



Deer populations, unchecked by predators or management, have grown to exceed 100 deer per square mile in some areas. It is generally accepted that deer densities above 20 deer per square mile are detrimental to the ecosystem.

In 1998, the Regional Water Authority authored a report that recommended further research and monitoring of the deer population on our properties. Eight years later, another report was prepared incorporating the latest studies and experiences with deer management. The second report recommended managing the deer population with a controlled hunt. The benefits of successfully reducing deer density include:

- **restoring ecosystem diversity,**
- **enhancing forest regeneration,**
- reducing deer-vehicle collisions,
- reducing damage to landscape plants in the surrounding neighborhoods, and
- reducing the incidence of Lyme disease.

The first two points in bold can impact **water quality** since a rich, diverse forest ecosystem **controls erosion and locks up nutrients that can fuel algal blooms in reservoirs.**

Bow hunting is allowed each year on 3,233 acres in North Branford, 154 acres in Seymour and Ansonia, 420 acres in Prospect and 520 acres in Bethany. Applicants choose which location they prefer. Eight hunters are assigned to the Seymour/Ansonia site, 152 to North Branford, 20 to Prospect and 25 to the Bethany site. Once assigned to a location, hunters are allowed to hunt only that site and no other site. The archery hunt, which is part of our deer management program, takes place throughout the month of November.

The RWA distributes 205 permits each season. Some permits are reserved for hunters who harvested a doe and those who volunteered at our check station during the previous year's hunt. The remaining permits are distributed by lottery. Applications are sent by mail in May and accepted through June each year.

Applicants must have a current State of Connecticut archery deer permit and be at least 18 years old. Applicants who have not previously passed our proficiency test will be required to pass a proficiency test in July or August. Additionally, all hunters are required to attend one of three pre-hunt meetings held in September. During the pre-hunt meetings, we review the boundaries, rules and safety. We will issue the permits at the end of the pre-hunt meetings. During the hunt, participants are required to use temporary tree stands and a safety (full body) harness. The hunt runs from 4:30 AM through 1:00 PM daily, Monday through Saturday. There is no hunting on Sundays.

Two names may be submitted per application. However, any person's name appearing on more than one application will disqualify that person.

We will solicit volunteers to staff a check station for each day of the hunt. Volunteers work one day at the check station will be guaranteed a spot in the next year's hunt. Applications to volunteer at the check station are available in June, after the lottery takes place.

To be placed on a list to receive an application, please contact:

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