

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **URBAN DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM RESEARCH STUDY**

BACKGROUND:

The Special Urban Deer Task Force (SUDTF) was convened in 2006 in an attempt to respond to citizen complaints about deer damage. Since that time, 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 establish trends in deer populations. The primary tool in estimating the deer populations has been an aerial survey conducted in January each year.

For the past two years, the ISU Wildlife Ecology and Management class, taught by Professor Sue Fairbanks, has conducted browse surveys and a camera trap study of deer in the City. Professor Fairbanks and her class have once again offered to conduct an update of this study. The proposed study is a more detailed study of deer population structure and compares deer habitat in different areas and at different densities. Like other data collection strategies, this effort becomes more valuable as it is repeated because it gives us trend information.

A more detailed study of the deer population structure, fall habitat use and travel patterns will assist the Task Force, as well as the larger community, in understanding the deer dynamics and recommending future solutions. This study will also increase the value of the information by identifying trends in population dynamics within the study areas.

Conducting this study will require placement of digital wildlife cameras in the study areas. The proposed areas currently involve City-owned property in the following locations: Hunziker Youth Sports Park, Homewood Golf Course, and Munn Woods, along with Iowa State University property in the Applied Science area. This request, if granted, will grant permission to place this study equipment on City-owned property for three weeks during the fall of the year.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve placement of research cameras and sensors on City-owned property as part of an Iowa State University animal ecology research project.
2. Do not approve placement of research cameras and sensors on City-owned property as part of an Iowa State University animal ecology research project. **This option would be supported if the City Council believes that placement of cameras on**

City property would be perceived as a possible intrusion into the private lives of any of our citizens who are in these areas.

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, the Police Department, and the 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.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that Council accept Alternative #1, thereby approving placement of cameras and sensors to conduct research on the population dynamics of deer populations within the designated City locations.