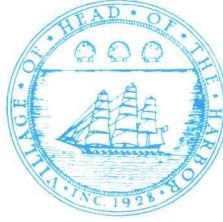


# Village of Head-of-the-Harbor



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Dear Friends,

Following up to the deer program discussions at the January 16th Village public meeting we are pleased to announce that starting March 10th and continuing into April, the first year of the deer immunocontraception study will begin. Head of the Harbor will be uniquely addressing the deer overpopulation problem with a nonlethal and humane solution. Your cooperation is important to the success of this program in our Village, I ask that you please read this letter carefully.

The immunocontraception study will explore techniques to improve cost-efficiency of immunocontraceptive delivery and enhance prospects for their use in long-term deer management plans. These techniques include direct dart-delivery of the vaccine, novel methods for identifying individual deer, and different means for estimating population size. This initiative is a joint effort between Head of the Harbor Village, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, and Avalon Park and Preserve. All work will be conducted under the conditions established by a NYS DEC license. This letter describes what you can expect to see during the weeks the field teams are working in the village.

Field operations will be conducted by trained personnel from HSUS, Tufts, and Avalon Park and Preserve. Female deer will be darted with an anesthetic. Once the deer is sedated, the field team will examine, weigh and measure the animal, collect blood for baseline pregnancy testing, inject the immunocontraceptive PZP-22 and a PIT tag (a microchip much like the ones used to identify dogs and cats), and place colored tags on the ears with identification numbers. The deer's vital signs will be closely monitored, and when the work-up is complete, the deer will receive a sedation-reversal agent and be released. This process takes approximately 30 minutes.

**Bait Stations:**

Deer feeders will be erected in early March prior to active darting efforts. These stations automatically dispense small amounts of corn at pre-programmed intervals to help bring deer into areas where it is safe to dart. The feeders will be placed on the properties of village residents who have agreed to participate in the study. If you happen to come across a feeder please do not disturb the device, as proper operation of feeders is essential to the success of the project. In addition, the release of corn can be hazardous at eye level.

#### Darting:

Safety (for people and animals) is the top priority when darting deer. A CO2 cartridge, much like a paintball gun, powers the equipment used to deliver the dart with shots taken at a distance of less than 25 yards. Upon impact, the dart will deliver a dose of anesthetic into the deer, with sedation occurring within 10-15 minutes. The dart is equipped with barbs that hold it in place and a radio transmitter. Most deer will flee after impact and may run some distance from the site of darting. If the deer is out of sight the field team will use radio telemetry equipment to locate the animal. Deer, while sedated, are not predictable. **PLEASE DO NOT APPROACH THE ANIMAL.** If no field staff are within sight, please call 911 and ask for Head of the Harbor police and report what you have found. In most cases the field team will be there within minutes to handle the deer. After the animal has been administered the reversal agent, field team members will remain on site until the deer is conscious and moving around. Please do not approach the team while it is working with a deer. Any disturbance can cause the deer to regain consciousness suddenly and create a dangerous situation.

All field team members will be wearing bright colored reflective vests with "Deer Project" in bold, and travel in and work from similarly marked vehicles. The team will retrieve the dart once the animal is located. On very rare occasions the team may not be able to relocate a dart. Although there is no chance that the dart will discharge spontaneously, on the off chance you encounter a stray dart, **PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH IT.** Call the Head of the Harbor police department utilizing the 911 system and someone will be dispatched to retrieve it.

#### Property access:

No member of the field team will knowingly enter a property without prior consent from the property owner. We have determined several high priority areas in the village where large concentrations of deer have been observed. We will be making contact with residents in these areas in the next few weeks to discuss the project further and determine interest in participating in the project by allowing access to property.

Four ways you can participate as a village resident and land owner:

1. Allow the research team to bait, dart and work up the deer on your property.
2. Allow the research team to dart and work up the deer on your property.
3. Allow the research team to work up a deer on your property should it enter your property after sedation.
4. Allow the research team to place trail cameras on your property to assist in population estimations

Darting activities will be carried out at both daytime and nighttime hours during times when deer activity is highest. These timeframes may fluctuate with deer behavior and movement patterns.



Enclosed is a separate participation form that you may fill out and mail to Avalon Park, 200 Harbor Rd., Stony Brook NY 11790 or scan and email to [deer@avalonparkandpreserve.org](mailto:deer@avalonparkandpreserve.org).

Placing a green flag (which Avalon will provide) in the ground next to your mailbox will signal to the field team that you have permitted them to access your property as needed for the above activities.

We will also make note of any property owners who do not want to participate at all.

Placing a red flag at your mailbox (which Avalon will provide) will signal to the field team that you do not wish to permit any of the aforementioned activities to take place on your property.

Ways you can help the project:

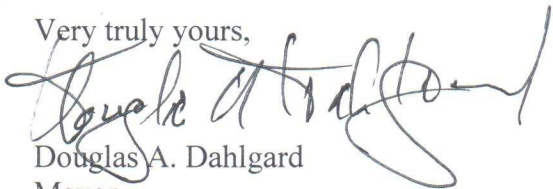
Many residents have inquired about how they might help with the study. First and foremost you are the best source of information about deer whereabouts. Any information you have related to deer traffic on your property is valuable to the research team. If you have deer that frequent your property at the same times during the day or deer trails that the animals are using as corridors, we would welcome the information. You can email your observations to [deer@avalonparkandpreserve.org](mailto:deer@avalonparkandpreserve.org).

During the darting period we will also have a hotline number (1-888-337-1099) you can call to report deer activity in your area. This number will only be active during the duration of field operations. During times of active fieldwork, the team will be housed at Avalon Park and Preserve. Another way to help this project is to donate grocery cards that will help feed our field teams as they work on the project. Please feel free to reach out to Katharine at Avalon Park 631-689-0619 or [deer@avalonparkandpreserve.org](mailto:deer@avalonparkandpreserve.org).

Avalon Park and Preserve will also host the project's web page, where you can access up to date information regarding the project throughout the duration of the study.

[www.avalonparkandpreserve.org](http://www.avalonparkandpreserve.org)

Very truly yours,



Douglas A. Dahlgard  
Mayor