



# CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### City of Ann Arbor 2017 Deer Management Program

#### 1. Why does the City of Ann Arbor have a deer management program?

The city worked with self-organized citizen stakeholder groups to identify issues the city's deer management activities needed to address, which include:

- The number of deer is adversely impacting beyond the tolerance level of a portion of the City's residents, the bio-diversity and sustainability of plants/animals/insects in the City's natural areas.
- The number of deer is adversely impacting beyond the tolerance level of a portion of the City's residents, the residential and commercial gardens/ landscaping on private land.
- The number of deer/vehicle accidents has increased over the past 5 years.
- Chronic wasting disease in deer is getting closer to Ann Arbor.
- A segment of the City's residents has a higher tolerance for deer, views them in a positive light, and is advocating for a change in the deer management program that includes non-lethal methods or no action at all.

#### 2. What does the 2017 City of Ann Arbor Deer Management Program include?

The 2017 implementation plan has three primary components:

- a. Sterilization (non-lethal) Plan — pneumatically darting deer in two neighborhoods, temporarily removing the deer and surgically sterilizing and then returning the deer to a safe location close to the area where they were found.
- b. Lethal Plan — sharpshooting and lethally removing up to 100 deer on public lands and a small number of large city-selected private parcels with appropriate consent.
- c. Educational Program and Public Rights-of-way Improvements — providing educational materials to the community on how to live with deer, evaluating the city's fencing ordinance and recommending improvements that can be made in the city's rights-of-way, such as signage.

#### 3. What are the goals of the program?

The overall programs are being implemented as part of an initial four-year effort. While each method (lethal and non-lethal) has measures of success, the overall program's measures are:

- Number of firearm-related injuries associated with the deer management program: 0
- Number of deer in Ann Arbor with chronic wasting disease: 0
- Total number of deer/vehicle crashes and percent of vehicle crashes involving deer reported in the legal boundaries of the city of Ann Arbor does not increase.
- MDNR permit approval.
- Establish a baseline for measuring the vegetative impact of deer in the city's natural areas and establish ecological goal.



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- Implement an education program that increases the community awareness of the role of deer in the local ecology and offers residents options to manage potential deer impacts on their private property.
- Community acceptance of herd impact — when 75 percent of surveyed residents in a Ward respond that damage to their landscape or garden plants is at an acceptable level on private lands. Recognizing there will be variability of this measure over time, a trend toward 75 percent is desired.
- Community acceptance of deer management program — when 75 percent of surveyed residents in a Ward respond that the city's strategy of managing the deer population is acceptable. Recognizing there will be variability of this measure over time, a trend toward 75 percent is desired.
- Investigate where deer signage is appropriate and implement where possible.

#### **4. If someone doesn't agree with all or parts of the 2017 Deer Management Implementation Plan, how can his or her views be expressed?**

- a. Ensure you're informed:
  - View the Council Working Session and materials.
  - Read most up-to-date FAQs to understand all aspects of the plan.
  - Submit clarifying questions to deer management [email](mailto:deer@cityofannarbor.org) or call the hotline, 734.794.6295.
- b. A professionally developed survey will be conducted with a random sample of residents this spring (2017). If you receive an invitation to participate, please complete the survey.
- c. Contact your councilmember.
- d. Attend a Council meeting (public comments spots are available at the beginning and end of each meeting).
- e. Please note: Interfering with the operations of the city's Deer Management Implementation Plan (e.g., tampering with bait piles) is against the law, and baiting deer onto private property within the city is also against the law, unless performed by the city's contractor.

#### **5. How did the city select White Buffalo to work with?**

After completion of last year's deer management plan, the city worked with some self-organized citizen groups to obtain feedback. These groups initially brought White Buffalo Inc. to city staff's attention. Staff reviewed White Buffalo's experience and found the Michigan Department of Natural Resources felt the organization was a credible research organization. City staff solicited a proposal from White Buffalo and determined there weren't any other non-profit organizations that provided the level of research expertise of White Buffalo.

### **Sterilization Program**



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## 6. **Where and when will sterilization occur?**

From Jan. 22 through Jan. 29, two areas in the city had deer sterilization activities performed. These areas were selected where sharpshooting of deer could not occur, but darting and surgical sterilization of deer could take place per a special research permit obtained from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Residents' daily routines did not need to change and there were no closures of parks during the nonlethal sterilization program.

No public lands were closed for deer sterilization activities. Select public lands were utilized for darting, but public access was not impacted. No University of Michigan land was utilized for sterilization activities.

## 7. **How were citizens in study areas informed of the sterilization program?**

The city informed residents in the two study areas of sterilization program activities via a flier mailed directly to homes the week of Jan. 9. In addition, a variety of communication channels were used to promote the program:

- Media release.
- Resident newsletter articles.
- Email notifications (subscribe at [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement), "email notifications" section).
- Social media.
- City of Ann Arbor website and deer management project webpage updates.
- Community Television Network.
- Direct email to all registered neighborhood associations.
- Ann Arbor Public Schools and University of Michigan notifications.

## 8. **What was the sterilization process?**

White Buffalo Inc., wildlife professionals, located female deer and darted them with tranquilizer darts equipped with tracking devices. This was done from marked, stationary vehicles on public roadways and at bait stations at designated sites within program areas between 3 p.m. and 5 a.m. Deer were darted by highly experienced personnel who are specially trained to dart deer in an urban setting with precision and accuracy. Unlike firearms, pneumatic darting guns have limited range (30-40 feet).

Once darted, the deer were tracked until they were unconscious (typically just a few minutes), and then transported to a temporary surgical site where a veterinarian performed ovariectomies and administered long-acting antibiotics and pain relievers. The entire process, from initial darting to release, took approximately one hour per deer.



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All sterilized deer were fitted with numbered ear tags, and one mature doe in each group was radio-collared to facilitate future program efforts. Treated deer were returned to a safe location close to the area where they were found and monitored until they recovered from anesthesia.

## **8. Were there volunteer opportunities to assist with sterilization activities?**

White Buffalo solicited volunteers to work for them to assist in transporting deer to the surgical facility, returning them to a safe location close to the area where they were found and monitoring them until they recovered from anesthesia. This was not a city volunteer program. White Buffalo was solely responsible for the selection and supervision of its volunteers.

## **9. Why was nonlethal sterilization implemented this year?**

City Council directed city staff via resolution to “work with local stakeholders, MDNR, willing institutions of higher education, and/or the Humane Society of the United States to design and, if practical and cost-effective, implement a doe sterilization and/or contraceptive program in areas where a deer cull is impermissible, unsafe, or ineffective, beginning in winter FY2017.” As a result, city staff proposed a deer management plan for 2017 to incorporate nonlethal sterilization, which was approved by City Council on Nov. 14, 2016.

## **10. What was the sterilization outcome?**

The City of Ann Arbor’s contractor, White Buffalo, successfully sterilized 54 female deer from Jan. 22 through Jan. 29. White Buffalo reported zero mortalities or injuries as a result of sterilization activities.

## **Lethal Program**

### **11. Where and when will culls be conducted?**

The White Buffalo contract also includes sharpshooters lethally removing up to 100 deer in designated City of Ann Arbor parks and natural areas in Wards 1 and 2 after the sterilization program is completed.

From Jan. 30 through Feb. 13, 2017, the below parks are closed every day (including weekends) for all purposes from 3 p.m. to midnight.

Bird Hills Nature Area  
Bluffs Nature Area  
Cedar Bend Nature Area  
Hilltop Nature Area  
Huron Hills Golf Course  
Huron Parkway Nature Area/Braun Nature Area  
Island Park  
Kuebler Langford Nature Area  
Leslie Park Golf Course  
Leslie Woods Nature Area



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Jan. 30 through Feb. 2, the following University of Michigan properties will be closed every day from 3 p.m. to midnight (see 2017 deer management map):

- Nichols Arboretum.
- Acreage south of Glazier Way and east of Fuller Road.
- Acreage south of Hubbard and west of Huron Parkway.

Sharpshooting will not occur from a moving vehicle, but may occur from a parked vehicle. Sharpshooting may occur by the city's contractor on selected city-selected, large privately owned parcels subject to the owner's consent and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

## 12. What is a cull?

Culling refers to the act of killing wildlife by firearm or bow. Per the MDNR research permit, deer culls will be conducted in Ann Arbor in designated parks and nature areas using firearms. The city's contractor will not be utilizing a bow.

## 13. What will happen to the venison?

The deer will be processed and the venison donated to a local food bank.

## 14. What happens if someone disregards a park's closure?

Violations of park rules are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In the case of deer management activities, safety is a top priority, and Ann Arbor Police will respond accordingly to individuals who violate park closures. Designated parks and nature areas are closed for all purposes every day from 3 p.m. to midnight Jan. 30 thru Feb. 13, 2017.

## 15. How will safety be ensured during cull activities?

The below processes and information help to underline safety protocols that have been put in place to ensure citizen safety during cull activities:

- The city's contract for professional sharpshooters is based on the contractor being paid for time and materials. The contractor's compensation is not dependent on the number of deer culled. White Buffalo Inc. is a non-profit organization.
- The safety protocols of the contractor have been reviewed by AAPD personnel.
- Park closures were communicated in early January for the Jan. 30 through Feb. 13 closure dates.
- Signage warning of sharpshooters and the park closures will be posted along entrances and other notable entry points at all designated parks, nature areas and UM sites at least 24 hours in advance of the closure timeframe. In addition, snow fencing will be placed with closure signs attached at select locations.
- Only personnel authorized by the City of Ann Arbor or UM are permitted in the parks and on UM property during closures.



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- A city employee, in communication with the Police Department, will perform a roving patrol of closed areas when sharpshooting activities are occurring.
- AAPD staff will coordinate with the UM Division of Public Safety and Security for all sharpshooting activities on UM property.
- Notwithstanding all of the above items, the professional sharpshooters are responsible for following safety protocols to ensure no injuries at all times.

### **16. Will walking and biking trails be closed in designated parks?**

Yes, all walking and biking trails are closed every day within designated parks from 3 p.m. to midnight Jan. 30 through Feb. 13, 2017.

### **17. Will the border-to-border trail remain open and the dog parks?**

Yes, all parks through which the boarder-to-border trail is constructed will remain open. All dog parks will remain open as well.

### **18. Was an MDNR permit issued?**

Yes, the MDNR issued a Scientific Collector's permit to White Buffalo, Inc., the City's contractor, to examine different management techniques to control the overabundance of white-tailed deer in the City of Ann Arbor. The research permit specifically approves use of the combined approach of surgical sterilization and sharpshooting as the selected management technique. The permit is available to view on the project website at [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement).

### **19. Will White Buffalo personnel be shooting near homes?**

The MDNR permit includes the restriction that shooting may not occur within 150 yards (450 feet) of an occupied dwelling unless written consent is obtained. The city and White Buffalo personnel will abide by all MDNR permit guidelines.

### **20. Will White Buffalo be shooting on private property?**

The approved program and MDNR permit allows shooting on private property subject to the restriction that shooting may not occur within 150 yards (450 feet) of an occupied dwelling unless written consent is obtained. The plan anticipates a few city-selected, large parcel properties may be utilized. However, if private property is utilized this year, White Buffalo must obtain the required permissions from the property owner since White Buffalo is the permit holder. No sharpshooting will occur within 450 feet of any occupied structure without prior written consent.

### **21. How will the city inform residents of cull activities?**

It's important to note that safety is our top priority. The deer will be lethally removed by highly experienced sharpshooters who are specially trained to conduct culls in urban settings with precision, accuracy and safety as their top priorities. The city has informed residents of



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potential cull locations in parks and nature areas via a variety of communication channels including:

- Signage, including Spanish and Chinese translations, at the identified park and nature area entrances.
- Postcards to residents located near the identified parks and nature areas.
- Media releases.
- Resident newsletter articles.
- Email notifications (subscribe at [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement), “email notifications” section).
- Social media.
- City of Ann Arbor website and deer management project web page updates.
- Community Television Network.
- Direct email to all registered neighborhood associations.
- Ann Arbor Public Schools and University of Michigan notifications.

### **22. What happens if I hear gunshots during lethal operations?**

AAPD and White Buffalo personnel are working closely to coordinate communications throughout all deer management operations. However, any citizen who hears gunfire and is concerned about it should call 9-1-1 directly to report it.

### **23. What were the results of last year’s cull?**

A Deer Management Update Report was provided to City Council in May 2016, which is available to online at [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement).

## Education

As of December 2016, the specifics of the educational program and identification of rights-of-way improvements is still under development. Due to limited city resources, it’s anticipated these efforts won’t be completed until late spring 2017.

## Questions

### **WHAT TO DO IF....**

- You observe or suspect unlawful activity (such as baiting on private property) or hear shots fired and are concerned, call the Police Department: Emergency 9-1-1 | Non-Emergency 734-994-2911.
- Poaching is illegal. If you suspect poaching is occurring, call the MDNR Report All Poaching (RAP) hotline at 800-292-7800 or visit the RAP website for information about how to report a violation.



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- You have additional questions about the city's Deer Management Implementation Plan:
  - a. Check out answers to frequently asked questions, which are updated regularly: [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement).
  - b. Review the MDNR permit: [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement).
  - c. For questions that aren't answered in the FAQs, contact the city via email at [deermanagement@a2gov.org](mailto:deermanagement@a2gov.org) or call the deer hotline at 734.794.6295. Staff will try to return calls within 24 hours Monday–Friday.