



*"NOW AND ALWAYS -- A Fine City • A Great Community"*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**DATE:** August 17, 2007

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City of Fremont Deer Management Task Force

**SUBJECT: FREMONT DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM- PART II**  
**-Second in a Series of Articles Highlighting the City's Deer Management Program**

### **More Details on the City's Deer Management Plan**

First of all, Fremont is not unique regarding an increased urban white-tailed deer population. Numerous nearby areas also have issues with concentrations of deer in or around their communities. Several have put "deer management programs" in place to help address these issues, including Big Rapids, the Canadian Lakes community and Holland. Grand Haven is currently studying its deer population and will be drafting a management plan.

For research purposes, Fremont's Deer Management Task Force has reviewed the plans of Iowa City, IA, Burnsville, MN and other communities across Michigan and the U.S. The Fremont Deer Management Plan has attempted to take the best aspects of these other programs and customize the Plan to meet local needs and desires. Fremont will be using local hunting enthusiasts to help reduce deer densities within and adjacent to the eight-square-mile deer management area (DMA).

It is very important to note that the current Fremont City Code of Ordinances do not permit discharge of any firearms, for hunting or any other purpose, within the City limits. The designated DMA will allow areas on the perimeter of the City limits to hunt the deer as part of the upcoming regular deer hunting seasons. Licenses issued to the City by the MI Dept. of Natural Resources (MDNR) will be re-issued to hunters and/or landowners for hunting purposes on private property within and adjacent to the DMA.

There are two additional aspects of the Deer Management Plan that are worthy of mention:

1. Programs in other communities can be costly (some over \$50,000 annually) in that authorities may contract with companies utilizing professional sharpshooters to remove deer. Fremont's program should be much more cost effective, with a budget of approximately \$5,000 to cover the costs of permits, processing of deer meat, creation & dissemination of public educational materials, etc.
2. The Task Force is encouraging the local sportsmen & women issued permits under this program to donate the deer so that ground venison may be distributed to families in need in Newaygo County. One of the Task Force members is arranging for the processing at a local meat processor, as well as the hopeful distribution through agencies such as NCCS and Love, Inc.

## **Supplemental Feeding of Deer Discouraged**

On a broader ecosystem scale, there are also the many residents in and around the City who enjoy the viewing of deer in their yards and throughout the community in open fields, parks and other prime habitat areas. In recent years, the practice of supplemental or recreational feeding of deer has become more popular. Unfortunately, this practice lures even more deer into undesirable residential areas of the City.

Artificial feeding also domesticates the animals and provides them “safe harbors,” within which they are not subject to human predation. However, eventually the population will overwhelm the carrying capacity of its localized habitats; at this point, deer become susceptible to disease and cause excessive browsing damage on adjacent lands, both at the “feeding” site, as well as during their migration to and from the site.

[Insert attached picture files here, w/ the following captions:]

**Picture 1:** “Deer browse damage incurred on Cedar trees located on Gerber Products Co. property south of 44<sup>th</sup> Street (near Pathfinder School). This is an example of the type of damage experienced when deer populations reach high densities in urbanized areas.”

**Picture 2:** “Another example of preferred deer “feedstock.” Young apple trees were planted this June as part of the MSU Agricultural Weather Station inside the fence at the City’s Wastewater Treatment Plant on 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Although protected by high fences on two sides, deer jumped a lower fence (in distance) along 80<sup>th</sup> Street to feast on the newly planted trees.”

Some folks feel that the City should simply adopt an ordinance to disallow recreational or supplemental feeding of deer within the City limits. Initially, however, the Task Force recommends that efforts be made to educate and inform our residents and property owners on the issues involved with this practice. Neighbors working with and communicating with their neighbors regarding this aspect of deer management is an integral part of the overall program.

## **Sources of Information on Deer Feeding**

Many aspects regarding the feeding of deer can be found in the MDNR Briefing Paper of March 9, 1999 titled Deer and Elk Feeding Issues in Michigan. Copies are available on the MDNR website at the following link:

[http://www.michigandnr.com/publications/pdfs/HuntingWildlifeHabitat/Issue\\_reviews/99feeding.pdf](http://www.michigandnr.com/publications/pdfs/HuntingWildlifeHabitat/Issue_reviews/99feeding.pdf)

The Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife has issued a very informative position paper on the topic of Supplemental Feeding of White-Tailed Deer during Winter. It describes the practice and lists some disadvantages and preferred alternatives to supplemental feeding. The information can also be found on the Department’s website at: [http://www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife/species/deer/feeding\\_deer.htm](http://www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife/species/deer/feeding_deer.htm)

Two other informational pieces on this subject come from the New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept. The article titled Feeding Deer Harms their Health can be accessed via their website at the following link:

[http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Newsroom/News\\_2004/News\\_2004\\_Q4/Donot\\_Feed\\_Deer\\_121704.htm](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Newsroom/News_2004/News_2004_Q4/Donot_Feed_Deer_121704.htm)

The above article references a brochure titled More Harm than Good, which explains the negative impacts of deer feeding. The Dept. makes its stand on feeding deer quite clear: “**The Fish and Game Department does not advocate the supplemental feeding of deer, will not participate in winter**

**feeding efforts and urges landowners to not provide supplemental feed to deer.”** The brochure is available directly at:

[http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Wildlife\\_PDFs/More\\_harm\\_deer\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Wildlife_PDFs/More_harm_deer_brochure.pdf)

All of the above information is available in printed form at City Hall, and will be posted to the City’s website at [www.cityoffremont.net](http://www.cityoffremont.net). The City will continue to provide articles and educational materials on additional key aspects of the City’s Deer Management Program. Questions or comments regarding the Program or the Task Force may contact James Breinling at home at 924-5740 or Fremont City Manager Chris Yonker at City Hall at 924-2101.

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