

## LETTER: White Township supervisors have it backwards

- August 21, 2022 5 hrs ago



The questions citizens are raising about White's Woods certainly aren't about hunting, per se. Hunters and their supporters are members of every local organization (including Friends of White's Woods).

The questions citizens are raising are: (1) Should hunting occur in a heavily used park that partly lies within the borough? (2) Will hunting in White's Woods achieve the goal White Township is aiming for? (3) What is the role of public input in municipal decisions?

In 2021, White Township invited feedback regarding question No. 1. FWW asked its members what they thought. And last June, IUP students and faculty asked the general community the same question.

The results? The feedback White Township gathered was 2-1 opposed to the existing plan; FWW members (many regular park users) did not support the plan (71 percent); and 57 percent of those surveyed in the IUP Community Interest Study were uncomfortable with the hunting plan, as well.

The majority in three different data-collection efforts opposed hunting in the park. Why? Many expressed a concern for the safety of park users in this "Y"-shaped park with numerous trails often just 100 feet apart.

People know that hunters are generally responsible, but accidents happen.

Has the township modified its plan to address these concerns? Apparently not.

A plan ensuring park-user safety might be possible, but the next question remains: Will hunting in White's Woods achieve White Township's goal?

The township says the goal is to suppress the deer population enough to protect the forest understory. But local foresters and hunters advised that since there isn't hunting on the surrounding properties, hunting the small plot that is White's Woods probably won't have much of an effect. If you want to protect the forest from deer browse, you will need to try other measures.

So the public is upset, the plan quite likely won't work and the response from the White Township supervisors?: "Go somewhere else."

White Township: Listen to the public. Take care of our precious White's Woods that, with state taxpayer funding, was preserved as a natural area for "passive recreation," such as hiking and walking.

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