

Health, Education & Welfare Committee

June 27th, 2012

Minutes

Those in attendance:

Natalie Wolf, Chair

Ed Hattenbach, committee member

Tom Muething, committee member

J.K. Byar, Mayor

Bill Doering, council member

Jane Murphy, resident

Louis H. Katz, resident

Ronna Willis, resident

Lt. Brian Blum

Chief Richard Wallace

Brett Beatty, Ass't Wildlife Mgt. Supervisor, ODNR

Mike Ohlrich, Clermont County Wildlife Officer, ODNR

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Mayor Wolf as committee chair. Minutes of the previous meeting related to deer management, May 7th, 2012, were approved by the committee.

Guests Brett Beatty and Mike Ohrich, both representatives of the Ohio Division of Wildlife (ODNR) were introduced. Mr. Beatty explained that he oversees all wildlife management (fur and feathers) in seventeen Ohio counties. This includes hunting, nuisance, and wildlife conflicts. His jurisdiction does not extend to Hamilton County, which currently does not have its own extension agent, but one has been hired and is being trained. Mr. Ohrich is the wildlife officer for Clermont County.

A brief history of Ohio's deer population was given: When Ohio was first settled, there were no hunting regulations and the deer population in Ohio was completely decimated due to overhunting. As deer moved back into Ohio from other states, game reserves were established and deer were protected. In the 1950s, the first regulated deer hunting season was initiated. It was very limited. As the deer

population increased, the season broadened to include several different aspects – archery: Sept-Feb, Youth Firearm – November (2 days), Traditional firearm – after Thanksgiving, Primitive weapon – January. The deer harvest and bag limit is increasing along with the deer population. By the late 1980s, Ohio allowed hunters one deer. Now, Ohio has three zones with different bag limits based on deer population. Zone A: 2 deer, Zone B: 4 deer, and Zone C: 6 deer/ hunter. Hamilton County is in Zone C. Additionally, there are Urban Zones, where hunters can harvest an additional 6 antlerless deer (less than 3” antlers). In Ohio, 225,000-250,000 deer are hunted annually. 10,000-12,000 through culling programs, 30,000 annually killed by motor vehicles. ODNR Pub. 304 is the Annual Deer Survey

The only predators of deer in Ohio are hunters.

The exact deer population in Ohio is unknown, but is tracked by trends. (See above)

The ODNR relies on the concept of Carrying Capacity to determine the deer population impact.

1. Biological Carrying Capacity – How many deer a given area or place can tolerate without sustaining damage.
2. Cultural Carrying Capacity – What people are willing to tolerate. Varies by community.

ODNR position on other methods suggested by residents:

1. Contraception/sterilization – Not permitted by ODNR, not regulated and approved by FDA
2. Trap & Transfer – Nowhere to “transfer” to since no place has zero deer, risk of spread of disease (Chronic Wasting Disease), very high mortality rate, inhumane

The ideal number of deer per square mile varies between 15-25/square mile.

There is a vibrant deer population in all of Ohio’s 88 counties. The ODNR seeks balance in the number of deer in the state – not too many, not too few. If we do nothing about controlling the deer population, we will reach “the point of no return.”

There are many communities in Ohio that allow hunting on private property. Indian Hill allows this.

A good community deer count takes into consideration:

1. Flyover count (Fleer infrared best)
2. Complaints from residents
3. Deer Vehicle Accidents

Ohio communities with good deer management plans: Solon and Avon Lake, both in Northeast Ohio. Jeff Westerfield is the Wildlife agent.

Dayton Metro Parks Mgmt. uses sharpshooters to get the deer population down to acceptable levels then uses bow hunting to maintain. Considered good method.

No opinion on whether sharpshooting or bow hunting is a more humane method. Both result in death. Bow hunters are required to be licensed and prove training. Almost always hit the “kill zone” of heart/lungs. Sometimes, though, deer have taken longer to die.

Private property considerations:

Deer are often hunted on private property with the permission of the property owner. Occasionally the deer will wander onto an adjacent property before it dies. The hunter must get the permission from the owner of the property where the deer carcass is located before retrieving the carcass.

For more info on deer biology, etc. Mike Tonkavitch (“Tonk”) is the Deer Biologist in ODNR District 4.