

News from the Town of West Seneca



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WEST SENECA DEER TASK FORCE MAKES PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARENESS ANNOUNCEMENT

West Seneca, NY - The West Seneca Deer Task Force was recently formed in March 2022 by Supervisor Gary Dickson and the Town Board. The task force, comprised of volunteer members, is preparing to make recommendations as to how the Town should consider managing deer-human conflict and the costs of various approaches in 2022.

The Task Force is conducting a comprehensive survey of deer-human conflict for residents, available here: <https://tinyurl.com/WSDTF> and on the Town of West Seneca Webpage.

There will be a meeting for public comment with the Deer Task Force on Tuesday, January 18th at 6:00pm. Location is to be determined but you can find the information on the Town of West Seneca Website under the Deer Task Force Agendas and Minutes Page when it becomes available.

They recommend that citizens consider the following information regarding deer, deer health, and impact on pet and human health:

- Feeding deer is illegal in New York State. Anyone who is aware that neighbors are feeding deer should call the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Law Enforcement at 716-851-7050.
- Driving the speed limit and driving cautiously can avoid many deer-vehicle collisions.
- Feeding deer may seem like a way to help them, but it can contribute to the spread of deer diseases by creating unnaturally large congregations of deer, and by providing them with food that is not easily digestible and can ultimately lead to deer death.
- Feeding deer leads to habituation, which exacerbates many of the issues that residents are facing, such as deer spending large amounts of time in residential areas, and increased vehicle collisions.
- Individual vigilance and inspection of humans and pets after being in brushy and wooded areas is the best way to avoid tick-borne illness.
- Households may choose deer resistant trees, plants, and shrubs.

While the Deer Task Force is still preparing their complete recommendations for the Town Board, the public should know:

- While there is more than one approach to bait and shoot programs, outcomes from bait and shoot programs are extremely limited in the number of deer eliminated, and requires multiple years of culling in order to see lasting results.
- Bait and shoot programs are highly controlled by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Programs are only conducted on Town and DEC approved properties, by specially licensed hunters, and from elevated stands. All meat is donated to those in need.

Deer Task Force Calls To Action:

West Seneca residents should participate in a new, more comprehensive survey in order to determine impact of deer- human conflict. Find that survey here: <https://tinyurl.com/WSDTF>

- Do not feed deer.
- Report neighbors who are feeding deer to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Division of Law Enforcement at 716-851-7050.
- Be vigilant about inspecting humans, clothing, and pets after they have been in brushy and wooded areas.
- Obey the speed limit and drive carefully in areas where there are high deer concentrations.

Background

Based on a growing concern with deer and human interactions in West Seneca, the Town Board surveyed the community in March, and as a result, appointed a Deer Task Force in April 2021. The Deer Task Force is charged with gathering information regarding what Town citizens were reporting as problems, conducting a transparent review of issues and potential solutions, considering the costs of a deer management program, methods for measuring and monitoring program successes, and making recommendations to the Town Board as to how the Town should proceed in addressing the reported issues.

The Task Force started working in May 2021, and holds meetings every third Tuesday of the month in the West Seneca Community Center. Meetings are open for public comment every other month, and email communications may be sent to wsdeertaskforce@twsny.org. Further information on activities of the Task Force may be found on the Town website, here: <http://www.westseneca.net/government/deer-task-force#gsc.tab=0>.

To date, the Task Force has reviewed the comprehensive resolution made by the Town Board, reviewed the original “Deer Control Survey,” learned from other regional communities that have implemented deer management programs, reviewed deer/ human health concerns, Town Police Records for deer calls, heard from the public, reviewed potential solutions, reviewed research on deer/human conflict, and met with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Members of the Deer Task Force include: Cynn timer Gaasch - Facilitator, Jonathan Brotka, Joe Cantafio - Town Councilman, Sheri Courteau, Mary Earsing, Amanda Escobar, Robin Foster, PhD, Jim Hinton, and Peter Holdsworth.

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