

Task Force Facilitator Cynn timer Gaasch called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present	-	Cynn timer Gaasch, Facilitator Joseph Cantafio, Councilman Jonathan Brotka Sheri Courteau Amanda Escobar Robin Foster James Hinton Saundra Mercado
Absent	-	Britney-Bay Croyle David Lavango Charles Sardo

Welcome

Presentation: Community-Based Deer Management

Kristina Ferrare from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County joined via video conference to share her experience working with communities around the deer-human conflict. See attached presentation.

Highlighted information to accompany the slides:

Checklist: Address the problem and keep in mind one option may be just living with it. It is a long process. Managing a deer herd requires a long term commitment. Deer management is a cyclical process.

Identify the problem first: What tips the scale to bring people into a room is the social situation that the human community can no longer not address the impacts of deer, whether its vehicle traffic accidents, the consuming of landscape plants over and over, deer sleeping in residential yards and impacting people's lifestyles. The connection between deer and Lyme disease, tick borne illness issues and realize people have opinions on solutions as they come to the table. Being able to articulate what your objectives are at the outset are important before you try to adjust the problem.

Controversy will exist regardless of decision, be ready to clearly explain your decision.

Do not expect consensus in the group; instead, have the expectation of open mindedness and that people come willing to learn and an open mind to consider other stakeholder opinions. The goal should be to sign off on a well thought out responsibly decided management option so the whole group can present it in a united way.

There are limitations in what the group can control, and you must involve the DEC forester; do not focus time on things out of the group's control, for example, conservation law.

Tools for community: Rely on experts and peer reviewed studies. Other considerations include the social acceptability and cost of a deer management program, who will bear the costs, and the timeframe for results.

Conditions for effective community based deer management process include adequate knowledge about the situation that is particular to your community and good working relationships between liaisons including wildlife managers, research scientists, and local leadership. Invite everyone that is impacted by the problem or a representative of each perspective to the table.

Achieve the right conditions: education and learning is critical, informative communication, expert involvement including biologists, DEC, etc; and assessment and review of changes.

Remember: The process takes time and patience along with consistent leadership; solutions are possible.

Onondaga programs: Management plan is developed in the community, completed, approved and supported by the Town Board to allow the activity to happen. Sometimes the plans have not received support from their local government leaders. One group had the goal of consensus, and this led to lawsuits; they were disbanded and then came back together with neighborhood level focus and found success.

Oneida County support has been in place since 2016 – 2017 due to tick borne illnesses, impacts to biodiversity, and deer-vehicle collisions; county legislators felt it was their responsibility.

Website: deeradvisor.dnr.cornell.edu

Contact information: Kristina Ferrare, Forestry Program Specialist, CCE Onondaga County
Kaf226@cornell.edu 315-424-9485, ext. 231

Questions from task force members:

Were there community gatherings or public education sessions?

Yes, several, depends on the community, minimum of two for every community.

For example, Syracuse: education sessions about suburban deer and Lyme disease; defined the problem. Public hearings followed to allow public feedback. Working on plan and when plan was final. Public education is a critical part of the process so they feel included in the process.

How often do you cull, what is the cost?

Culling cannot start until after the normal hunting season ends. The process starts at the end of December; representatives from the USDA APHIS (U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) begin baiting for 21 days before shooting begins and continue until March 30th. Winter is the time for deer culling. The cost varies tremendously. The goal is to keep costs down and have as many bait sites as possible, anticipate the cost at \$100 - \$250 per deer; again, many variables exist including weather, number of nights, number of sites, size of program, and other conditions on the ground. Non-lethal measures cost around \$1,000 per deer. Also, all venison in the county has gone to the venison donation coalition and is distributed to food banks. This is not a consideration in the deer management issue. Part of the reason the deer are so overpopulated is because there are no large predators other than our vehicles. Urban and suburban areas are a perfect habitat for deer as they are an edge species; there are many plantings to eat and shady places to bed down at night. I am not sure that controls on development or zoning would solve the problem.

How much is Oneida County budgeting, what is the population in the county?

The county has allocated around \$100,000. There is a push back starting for the municipalities to contribute. Mr. Brotka looked up the human population.

Were other methods considered? What were the reasons they were not chosen?

There were two main reasons non-lethal management was not chosen: the cost and labor involved is exorbitant approximately \$1,000 per deer, whether it is sterilizing the females or injecting them with birth control. Some lethal measures must accompany this management. In addition, birth control does not remove any deer from the community and the impact of birth control wouldn't be felt for ten years, the life span of deer. Culling the herd removes them and you will see a reverse in the negative impacts sooner, but it takes three to five years to lower the population; this requires a three to five year commitment from the start. Then it will be necessary to have a management phase, the operation may not be as big, but deer populations increase 20 – 30 % annually.

Ms. Ferrare left the meeting and Facilitator Gaasch asked group member Jim Hinton to introduce himself.

Jim Hinton, West Seneca resident, wanted to get involved in the discussion, has watched the deer population grow over the years

Motion by Ms. Escobar, seconded by Ms. Mercado, to approve Minutes 2021-01 of May 18, 2021.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Motion Carried

Presentation: Living with Suburban Deer: An Overview of the Issues

Dr. Robin Foster, wildlife biologist, and Saundra Mercado, NYS licensed wildlife rehabilitator specializing in white tail deer made the attached presentation.

Highlighted information to accompany the slides:

Ms. Mercado can provide all reports obtained through FOIA's to outline/map locations of accidents to identify where and why they are happening.

Ms. Escobar thought the numbers were interesting despite less traffic, more deer due to this. Ms. Mercado replied it is like hunting seasons, deer are very in tune to the time of year. Many of the deer accidents involve younger deer; deer learn to look both ways as they get older. Educate people to watch for deer in the identified areas and their crossing habits.

Dr. Foster stated data from Erie County does not include the time of year, locations of collection, or breakdown per municipality. Ms. Gaasch questioned if the severity of winters influences the number of ticks? Dr. Foster responded that weather in general does affect them.

Ms. Mercado stated habitat fragmentation causes migration of the herd moving from one food source and wetlands to another which brings deer into people's yards and zoning plans have not taken this into consideration. Another factor attracting deer is supplemental feeding by people; in fact, the two worst offenders in Erie County are Tonawanda and West Seneca. The deer know who is feeding them and if the food source is removed the deer will go back into the woods. People persist despite it being illegal and enforcement does not happen.

Map slide shows the fragmentation of habitat in West Seneca.

Ms. Mercado mentioned a woman that gives presentations and workshops for gardeners, Sandy Baker, "The

Deer Doctor." Ms. Baker comes highly recommended, and Ms. Mercado shared a pamphlet with Ms. Gaasch. Ms. Escobar asked if Ms. Baker's presentation could be part of the public education. Ms. Mercado stated she is very knowledgeable about gardening and will even visit some.

Ms. Mercado stated deer accidents will never be eliminated.

Dr. Foster stated most people who feed the deer think they are helping. It is necessary to identify why people are feeding the deer and how to educate people that they are not helping the deer. Dr. Foster suggested conducting an anonymous survey.

In closing, Ms. Mercado and Dr. Foster stated culling alone does not solve the problem and reiterated the compensatory rebound effect (CRE): deer populations will come back larger if there is not a continuous management program.

Councilman Cantafio volunteered to bring the recommendation to have Sandy Baker visit back to the Town Board for approval. Ms. Gaasch requested an electronic copy of the brochure to share.

Ms. Escobar asked what was the reasoning the survey was initiated? Ms. Gaasch stated there were many complaints and Supervisor Dickson is being responsive to the residents.

Review of communications received

Ms. Gaasch asked the members if they had reviewed the emails.

Emails received from: Marlene Davis, Kerri Napieralski, Sandra Weaver, Jennifer Grandinetti, and Leslie Just

Ms. Escobar stated she is reviewing the survey responses and can add anything new from the emails to them.

Action items and assignments

Ms. Escobar and Sheri Courteau will present in July:

Ms. Courteau will present on local communities' responses/management programs.

Ms. Gaasch stated Ms. Croyle would like to work on the education piece. Ms. Escobar suggested having education events in multiple areas of West Seneca. Ms. Gaasch agreed and would like to take advantage of community gatherings to share information. Additionally, one of the recommendations the task force can make is to have an education program.

Mr. Hinton stated he is looking forward to the results of the survey and identifying what the problem is. Ms. Gaasch agreed that the problems must be identified. Councilman Cantafio reminded the group that the survey is a good point of data, but it is just a piece, and asked the group not to get distracted by the loudest voices; he would like the group to review scientific data.

Ms. Escobar is interested in more specific data from Erie County for example how many people are being diagnosed with Lyme disease.

Councilman Cantafio stated the growth of neighborhoods has impacted where the deer can feed, education is important, and the police may need to become involved with people violating the feeding laws.

Ms. Gaasch stated there are ways to quantify the problems and mapping the results will be helpful. Ms. Mercado asked if the town could send a paper survey to every property. Councilman Cantafio stated the cost would be prohibitive and not likely effective; it would be better to explore other options.

Ms. Gaasch thanked everyone for their time and closed the meeting at 8 P.M.

Margaret A. Martin

Margaret A. Martin, Deputy Town Clerk

Community-Based Deer Management



Cornell University
Department of Natural Resources
Human Dimensions Research Unit



**Department of
Environmental
Conservation**

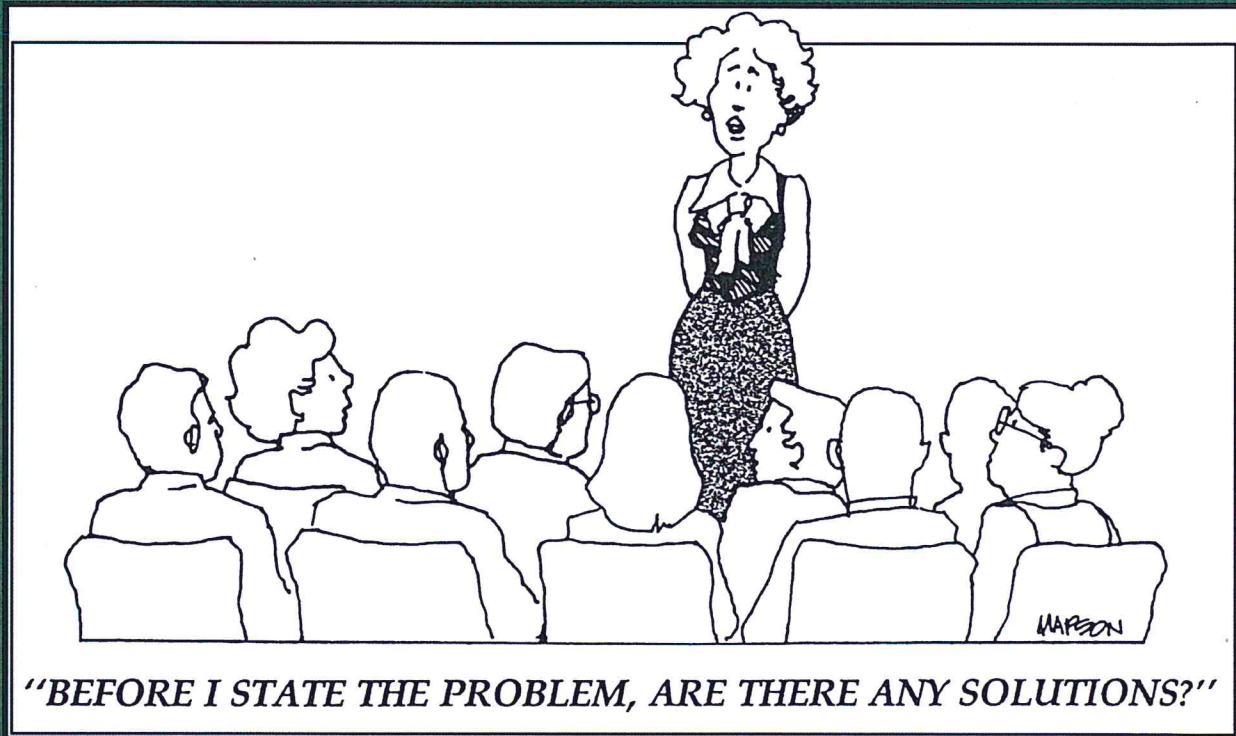


Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

Checklist

- ✓ A structured process for making community decisions that includes multiple perspectives
- ✓ Shared understandings about desired goals and a desire for achieving generally acceptable solutions
- ✓ An understanding that this will be an ongoing process
- ✓ A commitment to evaluation of the decision-making process and the subsequent management program

First identify the **problem**, then identify the outcome **objectives**.



Expect controversy!

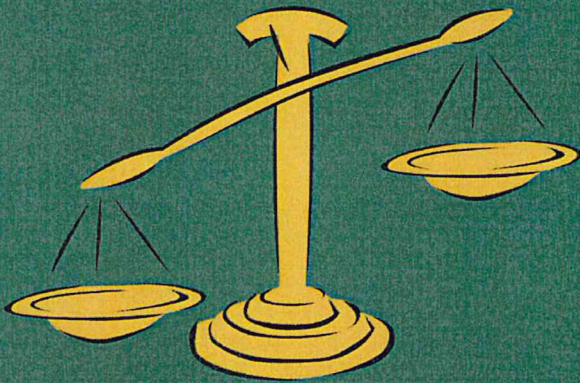
- 1) Controversy over whether or not deer should be managed at all
- 2) Controversy over the acceptability of the chosen approach





Evaluate and select the **right tools** for your community.

Consider:



Legality

Effectiveness

Cost

Social acceptability

Capacity to implement

Time

What **conditions** are needed for an effective community-based deer management process?

- Adequate knowledge about the situation
- Essential working relationships
- Effective local leadership
- Sufficient credibility
- Commitment to a common purpose

What **can be done** to help achieve the right conditions for effective community-based deer management processes?

- Stakeholder involvement
- Education and learning
- Informative communication
- Assessment
- Key partnerships

Remember:



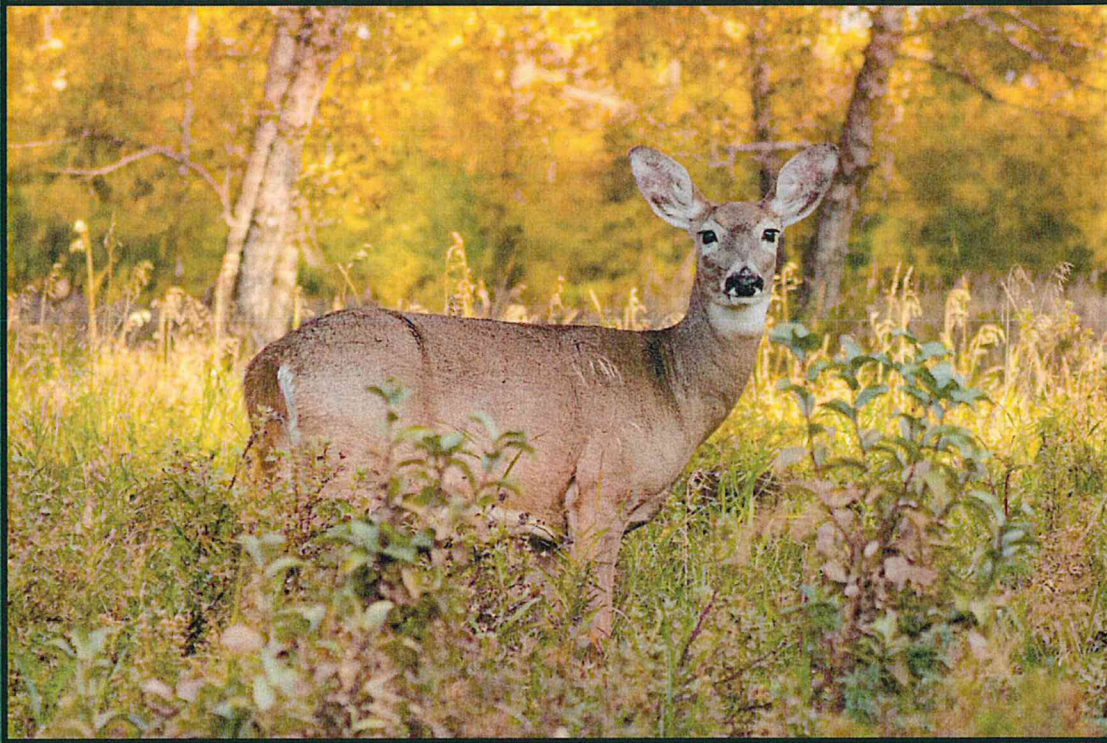
These efforts require **time & patience**

Effective, consistent **leadership** is key

Remember:



DESPITE these efforts there is
much out of your control



Community-based deer management may seem like a daunting task, but in communities where deer become an issue, accept that addressing it is inevitable and success is possible

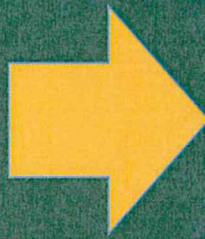
Onondaga County communities engaged in CBDM

- City of Syracuse – 2009, 2014, 2017, 2019
- Fayetteville - 2016
- Winkworth neighborhood – Town of Onondaga/City of Syracuse - 2016
- Dewitt – 2015 (disbanded 2016 and reformed)
- Westvale neighborhood – Geddes - 2017
- Town of Camillus - 2017
- Town of Manlius - 2017

Onondaga County support for communities in place since 2016-2017.

Active Management Programs

- Fayetteville and Manlius
- DeWitt
- Camillus
- Syracuse



- Committed and engaged (active) residents
- Committed local government
- Larger properties to meet state regulations
- Facilitation by CCE

Without these basics, it's very difficult to get a program going!

Deeradvisor.org

Syracuse prepares for deer cul... x Community Deer Advisor | Dec... x +

deeradvisor.dnr.cornell.edu

Apps SHOP

Cornell University The Nature Conservancy

Search

Community Deer Advisor Cornell

Community Deer Advisor

Decision support for communities managing deer

[About](#) [What is CBDM?](#) [Community Examples](#) [Resource Library](#) [Assistance](#) [Free Online Course](#) [FAQs](#)

Turning the Tide on Plant Damage and Lyme Disease

Type here to search

2:39 PM 10/21/2019

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Living with Suburban Deer: An Overview of the Issues



Overview

1. Deer-Vehicle Collisions
2. Tick-borne Illness
3. Deer Damage in Yards and Gardens

Deer-Vehicle Collisions: Background

Potential factors affecting rate of collision:

- Animal population abundance
- Habitat fragmentation
- Cover density near roads
- Lighting
- Speed limits
- Traffic volume



Deer-Vehicle Collisions: West Seneca Data

	2018	2019	2020	2021
West Seneca	174	194	145	35*
Lancaster	186	149	134	52
Orchard Park	179	173	152	45

*Through early June 2021

**Note that all collisions were property damage only,
no personal injuries reported.**

Deer-Vehicle Collisions: West Seneca Data

Using collision data, we might examine:

- Hotspots
- Correlations with risk factors
 - Surrounding land uses
 - Speed limits
 - Lighting
 - Traffic volume

Deer-Vehicle Collisions: Mitigation Methods

- Wildlife warning reflectors shown to be ineffective (Benten et al. 2018)
- Wildlife fencing
- Crossing structures
- Reduce speed limits
- Clear vegetation along roadway hotspots
- Improve lighting
- Reduce deer population

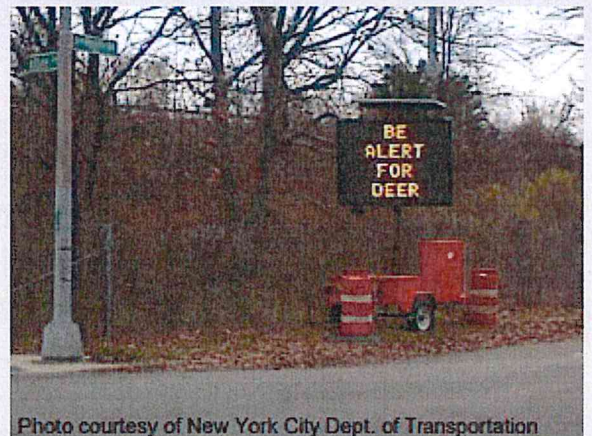
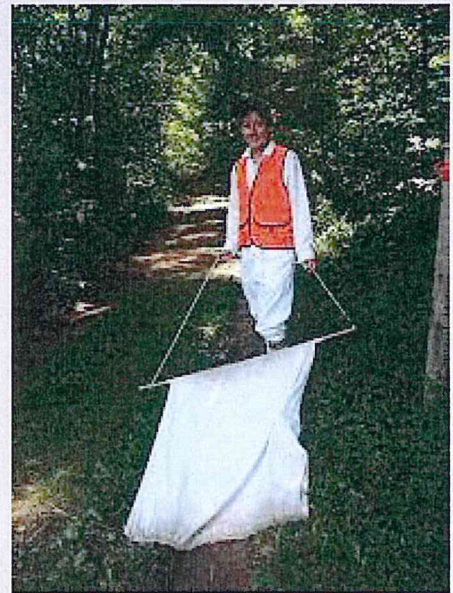


Photo courtesy of New York City Dept. of Transportation

Tick-borne Illness: Background

Surveillance for *five* tick-borne illnesses is regularly conducted in Erie County by NYDOH:

- **Lyme Disease**
- Anaplasmosis
- Babesia
- Borrelia
- Powhassan Virus – not yet found in Erie Co.



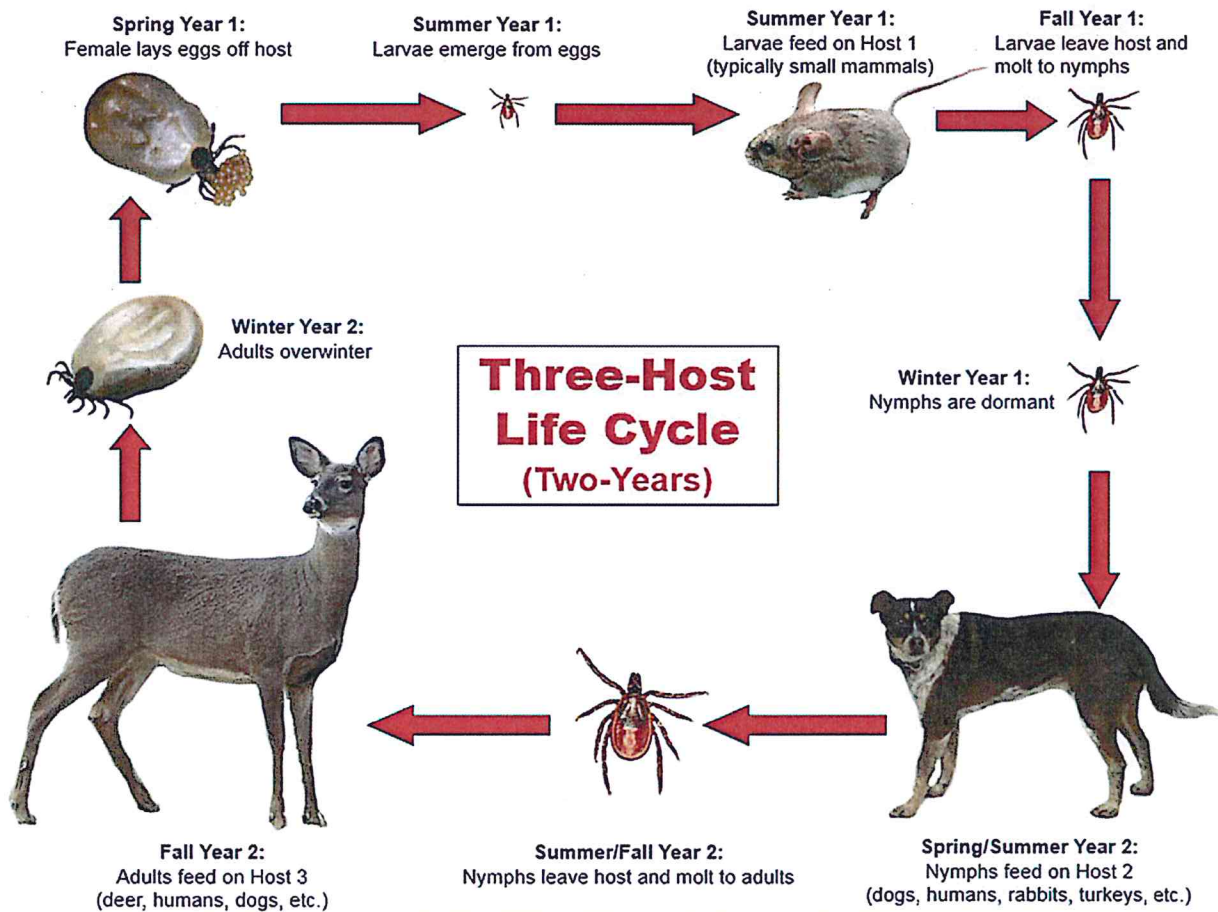
***ONLY LYME DISEASE IS COMMON IN THIS PART OF THE STATE**

NYSDOH Adult Deer Tick Surveillance Data for Erie County

Year	Sites	Ticks	Tick Density	Total Tested	Lyme	Anaplas-mosis	Babesia	Borrelia
2020	6	99	15.28	91	54.90%	4.40%	0%	0%
2019	2	145	68.05	51	45.10%	0%	7.80%	2%
2018	3	89	29.7	62	50%	1.60%	1.60%	0%
2017	3	94	31.3	50	52%	6%	0%	0%
2016	6	283	47.1	60	30%	0%	0%	0%

NYSDOH Nymph Deer Tick Surveillance Data for Erie County

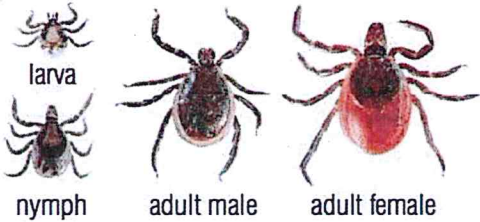
Year	Sites	Ticks	Tick Density	Total Tested	Lyme	Anaplasmosis	Babesia	Borrelia
2020	1	235	8.6	9	44.40%	0%	0%	0%
2019	5	83	7.54	52	28.80%	7.70%	0%	0%
2018	5	5	0.5	5	20%	0%	0%	0%
2017	8	93	3	35	28.60%	0%	0%	0%
2016	8	125	11	118	30.50%	3.40%	0%	0%



***Most Lyme disease cases are reported in summer after exposure to nymph stage ticks (which are smaller and harder to detect). Lyme disease is generally not transmitted if the tick is attached for less than 24 hours!**

Blacklegged Tick (Deer Tick)
Image source: URI TickEncounter Resource Center

Enlarged View



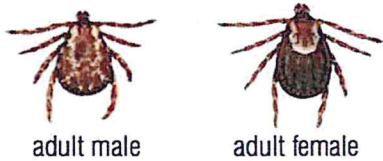
(inches) 0 1/4" 1/2" 3/4" 1" 1 1/4" 1 1/2"

Approx. Size



American Dog Tick (Wood Tick)
Image source: Maine Medical Center Research Institute

Enlarged View



	Deer (Black-legged) Ticks	Dog (Wood) Ticks
Habitat	Prefer wooded areas or woodland edges with dense vegetation and leaf litter. Attracted by taller trees and shrubs. Require a high moisture environment.	Survives in drier locations, such as roadsides, lawns, and trails.
Hosts	Adults prefer larger hosts (dogs, deer, humans)	Adults will utilize large or small hosts (rabbits, raccoons, etc)
Diseases Carried	Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, Powassan Virus	Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Tularemia

Solutions

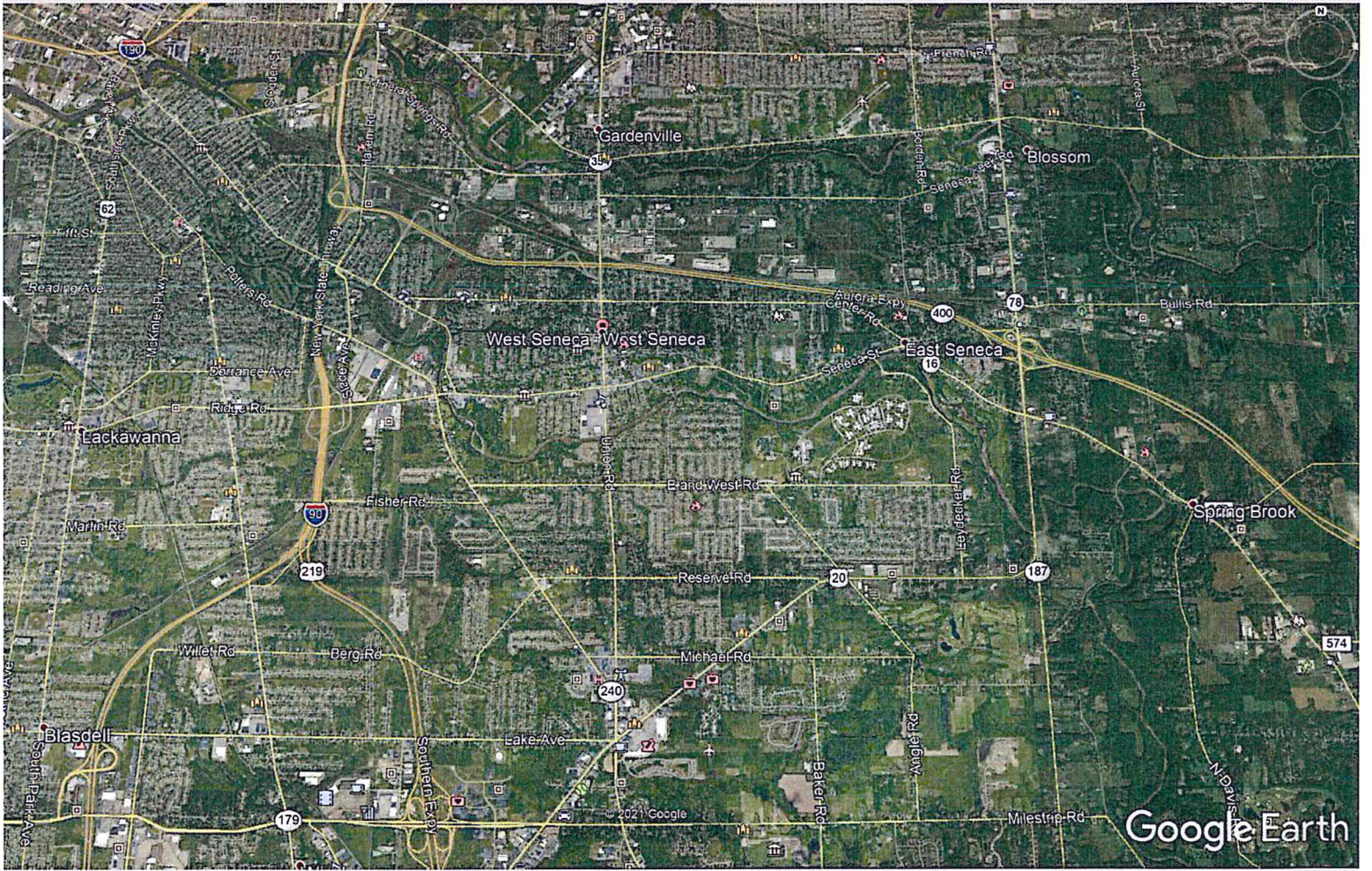
- Public education
 - Landscaping
 - Pesticides
 - Tick safety measures and identification
- Pesticide applications to reduce ticks in the area
- Treat deer using 4-poster bait stations to reduce tick loads
- Reduction of deer herd



Deer Damage in Yards/Gardens

What brings deer into people's yards?

- Habitat Fragmentation
- Attractive plants in gardens and landscapes
- Supplemental feeding



What Attracts Deer to Yards?

- Water and food sources!
- Safe shelter for fawns
- Deer are generalists – they eat a wide variety of foods
- Deer are attracted to some plant types more than others, but if the herd cannot find sufficient food in their natural habitat, they will eat almost ANY plant material



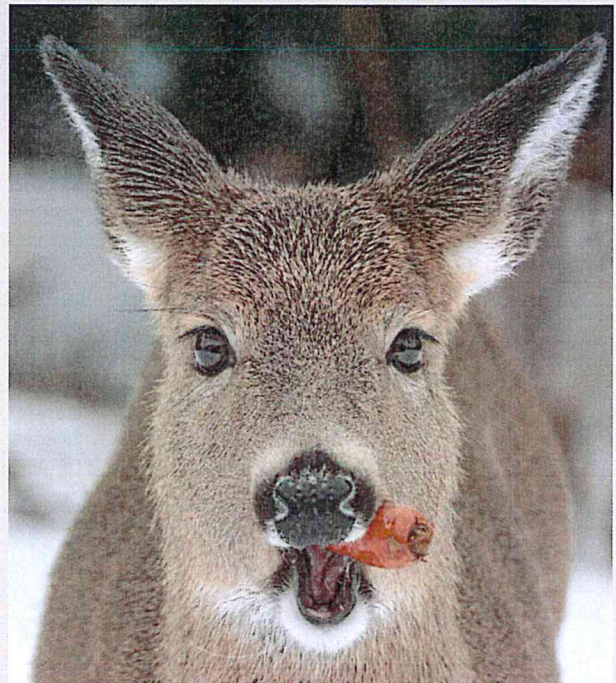
Solutions

- Educate public on which plants are most attractive, and which are deer-resistant
- Deer-proof fencing and netting
- Repellent sprays
- Hedge borders
- Motion activated sprinklers
- Wind chimes and “moving” décor
- Reduction of deer population



Deer Feeding

- Common in suburban areas
 - Connection to nature
 - Desire to help deer
 - Improve photography opportunities
- Impacts of feeding
 - High density “hotspots”
 - Increase population
 - Spread disease among deer
 - Digestive issues in deer



Some Closing Points and Recommendations

- No single solution typically solves these issues
- Culling alone rarely reduces the population sufficiently to fully alleviate suburban human-deer conflict issues – a multifaceted approach should be investigated
- Each doe may have 1-5 offspring. When food is abundant, they will produce more deer (and more young survive)
- Public education and land management approaches can help to alleviate many of these issues
- A list of resources has been provided with our handouts to help with research into solution options