Deer Management Assistance Program

By Tom Abbott, RI DEM, Division of Forest Environment

The Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) is a program that, when developed, will address the impact of deer on Rhode Island¢s woodlands with an ecological approach. The intent of this program is to be non-regulatory in nature and balance the needs of forest landowners, with the needs of the native wildlife which inhabit our forest.

Our vision for the DMAP will be one which incorporates several integrated components, with forestland assessment and evaluation for deer damage being the first step. Education for both landowners and potential hunters will be addressed and other techniques evaluated, including the potential of extending the current deer hunting season for those landowners who qualify for the program. The program will also work to match hunters with willing landowners and include a way to monitor program effectiveness.

We at DEM hear you, how could we not? The following titles from **THE FOREST CONSERVATIONSIST** demonstrates to us your concern: õRIFCO Spring Program, Features Deer Impacts on RI Woodlandsö; õWhat Can We Do About White-Tailed Deer?ö ; õRIFCO¢s Summer Twilight Session to Feature Deer Management at the Great Swampö, and õWhat Can Landowners do to Manage White-tailed Deer?ö Of course there is also your latest survey, õForest and Forestry in Peril?, A Survey of White-tailed Deer Impacts in Rhode Islandö.

So getting back to the Deer Management Assistance Program; we currently had our first committee meeting, with a committee made up of staff from DEM¢s Division of Fish and Wildlife and Forest Environment. As the program develops and to ensure its success, DEM will seek input from RIFCO, Tree Farm and RI hunters, as we hope to develop a program that will be responsive and help reduce forest impacts in line with landowner management objectives.

For more information about the DMAP, you can contact me at (401) 539-2356, Thomas.Abbott@dem.ri.gov or Brian Tefft at (401)789-0281, Brian.Tefft@dem.ri.gov .