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Bow hunters seek to reduce deer populations

By Joe Borda

Very quietly — “transparently” — as they like to say, a group of bow hunters called Suburban Whitetail Management of Northern Virginia, is beginning to make a significant difference in solving the problem of deer overpopulation.

Although publicity shy, the organization does have a highly informative Web site that gives an excellent insight into the overall activities of this growing organization. But members speak in hesitant terms when they describe the work they do in reducing deer populations

They believe that they have an ethical commitment to help control and reduce the excessive populations of deer that have infested Northern Virginia. Focused mainly in Fairfax, they have helped reduce deer populations in a number of areas, including Loudoun.

The bow hunters who get into the organization are required must meet strict qualifications standards that go beyond their archery ability. The group actually looks for hunters who are capable of killing deer without drawing attention to themselves. Personality is part of the process here.

Loudoun game Warden Bruce Lemmert said, “With over 4,000 deer being killed on county roads each year, we need an organization that is effective in reducing deer populations. This should be a win-win situation. We certainly haven’t had any problem with them.”

The hunters shoot their arrows down at their prey from tree stands. This prohibits arrows from going astray.

The hunters must be able to consistently hit a six-inch target from 30 yards just to get into the organization. They try to always hit the deer through the chest area to get an immediate kill.

While the hunters get to keep some of the carcasses they kill for their own use as food, most of the kill is donated to Hunters For the Hungry.

The organization never charges for their services and they attempt to be the essence of discretion in whatever type of neighborhood that they are working in.

It could be a three-acre parcel of already developed land in Fairfax or a massive tract of land under development in Loudoun.

The hunters do not arrive, for example, dressed in combat fatigues and when they leave a property they make certain that all carcasses are kept covered and out of view.

’We think it’s very important that the public doesn’t think that there are a bunch of killers out there,” said Jack Yoder, a member of the group.