

Deer Project Update – January 29, 2010

The Deer Management project field work was completed by mid December, 2009. The non lethal component produced 100 doe sterilizations and the lethal portion removed 112 deer by sharpshooting. The project was completed within budget and entirely without mishap.

As previously reported, the month of November was devoted to baiting and site preparation. In total, 16 sites were approved for sterilization or sharpshooting or a combination of both depending on site size, location in town and the topography. All sites were inspected routinely by both the Town and Country Police Department and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to ensure compliance with the established protocols.

The non lethal sterilization was initiated on December 1. By December 7, 70 doe had been sterilized by experienced veterinarians. Commencing December 8, sterilization efforts continued and sharpshooting began. The field work was completed on December 17. Unfortunately, two days were lost entirely because of high wind and heavy rain where no management effort was possible.

As shown in the following report presented to the Board of Aldermen on Monday, January 25, 2010, the full effect of the management effort should be understood by quantifying the impact on the herd population as of June 2010 when fawns are typically born. Using MDC statistics, 85% of the sterilized doe were pregnant and the average reproduction rate is 1.5 fawns per doe. Given that 100 doe were sterilized, that translates to 127 fawns that will not be born this spring. Of the 112 deer removed by sharpshooting, 50 were yearling or adult doe. Applying the same reproduction statistics, there are an additional 64 deer that will not be present in 2010. Add to this the 112 removed by sharpshooting and the 127 that will not be born to that group and the herd population in mid 2010 will be 303 fewer deer than would have been the case without the project. While these results are significant, there is recognition that the subject of deer management requires ongoing attention.

Deer Management Task Force Members

- ◆ Susan Feigenbaum
- ◆ David Gearhart
- ◆ Cynthia Pavelka
- ◆ Scott Rose

- ◆ Alderman Lynn Wright
- ◆ Alderman Fred Meyland-Smith

Timetable

Mid Sept.

- White Buffalo, T&C Police, Mo Dept. of Conservation inspect sites
- Designate sites for
 - » trapping for sterilization
 - » trapping first then convert to sharpshooting
 - » Sharpshooting

Nov 8-23 – Bait sites

Nov Last Week – Stage equipment (nets, tree stands)

Dec 1-6 – Sterilization (70 deer)

Dec 7-17 – Sterilization and sharpshooting (two days lost to high wind & heavy rain)

Results

- ◆ 100 Deer Sterilized
- ◆ 112 Deer Removed by Sharpshooting
- ◆ Impact on T&C Deer Population Effective June 2010

100 Sterilized Deer

x 85% Pregnancy Rate (MDC
Statistics)

x 1.5 Recruitment =

127 Fawns

+112 Removed by Sharpshooting (50 of
which were yearling or adult doe)

+64 Fawns that would have been born to
the 50 yearling/adult doe removed
by sharpshooting

303 FEWER DEER AS OF JUNE 2010

T&C Herd Size Estimate Process

- ◆ Survey conducted by White Buffalo and MCD
- ◆ Conducted Dec 15 and 16 from 11:00PM-4:00AM
- ◆ Transect was 22.1 mi in length and was traveled each night
- ◆ Conducted from vehicles traveling 10 mph using 200,000 candlepower spotlights

Estimate Findings

- ◆ 650 deer in @ 10 sq. mi (excluding portion of town east of I-270)
- ◆ Includes
 - ~35% yearling and adult females
 - ~55% fawns
 - ~10% yearling and adult males
- ◆ 35% yearling and adult females = 230 (~82 are sterile). 150 x 85% pregnant x 1.5 offspring = 190 new fawns will join the herd by mid 2010

**DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE
PROJECT UPDATE – NOVEMBER 24, 2009**

By Alderman Fred Meyland-Smith
Chairman of the Deer Herd Management
Program Implementation Task Force

On Tuesday, November 17, the Task Force deliberated and approved by a 4 – 1 margin a Resolution recommending that the City petition the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) for approval to raise the limits on both the sterilization and sharpshooting components of the project.

The Resolution reads as follows:

**CITY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY
DEER HERD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE
RESOLUTION NO. 09-001**

**A RESOLUTION TO RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY PETITION
THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION REGARDING THE
2009 DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE DEER HERD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE OF THE CITY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY, ST. LOUIS
COUNTY, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1. The Deer Management Program Implementation Task Force recommends that the City immediately petition the Missouri Department of Conservation to increase the limits on deer sterilization from 100 to 200 and the limit on deer sharpshooting from 100 to 200 during the presently established October 2009 – April 2010 timeframe. This modification will not alter the 2009 budget of \$150,000 established for this program and that budget cannot be exceeded.

Passed and approved by a vote of 4–1 this 17th day of November, 2009.

Fred Meyland-Smith
Chairman

Attest:

Pamela Burdt, City Clerk
Deer Task Force/Resolutions/09-001

The matter then moved to the Board of Aldermen for consideration. On Monday, November 23 the Board met and discussed the merits of the recommendation. After hearing from interested citizens, including members of the Task Force, the Board unanimously approved by a 8 – 0 vote an ordinance to request the Missouri Department of Conservation to raise the limits on both elements of the project.

There are four underlying points which were taken into consideration in approving this measure:

- 1) Number of deer – The professional opinion of both the MDC and the wildlife management firm under contract to perform the herd control measures in our City is that there are far more deer in Town and Country than was initially projected. This poses an even greater risk to human safety and vegetation as well as presenting an unhealthy situation for the animals.
- 2) Participating sites for the project – There has been a very positive response from residents to provide property for the implementation of the project. In fact, not a single landowner has declined participation when asked and a number have stepped forward and volunteered their land. Each of these sites were then inspected by the Town and Country Police Department to insure that each met the strict safety requirements established for the project. There are now ample locations to support greater results with both sterilization and sharpshooting.
- 3) Cost effective management – Approximately \$35,000 of the project funding is spent to move equipment to town, bait the sites and stage the equipment to commence work. There is a responsibility to optimize the use of public funds in a cost effective manner.
- 4) The reality of the 2010 City budget – The budget proposed for 2010 does not contain funding for any in field control measures due to City revenue declines reflecting the downturn in the economy. The deer management recommendation adopted by the Board in February, 2009 contained a projection for both sterilizing 100 deer and culling 100 deer in each of the first two years. The Board's action on November 23 approved accelerating Year 2 objectives into 2009.

The City will now immediately petition the MDC for approval to raise the limits for 2009. This recognizes that the MDC has statutory authority for wildlife matters in our State. We can report that the project preparation is on schedule and moving smoothly. As stated, the Police Department has inspected and approved each participating site. Baiting began in early November and is continuing.

It is important to note that sterilization will take place first and is scheduled to start on or about December 1. When approximately 70 deer have been sterilized, sharpshooting will begin. Both elements of the project will continue simultaneously as some sites are devoted exclusively to sterilization due to their location and others are to be used only for sharpshooting because of their location and topography.

DEER MANAGEMENT UPDATE – AUGUST 2009

By Alderman Fred Meyland-Smith
Chairman of the Deer Herd Management
Program Implementation Task Force

In response to concerns raised by our residents regarding the City's deer population, on November 12, 2007 the Mayor appointed a four member Aldermanic Task Force to study the issue and recommend a plan. This group worked for 18 months and covered more than 25 meetings and two town hall forums. Additionally, the Task Force conducted multiple meetings with regional and national wildlife experts and governmental officials from neighboring municipalities.

No one knows conclusively how many deer exist in our City. The maximum population density recommended by experts for a suburban area such as ours is 15 per square mile. Our city is approximately 12 square miles so that would translate to a recommended population of about 180 deer. We suspect we have 3 to 4 times that number – far above the recommended density.

It is important to note that various areas of our City are impacted differently by the deer population. Portions of Town & Country east of I-270 are relatively unaffected while areas such as Mason Road near Queeny Park, Clayton Road between Topping and Weidman, the outer road from Mason Road around to Clayton Road, along Topping Road and along Conway Road and Ladue Road have particularly high interaction with deer.

RISKS

The overpopulation of deer present two very clear and significant problems:

- 1. Human Safety.** The most serious risk is the potential danger to our residents. In the five years ending 2008, there were 237 auto-deer collisions in Town & Country. That is an average of almost one per week. Keep in mind, this figure does not include near misses nor does it include accidents where the deer ran off. This collision total represents only situations where the dead deer was hauled away from the scene.
- 2. Vegetation Destruction.** An adult deer can consume a significant amount of vegetation. Bucks, rubbing their antlers, are particularly destructive to shrubs and small trees. An abundance of deer in an area amplifies the problem and leads to extensive and sometimes irreversible damage. This applies to both decorative landscaping as well as natural habitat for birds and small animals.

DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Task Force proposed a comprehensive plan and the Board of Aldermen approved this recommendation on February 23, 2009 by a vote of 7-1. The plan is a balanced proposal that has both lethal (sharp shooting) and non-lethal (sterilization) components. This plan has received the full approval of the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), and the City has received permission from MDC to implement the plan in the fall and winter of this year. MDC has given permission to sterilize up to 100 deer and to sharp shoot up to 100 deer.

The 2009 General Fund budget approved by the Board of Aldermen established an allocation of \$150,000 for deer management. Town Forums on the subject of deer management and how to proceed in our community were held on January 22 and July 17, 2008. On June 8, 2009, the Board unanimously approved a contract with Dr. Tony DeNicola, PhD, wildlife manager with White Buffalo,

Inc., to provide the deer management services approved earlier by the Board. The Board's action was prompted by the growing risk of deer-auto collisions, the continued vegetation destruction and the recognition that nothing has been done to address this matter in Town & Country in the last eight years.

The plan will be administered by experts, hired by the City, will have police department oversight and will have the assurance that the experts (including the veterinarians doing the sterilization procedures) are the best at what they do for the safety of both the residents and the deer.

Speaking of safety, it is important to point out that the sharp shooting will be done by trained experts. They will operate only on tracts of land ten acres in size or larger...and only with the permission of the owner of that land and with notification of neighbors.

CURRENT STATUS

On June 22 and July 13, 2009, acting on one of the recommendations of the Task Force, Mayor Dalton appointed a group of individuals to advise the City on matters associated with implementing the deer management program. Appropriately named the Deer Herd Management Program Implementation Task Force, this group consists of four resident volunteers – Susan Feigenbaum, David Gearhart, Cynthia Pavelka and Scott Rose – and two aldermen – Lynn Wright and Fred Meyland-Smith (Chair). The Implementation Task Force will meet in open session with meeting dates posted on the City's web site in the calendar section. The field work of the program will start with the sterilization phase and move through the lethal phase during the late fall and early winter of this year.