

**City of Ann Arbor**  
**2018 Deer Management Program**  
(Last updated 1/3/2018)

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. What does the 2018 City of Ann Arbor Deer Management Program include?**

The 2018 deer management plan has three primary components, including:

Educational Program and Public Rights-of-Way Improvements

Provide educational materials to the community on how to live with deer, evaluating the city's fencing ordinance and recommending/implementing improvements that can be made in the city's rights-of-way, such as signage. To date, the education program has recommended adding additional signage in priority locations, assisted in the development of an interactive information and mapping tool and suggested improvements to the city's deer management website.

Sterilization (Non-Lethal) Program

Pneumatically darting female deer in three neighborhoods, temporarily removing the deer for surgical sterilization, and returning females back to their original area. From Jan. 2-6 between 3 p.m. – 5 a.m., three neighborhoods will have up to a total of 26 females sterilized via an ovariectomy. The primary focus will be on zones 1 and 2. To the extent the goals are met in zones 1 and 2, sterilization activities will occur in zone 3. Like last year, the city will mail sterilization information directly to residents in impacted areas in December.

Lethal Program

From Jan. 8 through Jan. 31, sharpshooting activities may occur on privately owned parcels, subject to the owner's prior written consent and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Residents can continue with their normal daily routines since all deer management activities will occur on private property. Unauthorized trespassing is not permitted and will be subject to enforcement action.

From Jan. 8 through Jan. 31, sharpshooting of deer may occur in the following city parks and nature areas. These city parks will be closed every day for all activities from 3 p.m. until midnight. The city will mail park-closure postcards in December to residents adjacent to impacted areas in Wards 1 and 2.

1. Arbor Hills Nature Area
2. Barton Nature Area [Foster area north of Warrington Dr. only]
3. Bird Hills Nature Area
4. Foxfire West Nature Area
5. Glazier Hill Nature Area
6. Huron Parkway/Braun Nature Areas
7. Leslie Park Golf Course
8. Leslie Woods Nature Area
9. Narrow Gauge Way Nature Area
10. Oakridge Nature Area [East of Huron Parkway only]

11. Oakwoods Nature Area
12. Olson Park [The dog park and parking lot will remain open]
13. South Pond Nature Area [Only the area in the vicinity of NAP office at 3875 E. Huron River Dr.]
14. Stapp Nature Area
15. Sugarbush Park [North of Rumsey Dr. only]
16. Traver Creek Nature Area
17. The Arboretum will be closed on the following dates: Thursday, Jan. 11, Only from 4-9 p.m.; Tuesday, Jan. 16, 3 p.m.-midnight; Friday, Jan. 19, Only from 4-9 p.m. and Tuesday, Jan. 23, 3 p.m.-midnight.

Residents should be aware that interfering with the operations of the city's deer management implementation plan (e.g. tampering with bait piles) is against the law. Also, baiting deer onto private property within the city is against the law, unless performed by the city's contractor.

## **2. What are the objectives of the program?**

### **Educational Program & Public Right-of-Way Improvements:**

- Review the City's "Fencing" ordinance and existing deer signage locations. Recommend and implement changes and improvements.
- Develop and publish an expanded deer education component to the City's deer management website, including a deer-resistant gardening campaign.
- Develop an interactive information/mapping tool.
- Create and hold a public forum designed to address questions related to the City's deer management program
- Establish an on-going education program.

### **Sterilization (Nonlethal) Program:**

- Obtain an amended permit from MDNR for a deer sterilization program.
- Sterilize of at least 98% of the female deer in the original research areas #1 & #2.
- Sterilize at least 95% of the female deer in a new third zone, such that the cumulative sterilizations for all three zones are not more than 80.
- Mortality rate associated with sterilization of less than 2%.
- Investigate with University of Michigan if there are appropriate locations for sterilization.
- Obtain a written update on the scientific results to-date on the sterilization efforts.

### **Lethal Program:**

- Number of firearm related injuries associated with cull activities is 0.
- Remove 250 deer.
- Level of public park closures is acceptable to at least 75 percent of surveyed residents.
- Coordinate with University of Michigan to increase the number of available locations for the deer management program.

- 3. If someone doesn't agree with all or parts of the 2018 Deer Management Implementation Plan, how can his or her views be expressed?**
- a. Ensure you're informed:
    - Read most up-to-date FAQs to understand all aspects of the plan.
    - Submit clarifying questions to deer management [email](#) or call the hotline, 734.794.6295.
  - b. A professionally developed survey will be conducted with a random sample of residents this spring (2018). 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).
- 4. Can residents feed deer?**
- No, since January 2016 the city has had a deer feeding ban ordinance. Baiting deer onto private property within the city is against the law, unless performed by the city's contractor. In addition, interfering with the operations of the city's Deer Management Implementation Plan (e.g., tampering with bait piles) also is against the law.
- 5. How did the city select White Buffalo to work with?**
- After completion of the 2016 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 believed the organization to be a credible research organization. City staff solicited a proposal from White Buffalo for the 2017 program and determined there weren't any other non-profit organizations that provided the level of research expertise of White Buffalo. The city contracted with White Buffalo to implement the city's 2017 Deer Management Plan, including sterilization and nonlethal deer removal. Under the terms of White Buffalo's contract with the city, White Buffalo applied for and received the necessary permit from the MDNR to implement the city's 2018 deer management plan.

## Sterilization Program

- 6. Where and when will sterilization occur?**
- From Jan. 2 through Jan. 6, three neighborhoods will have up to a total of 26 female deer sterilized by White Buffalo via an ovariectomy. The primary focus will be on zones 1 and 2. To the extent the goals are met in zones 1 and 2, sterilization activities will occur in zone 3. These areas were chosen where sharpshooting of deer cannot occur, but darting and surgical sterilization of deer can take place per a special state permit. Residents' daily routines do not need to change.
- No public lands will be closed for deer sterilization activities. Selected public lands will be utilized for darting, but public access is not affected. No university lands will be utilized for sterilization activities.

It is unlikely that residents will notice the actual darting activities because, while some darting will occur at designated bait stations in the late afternoon (after 3 p.m.), most work will be done during nighttime hours, when deer are most active (and people generally are not).

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

The city informed residents in the study areas of sterilization program activities via a flyer mailed directly to homes mid-December. In addition, a variety of communication channels were used to promote the program, including:

- Media release.
- Resident newsletter article.
- 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 is the sterilization process?**

White Buffalo Inc., wildlife professionals, will locate female deer and dart them with tranquilizer darts equipped with tracking devices. This will be 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. Female deer will be 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 female deer will be tracked until they are unconscious (typically just a few minutes), and then transported to a temporary surgical site where a veterinarian will perform ovariectomies and administer long-acting antibiotics and pain relievers. The entire process, from initial darting to release, takes approximately one hour per female.

All sterilized female deer will be fitted with numbered ear tags, and one mature female in each group will be radio-collared to facilitate future program efforts, track migration rates and patterns and assess survival rates. Data regarding size, age and condition will be collected. Treated deer will then be returned to a safe location close to the area where they were found and monitored until they have recovered from anesthesia.

Once darted, a female may run up to 100 yards before succumbing to the tranquilizer. It is unlikely that a tranquilized female will choose your yard in which to fall asleep, but if she does, the recovery team, assisted by the Ann Arbor Police Department, will carefully remove the sedated female and transport her to the surgical site. A city police officer will be present during darting and removal of the female deer. Any vehicles involved in the deer sterilization activities beyond city vehicles, will be marked with White Buffalo, Inc. or Wildlife Research.

**9. Are there volunteer opportunities to assist with sterilization activities?**

White Buffalo is soliciting volunteers 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 recover from anesthesia. This is not a city volunteer program. White Buffalo is solely responsible for the selection and supervision of its volunteers. If you are interested, contact Robert McGee via email at [annarbordeer@gmail.com](mailto:annarbordeer@gmail.com).

**10. Why did the city implement sterilization as a deer management method?**

The Ann Arbor community is comprised of individuals with a variety of perspectives and values about deer. As a result of working with resident stakeholder groups, sterilization was identified as an appropriate deer reduction method for the city to explore.

**11. Why did the city add a third sterilization zone?**

There are areas in the city that have dense residential neighborhoods, some of which are within one thousand feet of a public school. In these areas, the city has determined that sterilization is a preferred solution to address deer browsing impacts. Because sterilization is not an approved deer management method by the MDNR, these activities were authorized by the MDNR under a special research permit.

**12. When will sterilization outcomes be shared?**

After completion of the sterilization program, results will be available on the deer management website at [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement).

**Lethal Program**

**13. 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, nature areas and on city-selected private property using firearms. The city's contractor will not be utilizing a bow.

**14. Where and when will culls be conducted?**

The MDNR permit allows White Buffalo sharpshooters to lethally remove up to 250 deer in designated City of Ann Arbor parks and natural areas in Wards 1 and 2. If needed, the permit can be modified by the state at a later date to increase the lethal removal amount. Sharpshooting will not occur from a moving vehicle, but may occur from a parked vehicle.

From Jan. 8 through Jan. 31, the below parks and nature areas are closed every day (including weekends) for all purposes from 3 p.m. to midnight.

1. Arbor Hills Nature Area
2. Barton Nature Area [Foster area north of Warrington Dr. only]
3. Bird Hills Nature Area
4. Foxfire West Nature Area
5. Glazier Hill Nature Area
6. Huron Parkway/Braun Nature Areas
7. Leslie Park Golf Course
8. Leslie Woods Nature Area
9. Narrow Gauge Way Nature Area

10. Oakridge Nature Area [East of Huron Parkway only]
11. Oakwoods Nature Area
12. Olson Park [The dog park and parking lot will remain open]
13. South Pond Nature Area [Only the area in the vicinity of NAP office at 3875 E. Huron River Dr.]
14. Stapp Nature Area
15. Sugarbush Park [North of Rumsey Dr. only]
16. Traver Creek Nature Area
17. The Arboretum will be closed on Thursday, Jan. 11, from 4-9 p.m.; Tuesday, Jan. 16, 3 p.m.-midnight; Friday, Jan. 19, from 4-9 p.m. and Tuesday, Jan. 23, 3 p.m.-midnight.

In addition, from Jan. 8 through Jan. 31, several UM and Concordia University properties will be closed every day from 3 p.m. to midnight. Please refer to the closure map available on the Deer Management Website [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement).

### **15. When will the city stop culling deer?**

Once a community begins deer management activities to address deer browse damage, it requires some level of actions to continue unless the tolerance of the community changes. The city monitors citizens' deer browse tolerance via an annual survey conducted by the Michigan State University Research Center.

In addition to education, culling is the preferred method recommended by the MDNR for effectively managing deer. The city, based on input from its residents, is also pursuing an alternative deer management method in locations where culling is infeasible. The mixture of these three methods in Ann Arbor going forward may change. At this time, the MDNR does not permit sterilization without an approved research permit.

Because deer don't have natural predators in urban environments and they reproduce at a rate that rapidly increases their population, it is necessary to remove 30 to 40 percent of the deer population annually in order to maintain a stable population size. The sooner a large population of deer is brought to an acceptable level, the fewer deer that will have to be removed annually and cumulatively. The city's future deer management efforts include deciding which method is appropriate for maintaining an acceptable level of deer impacts in the community.

### **16. What will happen to the venison?**

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

### **17. 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. 8 through Jan. 31, 2018.**

### **18. 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.
- Designated city parks and nature areas will be closed daily from 3 p.m. until midnight.
- The City will communicate park and nature area closures December for the January 8 through January 31 closure dates.
- Nichols Arboretum will be closed on Jan. 11, Jan. 16, Jan. 19 and Jan. 23.
- The designated University of Michigan and Concordia University properties will be closed from 3 p.m. until midnight for the January 8 through January 31 closure dates.
- Signage warning of sharpshooters and closures will be posted along entrances and other notable locations around all designated City Parks and University sites at least 24 hours in advance of the three-week closure timeframe. Snow fencing will supplement signage at select locations.
- Only personnel authorized by the City of Ann Arbor or University of Michigan are permitted in the parks and on UM property during closures.
- A city security contractor, in communication with White Buffalo, will perform a roving patrol of closed public areas when sharpshooting activities are occurring.
- City Police staff will coordinate with the UM Division of Public Safety and Security for all sharpshooting activities on university property.
- Notwithstanding all of the above items, the professional sharpshooters are responsible for following safety protocols to ensure no injuries at all times.

### **19. 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. 8 through Jan. 31, 2018.

### **20. 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, including Olson Dog Park.

### **21. Where can I get a copy of the MDNR permit?**

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). White Buffalo has requested an amendment to this permit

to incorporate the 2018 activities. The amended permit also will be shared on the city's website.

**22. Will White Buffalo be shooting on private property?**

Yes, private properties were identified by the city for lethal removal activities. All private property sharpshooting will be confined to that property. Abutting property owners will be notified of activities and residents' daily routines will not be impacted. White Buffalo's sharpshooters will remain within the confines of permissioned properties. They will not be following deer onto adjacent properties nor shooting on any property without permission. Unauthorized trespassing is not permitted and will be subject to enforcement action. As a result of safety precautions followed by White Buffalo personnel, citizens can safely walk, bike or drive through all neighborhoods in Wards 1 and 2 during culling activities.

**23. In what neighborhoods will sharpshooting occur on private property?**

Sharpshooting will occur in Wards 1 and 2 and near Mary Beth Doyle Park. Prior written consent is obtained from the property owners and abutting property owners are notified. Residents can continue with their normal daily routines since all deer management activities will occur on the small number of city-selected private property only. Sharpshooting will not occur on ANY property where prior written consent hasn't been obtained or where adjacent homeowners haven't been notified.

**24. Besides informing adjacent homeowners, will the city inform other residents of sharpshooting locations?**

No. At the advice of the city's contractor who performs sharpshooting activities in other communities, it is safer to not publicize specific private property addresses. Their experience has been that they can operate safely within the confines of pre-selected private parcels.

**25. Should citizens modify their normal routine when White Buffalo is shooting on private property?**

As stated above, residents do not need to modify their normal routines during culling activities on private property. Also, please see answer to question 16 regarding implemented safety precautions.

**26. 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 will inform residents of 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 mailed to residents in close proximity to closed parks within Wards 1 & 2.
- 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.

**27. 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.

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

A Deer Management Update Report was provided to City Council in June 2017, which is available online at [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement).

**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.
- 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. Email [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.