



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: October 20, 2022

Agenda Item: City of Havre Urban Deer Management Action Plan

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background: The 2003 Montana Legislature authorized cities to create plans to control game animals for public health and safety within city limits. These plans require approval by the commission before implementation. The City of Havre developed a Deer Management Action Plan in cooperation with the department to address concerns about urban mule deer and associated risks to human safety and property damage. Specific goals of the plan are to 1) eliminate deer that threaten human safety and property and 2) reduce the potential for human-deer interactions and conflicts by lowering deer density within the city.

Two primary strategies would be employed to reduce deer within the city boundaries:

1. Direct removal of deer by the city: The City of Havre requests a Permit to Destroy Game Animals Causing Damage from the department. The permit would allow the city or its agents to trap and euthanize deer within city limits between Aug. 15 and Feb. 15. The number of deer removed each year will be limited by the terms of the permit. All deer removed under the permit would be donated by the city to groups or individuals in need.
2. Public hunting: Public hunters, restricted to archery equipment, would be allowed to hunt mule deer within the city limits on open space property approved by the city. The hunt may occur between Aug. 15 and Feb. 15 with any unused deer licenses valid for HD 600 or 690 and additional B-licenses issued annually for mule deer within the city limits. The hunts may include some properties adjacent to the city but outside the city limits.

Public Involvement Process and Results: The city hosted a public town hall meeting on May 16 to hear issues and scope potential management actions to address urban deer. Fifty-one people attended and voiced support for reducing deer numbers within city limits, including use of direct removals and archery hunting. The city council subsequently approved the City of Havre Deer Management Action Plan at their meeting on July 5. Public comment will be solicited for a four-week period starting Aug. 26. Public comments will be posted online and provided to commissioners at least two weeks prior to the October commission meeting.

Analysis and Alternatives: The city evaluated public input and, with the department, considered biological alternatives. The city considered contracted services to remove deer, but fiscal constraints restricted this choice. Alternative A: The commission may choose to approve the City of Havre Urban Deer Management Action Plan. Alternative B: The commission may choose not to approve the deer plan, and the city and the department would continue to respond to deer complaints on an individual basis and urban deer density would remain high.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale: The department recommends the commission approve the City of Havre Deer Management Action Plan. The plan contains strategies that can effectively remove urban deer.

Proposed Motion: I move that the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the City of Havre Urban Deer Management Action Plan.