

LETTER: Friends of White's Woods does not oppose deer hunting

Dec 3, 2022



Despite what you have read/heard, Friends of White's Woods has not opposed deer hunting in general.

A letter to the editor (Nov. 5) stated, "Friends of White's Woods (FWW) should be concerned with the destruction of wanted new growth and saplings never have a chance to grow because of browsing deer." Previously, a Gazette editorial stated, "a coalition of residents (FWW included) opposed to hunting of any kind."

First, FWW is concerned about the long-term threat of deer browse in White's Woods Nature Center (WWNC) and has investigated several strategies that have proven successful: exclusion fencing; deer contraception; protecting natural predators; even hunting. Second, FWW does not oppose

hunting generally, but rather, along with other citizens, raised concerns about the township's (withdrawn) plan to permit hunting in WWNC because:

- The plan was developed without data. An attempt at counting deer culminated with a letter to the Township claiming there were 10-plus deer/acre (greater than 2,500 total)!
- The "Y" shape and topography of WWNC make it nearly impossible to establish a safe zone for hunting — an area sufficiently far from trails, as in parks such as Blue Spruce and Yellow Creek.
- WWNC is surrounded by properties that do not permit hunting. Injured deer will inevitably cross these properties where it is illegal for hunters to follow them without permission.
- Killing deer on a 240-acre plot surrounded by at least a thousand residential and forested acres is not likely to significantly reduce the herd.
- Most importantly, WWNC users expressed concern for safety and indicated they will not enter WWNC for its intended use: passive recreation. Project 70 guidelines clearly state that no activity may interfere with the public's use of WWNC.

FWW also recognizes that deer can cause damage to landscaping and harbor deer ticks, problems which cannot be solved by hunting on a single 240-acre plot surrounded by 28,000 acres of borough and township.

FWW's position is that all of the above issues must be addressed before bow hunting (firearms use has been banned in WWNC since 1970) can safely and effectively take place in White's Woods.

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White Township