



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

**DATE:** November 9, 2017

**SUBJECT:** **Update on Winter 2018 Deer Management Planning Efforts**

**REFERENCES:** 2018 Deer Management Objectives  
Oct. 31, 2017 White Buffalo Memorandum to MDNR Regarding Research Permit

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**PURPOSE:** This memorandum provides an update on the development of the City's 2018 Deer Management Plan. Transparency is achieved by maintaining a dedicated page on the City's website ([www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement)) which tracks the status of and development of the plan. Full consensus on a plan is unlikely and should not be expected; however, acceptance of the plan, which contains elements desired by various parties, is desired.

**BACKGROUND:** The October 2, 2017 memorandum briefly described the three key program areas lethal cull, sterilization, and an education program. It also highlighted a few changes anticipated from the prior two years including the dis-continuation of the 450 foot safety zone for professional sharpshooters, the use of private property (with prior owner written approval) to supplement the number of access points over and above public land, and the recommendation for an additional sterilization zone where shooting is not permitted under federal law.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** During the past month, the FY2018 goals and objectives have been finalized. In addition, long-term goals are articulated/documented along with a recommended process to follow going forward. Both are included in the attached "2018 Deer Management Goals and Objectives" document.

The long-term process includes meeting with residents at least once each year to review and discuss the latest data involving deer in the City. It's important to note that the spectrum of opinions and feelings on this topic have not changed and while the stakeholder groups provided input to staff, it's safe to say no group agreed with all the objectives. This discussion will help inform staff recommendations to City Council for future programming.

**SAFETY:** With the legislative change removing the 450 foot safety zone for sharpshooters, the MDNR does not anticipate requiring the zone for White Buffalo's amended permit this year. Both the MDNR and White Buffalo have indicated that professional sharpshooters utilize other significant factors besides a

horizontal buffer zone when determining where to safely shoot. For example, the nature of the terrain, the angle of shooting, and clearance can all be factors affecting a safe place to shoot without a 450 foot horizontal distance restriction. White Buffalo has operated without the 450 foot zone in many cities over the past two decades without incident.

Staff anticipates using selected private properties (with the owner's prior written consent) in this year's program. It's worth noting that with the density of property in Ann Arbor, deer migrate across numerous private properties so, like sterilization, any operation on private property would be done to affect the broader community, not for the sole benefit of an individual parcel owner.

Private property parcels are presently being identified. Staff is *not* looking for unsolicited volunteers. Parcels are selected based on discussions with White Buffalo and their determination of what's appropriate for their potential use. When staff requests written permission, residents will be asked to contact their abutting neighbors to notify them of their intent to give permission to White Buffalo for use of their property for culling. The City will follow-up with a written notification to each abutting property. During the lethal cull operations, White Buffalo does not follow the deer onto adjacent parcels for shooting. All shooting is done on property where written permission is obtained.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

Communication: The implementation plan is in the process of being developed and likely won't be completed until late November/early December. This date is necessary in order to have time to publicize the plan prior to actual implementation.

MDNR Permit: White Buffalo recently submitted their request for amending the research permit, consistent with a prior communication to Council. A copy of it is attached. Staff will share the final MDNR permit on the deer management webpage once it is received.

Timing: Preliminarily, the lethal and sterilization activities are anticipated to occur during the full of month of January. Final dates will be established by early December.

Public Park/Nature Area Closures: Attached is a preliminary list of parks/nature areas anticipated to be closed for public use between 3 p.m. and midnight each day during most of January. Last year public areas were closed for two weeks. With the objective of removing 250 to 350 deer this year, it's necessary to plan for closures to be 3 to 4 weeks. Please share this information with your constituents over the next few weeks and share any feedback with staff or reference residents to the Deer Management hotline. A final list of public land closures will be determined by early December.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- ***Final 2018 program and share with City Council (targeted for 12/5/17)***

**COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION:** Tom Crawford is the primary point of contact for this action, and can be reached at 734-794-6110 x45100 or at [tcrawford@a2gov.org](mailto:tcrawford@a2gov.org). Mr. Crawford is supported by a number of other employees who will be focused on certain aspects of the plan.

#### **2 Attachments**

- 1 – Ann Arbor Deer Management Plan Objectives – Final
- 2 – Memorandum regarding Amended Proposal for Deer Research in Ann Arbor, MI Year 2

## Ann Arbor Deer Management Plan – Objectives

### **LONG-TERM PLAN:**

The goal of the City's Deer Management Program is to have a sustainable deer population at a level acceptable to the overall City population. To do this, the City will regularly collect data about deer and publish it on the City's website. Each data measure will have an established level (or range) which would, if exceeded, result in staff calling together citizen representatives to discuss. No City action (lethal or sterilization) is presumed to be necessary. The purpose of the discussion with the citizen representatives is to make a recommendation if 1. additional information is needed 2. if the existing data justifies any action or 3. if an action is deemed necessary, what is the appropriate action (ie. education, sterilization, lethal, other) and where. This plan/process is being implemented to establish a clear, transparent, and collaborative expectation for any future City Deer Management program in advance of Council consideration.

### **MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

#### **Overall Program:**

- Number of firearm related injuries associated with the deer management program is 0.
- Total number of deer/vehicle crashes reduced to 40 per year, and percent of vehicle crashes involving deer reported in the legal boundaries of the City of Ann Arbor reduced to 1.3%, assuming no major changes in total vehicle crashes.
- Reduce deer browse damage in the City's natural areas to a sustainable range of 15% to 30%, as measured by NatureWrite's field study. This measure will be regularly re-visited to reflect the latest information available.
- Maintain community-based education program about the role of deer in the local ecology and identify options for residents to manage potential deer impacts on their private property.
- Community acceptance of herd impact - when 75% of surveyed residents in a Ward respond that damage to their landscape or garden plants is at an acceptable level on private lands. Recognizing there will be variability of this measure over time, a trend towards 75% is desired.
- Community acceptance of deer management program - when 75% of surveyed residents in a Ward respond that the City's strategy of managing the deer population is acceptable. Recognizing there will be variability of this measure over time, a trend towards 75% is desired.

[FY2018 Specific Objectives on Next Page]

## 2018 PROGRAM SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

### MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

#### **Educational Program & Public Right-of-Way Improvements:**

- Review the City's "Fencing" ordinance and existing deer signage locations. Recommend and implement changes and improvements.
- Develop and publish an expanded deer education component to the City's deer management website, including a deer resistance gardening campaign.
- Develop an interactive information/mapping tool.
- Create and hold a public forum designed to address questions related to the City's deer management program
- Establish an on-going education program.

#### **Non-lethal (Sterilization) Program:**

- Obtain an amended permit from MDNR for a deer sterilization program.
- Ensure sterilization of at least 95% of the does in the original research areas #1 & #2 (estimated additional 15-26 does).
- Sterilize at least 95% of the does in an additional zone (estimated additional 14-25), such that the total estimated sterilizations for all three zones are estimated to be 40.
- Mortality rate associated with sterilization less than 2%.
- Investigate with University of Michigan if there are appropriate locations for sterilization.
- Obtain a written update on the scientific results to-date on the sterilization efforts.

#### **Lethal Program:**

- Number of firearm related injuries associated with cull activities is 0.
- Number of deer removed is 250 – 350.
- Acceptable level of park closures remains at 75% or above.
- Coordinate with University of Michigan to increase the number of available locations for the deer management program.



# WHITE BUFFALO, INC.

HELPING RESTORE THE NATURAL BALANCE

a nonprofit organization

31 October 2017

Steve Beyer  
4166 Legacy Parkway  
Lansing, MI 48911

RE: AMENDED PROPOSAL FOR DEER RESEARCH IN ANN ARBOR, MI: YEAR 2

Mr. Beyer,

Please accept this letter as a request for continuation of the deer research project entitled: "Examining the Effectiveness of Surgical Sterilization and Sharpshooting as a Combined Approach for Managing Suburban White-Tailed Deer Populations" initiated in January 2017. This proposal considers research activities to take place from 15 December 2017 – 31 March 2018. The following are modifications based on our observations/findings from the first year:

1. We will need to initiate pre-baiting on 15 December 2017 to start deer capture efforts on 2 January 2018. We will capture deer from 2-15 January 2018. We will likely conclude capture efforts by 8 January, but are requesting a longer time period to account for weather events. We are trying to balance optimal bait leverage (later in winter) to capture the last remaining females in our existing two sterilization areas, and performing surgery as early in gestation as possible.
2. The original research proposal requested an additional sterilization area in Year 2. This requested area, as now defined, is much smaller than originally projected because the firearm discharge area around occupied structures no longer applies (see attached). However, the City's interpretation of the federal restriction on shooting on public/private property within 1,000 yards of a school means there are still significant areas within the city's urban footprint which are not able to be addressed via culling. This area also has a substantial portion of small single family lots which are not suitable for sharpshooting operations. Therefore, the city has no other available tool to address deer in this area.
3. We will attempt to capture  $\geq 95\%$  of the female deer in the third sterilization area and  $\geq 98\%$  of the females in the original two sterilizations areas from Year 1. We do not know how many females we will need to capture to meet these objectives, but possibly more than the 80 permitted for Year 1.
4. We will use the same capture and surgical methods as in Year 1.



# WHITE BUFFALO, INC.

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5. We will cull deer using the same protocol as last year from 2-31 January 2018. We are requesting authorization to cull 250 deer, with the option not to exceed 350 deer. Meat donation will be the same as Year 1.
6. We are removing constraints associated with the previous 450' discharge restriction.
7. The following White Buffalo personnel will participate in this year's program: Dr. Steven Timm, Dr. Nathan Kotschwar, Anthony DeNicola, Ryan Rodts, Vickie DeNicola, Sam Friederichs, and Benjamin Nolan.

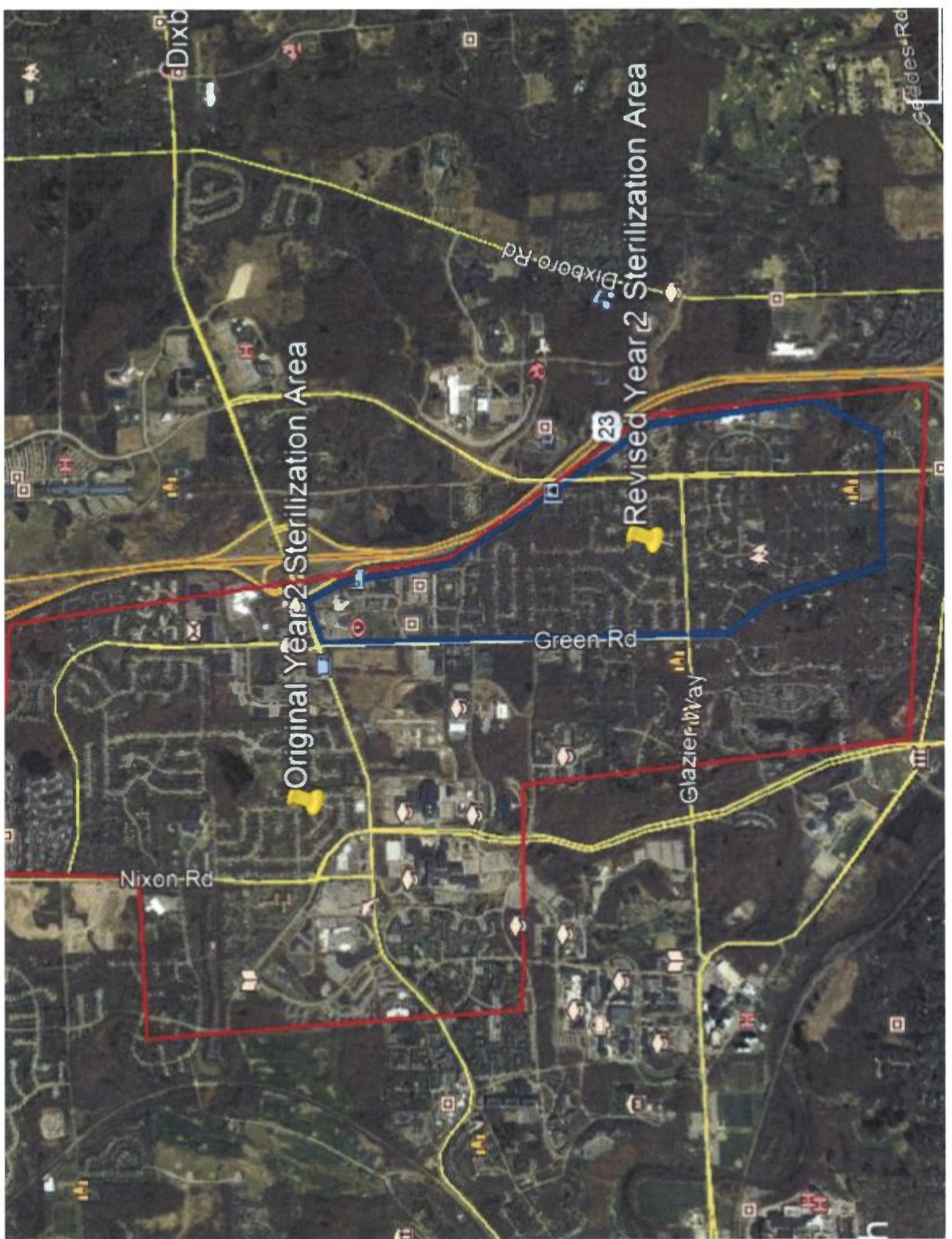
Do not hesitate to call (860-790-0224), if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. DeNicola, Ph.D.  
President

Encl.





Original Year 2 Sterilization Area

Revised Year 2 Sterilization Area

Nixon Rd

Green Rd

Glacier Way

Dixboro Rd

Geddes Rd

23

## 2018 POTENTIAL DEER SITES

SITES CLOSED FOR CULL	PARKS CLOSED IN 2016	PARKS CLOSED IN 2017	Potential PARKS TO CLOSE IN 2018
Arbor Hills			X
Barton - north of the railroad tracks	X		X
Baxter			X
Bird Hills	X	X	X
Black Pond Woods	X		
Bluffs	X	X	
Cedar Bend/Island Park	X	X	
Folkstone			X
Foxfire West			X
Furstenberg	X		
Glazier Hill			X
Huron Hills Golf Course		X	
Hilltop		X	
Huron Parkway	X	X	X
Island Park		X	
Kuebler Langford/Hilltop	X	X	
Leslie Woods	X		X
Leslie Park Golf Course	X	X	X
Narrow Gauge			X
Oakridge			X
Oakwoods			X
Olson	X		X
Ruthven	X		
South Pond	X	X	X
Stapp	X		X
Sugarbush, north of Rumsey			X
Traver Creek Nature Area			X
<b>COUNT =</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>