

TOWN OF ISLESBORO  
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Thursday, January 26, 2012, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

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

Absent: Paul Hatch, Jr., Scott Sienkiewicz

Fred Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes, Meeting of January 2, 2011. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Follow-up from meeting of 1/2/12:

- *On-island butchering during a Special Hunt.* Fred Thomas reported that Scott Brown, who lives in Morrill and works at Hannaford's, does not have the time this year but may be interested in the future. Andrew Coombs will investigate whether other individuals might be available. Committee members asked if a butchering operation must be certified by the State; Linda Gillies will find out. Linda reported that according to State procedures, donated venison is prepared and distributed by the butcher, who then bills and is reimbursed for costs by the Hunters for the Hungry program.
- *"Hunting out of season."* IF&W has not yet come up with an answer to the question of whether an unauthorized person found hunting in a Special Hunt would be deemed "hunting out of season."
- *IIN.* Linda said that the paper will include the DRC's Interim Report in the January/February issue. Maggy Aston will try to attend DRC meetings and is glad to accept any article prepared by DRC for future issues. Linda will draft an article about the IF&W's long-term study of vegetation on the island in the March/April issue.

Report on IF&W's 1/20/12 Visit to Islesboro. Fred said that the meeting with Keel Kemper and Kendall Marden went well; it was clear that they wanted to help expedite Islesboro's deer reduction initiative to the extent possible. Fred thanked Andrew Coombs, Laura Houle and Philo Hutcheson for providing a delicious lunch, which was appreciated by all. Fred then reported the following:

- Keel, visiting Islesboro for the first time, was struck by the size and topography of the island. It was clear to him and to Kendall that a Special Hunt without baiting will be a challenge to Islesboro hunters and that reaching the goal of taking approximately 100 deer during a 2-3 week period will be difficult, perhaps impossible. Although the committee could try to make the case for relaxed regulations through political channels, at this point it will be best to follow the regular IF&W application procedures for a Special Hunt.

- Before the lunch meeting, with the help of Steve Miller and Aaron Megquier of IIT, Keel and Kendall established a number of GPS sites throughout the island that demonstrated the damaging effects of deer over-browsing on vegetation growth, which they found to be extensive. They took photographs and in future years, as the deer herd is reduced, will photograph the same sites for comparison.

### The Special Hunt.

- *Hunter eligibility.* Philo said that the DRC should establish clear criteria in advance for who can participate in a Special Hunt, so that people are treated fairly and consistently. He cited examples of questions that will arise:
  - Does a young person whose parents live on the island and who grew up here but now lives elsewhere qualify?
  - Does the spouse or other family member of a property owner qualify?
  - Must a property owner's land have a habitable dwelling on it?
  - Do ICS magnet students qualify?
 Linda suggested that as chair of the Hunter Eligibility and Safety Committee, Philo draft a list of hunter qualifications for consideration by DRC at the next meeting. Philo agreed on the condition that he could appoint two members of his committee now. There was consensus that Philo could begin to form the committee.
- *Hunter safety.* Philo emphasized two hunter safety measures:
  - Eligible hunters must demonstrate firearms competency.
  - Eligible hunters must attend a 90-minute hunter safety course.
 Carol asked if she could give the safety course to "her group" on 700 Acre Island. There was consensus that this would be allowed. Philo asked Carol to join his committee, and she agreed.
- *Property owner permission.* Several DRC members said that hunters should have written landowner permission, signed by the owner. Philo disagreed, saying that if owners don't post their land, they have given permission to hunt. Philo said that permission should be secured from the Town and several non-profit organizations which collectively own considerable land on Islesboro. Linda said that some were currently investigating liability issues; she has spoken with IIT staff members about coming up with relevant information that could inform their decisions.
- *Tagging.* In discussion of tagging during both the regular archery season and Special Hunt, question arose about how many deer taken on Islesboro were tagged at stations on the mainland in 2011. Linda will check with Kendall Marden at IF&W.

Early Survey Results. Linda reported that a good number of completed surveys have been returned to the Town office and that Caitlin Anderson has begun entering data into a database set up by Town Assessor Vernon Ziegler. Of the 80 responses, 65 favor the hunt, 5 did not answer the question and 10 are opposed. Three quarters favor archery, and a majority would allow it on their property. One half favor shotgun, though not many on their property. Almost none want rifle or would allow it on their property.

Review of DRC Budget for 2012/13. The committee reviewed a draft budget to be submitted to the Town in the week of January 30<sup>th</sup>. The budget totals \$24,055; the largest expense, an

estimated \$12,355, is for a tagging station to be operated during the regular archery season near the ferry. After discussion,

MOTION: The Deer Reduction Committee shall submit to the Town a budget totaling \$24,055 for projected expenses from July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2012 . The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Forum. It was agreed that the DRC should hold a forum to present its plan to the Islesboro community in mid-April, after the plan has been approved by IF&W's Advisory Council in March. Linda will look into possible dates.

Next Meeting. The next DRC meeting will be held on Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 in the Town Office.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

#### FOLLOW UP

- Investigate individuals who would be interested in setting up an on-island butchering operation during the Special Hunt. (AC)
- Investigate if an on-island butchering operation must be certified by the State. (LG)
- Research liability issue. (LG)
- Check with IF&W on how many deer taken on Islesboro were tagged at mainland stations. (LG)
- Look into possible forum dates in mid-April. (LG)

1/30/12