

DEER MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

CITY OF HAVRE, MONTANA

Overview:

A healthy, wild deer population is important to the people of Havre. Wildlife viewing is an esthetic value that will be preserved. However, high deer numbers and the habits of some individual animals within the City of Havre (City) and the interface between the City and adjacent rural areas can create a situation that threatens human safety, damages property and is not conducive to the long-term health of the deer population or its habitat.

History:

A number of Havre citizens have complained that the risk to human safety and the level of property damage have grown to unacceptable levels.

The Action Plan's PURPOSE and SCOPE are:

1. To reduce the negative impacts to people caused by the deer in and near the City.
2. Provide the City with the management tools necessary to effectively respond to individual deer-human conflicts and to limit overall mule deer density within the City Limits, as necessary.

Note: While the management of deer that inhabit Havre occurs on a larger scale, the restrictions detailed in the PLAN are limited to within the boundaries of the City (Exhibit A, attached). This does not preclude additional coordinated efforts with landowners adjacent to and in near proximity to Havre.

The specific GOALS are:

1. To eliminate individual deer that threaten human safety or property;
2. To reduce the potential for human-deer interactions and conflicts by lowering deer density within the City.

Deer Populations:

The deer comprise two distinct populations. One population is only intermittently present in the city limits and less habituated to human presence and the other resident "City Deer". Non-resident deer generally occupy periphery areas adjacent to Havre but pass through and occasionally use residential or business areas. These deer do not cause as many problems but over time may contribute to growth of the resident population that reside year-round within the City.

ACTIONS needed to achieve the goals:

- A. Public hunting will be used as the management tool of choice to reduce deer density in the City and to reduce the habituation of deer to the presence of humans.

B. Aggressive deer that threaten human safety will be dispatched as soon as possible after receiving a complaint. Montana Peace Officers (including but not limited to Fish, Wildlife & Parks Wardens, and Police Officers of the City,) acting in their official capacities, are the only persons authorized to use firearms for the purposes of dispatching animals within the City Limits. All deer issues and complaints within the City should first be directed to the local Havre Police Department Dispatch Center (406-265-4361). If City departments are unavailable to resolve the issue or complaint, or assistance is needed, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) enforcement or wildlife staff will be the secondary point of contact (406-265-6177).

1. Resident deer threatening the safety of pets confined to yards will be dispatched if necessary, by Havre Police Department. Resident deer causing severe and persistent damage to gardens and ornamental plantings will be addressed by hunting where possible. The intent is to reduce or minimize conflicts where resident deer are causing problems.

C. The people of Havre must refrain from artificial feeding of deer, as it encourages them to stay near or return to the city. Pursuit to MCA 87-3-130, it is a misdemeanor violation to feed deer. It is also a violation of Havre City ordinance 8-5-21. In addition, the diet is unhealthy, and the practice induces the deer to adopt habits that put them in conflict with humans and ultimately means these deer must be destroyed. Wild and wary deer will stay out of trouble but will still be visible to those who enjoy seeing them as they pass through areas occupied by people.

Note 1: Our tradition and state law recognize the importance of Montana's public Wildlife legacy. Minor or occasional property damage caused by wild deer is a by-product of their presence that Montanan's have chosen to accept. This also is in accord with the expressed wishes of the residents of Havre.

Note 2: Citizens who find dead deer in town can dispose of deer. It is recommended that deer carcasses are disposed of in a manner where the carcass will end up in a Class II landfill.

Note 3: Carcasses of deer that must be killed according to above section B, will be given to the local food bank or other suitable charity, organization, or individual when suitable for human consumption. Agency dispatching the deer will be responsible for finding a recipient and donating the deer.

Note 4: Deer that have been killed with a vehicle, within the limits of the City, will be removed by the Havre Police Department, City Public Works or the Montana Department of Transportation depending upon the location of the animal.

Management Process

Using the following strategies will facilitate the reduction of deer within City boundaries:

1. The City may choose to trap and euthanize a number of resident deer within the City Limits each year between August 15 and February 15 in order to reduce overall deer density. The number of deer removed each year will be limited by the terms of a **Permit to Destroy Game Animals Causing Damage** issued to the City by Fish Wildlife & Parks Region 6 Supervisor.
2. Implement a public deer hunt within the City with the following rules and regulations:
 - a. Hunting will be in accordance with all Montana laws and regulations.
 - b. Hunting will be managed with safety as a primary consideration. In some locations assigning and directing hunters to appropriate sites will suffice. In more sensitive locations hunters may be escorted to assure safe and successful harvests.

- c. Hunting will be restricted solely to the use of archery equipment in the City as defined by Fish and Wildlife Commission Big Game Regulations.
- d. Only open space property owners approved by the City may allow hunting on their properties. A list of approved property owners that are allowing hunting will be kept on hand and updated as needed at the Havre City Hall. Hunters are still required to check-in and obtain approval from a landowner, including the City, before hunting on their property. Additional landowners may be added to the list after being approved by the City.
- e. Hunters will be required to bag and remove the deer viscera from City property or any areas where its presence may be offensive or a problem.
 - i. **Note:** Hunters, particularly those who might be interested in management hunts but who do not need the meat, may have the option of donating their game. The Havre Food Bank only accepts processed meat. Montana FWP recommends Chronic Waste Disease testing prior to donating deer venison.
- f. The range of possible dates for harvest within this plan are from August 15 – February 15.
- g. Hunters may be allowed to use existing deer licenses inside the city limits that are valid for HD 600 or 690
- h. Additional deer B-licenses (up to 500) that are valid for mule deer, may be available for hunters to purchase if needed. These B-Licenses would be valid within the city limits and may include some properties adjacent to the city, but outside the city boundary.
- i. Hunters may purchase up to 5 B-licenses and will not count against their limit of 7 B-licenses.
- j. Hunt details (season dates and available licenses/quotas) would need to be approved by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Monitoring and Responsibilities:

The City and FWP will jointly monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this Action Plan.

All deer euthanized by the city under this plan will be documented and a record of those removals will be maintained by the City of Havre. An annual report will be provided to FWP to include the number of deer dispatched, the method of removal, and the disposition of the deer removed. After venison is donated, remaining carcass will be disposed of in accordance with FWP rules and statutes.

The Havre Police Department will accept complaint calls and provide the assistance of a police officer, when needed, in response to complaints about aggressive deer. A police officer, or the highway patrol will continue to respond to auto/deer accidents. The number and types of complaints received, as well as the action taken will be tabulated.

FWP will assist the City in determining the deer population within the City Limits and advising the City in structuring effective management strategies.

Approved property owners will manage the hunting on their respective properties.

Measures of Success:

1. Reduced call volume and complaints
2. Reduced vehicle collisions
3. Lower deer density over time
4. General landowner and public satisfaction

Program Longevity:

Consensus of the City and approval of FWP may modify this ACTION PLAN in writing.

This **ACTION PLAN** is effective upon authorization from FWP and the City, and it will remain in effect until modified or terminated by the City or the FWP.

REPRESENTING OFFICIALS:

For Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For City of Havre:

Name: Douglas A. Kaercher Title: Mayor

Signature: *Douglas A. Kaercher* Date: July 6, 2022

Date ACTION PLAN Authorization: July 5, 2022

The following individuals' signatories represent their respective support for the ACTION PLAN.

For: The Hill County Commissioners

Diane McLean
[Signature]
[Signature]