

Minutes of Deer Management Task Force meeting of 2/24/2010:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2010, 7PM, IN THE TOWNSHIP COURTROOM

The task force welcomed Jen Rogers, a naturalist from the Mercer County Park Commission, as our newest member.

There was a survey done by a graduate student at the University of Texas for the city of San Marcos that is very similar in nature to the one prepared by the task force. Survey Monkey, an internet service, was used for the Texas survey with a 38% return, which is considered the average for a survey.

Discussion regarding the survey/questionnaire/poll resumed. It was decided that changes would be made to the survey to incorporate more friends of deer questions and to change some of the questions in the original survey to those in the Texas survey and to use a 3 year time line so the questionnaire could be repeated on a regular basis, if needed. Denise will send out both the original survey and the questionnaire with the edited/added questions for the group to review prior to the next meeting.

The questionnaire will be mailed to all property owners with a return stamped envelope.

Mike VanClef updated the group on the need for a deer count. He is meeting with Fish and Wildlife on Friday regarding the method and timing. Mike described the method he is familiar with – 3 people in a truck with mega-watt flashlights. It was suggested that a representative of the Friends of Deer be one of the three. Mike agreed it was a good idea and that it should be a limited number of counters. (question Mike – just the one group?) He believes the count can be done over a course of several nights during March/April time frame that is suggested by Fish and Wildlife. Mike mentioned that he thought a better time may be August/September but since the former is suggested by the state, we should go with that. Also suggested for the count was using aerial methods.

Mike provided a handout showing various graphs with suggested acceptable baselines.

We received and updated Deer Crash Statistics Report from Chief Meyer.

Denise and Bill will work with Paul Porgorzelski to get a budget put together and gather the funding for the task force. The group will also work with Paul to get a Hopewell township email address and a link on the website.

Francesca contacted the HVN who is willing to give us space for a column. Francesca has prepared a list of possible topics that will be circulated through the task force for volunteers to write the columns that will inform/educate readers. Denise and Bill will write the initial column introducing the group and describing its charge with the hopes of encouraging residents to attend the meetings. All articles are to be funneled through Francesca to be edited and forwarded to the HVN, the Pennington Post and the newest paper should they be interested. (Thank you, Francesca!)

Discussion was held regarding pocket deer and Francesca informed the group of her positive experience with having bow hunters in her own yard.

A question was raised on how to marry property owners with bow hunters if agreement can be reached with homeowner associations and/or neighbors. Jim Burd suggested getting hunting clubs involved with some of the meetings and stress the necessity of both safety and the importance of marksmanship, especially in confined areas. Bow hunting is important in these types of areas.