

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: May13, 2010

Agenda Item: Fort Benton Urban Deer Plan

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: X **Approval of Tentative Rule** **Approval of Final Rule/Action**
 Endorse Course of Action **None - information only**

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

In 2003 the Montana Legislature authorized cities to create plans to control wildlife to address public health and safety within city limits. Such plans must be approved by the FWP Commission. In response to concerns and complaints expressed by its citizens concerning the growing population of "urban" deer, and the increased risk to human safety and property damage, the City of Fort Benton, in conjunction with FWP, has developed a Deer Management Action Plan. The plan lays out goals, actions needed to meet goals and a management process. The plan is patterned after plans already approved for the communities of Glendive, Colstrip and Ekalaka. Due to lack of "Open Space" areas owned by the city, within the city limits public hunting is not a viable tool for control of resident deer numbers. A process has been set up to: 1) provide residents that have experienced deer / human conflict to call the city and Fort Benton City Hall, the Fort Benton Chief of Police, or FWP Local Warden to report problem deer. Only City Police will dispatch problem deer; 2) involve public in identifying resident deer that become a problem, so removal is specific to problem deer.

Public Involvement Process & Results

In response to urban deer complaints, during the City Council meeting the Mayor, Chief of Police, Council members and the public discuss a draft plan. This plan is exclusive to Fort Benton and will only involve actions within city limits; however, Chouteau County Commissioners and the Chouteau County Sheriff's office have been contacted in regards to the plan. Chouteau County has deferred all decisions and action to the City of Fort Benton.

The City of Fort Benton is putting the draft plan out for public review on October 3 during their City Council Meeting and allow public to review and comment for a two week period. On October 17th the City will approve a final plan subject to FWP's public process and FWP's Commission approval. Public comment on any FWP Commission adoption would run through 5:00 p.m., November 4, 2011 with any final adoption taking place at the FWP Commission's meeting on November 10, 2011.

No public involvement/comment has been solicited for this course of action at this time. With Commission Approval of this tentative plan, Region 4 will advertise for public comment and the City of Fort Benton will provide FWP with public comment they receive from October 3 – October 17 2011.

Alternatives and Analysis

The City of Fort Benton has been proactive in developing a management plan that is both reasonable and effective. The city has sought FWP participation and has collaborated with FWP on plan development. Alternatives would include reworking the plan to include adjustments to address issues that may be identified.

Proposed Motion:

I move the FWP Commission approve the tentative City of Fort Benton Deer Management Action Plan as presented and put the plan out for Public review and comment as suggested.