

History Behind the Deer Management Program

In 2005, the City of Fargo Board of Commissioners was petitioned by citizens to address the growing deer herd within the city limits of Fargo. The Board of Commissioners directed the Police Department to research the citizens' concerns and develop a solution to the situation. A committee was formed to research the problem of deer depredation and identify possible solutions to the problem. This committee was made up of members of the Fargo Police Department, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, Fargo Park District and Fargo City Attorney's Office.

This group discussed the following possibilities for reducing the number of deer within the city of Fargo:

- Live trapping and relocation of deer.
- Deer contraception.
- Herd reduction through harvest by archery

Randy Kreil of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department discussed the options of live trapping and contraception of deer. In his professional opinion these options were very costly and required extensive manpower. The group ruled out these two options.

The group then focused on controlled harvest by archery hunting in limited areas as the preferred means to control the size of the deer herd in Fargo. Randy Kreil discussed a similar process used by the city of Bismarck, ND to control urban deer. Bismarck has conducted urban archery deer seasons for approximately 17 years. Bismarck had not received any complaints or injuries associated with the program.

We realized if the City Commission was to approve of an urban archery season we would need to take every reasonable precaution to ensure public safety and protection of private property owners' rights. To ensure these precautions we planned to focus on three primary areas. They were:

- Adoption of a new city ordinance to allow archery within city limits and provide enforcement of any potential violations.
- Training and certification, to ensure only safe archers could participate.
- Identification of locations for a herd reduction archery season to take place.

Adoption of a new city ordinance to allow archery within city limits and provide enforcement of any potential violations.

Patty Roscoe from the City Attorneys' Office and Lieutenant Gene Anderson began research and development of a new ordinance to address this process. The ordinance needed to include a certification and permit process, a private property trespass form, safety guidelines and penalties for violations. This would give Fargo Police Officers the necessary authority to address citizen complaints relating to trespass violations or safety issues. It would also establish our ability to control and limit the number of archers participating and ensure the archers were trained and certified in the safe operation of their equipment.

Training and certification, to ensure only safe archers could participate.

Clay Whittlesey from the Fargo Park District, solicited assistance from local archery clubs to assist with training and certification of potential applicants for the limited archery permits. The training included information regarding public safety, public perception, and specific ordinance requirements. The city ordinance contains more restrictions than the North Dakota Game and Fish Proclamation on hunting regulations. We wanted to make sure all participating archers were aware of these additional restrictions prior to participating.

Identifying logistical locations to allow the archery season to take place.

Through aerial photographs, site visits and an aerial survey of the deer herd we designated several specific locations to target herd reduction. Criteria used in selecting these locations were:

- Potential deer holding habitat.
- Proximity to occupied dwellings.
- Deer herd numbers ascertained from an aerial survey.
- Private property access.
- Public property access.
- Potential for civilian interaction during the archery season.

We wanted to select areas with minimal potential for citizen/archer proximity. We also needed to select areas with high likelihood for success on the part of the archers. We avoided areas with developed parks or bike paths to ensure a higher level of safety. We labeled the areas and assigned maximum numbers of permit holders to limit the potential for over saturation of archers. The areas identified for a herd reduction archery season were divided into two regions. One region on the north side of Fargo and one region on the south side of Fargo. Participants are restricted to one region. Property included in each region is:

Region One **Recommended Permits 30**

Roughly the area from 19th Ave. N. to 35th Ave. N., on selected property. These areas are the most likely holding areas for urban deer due to large tracts of undeveloped property and woodlands on the Minnesota and North Dakota sides of the Red River. This area includes flood buy out property, Fargo Park property (north of the VA Hospital) and private property (Cardinal Meunch and Peterson farm.)

Region Two **Recommended Permits 15**

Lemke Park, 32 Ave. S. Harwood Drive area and Conservancy Park, 40th Ave. S. to El Cano Drive. These two areas are comprised of undeveloped Fargo Park property. Also included in Region Two are wooded areas along the Red River adjacent to Riverside Cemetery.