

## **IS THERE A DEER PROBLEM IN HOPEWELL VALLEY?**

By Denise Moser and Bill Cane, co-chairs, Hopewell Valley Deer Management Task Force

The idea of creating a volunteer task force to investigate whether there is an increasing deer problem in Hopewell Valley came about early in 2009 at an ice cream social given by the township committee to honor the many volunteer groups that diligently serve the needs of the Hopewell Township community. During the get-together, several members of different commissions were discussing various issues relating to deer including Lyme disease, landscaping and farm crop predation and deer/car collisions. The question became: What, if anything, should be done about it?

From a lively discussion over bowls of seriously good ice cream a new volunteer group was created called the Hopewell Valley Deer Management Task Force. The Task Force represents a cross-section of Hopewell Valley residents: from farmers and hunters, to ecological, forestry, and public health experts, to administration and law enforcement representatives, to animal rights and friends of deer. The group has met several times beginning late in 2009 and is currently in the process of working on several fronts: (1) to create and disseminate a community questionnaire to find out what Hopewell Valley residents think and feel about the deer in their midst, (2) to do a careful deer count throughout Hopewell Valley to get an idea of what the deer population actually is; and (3) to educate the community via monthly articles in the local press and a new web site.

Residents are welcome to attend the Task Force's monthly meetings, and can also access meeting notes and other pertinent information on its web site: <http://www.hopewelltp.org/current-topics.html>.