

**Hays, Diana**

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**From:** Mekarski, David  
**Sent:** Friday, July 9, 2021 3:14 PM  
**To:** Only Town Council  
**Cc:** Mekarski, David; Moskowitz, Scott; Camp, David; Dailey, Dave; Didawick, Jason (jdidawick@purcellvilleva.gov); Hays, Diana  
**Subject:** Managed Hunt Program for Aberdeen Property  
**Attachments:** Purcellville Deer Management Program.docx

Mayor and Town Council,

As the Council recalls, we discussed in open session the need to conduct a managed hunt program to reduce the total number of deer that currently utilize the Aberdeen property as a sanctuary for both habitat and feeding. With the nutrient bank in place and approximately 1,200 tree seedlings planted, a managed hunt program is critical to ensure the sustainability of at least 400 trees per acre, which is required by DEQ as a viable unit for the sale of nutrient credits. As to date the trees have been very healthy, and there has been only a minimal amount of loss due to deer predation. While this is the case currently, as we move toward the winter season the seedlings will become primary food source from the early part of December through the early part of spring. There's great concern that should we not begin a managed program to cull the deer to substantially bring down the herd, we will not achieve a sustainable stand following the winter season.

Earlier this week, I met with our Public Works Director Jason Didawick and members of our police dept. who have extensive experience in managed hunt programs. It appears there is a herd numbering a minimum of 180 head that occupy this habitat on a daily basis. Our team came to realization that a typical managed hunt program allowing bow hunting only, would not be effective to bring down the population in significant numbers from the opening of the season on Sept. 1 through Nov. 30. It was the consensus of the team the town should conduct a deer management program as an initial phase to safely and humanely reduce the deer population in significant numbers during the month of Sept. To that end, I am enclosing an outline developed by Lt. Moskowitz with the assistance of Patrol Sergeant Camp for a deer management program that would effectively cull the deer within 3-4 weeks, starting in Sept. to a manageable level where following this program, the administration could put together a continued managed hunt program allowing limited bow hunting to keep the deer population to a level that would not cause significant damage to our nutrient bank.

The enclosed outline lays out the methodology and logistics of utilizing regional law enforcement personnel who are trained and qualified in precision sharp shooting to systematically cull the population of deer on the property. This would only take place following collaboration and cooperation with the VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries as well as the VA Dept. of Wildlife Resources and the Commonwealth's Conservation Police. If you concur with this approach, my office can continue the coordination with our police dept. to implement it accordingly.

Please feel free to contact me by phone or send your comments to me in email, and advise if you are comfortable with placing this on the July 27 agenda for further discussion and authorization to proceed. Please be aware that all game that would be taken down would be donated to Hunters for the Hungry, a charitable organization which processes and distributes the venison to local food banks to feed the needy.

David

# Purcellville Deer Management Program

## Purpose

To safely and humanely manage deer population on the Aberdeen property in an effort to prevent browsing damage of thousands of newly planted trees.

## Method

Utilization of law enforcement personnel who are trained and qualified in precision sharpshooting to systematically cull the population of deer on the Aberdeen property. Because of their elevated training and experience with sharpshooting, utilization of trained law enforcement officers allows for the greatest safety, security, and accountability of the program. Additionally, it will enhance the abilities of the participating officers by giving them greater experience in their precision sharpshooting skills. Below are bullet points of the operation.

- Position trail cameras in strategic areas of the property to capture data on the deer population, movement, and patterns.
- Work in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Conservation Police (formerly Game Wardens) to research deer management options, including issuance of kill permits, and assessment of deer health (Chronic Wasting Disease, Lyme Disease).
- Qualified officers of the Purcellville PD, with assistance of other trained law enforcement officers, will utilize precision rifles to dispatch the over population of deer through sharpshooting techniques.
- A qualification course will be established to ensure that participating officers are proficient with the operation of their rifles. In lieu of participating in our qualification course, officers from outside agencies can provide qualifying scores of industry accepted courses of fire from their home agencies.
- Safety of the participants and the surrounding properties will be of the upmost importance. The sharpshooting operations will be monitored by the PPD and a PPD supervisor and/or a Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) certified Firearms Instructor will be present at all operations to act as a Safety Officer.
- All personnel will be accounted for prior to and after each operation.
- A comprehensive Tactical Operations Plan will be developed by PPD for these operations.
- All sharpshooting operations will take place from safe locations.
- Dates and times of the operations will be evaluated and conducted at the safest and most opportune times, dependent on the research data collected.
- Precision sharpshooting allows for the deer to be dispatched quickly and humanely, minimizing the ability for deer to run off, requiring the need for a search of the animal.
- Deer will be processed onsite and donated to a charitable organization, such as Hunters for the Hungry. This will allow local food banks to receive and distribute the meat.

- Remnants of processing will be buried so as not to attract other wildlife that may be detrimental to the survival of the newly planted trees.
- Collaborate with DGIF and DWR to establish alternate deer management techniques, after the population has been curtailed to a manageable size.
- Budgetary concerns will need to be taken into consideration with reference to equipment needs and any overtime expenditures.