

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: URBAN DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM – RESEARCH STUDY

BACKGROUND:

In an attempt to respond to citizen complaints about deer damage, the Special Urban Deer Task Force (SUDTF) was created in 2006. Task Force recommendations have included an annual survey of deer population, a ban on deer feeding, public education, and limited urban bow hunting of deer. Various sources of data have been used to estimate deer populations. The primary tool has been an aerial survey conducted in January each year.

Last year, the Task Force was approached by Professor Sue Fairbanks regarding the possibility of conducting a more detailed study of the urban deer population in selected areas. The use of City property was approved by the Council at that time, and no problems resulted from this activity. Professor Fairbanks and her class have once again offered to conduct an update of this study. The study combines browse surveys with 'camera traps' to compare deer habitat in different areas and at different population densities.

A more detailed study of the deer population structure, fall habitat use and travel patterns will assist the Task Force in understanding local deer dynamics and recommending future solutions. Continuing this study will also increase the value of the information by identifying trends.

This study will require placement of cameras and infrared sensors in the study areas. The proposed study areas currently involve City-owned property in the following locations: Hunziker Youth Sports Park, Homewood Golf Course, Munn Woods, and ISU's Applied Science area. This request, if granted, will allow placement of study equipment on City property during the fall of the year.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve placement of research cameras and sensors on City property as part of an Iowa State University animal ecology research project.
2. Do not approve placement of research cameras and sensors on City property as part of an Iowa State University animal ecology research project.

MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

In response to citizen concerns, the Iowa DNR, Special Urban Deer Task Force, Parks and Recreation Commission, staff members within Parks and Recreation, Police Department and Animal Control Division have collaborated in the design and implementation of the Urban Deer Management program. Deer population data is critical to the development of recommendations from the Special Urban Deer Task Force. This study is a continuation of activities approved by the Council last year.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, thereby allowing the placement of research cameras and sensors on City property as part of an Iowa State University animal ecology research project regarding the dynamics of deer populations within the City limits.