special Hunt as originally planned (with possible modifications) or suspending the hunt in order to investigate alternative deer reduction methods, including sharpshooting.

4/18/13