



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

301 E. Huron, P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107

December 14, 2016

Kristin M. Bissell, Wildlife Biologist
Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources
Waterloo Wildlife Office
13578 Seymour Road
Grass Lake, MI 49240

Re: City of Ann Arbor MDNR Cull Permit Application

Dear Ms. Bissell:

The City of Ann Arbor is requesting a permit to cull up to 100 whitetail deer in the time period between January 1 and March 31, 2016.

Background

During the spring of 2014, City Council directed Ann Arbor's City Administrator to develop a deer management options report. The directive from Council arose as a result of many residents reporting deer damaging landscaping and concerns about vehicle/deer collisions and deer-borne diseases.

On Aug. 14, 2014, the Deer Management Options Report was provided to Council, which outlined the need to develop a community-endorsed deer management plan built upon community input and management options approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division.

From November 2014 to August 2015, numerous deer management outreach methods were utilized by City staff, including an A2 Open City Hall online survey, three public meetings, numerous stakeholder interviews, Community Television Network cablecasts, media releases, social media posts, email notifications and public hearings.

These outreach methods helped city staff to learn more about the deer population and residents' experiences to develop a recommended deer management plan for City Council consideration in August 2015. The plan aimed to answer the following questions:

- What should be the goal of the deer management program?
- What would be the deer management area?
- What is the preferred deer management method(s)?

The May 2015, Ann Arbor Deer Management Plan recommended decreasing the deer population in Wards 1 and 2 to reduce deer-human negative interactions and support biological diversity in natural areas. The recommended methods identified in the report were options allowed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the public agency responsible for managing Michigan's deer.

On August 17, 2015, City Council approved the establishment of a deer management program for the next four years, including culls on City of Ann Arbor property beginning in the winter of 2016. In addition, City Council directed city staff to continue to explore the viability of a deer fertility control program with the Humane Society of the United States.

Goals & Objectives

The goal of Ann Arbor's deer management program is to decrease the deer population in Ann Arbor in order to reduce deer-human negative interactions and support biological diversity in natural areas.

Proposed Methods

The culls will take place between January 1 and March 31, 2016, between the hours of 4 p.m. and 7 a.m. in the following 26 city parks and nature areas located within Wards 1 and 2. The identified locations will be noticed as being closed to the public during these dates and times.

Arbor Hills Nature Area

Argo Nature Area

Bandemer Nature Area

Barton Nature Area

Bird Hills Nature Area

Black Pond Woods Nature Area

Bluffs Nature Area

Braun Nature Area

Cedar Bend Nature Area

Dhu Varren Woods Nature Area

Foxfire South Nature Area

Foxfire West Nature Area

Furstenberg Nature Area

Huron Parkway Nature Area

Kuebler Langford Nature Area

Leslie Park Golf Course

Leslie Woods Nature Area

Narrow Gauge Nature Area

Oakridge Nature Area

Oakwoods Nature Area

Olson Park

Onder Nature Area

Ruthven Nature Area

South Pond Nature Area

Stapp Nature Area

Traver Creek Nature Area

Small bait piles consisting of corn and apples will be placed at some of these locations beginning January 1, 2016 and will continue until cull activities are completed.

The City has contracted with the United States Department of Agriculture - Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services Division (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services) to conduct the cull. All USDA APHIS Wildlife Services marksmen are employees who are professionally trained to remove nuisance wildlife. The cull will be conducted with firearms equipped with suppressors, night vision, and FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared). The ammunition used will be highly frangible bullets specifically designed to reduce pass-through.

The shooting will occur in one or both of the following scenarios:

1. From deer stands or deer blinds at bait piles within identified parks or nature areas.
2. From vehicles in parking lots or on trails within identified parks or nature areas, or in rights-of-way immediately adjacent to parks or nature areas.

The City is requesting a damage and nuisance animal control permit to shoot whitetail deer, a non-hunting purpose under MDNR regulations. It is the City's understanding that the safety zone requirements of MLC §324.4011(7) apply to hunting only (i.e. pursuit and kill for sport) and written permission from the owner/renter of any occupied dwelling within 150 yards is not required for issuance of the requested permit.

Such a shot would not be considered to be a regular activity for this cull, but may be desirable in certain instances where safety can be ensured. The City is requesting confirmation that MDNR classifies this permit as a non-hunting activity and that no safety zone is required as part of any permit conditions imposed by the MDNR if this permit application is granted

Deer Carcass Removal

Deer carcasses will be removed from cull locations by 7 a.m. Every effort will be made to remove visual evidence of the cull and return the site to its normal appearance. Carcasses will be field-dressed at a city facility, and then transported to a meat processing facility in Jackson County. Costs for the meat processing will be paid for by Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger. Venison will be donated to Food Gatherers – a local food bank in Ann Arbor. The UM Kellogg Eye Center also would like to obtain the deer eyes for research purposes.

Monitoring

In winter 2015, two aerial surveys were conducted in order to help establish a baseline, and to determine areas of the City where deer were most numerous. That aerial survey will be repeated one or two times during the winter of 2016. If adequate snow cover exists, aerial surveys may be conducted prior to cull activities in order to help pinpoint the location and movement of deer within Wards 1 and 2.

In addition, in November 2015, the city contracted with an independent researcher to implement an oak tree seedling study in order to more quantitatively measure the extent of deer browse within City of Ann Arbor natural areas.

Sincerely,

David Borneman, Deputy Manager of Volunteerism and Natural Area Preservation
City of Ann Arbor, Parks and Recreation Services

Attachments:

1. [Recommendations for Deer Management in Ann Arbor Report](#) - May 2015
2. [Resolution to Establish a Deer Management Program within the City of Ann Arbor](#) - August 17, 2015