
From: Dan Keifer [dckeifer@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, September 15, 2008 5:33 PM
To: Mike Hartner; Leanne Scott; Mayors Office@rochesterhills.org
Subject: Deer Management Methods

Hello, City Council, Mayor Barnett, & Parks Department.

I am writing to provide comment regarding the discussion of appropriate methods for management of the deer over-population in our City. I am unable to attend the City Council meeting this evening.

The deer over-population has had significant negative impacts on our city: first, the high cost in auto repairs caused by the high number of car-deer accidents; and second, the environmental damage caused by un-natural deer densities that has greatly harmed the vegetation in the river corridors of Paint Creek and the Clinton River, our city's parklands and two rail-trails, and residential backyards through over-browsing.

I am in support of an "active" method for deer management. Signage and citizen education are a "passive" method to address the negative impacts that the deer over-population is having on the City, and insufficient. Deer can't read signs or brochures. Motorists don't read our existing signs for speed limits, let alone deer warnings that aren't very visible anyway during the low-light hours of the day when most collisions occur.

An "active" method for culling the deer population is needed in order to have a real impact at reducing these costs and damages. However, I am opposed to allowing bowhunting within the city limits for both safety and aesthetic reasons.

Bowhunting is not a managed solution to cull the deer population, and thus vulnerable to unsafe and distasteful culling practices that would almost certainly occur. Without a well-thought-out plan to control it, bowhunting would have have unwanted consequences caused by poorly trained hunters and improper locations posing safety threats to residents. Bowhunting, though lethal, is not an appropriate culling method for high-density residential areas like ours. Even the best lethal shot by an expert archer will result in a deer running 50 to 100 yards before succumbing. Residents should not have that unpleasant experience in their backyards.

Instead, I support a "sharpshooter" method for culling the deer population. Using this method, the safety and aesthetic concerns that would occur with bowhunting can be avoided. A specific number of deer can be targeted. Safe, site-specific locations can be used at specific hours of the day. Trained sharpshooters would be skill-certified; and a lethal drop-on-the-spot firearm weapon can be used to eliminate the unwanted impact on backyards.

Citizens concerned about the welfare of the deer should heed the recent outbreak of viral disease that claimed something like 50 deer just in our city alone in the past month. Our deer population is too dense and unhealthy. I kayaked the Clinton River three weeks ago during the height of that outbreak and observed the carcasses of 10 dead, rotting deer that had sought the river's cooling waters for relief. There is nothing humane about the current conditions. The impact on water quality and on the aesthetics of using the river and our parklands from this viral outbreak was profound. Without an active and on-going method to safely and humanely cull the population, the costs and damages will continue.

Respectfully,

Dan Keifer
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Friends of the Clinton River Trail

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