

## Saddle River Wildlife Management Committee Position Statement to the Saddle River Mayor and Council

In order to clarify the position of the WLMC regarding deer population management in Saddle River we have prepared the following statement and recommendation to the Mayor and Council.

After lengthy consideration of all possible alternatives for the immediate reduction of the existing deer population we have determined that, at present, the only practical and legal option is to initiate a regulated bow hunting program as outlined in the resolution presently before the Mayor and Council.

The vocal opposition to a bow hunting program is not focused on the best interests for health and safety concerns for Saddle River residents but is an offshoot of a determined anti hunting campaign. The WLMC is not opposed to a sterilization approach, and that may be the only option available to other more heavily developed towns. However, at this time sterilization is, at best, still experimental and not even legal under NJ Dept. of Fish and Game regulations. A combined program is in everyone's best interests.

The recent trial demonstration of a drone-deer survey was very successful and demonstrates the progress that can be made by an open minded trial and error approach. The rough estimate of the deer population in town based on a very limited survey is about 200. However, the survey was done in early March, before the birthing season and the population could be well over 300 by mid-summer.

The WLMC recommends that, in conjunction with a bow hunting program, the town assign an administrator to oversee and co-ordinate a pilot program run by the Humane Society to develop an effective sterilization by immunization program under a special exemption by NJ Fish and Game. It is our opinion that a goal of sterilizing 50 deer by vaccination and removing 60 deer by bowhunting in the 2016-17 season would give us good start for immediate and long term herd reduction. A complete town drone survey performed early in 2017 would give us a good baseline for next years program.

Nothing will be accomplished without compromise by all parties involved and there is much to be gained by a combined bow hunting and sterilization project.

The WLMC is neither opposed or in favor of a town wide referendum on this matter. It is up to the mayor and council to make a decision and move forward on this issue.

The Saddle River Wildlife Management Committee