

Mule Deer/White-Tailed Deer Management Action Plan for the Town of Philipsburg, Montana

Overview:

Montana statute recognizes that cities or towns may, on occasion, need to manage wildlife within their boundaries in order to protect residents or their property.

MCA 7-31-4110 reads as follows: A city or town may adopt a plan to control, remove and restrict game animals, as defined in 87-2-101, within the boundaries of the city or town limits for public health and safety purposes. Upon adoption of a plan, the city or town shall notify the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks who approves the plan or approves the plan with conditions, the city or town may implement the plan as approved or as approved with conditions.

A healthy, wild deer population is important to the People of Philipsburg and Montana. Deer hunting and viewing in areas surrounding Philipsburg is highly valued by residents and visitors, as well as an important component of the local economy. Minor or occasional property damage caused by wild deer within the town's limits is an inevitable but acceptable consequence of the occasional deer roaming through the area. However, high deer densities within the Town's limits and the behavior of some individual animals can, at

times, be problematic. Deer that live all or part of the year in the Town of Philipsburg may threaten human safety and health, injure pets, and damage property.

Purpose and Scope of the Action Plan

1. Reduce the negative impacts to people caused by mule and white-tailed deer within the Town of Philipsburg, Montana.
2. Provide the Town of Philipsburg, and local Law Enforcement with the management tools necessary to effectively respond to individual deer-human conflicts and to limit overall deer density within the Town's limits, as necessary.

Goals

1. Cull individual deer within the Town's limits which threaten human safety or property.
2. Reduce the potential for human-deer interactions and conflicts by lowering the density of the deer resident within the Town of Philipsburg.
3. Reduce the potential for predators to be attracted to concentrations of mule deer/White-Tailed deer in and around the Town of Philipsburg.

Actions to Meet Goals

1. Mule or white-tailed deer within the Philipsburg Town limits which have become habituated to human activity and are acting aggressively will be dispatched by local Law Enforcement or Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, as soon as possible after verification of the deer's behavior or activities posing a threat to human safety or property. Resident deer threatening the safety of pets confined to yards may also be dispatched. Public complaints

need to be directed to the non-emergency number of the Granite County Sheriff's Office at 406-859-3251.

2. The Town and the Town's Law Enforcement may choose to trap and euthanize a number of resident deer within the Town Limits each year between August 15 and February 15 in order to reduce the overall deer density. The number of deer removed each year will be limited to the terms of a Permit to Destroy Game Animals Causing Damage issued to the Town of Philipsburg by the Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 2 Supervisor.
3. All deer removed under this Action Plan must be documented and a record of those removals maintained by the Town of Philipsburg. An annual report will be provided to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks which includes the date and nature of any public complaints, the responding Law Enforcement officers, the number, age class, and gender of deer dispatched, the method of removal, and the disposition of the deer removed. Carcasses will be disposed of in accordance with FW&P rules and statutes and venison fit for human consumption will be donated.
4. Deer that have been killed due to vehicle-deer collision within Town's limits will be removed by Law enforcement or by Town maintenance staff. (Salvage of Game Animals: 87-3-145)
5. Citizens of Philipsburg must refrain from artificially feeding or providing supplemental feed attractants to resident and wild deer pursuant to MCA 87-2-216. Artificial feeding is a misdemeanor and encourages deer to habituate to the urban environment and create human/deer conflict. Wild deer are less likely to become resident and/or remain in the Town when artificial feed is contained.

6. Town will include in the report to Fish, Wildlife & Parks a summary of responses and actions related to unlawful deer feeding.

Monitoring responsibility

The Town of Philipsburg and the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will jointly monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this Action Plan. The local Law Enforcement will accept, and forward complaint calls and will provide assistance of an officer to respond to aggressive deer. The Sheriff's Department or Montana Highway Patrol will continue to respond to deer-vehicle collisions. The number and type of complaints received, as well as the action taken will be included in the annual report.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will assist the Town of Philipsburg in determining the deer population within the Town's limits and advising the Town in structuring effective management strategies.

Program Longevity

The Town of Philipsburg may modify this Action Plan as needed, however, changes to stipulations regarding the harassment or lethal removal of Game Animals are subject to oversight and permitting by the FW&P Commission.

This Action Plan is effective upon authorization by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission, and the Town of Philipsburg. It will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any of those named parties.