Village of Hamilton Deer Management Program
October 2015 – March 2016

1. The goal of the Village of Hamilton Deer Management Program is to reduce deer numbers to levels where forest regeneration and survival of browse sensitive plants within the Village of Hamilton are once again possible. In addition, we aim to reduce deer tick populations to levels where Lyme disease risks are reduced (5-8 deer per square kilometer = 13-20 per square mile according to recent studies in CT) and to minimize the incidence of car/deer collisions.

2. The Village of Hamilton Deer Harvest Implementation Committee (Committee) has been established by the Village of Hamilton Board of Trustees to coordinate this program.

3. Areas of heavy deer population have been identified throughout the village. Harvest sites have been identified by the committee with safety and success in mind. At first, most activity will take place outside the center of the village. Sites will be evaluated continuously and added or changed when school population changes. Safety of the residents of the Village is the number one priority of the committee.

4. Activities of the Deer harvest can occur from September 18, 2015 to September 30, 2015 and again from December 23, 2015 through the end of March 2016. The Committee will review the program after the initial September undertakings and will update the community and plan for the winter harvest session. All landowners will be kept informed about management activities (including who are the participants on their property) in regular updates. It is anticipated that activity will take place daily with a focus on (but not limited to) early morning and evening until harvest goals are met. This DEC permitted nuisance program allows activity both day and night.

5. A small group of proficient participants will be selected. Participants will be using compound bows or cross bows exclusively. The activities of the participants will be coordinated by the Committee.

    a. Participants must:
        i. Fill out an application
        ii. Submit to and pass a background check
        iii. Sign a liability waiver
        iv. Agree to and sign a code of conduct
        v. Provide own equipment as needed
        vi. Agree to all rules set forth by the village

6. Tree stands will be placed (no screw in steps, ladder stands are preferred) at landowner approved locations. A few branches may need to be trimmed to improve shooting lanes. Seven to ten days before activities are to begin, bait (corn) may be placed about 20 yards away from tree stands to attract deer to these locations. Trail monitoring cameras may be installed to capture deer activity. If needed, locations may need to be shifted or abandoned. Each landowner will be informed about any activities on their properties, as indicated by landowner preferences.

7. All participants are required to follow all village and state laws, and expressed landowner preferences. It is the right of each landowner to restrict the number of individuals on their property, the times or dates participants are allowed on properties, stand location, parking locations or access routes as desired by each landowner. The agreement to use properties can be terminated by landowners at any time by notifying the village clerk.

8. Which days and stands will be used cannot be predicted in advance, as this will depend on individual time schedules, wind direction, weather and previous use of stand locations. To prevent overuse, a resting period of an area may be utilized. Baiting may continue during these resting periods, as this will allow deer to resume their usual use patterns.

9. Participants may be in trees using camouflage and may use flashlights to locate a deer or to walk out of the woods; therefore landowners may notice a slow moving flashlight. If deer can't be readily retrieved, approved tracking dogs may be available to help in locating the deer. In very rare circumstances tracking may occur the next morning.

10. In most instances, landowners and neighbors will not even notice activities or the harvesting of a deer because it happens quietly and fast. Occasionally tracking a deer may extend beyond property boundaries. All participants will have information about property boundaries when afield. A communication network will be established to notify landowners and neighbors if a search extends beyond the approved properties. Permission to retrieve a deer, unless we have written preauthorization, must be established. We will make every reasonable attempt to recover all animals. All harvested deer will be removed discretely from the site. Any entrails from field dressing will also be removed unless permission is granted for them to be left.

11. Participants will keep track of the arrows used as well as record all the information necessary on the NYS DEC nuisance tag. The information will be compiled by the committee to evaluate all aspects of the project in regular intervals. The number of deer harvested will determine if activities are to be continued or terminated.

12. All harvested deer will be consumed by participants or donated. We are currently exploring options to allow storage in the village in a refrigerated mobile unit. The donated deer would then be dropped off at an approved venison donation processor for distribution to local food banks and pantries.

13. The Hamilton Food Cupboard will coordinate the distribution of donated deer to families in need. Arrangements for charitable donations to defray the costs of processing and distribution of the donated deer will be coordinated by the Food cupboard.

14. The committee will provide regular updates to the village board, including the number of deer harvested, which will also be posted on the village website.