

# Mendham, New Jersey “controlled hunt” OUT OF CONTROL

## What’s Coming To Ridgefield

12/16/2004

### **Residents fear hunting along Patriot’s Path**

By MARIA VOGEL-SHORT

**MENDHAM - Residents are afraid they’re going to get hit with arrows shot by deer hunters along the heavily traveled Patriot’s Path.**

Officials, however, were unclear about whether hunting is permitted in the area. Residents protested at the Monday, Dec. 6, Borough Council meeting that when they walk along Patriot Path by India Brook Park off Mountainside Road, they see bow and arrow deer hunting and there are no signs advising them to stay away.

“This is dangerous,” said Jane Wahl, of Ironia Road. “I’m out walking my dog and there’s an archery metal hunters’ tree stand. That chair is 20 feet up facing the park. There shouldn’t be hunting in a park.”

Mayor Richard Kraft said Monday hunting should be prohibited along the path.

“We should be closing it to hunting,” Kraft said. “It’s under review and investigation.”

Police Lt. John Taylor said there had been a few complaints about the deer hunting but no tickets had been issued.

“We’re called but we don’t see anyone when a patrol car goes out,” Taylor said.

Another resident, Bob Orgera, of Mountain Avenue, said there was a salt lick under the stand. The salt lick was still seen on Monday, Dec. 13.

At the meeting, four residents told councilmen that there are no hunting signs marking the path.

“On the township side, there are yellow signs that clearly mark the dates of shotgun hunting. We know not to walk in the woods on that side down by the brook. But on the borough side, there are just no signs,” said Barbara Kennedy, who has lived for 30 years on Ironia road.

#### Deer Management

Kraft said Councilman Stanley Witczak was in charge of the borough’s deer management program, a program that had been going on for three years. Witczak could not be reached for comment.

According to the residents, Witczak told them that the bow hunters were “deer management agents,” and the hunting was safe.

Orgera, who walks his dog along Patriot’s Path, said he’s worried because an arrow is a weapon. Orgera said he saw people put up the deer stand on park property.

“There were no notices. I saw people put up this tree stand. I asked when they would put up notices. They ignored me. They had no identification and they ignored me. They said they worked with Councilman Witczak, who is a police officer in Morris Township,” Orgera said.

Orgera said he served in Vietnam and that the last thing he wanted while walking his dog, was to have to look up to make sure no one would hit him with an arrow.

“I haven’t had a flashback in 35 years. I feel like I’m back in Vietnam here. But these people hunting are not from the town. I’m a hunter but I don’t hunt here. I hunt in New York. But when I do, I have my firearm ID card, and no one is not going to see it when I do hunt. The people putting up that stand had no identification,” said Orgera.

Orgera, Kennedy and Wahl said they were told at the Dec. 6 meeting that the people hunting “were thoroughly screened.”

Wahl said she complained so much to the police that a police officer offered to attend the meeting with her.

“He (the officer who attended the meeting) didn’t say anything, though,” she said. “The path parallels India Brook and it’s only a stretch of a quarter mile. But kids ride their bikes there. People walk their dogs. Look, we’re not like the people who are chaining themselves to fences in East Hanover because of hunting. We just want to make sure that accidents don’t happen.”

Wahl said Witczak introduced himself to her, when she was walking along her driveway.

“It was strange. I was surprised he knew my name,” Wahl said.

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**Reader Opinions:**  
**Fred Metzler Dec, 17 2004**

My own daughter lives in the area described in the article. Several years ago, my daughter heard men's voices on her property at 6 AM one Saturday morning. That concerned her, so she went outside to investigate. An arrow landed at her feet! She still has the arrow and is very unhappy about hunting in that area. The arrow could easily have landed in her neck. Hunters should not be near Patriot's Path, nor should they be trespassing on private property as they did on my daughter's property.

One friend saw a slug from a hunter sail into her bedroom, and another saw a hunter crack the windows of her jeep when it was in her driveway. Several friends have found arrows embedded in their homes.

Even the New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest (August 1997) stated, "We cannot just shoot at deer with no consideration of where our shot will land. A slug or buckshot can travel far past or through a target. The 450 foot safety zone is not a magic shield that stops bullets."

We flirt with disaster every time a hunters lifts a shotgun or shoots an arrow. Hunters can easily miscalculate and kill someone in areas where there's an abundance of joggers, people riding horses, people walking family pets and children running free.

**Barb Sachau Dec, 16 2004**

NJ is far too densely populated to allow these gun wackos/hunting perverts to be hunting in such a congested area. The woods should be safe to walk in, safe from gun wackos. People in Mendham have had their houses shot into, their driveways have arrows shot into them, This area is no place for hunting. No place at all. There are thousands of people injured and killed every year by hunters. Long Valley had a fatality not long ago. Blairstown had a mother with two babies in the back seat almost shot to death not that long ago. I can personally show you thousands of accounts of hunting "accidents" - which I call gross negligence. You cannot trust people with guns to be safe.

My daughter Julie lives next door to Jane and Tony Wahl. Jane Wahl is in the article below. A few years ago, Julie heard men's voices outside at 6 AM one Saturday morning. She went out to investigate.

My daughter found a hunter's arrow, with three razor blades in the tip, when it landed on the ground next to her feet. It narrowly missed her neck. One friend saw a slug from a hunter sail into her bedroom and another saw a hunter crack the windows of her jeep when it was in her driveway! Many friends have found arrows in their homes. I have many of these stories!

The New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest (August 1997) states, "Because of the nearly 8 million people now living in the Garden State, we cannot just shoot at deer with no consideration of where our shot will land.

Remember, a slug or buckshot can travel far past or through your target. You had better be sure of the final resting place of that slug."

The Digest then offers a couple of facts on ballistics: **The 450 foot Safety zone is no magic shield which stops bullets.** Shotgun birdshot pellets can travel well over 200 yards. Shotgun slugs can travel more than 3700 feet (.7 miles or more than 10 football fields including the end zones). Buckshot pellets can travel 1900 feet (nearly 1/2 mile).

We flirt with disaster every time a hunter lifts his shotgun or shoots an arrow.

Hunters can miscalculate and kill someone in areas where there's an abundance of joggers, people riding horses, people walking family pets, and children running free.