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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shelter Island Deer Samples Negative for Permethrin

Due to the demand for effective and environmentally sensitive strategies for managing dense tick populations in Suffolk County a 4-Poster project was established. The 4-poster device works by treating the white-tailed deer with the insecticide permethrin. Permethrin is the active ingredient in the tickicide passively applied to deer while they feed at the 4-Poster stations.

In September 2008, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and Cornell University staff sampled deer on Shelter Island to assess permethrin levels where 4-Poster tick management devices have been deployed and deer have been feeding since spring, 2008. This sampling was undertaken to provide hunters with information on permethrin detections from deer prior to the start of the regular hunting season.

The pre-hunting samples were obtained as part of a Cornell study of 4-Posters used for control of ticks around Shelter Island. These initial samples were obtained from full-grown does, and included coat swabs and venison from the neck region, as well as liver. Two deer collected by NYSDEC Wildlife staff and a third by Cornell staff were used for the samples. The two NYSDEC-collected animals were within 100 yards of two 4-Poster units and the third Cornell collected sample was taken from an area with multiple 4-Poster units.

Swab samples from hides were analyzed by NYSDEC chemists and results returned found no detections of permethrin residue, at a detection limit of three micrograms per wipe. Liver and venison samples, analyzed by Cornell's Animal Health Diagnostic Center (AHDC), also detected no residue, at a detection limit of 10 parts per billion. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action level for permethrin is 0.25 parts per million; the AHDC test results are nearly 100 times more sensitive than the EPA action level threshold.

Additional deer on Shelter Island and from North Haven will be sampled during the fall 2008 – winter 2009 hunting season and annually for the three- to four-year duration of the 4-Poster study. The study is also evaluating wildlife interaction with the devices, their impact on local vegetation as well as efficacy for controlling lone star and blacklegged ('deer') ticks, vectors of several disease-causing pathogens. The 4-poster study is a cooperative project conducted by Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.

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