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The View from Laughing Springs: Hans Reimann's ecological notes

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The deer browse and buck rubbing of trees is becoming epidemic. My heart wrenches as I recall the American Chestnut tree, barely fifteen feet tall, girdled and now easier prey to the invasive organism waiting to strike. This life form, accidentally introduced into the North American ecology seven decades ago, attacks the bark of the Chestnut, killing the tree above ground after leaving the root stock alone to valiantly grow up more saplings.

This unnatural cycle of life has relegated the American Chestnut to a role as an understory tree scarcely reaching twenty-five feet in height. White-tailed deer, existing in unsustainable numbers, are unwilling partners to an invasive organism.

Bucks girdling young trees and deer eating tree, shrub and wild flower buds interrupt the natural regenerating powers of the forest. The unnaturally large concentration of deer on Kohlberg Hill and nearby environs should be a call to action for all landowners here.

Can anyone stand by while the Mountain Laurel, our state flower, is ravaged and made to slowly disappear by deer herds, when as landowners, we could unite in principle and purpose to meet the threats to our forest's health and work together to eliminate them?

A recent *Saucon News* article on deer management is promoting the thinning of dense forest to create better feeding conditions for deer, thereby relieving pressure on landscape & garden plants around homes. This policy will only work in conjunction with a private hunting initiative covering hundreds of contiguous acres. An invasive plant management plan would also need to be implemented at the local level to keep non-native plants from encroaching into the new openings in the forest canopy.

A regional approach with neighboring municipalities cooperating together with farmers and owners of large tracts of land will be the key to a successful deer management plan. But the most important thing for all citizens to remember is our civic duty to convince & vote into office, local & state officials who will work with us to improve our environment & hence our standard of living.