

# **Village of Trumansburg Deer Management Program (TDMP) for 2016-17**

## **Activities on Approved Properties**

### **Approved August 22, 2016**

Over the past three years the Trumansburg Board of Trustees, in conjunction with Cornell's Integrated Deer Research and Management Program, the Village's Nuisance Wildlife Committee and Village's DMP Oversight Committee, has developed and implemented the Trumansburg Deer Management Program, which started September 2014 and ended in March 2016. The program has successfully removed over 115 deer and is serving as a model for several other communities in New York state that have similar deer issues.

On April 1, 2015 an aerial deer count survey was completed by Davis Aviation and found the following: There were between 44 and 50 deer present in the Village, and 90 deer just outside the Village, that likely move in and out of the Village. With these numbers along with an estimate of about 150 new fawns born this spring (based on 75% of the deer being female and the average doe having 1.5 fawns), we believe the deer population is now around 285 deer in and in close proximity to the Village.

Many residents have commented and been thankful that the number of deer is significantly lower and there has been less plant damage than in previous years. However, there are still many reports of Lyme disease in the Village and surveys of planted oak seedlings indicate significant mortality within the first week after planting due to deer browse. Based on the positive experience in deer reduction we had in the first year of the program, over 10 years of experience of the Cornell Program on Cornell lands, input from the villages of Lansing and Cayuga Heights on their deer management programs, and discussions with the NYSDEC Region 7, what follows is what we believe to be the best approach to continue to significantly reduce the deer population and negative impacts of the high deer level in the Village of Trumansburg.

Over many years the Village of Trumansburg has experienced high deer populations (likely over 200 animals) that have resulted in ecological and economic damage. The continued presence of this high deer population puts residents at an increased risk of Lyme disease, causes extensive plant damage, and creates an increased risk of deer-vehicle collisions. Village residents have responded by fencing and applying deterrents to valuable plantings to prevent browse, as well as rubbing damage to planted trees by buck. But the costs associated with fencing and continued and increasing problems have reached a crisis point.

Based on input from the Nuisance Wildlife Committee, Cornell's program, participants in last year's program and the Oversight Committee, the use of New York

Department of Environmental Conservation (NY DEC) approved Deer Depredation Permits (DDPs) – also known as nuisance permits – is again recommended to reduce deer numbers. This approach is not considered regular hunting. This preferred method is using proficient bow hunters at baited locations with activities in the evening and using supplemental lights (until 11PM).

We anticipate using the 10 or more properties that were used last year, adding several new sites in other strategic locations in the Village to begin implementation of the deer management program starting September 1, 2016 continuing no longer than March 31, 2017. Once the final list of sites is determined, a map showing the locations will be available at the Village Office and will be posted on the Village's website. The deer management oversight committee will review properties across the village that are ideal locations given their size, expected deer traffic, availability of trees and cover. What follows is detailed information on the TDMP.

1. Activities are anticipated to occur from September 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. The Village of Trumansburg Deer Management Oversight Committee will review the success of the program and will reduce or expand activities as needed based on deer harvests. All landowners will be kept informed about management activities (including who the participants are on their property) in regular updates. It is anticipated that generally Friday, Saturday and a few Sunday evenings will be used followed by a four to five-day resting period.
2. Tree stands will be placed (no screw in steps, ladder stands are preferred) at landowner approved locations in mid-August. A few branches may need to be trimmed to improve shooting lanes. Shooting from elevated positions directs arrows into the ground after passing through a deer. Seven to ten days before activities are to begin, bait (corn) will be placed 15 to 20 yards away from tree stands to attract deer to these locations. Trail monitoring cameras may be installed to capture deer activity. If needed, locations may need to be shifted slightly or abandoned. Each landowner will be informed about any activities on their properties, as indicated by landowner preferences. If an elevated position cannot be used and the area is found to hold deer the use of a ground blind can be implemented
3. Last year's small group of proficient participants has agreed to do it again and several new ones may be added. Participants will be using compound bows or cross bows exclusively. The activities are coordinated by Merritt Compton (local but internationally renowned bow hunting expert) and he is assisted by Bernd Blossey (also coordinator of the Village of Lansing deer management program), and Phil Carubia as part of the Village of Trumansburg Deer Management Oversight Committee.
4. Activities will occur only in the evenings starting about 1-2 hours before sunset and continuing until after dark (until 11PM, as per NYSDEC regulations)

depending on deer use patterns. Based on our first year's results, this approach captures high deer activity periods. Use of supplemental lights after dark will allow for safe, highly accurate shots at very close range. All of our current participants are experienced in using this approach and any new ones will be trained. Deer use patterns at bait will be monitored using infrared trail cameras to target the best possible times to utilize locations. We did find some sites had early morning activity and thus some site may be used on Saturday or Sunday mornings.

5. All participants are required to follow all Village and State laws, or expressed landowner preferences. It is the right of each landowner to restrict the number of individuals on their property, the times or dates participants are allowed on properties, stand location, parking locations or access routes as desired. The agreement to use properties can be terminated by landowners at any time by notifying the Village Clerk.
6. Which days and stands will be used cannot be predicted in advance, as this will depend on individual time schedules, wind direction, weather and previous use of stand locations. To prevent overuse, the use of resting periods of 1-2 weeks between activity periods will allow deer to fall back into their usual use patterns. Baiting will likely continue during the resting periods.
7. Participants will be in trees using camouflage and will use flashlights to locate shot deer or to walk out of the woods; therefore landowners may notice a slow moving flashlight. If deer can't be readily retrieved due to poor blood trails, approved tracking dogs are available to help in locating wounded deer. In very rare circumstances tracking may occur the next morning with better light. Landowners will be alerted to any of these possibilities and will have access to cell phone numbers of participants.
8. Occasionally a mortally wounded deer may run beyond property boundaries. All participants will have information about property boundaries when afield. This information will include phone numbers of landowners and neighbors who need to be notified if a search extends beyond the approved properties. If necessary, a Village Trustee, Village Police or the participant will call and ask permission to retrieve a deer unless we have pre-authorization to retrieve deer from a property. An attempt will be made to inform all immediate neighbors of these activities, regardless of whether a deer ever leaves an approved property.
9. Participants will keep track of and report all arrows shot using a secure website. Arrows usually pass through deer and fall close to the spot where a deer was hit, but occasionally will remain in the deer. Every effort will be made to retrieve arrows (they are expensive), aided with the help of a metal detector when needed. Based on last year's results almost every arrow was recovered.

10. All shot deer will be removed discretely and not be field dressed on properties. Samples of internal organs and blood may be submitted to the Animal Health Diagnostic Center, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, to assist in various research projects.
11. All harvested deer will be consumed by participants or donated. We will again drop off as many deer as we can to an approved venison donation processor for distribution to local food banks and pantries and to families that can benefit from the meat.
12. In most instances, landowners and neighbors will not even notice activities or the killing of a deer because it happens quietly and fast. However, despite all precautions and skills, deer may be wounded, may not expire immediately, collapse on neighboring properties or may not be found. We will make every attempt possible (including the use of a trained dog) to recover all animals or assure that they will be fine (superficial arrow wounds heal quickly).
13. The Village Deer Management Oversight Committee will review activities and success in regular intervals (weekly) and determine if activities should continue or be terminated based on activities and number of deer harvested.
14. The Deer Management Oversight Committee will provide regular updates to the Village Board, including the number of deer harvested, which will also be posted on the Village website.
15. The goal is to reduce deer numbers to levels where forest regeneration and survival of browse sensitive plants within the Village of Trumansburg is once again possible. In addition, we aim to reduce or maintain deer tick populations at levels where Lyme disease risks are minimized (5-8 deer per square kilometer according to recent studies in CT). With assistance from Cornell Universities Department of Natural Resources the ecological success of deer reductions in the Village will be assessed using oak sentinels, a method developed by Bernd Blossey. To assess tick populations we will use standardized tick sampling using drag cloths. We will also assess tick loads on harvested deer.
16. Given the high deer densities and the articulated ecological and health goals, we propose to target both antlered and antlerless deer. This requires approval by the DEC. Participants shooting bucks will be required to saw off antlers and antlers will be delivered to the DEC.

Village of Trumansburg Village Deer Management Oversight Committee:  
Merritt Compton, Bernd Blossey, Phil Carubia, Pat Miller and Marty Petrovic

Village Contacts:

Tammy Morse - Village Clerk  
email: [clerk@trumansburg-ny.gov](mailto:clerk@trumansburg-ny.gov)  
tel: (607)387-6501  
fax: (607)387-5806

Marty Petrovic – Mayor  
email: [mayor@trumansburg-ny.gov](mailto:mayor@trumansburg-ny.gov)  
tel: (607)387-6501 (w)  
(607)227-0310 (c)  
(607)387-6770 (h)  
fax: (607)387-5806