

Mary Mills

From: Edita [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 1:09 PM

To: Mary Mills; Kate Supron

Cc: 'Lee Hall'

Subject: Friends of Animals' Comment for the Record on the DEIS for Cayuga Heights' Deer Management Plan

Via e-mail: clerk@cayuga-heights.ny.us, mayor@cayuga-heights.ny.us

Cc: Lee Hall, Vice President – Legal Affairs, Friends of Animals leehall@friendsofanimals.org

Subject: Friends of Animals' Comment for the Record on the DEIS for Cayuga Heights' Deer Management Plan

Date submitted: 15 December 2010

To Mayor Supron and the Cayuga Heights Village Trustees,

I am the New York Director of Friends of Animals, an international advocacy group founded in New York. Since 1957 we have been working to raise community awareness regarding the environmental, ethical and psychological benefits and the ethical importance of living in respectful harmony with the rest of the biocommunity of which we humans are, ecologically speaking, a part. I write on behalf of Friends of Animals, and especially our thousands of members in New York State, to oppose the proposal in full and its components: killing, surgical sterilization, and “ongoing maintenance” through further “further sterilization and culling” of the community of deer in Cayuga Heights.

The estimated 160-200 white-tailed deer in Cayuga Heights belong to an indigenous species with whom the human community can and should co-exist.

It is ecologically irresponsible for leaders of a community of 3,273 people to claim that only 30 deer or less should be allowed to live in their native habitat.

The possible unnatural social and biological effects of the sterilization scheme are unknown. We do know that deer-control generally drives a kind of evolution in reverse, contradicting the natural survival advantages of the strongest, healthiest deer. Nature itself balances deer herds best, according to available food, terrain, and weather, as well as the presence and health of carnivorous animals. If nature allows for the presence of 160-200 deer in Cayuga Heights, then that is the number of deer the terrain can suitably sustain. That deer thrive in Cayuga Heights is a benefit, not a problem.

There is, however, a problem involving suburban development. The impulse to blame other species for problems they didn't create should be challenged, for the real problem in Cayuga Heights, as in many communities, is one of our own making as we usurp more natural spaces through residential, recreational, and commercial development, causing animals to concentrate into increasingly smaller areas.

Moreover, if there is tension related to deer in Cayuga Heights, the best answers begin by acknowledging that hunting (which generates biological responses that increase deer births) as well as the treatment of natural predators as nuisance animals do not reduce that tension.

Controversially--and, we believe, incorrectly--the Draft Environmental Impact Statement cites a lack of hunting in residential areas as a contributory factor to a thriving deer population.

A reframing of the issue is necessary. We urge you to implement changes in the community that would inform residents and lessen any perceived conflicts with deer. Educating landowners as to some simple tips is sensible and can have long-term positive results. Examples: planting daffodils rather than azaleas; planting high bushes to decrease visibility into gardens.

Helpful changes might also include revisions to the current fencing ordinance so that residents can protect their gardens from deer if desired. By restricting residents and connecting itself with a plan that would allot substantial payments to an animal-control firm, Cayuga Heights would continue to exaggerate the perception of a conflict in need of buying a solution.

Most of all, cultivating respect for nature is urgently needed in Cayuga Heights. The idea of deer as a problem needing draconian, expensive solutions is sweeping the country and needs to be challenged itself.

Anthony DeNicola, the president of a firm that carries out deer culling activities, downplays the safety issues surrounding deer-control plans.

Anthony DeNicola has a vested interest in deer control; the name Anthony DeNicola appears in many similar Draft Environmental Impact Statements (including plans developed in jurisdictions outside of New York). The "personal communication" of Anthony DeNicola to Tim Miller Associates, the firm which prepared the Impact Statement, should be seen in light of this business owner's interests.

The DEIS outlines a morally and ecologically unjustifiable course of action, one that undermines the enlightened reputation of Cayuga Heights. This plan for aggressive domination of the deer has a degrading effect upon the entire community, as both a practical matter in terms of physical safety for children and others, and psychologically. Cayuga Heights should resist the plan to codify a slaughter and near extinction of one community of indigenous animals that many people in the Cayuga Heights area and beyond, including our New York members, respect and appreciate.

Mayor Supron and Cayuga Heights Village Trustees: your decision on this controversial proposal not only affects the legacy you offer Cayuga Heights; it involves deer living in New York as part of a greater community of animals--a community we have an interest in protecting. On behalf of the staff, members and supporters of Friends of Animals, I urge you to meaningfully address the impacts brought to your attention, and to set aside the deer-control plan.

Please include this comment in the official record.

Very truly yours,

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