

## **Student makes case for bow hunting**

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To the editor:

I grew up in Dobbs Ferry, and am now a freshman at Dickinson College, studying environmental science. For years, there has been debate in this community on how to manage our deer population. While I understand the concerns expressed regarding bow hunting, I believe it is the best and perhaps only viable option.

As many studies show, a deer population exceeding the limits of the local ecosystem causes many problems. One study in Greenwich, Conn., revealed that 45 percent of residents had a household member contract a tick-borne disease, 33 percent were involved in a deer-vehicle accident, and 88 percent had deer-related damage to their property.

I know this firsthand: For many years, my family's garden has been decimated by deer. But that is the least of the problems. Driving at night, my parents often have to veer suddenly to avoid hitting a deer. On several occasions, a buck or small herd has entered our yard when our dog has been loose, and we have had to take sudden action to avoid a fight.

Too many deer present risks of the environment. Those risks are evident in the Reinman Sanctuary near my college. The previous owner's will prohibits any interference with the ecosystem, but that has not saved the land. The deer have consumed the saplings and bushes. Unless the population is reduced, the forest will be reduced to grassy hills. The same defoliation exists in our community, in the Juhring Estate and Hillside Woods.

There is only one realistic solution: seasonal bow hunting.

Hunting is cost effective and efficient. It provides direct control of the population. Nothing goes to waste because the venison can be consumed by the hunters or donated. Bait improves shooting placement and safety.

Hastings has employed an alternative: birth control. But contraception is expensive, and its success is uncertain. In the Greenwich study, respondents preferred birth control and relocation, but only if these methods for population control were as effective as hunting and did not increase costs. Unfortunately, that is not likely. A study showed that a Georgia

community paid \$144 per deer injected with birth control. In comparison, bow hunting imposes little cost, because hunters volunteer for the job.

Environmental sustainability is critical for future generations. We must manage the deer population or forests will disappear and accidents involving people, perhaps fatal ones, will occur. Season bat hunting with bows offers the best solution.