



Village of Cayuga Heights

MARCHAM HALL
836 HANSHAW ROAD
ITHACA, NEW YORK 14850

(607) 257-1238
fax (607) 257-4910

Kathryn D. Supron, Mayor
Mary E. Mills, Clerk
Angela M. Korbel, Deputy Clerk
Joan M. Mangione, Treasurer
Brent A. Cross, Engineer

The Cayuga Heights Deer Population Management Program: An Update for Villagers, February 2012

We have an over-population of deer in Cayuga Heights. The estimate of the deer population exceeds 200 within our 1.8 square miles. A carrying capacity assuring healthy biodiversity in our natural environment would be a maximum of 30 deer total or 15 per square mile. The deer over-population has created adverse deer-human interactions. Problems such as Lyme disease, attacks by deer on domestic animals, deer-vehicle collisions, and deer impaling themselves on fences have become all too common occurrences. In addition, properties are damaged by over-browsing and accumulation of deer feces.

Under the DEC permit the Village is proposing to surgically sterilize a core population of does and to subsequently cull initially up to 85 deer. The Village will join many other communities in New York State to reduce the size of its deer herd by culling. According to the DEC, over 1,600 deer were culled in seventeen New York locations in the last two years. These communities ranged from Cheektowaga outside Buffalo to Shelter Island.

Culling currently occurs in the two communities immediately adjacent to Cayuga Heights. The Village of Lansing has changed the local law to permit bow hunting inside the statutory 500 foot limit if the landowner gives permission. Cornell University has operated a culling program since 2007 removing nearly a hundred deer annually from its campus and grounds. New York State also manages its deer population through hunting. In 2010, hunters in Tompkins County harvested 4,463 deer. Overall in New York State hunters killed 230,100 deer.

Program implementation is currently on hold due to the issuance of a preliminary injunction by the NYS Appellate Division. The Village Board will continue its efforts to have everything in place for program implementation once legal issues are resolved.

This brochure has been prepared by the Board of Trustees to provide summary information about the deer population management program adopted in April 2011. Additional information is available on the Village's website, cayuga-heights.ny.us. The public support and participation of Cayuga Heights' residents are essential to deal with this health and safety issue.

Q & A FORUM on DEER MANAGEMENT

In its ongoing effort to keep residents informed and to address their concerns, the Village has scheduled an informational forum on deer management. Attendees will submit their questions in writing to a facilitator who will present the questions to a panel for response. Panelists include Mayor Kate Supron, Trustee Bob Andolina, Village Attorney Randy Marcus, Cornell Professor Paul Curtis, CHPD Officer in Charge Steinmetz, NYS DEC Chief Wildlife Biologist Gordon Batchellor, and NYS DEC District 7 Regional Wildlife Manager Steve Joule. **February 29, 2012, 7:15 pm at Kendal of Ithaca**

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Take Care of Yourself and Your Family

Many deer appear to have no fear of humans. However, they are wild animals – do not feed them or attempt to interact with them. It is against the law to feed deer in New York State. Do not allow children or pets near them. Deer can become very defensive and have attacked domestic pets.

Deer and other wildlife carry very small ticks that harbor Lyme disease which is debilitating and must be dealt with by a medical professional. Learn about Lyme disease and tick identification through the Tompkins County Department of Public Health at www.tompkins-co.org/health/summer/lyme-faw.html. A diagnosis of Lyme disease should be reported to the Health Department's Division of Community Health, 607-274-6604.

The 30 mph Cayuga Heights speed limit has helped limit deer and car collisions. Everyday -- morning, noon and night -- you can find deer along side our 21 miles of roads. Use caution when driving at all times; deer may suddenly dart out into the road. If you see one ahead of you, slow down because one or more deer may be following it. Bicyclists and runners also need to be aware of deer jumping into their pathway. Deer are not intimidated by the presence of human activity so do not count on your movements to scare them away.

Fence Your Property

You can protect your property by fencing. Fences can be anywhere on your property. Fencing over four feet in height may run along back and side property lines but must be set back 25 feet from a front property line. Fencing material above 4 feet must be 90% transparent and not brightly colored. All fences require a permit that can be obtained from the Village Hall. Full details of the fencing law are on the Village website.

Report Deer Incidents to the Village Police

Aggressive deer behavior, such as deer attacking pets or challenging humans, should be reported to the Cayuga Heights Police Department, non-emergency 257-1011 or emergency 911.

Deer vehicle accidents that result in over \$1,000 in damage are required by law to be reported to the Village Police Department, either in person at the Village Hall or at the above phone numbers. Record-keeping of all accidents is important in documenting deer-human interactions. Wounded deer, including those impaled on fencing, should be reported to the Police who may make the decision to euthanize the animal by shooting. Dead deer should always be reported to the Police who will be in touch with the Department of Public Works for disposal, whether from your property or any Village property or roadway.

Volunteer Your Property for the Village's Deer Population Management Program of Sterilizing and Culling

Safety of the public during sterilization and culling is our first priority. Written permission is required from all property owners within 500 feet of any culling site. You can assist in the Village's management program by volunteering your property for sterilization or culling site. This is an essential part of the population control program. Voluntary participation requires written permission to be given to the Chief of Police. Call 257-1011 to discuss your participation.

The current plan is to hire White Buffalo for sterilization (www.whitebuffaloinc.org), a highly regarded non-profit wildlife management organization. They will bait and anesthetize the does, take them to a mobile sterilization unit and perform a 15 minute surgery. The does will then be released into the area where captured. The Cornell Department of Natural Resources in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will be under contract with the Village to participate in preparation of sterilization and culling sites, as well as in monitoring the success of the program by surveying the number of deer.

Culling, or killing deer, in addition to sterilization, is needed because of the danger to public health and safety that has resulted from too many deer in the Village. White Buffalo will also be used for the culling. Experienced employees will use frangible bullets to prevent ricochet and will fire downward to eliminate cross-horizon shots. The current Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) permit is for sterilization and culling by bait and shoot. Should these prove to be ineffective in reducing the deer population, an option is to expand the permit to allow netting and bolting.

Cost of the Deer Management Program

The cost of the program is estimated to be \$1,000 per sterilization and \$400 for each deer culled. The number of deer impacted will depend on access to private and public properties within the Village. The cost of the program will be funded through surplus funds in the Village budget. To date the Board of Trustees has authorized \$25,000 to Cornell for preparation of the sites and sterilization and up to \$35,000 to White Buffalo for sterilization and culling services. Due to the issuance of a preliminary injunction by the NYS Appellate Court, contract negotiations are on hold.

A Closing Note on Public Safety and Public Support in the Culling Process

All sterilization and culling operations will be monitored fully by our Police Department and conform with all regulations stipulated in the DEC permit granted to the Village and all NYS laws.

Now is the time to step forward and consider volunteering your property for sterilization and/or culling. You can do that by calling Officer in Charge Jim Steinmetz at 257-1011. Mayor Kate Supron will discuss your ongoing questions or concerns. You can contact her at the Village Hall, 257-1238 or by email at ksupron@cayuga-heights.ny.us or any member of the Board of Trustees at vch-trustees@cayuga-heights.ny.us.

SUMMARY

Deer Management Goals:

- 1) To reduce the deer population in the Village to a sustainable level that allows balanced development of all species.
- 2) To provide meat to the Southern Tier Food Bank to help those in need.

Step	Status
Hold public forums on deer issues. To date several forums have been held with participation of many residents and non-residents of the Village.	Completed
Adopt Management Plan.	Completed
Perform environmental review, including preparation of full environmental impact statement, including public hearing.	Completed
Apply to DEC for permit to sterilize and cull the deer population.	Completed
Change fencing law to permit higher fences for homeowner protection. Including public hearing.	Completed
Receive permit and approval from DEC for management program.	Completed
Hold public hearing on discharge of weapons law.	Completed
Amend Weapons Discharge Law to allow designated persons hired by the Village to carry out culling, as allowed by our DEC permit and NYS law.	Completed
Request landowners to contact Village Chief of Police to authorize land as sterilization and/or culling site.	In process
Contract with Cornell University for site preparation and deer population estimate technologies.	In process
Contract with White Buffalo for sterilization and culling services.	In process
Identify local meat processing and storage facility for preparation of meat for Southern Tier Food Bank donation.	In process
Surgically sterilize specific number of deer at sites in Village using net and release methods	Upcoming
Cull deer population at volunteered sites determined to be safe by police and contractor. No unauthorized person is permitted within the safety zone of the site. Transport harvested deer immediately to processor for contribution to Food Bank.	Upcoming
Population count by Cornell University, using the tags placed during sterilization.	Upcoming
Evaluation of program results and continuation. Program will need ongoing monitoring, adjustment and maintenance to sustain balance.	Upcoming