

ECOLOGY COMMISSION

Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District
8377 Cordry Drive, Nineveh, Indiana 46164

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

10 February, 2018

- A. A special "TOWN HALL MEETING," hosted by the Ecology Commission of the Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District (CSCD) on the subject of: **"Deer Conservation Measures in the CSCD"** was called to order by Commission Chairman, Rick Normington, at 1:00 P.M. on 10 February, 2018, at the CSLOA clubhouse.
- B. Members Present: Rick Normington, Josh Edwards (Board), Sunny Leerkamp (CSLOA), Randy Brumfield & Jim Donnell (Recorder)
- C. Members Absent: Ty Cooper
- D. Others in Attendance: 12 Freeholders + 2 DNR officers + 1 Guest (Potential "CHAP Coordinator")*
- E. SUMMARY: Over the last 2 years, numerous freeholders have expressed concern to the ECOLOGY Commission over the ever-expanding deer population in the CSCD, especially in the residential areas. As a result, the ECOLOGY Commission sought advice from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on what can/should be done to address these increasing freeholder concerns. In November, 2017, 2 biologists from the Bloomington Regional DNR office met with the Commission at its regular monthly meeting to address these concerns and offer conservation-smart options. Consequently, the Commission decided to conduct a "Town Hall Meeting" for CSCD freeholders to hear the DNR's assessment of our situation and the options they see as feasible and viable to address our deer over-population. *A record of that Town Hall Meeting is found on succeeding pages to this document as the "Minutes," of that meeting.*
- F. RECOMMENDATIONS (To The CSCD Board) **AS A RESULT OF THIS TOWN HALL MEETING**:
1. Prohibit, by Ordinance or Rule, purposeful feeding of deer by freeholders within the CSCD.
 2. Waive restrictions on the discharge of firearms and archery weapons, within the CSCD, by licensed and authorized hunters while in the conduct of a deer hunt authorized by CSCD and the Indiana DNR as part of an approved "Community Hunt Access Program (CHAP)" hunt or a "Deer Reduction Zone" hunt.
 3. Authorize the Ecology Commission to pursue (by formal application) Indiana DNR approval for both:
 - a. Designation as a "Deer Reduction Zone" for the 2018-19 season and beyond.
 - b. A "Community Hunt Access Program (CHAP)" hunt location for the 2018-19 season and beyond.
 4. Authorize the Ecology Commission to pursue (by formal application) a \$ 25K Grant from the DNR (deadline is 31 March 2018) for the purpose of hiring a "CHAP Coordinator" to organize and run the first "CHAP Hunt," in 2018-19.
- G. MINUTES of the 10 February, 2018 "Town Hall Meeting," on the SUBJECT of "Deer Conservation in CSCD"
1. ISSUES TO CONSIDER (per DNR):
 - Wildlife "Carrying Capacity" defined one way by the amount of food, water, and cover that a deer herd has available for it to thrive, but ALSO, by Social Norms (How many deer are "too many" deer in a residential area based on vehicle accidents, damage to crops, damage to landscape plants, disease, attraction of other undesirable predators and fearless response to deer in human interactions).

(OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER):

- Surpassing either "Carrying Capacity" definition limit (natural or social) calls for active conservation measures in the interest of both the animals and humans.
- Each doe (even yearling) can give birth to one, and as many as three fawns each year, which can feel like a population "explosion," for a sizeable herd in as few as 5 years without predation by human (hunting) and/or animal predation. Deer live for 14 +/- years. Look around the CSCD and do the Math...
- Birth Control Measures are impractical in our CSCD situation (based on cost, feasibility, and relative ineffectiveness over the long term)
- Purposeful feeding of deer can be a major problem for a deer herd. It attracts more deer, contributes to higher deer reproductive rate, diminishes deer herd's ability to "fend for itself" in a natural environment, attracts packs of predators and in fact, if done while taking deer is in progress, can be considered an illegal activity termed "baiting."
- Over-browsing of young, tender tree saplings by hungry deer herds can severely hinder natural re-forestation of woodlands.
- Firearm and/or archery hunts in residential areas must be closely supervised by trained and certified hunt coordinators in order to be safe and effective. Target practice must include shooting firearms and/or archery arrows from elevated "stands."
- Rules prohibiting the discharge of firearms and/or archery arrows must be "waived" during approved hunts by authorized hunters.
- Limiting a hunt to just one (non-residential) area will not be effective....deer will simply move on to where there is food/water and where predators (hunters) don't bother them.
- Residential hunting best done when population is low (for CSCD, winter "low season" coincides with Indiana deer hunt season).
- If a "CHAP" or "Deer Reduction Zone" Hunt is approved, CSCD makes all the "RULES" for authorized hunting within the CSCD, as long as they do not contradict Indiana DNR rules.
- If a "CHAP" (Community Hunt Access Program) Hunt is approved, DNR requires that a trained/certified "CHAP Coordinator," organize and oversee the hunt.
- Signed permission forms to hunt on private lands/lots must be accomplished and neighbor approvals to track & retrieve wounded deer must be coordinated for.
- If a "CHAP" or "Deer Reduction Zone" Hunt is approved, hunters must consider what they will do with excess venison. "Wasting" of venison and/or "selling" of venison that is produced from these hunts is prohibited, and in some cases, hunters may harvest as many as 10 deer.
- Deadline for CSCD submission of "CHAP" Hunt application is 31 March, 2018. Approval decision by DNR will be announced by June, 2018 at the latest. A hunt can be set for, as soon as September, 2018, lasting until, at latest, 31 January, 2019. CHAP approval is a 2 year contract. Reimbursement funds from a CHAP Grant (if approved) occurs 30 days after the hunt is completed and the required "report of the hunt" is received at DNR HQs.

2. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO CSCD:

- CONTINUE WITH STATUS QUO (Unrestricted population growth with ever-increasing residential impact)
- ATTEMPT BIRTH CONTROL MEASURES (NOT Recommended by DNR due to expense & ineffectiveness)
- APPLY FOR DEER REDUCTION ZONE STATUS from DNR (continues until CSCD requests an end)
- APPLY FOR \$25K "Community Hunt Access Program" (CHAP) GRANT from DNR (2 Year Contract)

3. QUESTIONS/ISSUES FROM FREEHOLDERS: (During 60 minute Q & A session, the following freeholder questions were posed *(regarded as important in establishing "Rules of the (CSCD) Hunt," if pursued)*

- "DOES A DEER REDUCTION ZONE DESIGNATION NEED TO BE RE-APPLIED FOR EACH YEAR?"
- MULTIPLE, SERIOUS DEER-AUTO COLLISIONS HAVE OCCURRED WITH BOTH FREE-HOLDERS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES.
- "DEER ARE GETTING INCREASINGLY FEARLESS OF HUMANS AND IN SOME CASES AGGRESSIVE."
- "DEER ARE OVER-BROWSING AND ELIMINATING FREEHOLDER LANDSCAPE PLANTS & GARDENS."
- "DEER POPULATION EXPLOSION POSSIBLE?"
- "IS BETTER BUCK/DOE MANAGEMENT POSSIBLE?"
- "WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF AN INJURED DEER IS FOUND?"
- "ARE COYOTES/COYWOLVES A PROBLEM IN THE CSCD?"
- "CAN YOU LEGALLY FEED DEER IN INDIANA?"
- "TOO MANY FREEHOLDERS IN CSCD ARE FEEDING DEER CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROBLEM."
- "IS THERE AN ISSUE WITH FIREARM & BOW/ARROW DISCHARGE RULES WITHIN THE CSCD?"
- CONCERN VOICED OVER VISIBLE RESIDENTIAL KILLING OF DEER (Adverse Visual Impact to Some)
- "CAN THE HUNT AREA BE RESTRICTED?"
- "CAN FREEHOLDERS ESTABLISH A "PRIVATE HUNT SECTOR" IF CSCD DOES NOT ESTABLISH ONE WHERE DESIRED?"
- "ONLY COMPETENT & APPROVED HUNTERS WILL BE ALLOWED TO HUNT IF HUNT IS APPROVED"
- "IF 'CHAP HUNT' IS APPROVED, GOALS SHOULD BE SET FOR LONG-TERM HERD MANAGEMENT"
- "WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH DEER MEAT?"
- CONCERN VOICED OVER SHUTTING DOWN NATURE TRAILS TO FREEHOLDERS DURING A HUNT.
- "WHAT ABOUT LIABILITY (Insurance ?) ON PRIVATE PROPERTY IF CSCD AUTHORIZES A HUNT?"
- "WOULD THERE BE AN ARCHERY HUNT OR FIREARM HUNT OR BOTH?"
- "WILL A HUNT BE LIMITED TO CSCD FREEHOLDERS ONLY?"
- "HOW DO I NOMINATE MY PROPERTY FOR A HUNT?"

4. **WRAPUP:** AFTER A VERY PRODUCTIVE AND CONGENIAL 90 MINUTE MEETING OUTLINING ALL OF THE ISSUES, OPTIONS AVAILABLE, & PROS AND CONS OF EACH OPTION AS OUTLINED IN THE 3 PRECEDING PAGES, A STRAW VOTE WAS TAKEN WITH ALL IN ATTENDANCE.

The Question Posed in the Straw Vote was *"How many of you (freeholders in attendance) are in favor of pursuing a Hunt (as outlined by the DNR representatives today) in the CSCD, as a conservation measure to better manage the deer herd?"*

The Freeholder Response: 20 (out of 20) IN FAVOR
0 (out of 20) AGAINST

- I. **ADJOURNMENT:** *Rick Normington moved to adjourn the SPECIAL TOWN HALL MEETING of the Ecology Commission. Jim Donnell's seconded. The motion passed;* The meeting adjourned at 2:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

JIM DONNELLS
Commission Recorder
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* GUESTS referenced in paragraph D. on page 1 include:

DR. JOE CAUDELL

DNR Deer Biologist
Bloomington, IN Regional Office

MS. SHANNON WINKS

DNR Private Lands Biologist
Bloomington, IN Regional Office

MR. JIM WILSON

DNR Approved CHAP Coordinator
(Interested in CSCD contract)

NOTE: *Freeholder Attendance Log Was Used And Is On File With The Commission Recorder*