

January 9, 2012

While the Deer Reduction Committee (DRC) has not yet completed a final plan to be considered by Islesboro voters, good progress has been made, and it is time for us to send an interim report to the community.

**DRC's MISSION.** In accordance with the warrant article approved by Islesboro voters on August 24, 2011, the mission of the DRC is to come up with a plan for reducing the deer population on Islesboro to 10 per square mile and maintaining it at that level. The plan will be taken to the voters before implementation.

**DRC's WORK.** The DRC has met every two weeks since October 13, 2011. Gerry Lavigne, former State Deer Biologist, came to our November 21st meeting, and on December 14th six members of the committee met with officials at the Sidney office of the State Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife (IF&W).

## **DRC'S FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS SO FAR**

- **Deer Numbers.** DRC will use the numbers provided by the 2011 Stantec Consulting survey: 48 deer per square mile on Islesboro (a total of 528 deer) and 53 per square mile on 700 Acre Island (a total of 62 deer). In order to confirm the number of deer to be removed, we considered having a third count in 2012 but concluded that no wildlife survey will be precisely accurate, and that we know for sure that Islesboro has many deer. When the reproduction rate is taken into account, 500-700 deer will have to be taken from Islesboro over the next several years. The aim of the Special Hunt would be to take approximately 100 deer annually over and above those taken in the regular extended archery season. Another deer count would be taken in 2-3 years.
- **A "Special Hunt."** After meeting with IF&W staff and other experienced professionals, the DRC has come to the preliminary conclusion that Islesboro should conduct a "Special Hunt," which is permitted by IF&W in communities where an overabundance of deer causes health and environmental problems. Given the large number of deer to be culled, IF&W **strongly recommends the use of appropriate firearms.** The specifics of a Special Hunt would be:
  - *Timing.* A 2-3 week period, probably the second half of December, following the regular extended archery season.
  - *Hunters.* Only residents of Islesboro would be permitted to hunt. Hunters who routinely come from the mainland during the regular season would not be permitted to participate in the Special Hunt.
  - *Hunter screening:* Licensed hunters would be screened by a sub-committee of the DRC and would take a target test. Special Hunters would be required to take a hunter safety course. They would have badges and special stickers for their vehicles. In the Special Hunt they would secure landowner permission to hunt on specific properties.
  - *Hunting Methods.* Archery and firearms, to be determined by the landowner survey (see below).
  - *Regulations:* Standard IF&W regulations pertain to Special Hunts. For instance, night hunting, Sunday hunting and baiting would not be permitted.
  - *Number of deer per hunter.* Unlimited.
  - *Location.* In areas where landowners have given permission.
  - *Safety.* Islesboro residents would be fully informed about all aspects of the hunt, including a map indicating where hunting is permitted.
  - *Tagging station.* There would be a tagging station near the ferry during both the regular special archery season and the Special Hunt.
  - *Butchering.* Butchering would be provided, either on the island or at a mainland facility, and would be subsidized by the Town. Deer meat not wanted by hunters would be made available to island residents.
  - *Biological analysis.* Deer teeth would be analyzed according to State procedures in order to ascertain the history and condition of the deer herd.

**TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH A PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY.** The specifics of the DRC's plan – where the Special Hunt would be held and what hunting methods would be permitted - will be determined by landowner permissions secured through a survey to be mailed on January 17<sup>th</sup>. **Please watch for it!**

**DRC'S SCHEDULE GOING FORWARD.** DRC's proposed schedule is as follows:

- February 10, 2012                      Deadline for property owner survey.
- March 2012                              Submit written plan to IF&W.  
                                                    If IF&W approval secured, present plan to Selectmen.
- April 2012                                If Selectmen approval secured, hold community forum.
- May 2012                                 Vote on DRC plan at Town Meeting.
- May – August 2012                    If vote approved, IF&W puts Rule in place.
- September – Nov. 2012              Preparation for Special Hunt.
- December 2012                         Special Hunt.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.** The DRC meeting agendas and minutes, as well as other information that might be helpful, will soon be posted on the Town website (townofislesboro.com). **QUESTIONS.** Please call: Pete Anderson - 734-9736, Linda Gillies - 734-6452 (away January 14-21) or Fred Thomas - 734-6974.

Deer Reduction Committee

Fred Thomas-Chairman, Pete Anderson, Jacob Bethune, Andrew Coombs, Linda Gillies, Paul Hatch, Jr., Philo Hutcheson, Don Johnson, Carol Macaulay, Gilbert Rivera, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Scott Sienkiewicz, William Tilden

**DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE**

**INTERIM REPORT**  
*to the Islesboro Community*

**BOXHOLDER**

**04848**