

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 1/02/2020

1. What does the 2020 City of Ann Arbor Deer Management Program include?

The 2020 deer management will include:

Educational Program

City staff created a comprehensive list of non-lethal deer management techniques that allow citizens to reduce deer impacts on their property. We have listed a variety of exclusionary methods, repellents and deterrents that are allowed within the City of Ann Arbor and have scientifically shown some efficacy. Residents who want to reduce deer impacts on their property should review and consider implementing these various strategies via the [non-lethal deer deterrent webpage](#).

Lethal Program

From Jan. 2-26, 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.

January 2- 26, select University of Michigan and Concordia University properties will be closed every day from 3 p.m. to midnight for sharpshooting activities to occur. Please refer to the closure map available on the Deer Management Website www.a2gov.org/deermanagement.

From Jan. 2-26, sharpshooting of deer may occur in the following city parks and nature areas. These city parks in Wards 1 and 2 will be closed every day for all activities from 3 p.m. until midnight. The city will mail park-closure postcards to residents adjacent to impacted areas.

1. Barton Nature Area [only the Foster area north of Warrington Dr.]
2. Bird Hills Nature Area
3. Cedar Bend/Island Park
4. Foxfire West Nature Area
5. Huron Parkway/Braun Nature Areas
6. Leslie Park Golf Course
7. Leslie Woods Nature Area
8. Oakwoods Nature Area
9. South Pond Nature Area [Only the area near NAP office at 3875 E. Huron River Dr.]
10. Button Bush (a new park north of Dhu Varren Road and West of Nixon Road)
11. Ruthven Nature Area
12. The UM Arboretum will be closed January 6, 13 and 20 only from 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:

- Monitor potential areas for additional deer signage and implement installation.
- Continue to update the city's deer management website.
- Continue to update the city's interactive information/mapping tool.
- Sterilization (Non-lethal) Program:
- Sterilization program is suspended until the Michigan Legislature makes a determination regarding its legality.

Lethal Program:

- Number of firearm related injuries associated with cull activities is 0.
- Remove up to 150 deer, depending on available locations, weather and contractor recommendation.
- Level of public park closures are acceptable to at least 75% of surveyed residents.
- Coordinate with University of Michigan to use available locations for the deer management program.

3. Can residents feed deer?

No, since January 2016 the city has had a deer feeding ban ordinance. Baiting deer onto private property is against local and state 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. Under an [Ann Arbor deer feeding prohibition ordinance](#) and a [Michigan Department of Natural Resources baiting and feeding ban](#), it is illegal to put out any substance composed of grains, minerals, salt, fruit, vegetables, hay or any other food material, whether natural or manufactured, which may lure, entice or attract deer. Removing bird feeders entirely is the only way to guarantee they will not act as bait for deer, however such drastic action is not required with the right planning. With a little care and effort, you can significantly reduce the likelihood that your feeders will attract deer and still enjoy legally feeding birds or squirrels. For more bird feeding tips, read the [Bait Ban and Bird Feeding Flyer](#).

4. 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, 2018 and 2019 Deer Management Plans, 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.

Lethal Program

5. 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.

6. Where and when will culls be conducted?

The MDNR permit allows White Buffalo sharpshooters to lethally remove up to 150 deer in designated City of Ann Arbor parks and nature areas in Wards 1 and 2. Sharpshooting will not occur from a moving vehicle, but may occur from a parked vehicle.

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From Jan. 2-26, sharpshooting of deer may occur in the following city parks and nature areas. These city parks in Wards 1 and 2 will be closed every day for all activities from 3 p.m. until midnight. The city notifies residents adjacent to impacted areas via postcard in December.

1. Barton Nature Area [only the Foster area north of Warrington Drive]
2. Bird Hills Nature Area
3. Cedar Bend/Island Park
4. Foxfire West Nature Area
5. Huron Parkway/Braun Nature Areas
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7. 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. In addition to education, culling is the preferred method recommended by the MDNR for effectively managing deer. The MDNR has the legal authority to manage deer in the state of Michigan. It is illegal to relocate deer.

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.

8. What will happen to the venison?

Per the MDNR permit requirements, the deer is processed and the venison must be donated to a local food bank.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) staff have conducted tests across the state, including data from Washtenaw, Oakland and Livingston counties, and have concluded that there is no consumption advisory for deer in the Ann Arbor area given current analyses.

This conclusion is based on the information these agencies now have in relation to PFAS/PFOA concentration in surface waters across the state and in the Huron River, deer biology and habit in urban and suburban areas, and testing of muscle tissue of sampled deer from within and around Washtenaw county. The highest concentration of PFOA/PFAS in water samples for the Huron River watershed (including all creeks and drainages) is found in Norton Creek, which is approximately 13 miles from Ann Arbor. MDNR staff noted that the likelihood of deer covering that distance is highly unlikely. The samples from the deer muscle tissues taken from Washtenaw, Oakland and Livingston counties yielded "non-detectable" results of PFOA/PFAS, using MDHHS protocols and techniques that can detect down to 0.1 parts per billion.

Please refer to the state's [PFAS in Deer webpage](#) for more information.

9. 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. 2-26, 2020.

10. 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 via a variety of channels, including the city's website, email notification, postcards and social media.

- UM Nichols Arboretum will be closed on Jan. 6, 13 and 20.
- Select University of Michigan and Concordia properties will be closed from 3 p.m. until midnight January 2-26.
- 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 may be used to 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 and coordination 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.

11. 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. 2-26, 2020.

12. 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.

13. 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 and can be viewed [online](#).

14. 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 during culling activities. Private property in Wards 1 and 2 have been selected.

15. In what neighborhoods will sharpshooting occur on private property?

Sharpshooting will occur on selected private property in Wards 1 and 2. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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 11 regarding implemented safety precautions.

18. 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 release.
- Resident newsletter article.
- Email notifications (subscribe at www.a2gov.org/deermanagement, "email notifications" section).
- Social media.
- City of Ann Arbor website and deer management project web page updates.
- Community Television Network.
- Ann Arbor Public Schools and University of Michigan notifications.

19. 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.

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.
 - b. Email deermanagement@a2gov.org or call the deer hotline at 734.794.6295. Staff will try to return calls within 24 hours Monday–Friday.