

TOWN OF CIRCLE, MONTANA DEER MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Overview:

A healthy population of wild deer is important to the citizens of Circle. Wildlife viewing and other recreational interactions are an important part of the lifestyle and culture of the Town. However, high deer numbers in the Town and adjacent rural areas have led deer-human interactions which may threaten the safety of humans and animals, or may cause property damage, both of which are contrary to the maintenance of a healthy deer population and habitat.

History:

The Town Council has determined from a variety of citizen complaints and law enforcement reports that the risks to persons and property from wild deer in the Town limits have grown to unacceptable levels.

Purpose and Scope:

The goals of the Town and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) are:

1. To reduce the negative impacts to persons and property from deer in and near the Town;
2. To provide the Town with appropriate management tools to effectively respond to individual deer-human contacts, to reduce the overall deer population density where appropriate, and otherwise to take actions necessary to control the negative impacts presented by wild deer in the Town.
3. To eliminate individual deer which threaten the safety of people or property;

Deer Populations:

Wild deer in Town comprise two distinct populations, one of which is only intermittently in Town, are less habituated to human interaction, but which contribute to growth of local deer populations. The other population of deer reside long-term within Town limits, are habituated to humans, and present more of a threat to humans and property.

Management Tools and Plan:

1. The management of deer populations in the Town will be the responsibility of the McCone County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff's Office) in coordination with personnel of FWP Region 6 .
2. Officers of the Sheriff's Office and Wardens with FWP, acting in their official capacities, will be the only persons authorized to dispatch wild deer within the Town limits, whether through the use of firearms or otherwise.

3. All deer issues and complaints will be directed first to the McCone County Sheriff and/or the Circle Town Clerk. If Town officials are unavailable to resolve the issue, or if additional assistance is needed, FWP wardens or wildlife staff will be a secondary point of contact (406-228-3700).

4. Citizens of the Town **must** refrain from feeding deer as it encourages them to remain in Town and to become habituated to and dependent upon humans. Montana statute 87-6-216(c), MCA, provides that it is a misdemeanor to feed wild deer.

5. Non-lethal means of population control will be first implemented where possible. Except as noted herein officers will first attempt to haze deer to leave an area, or use other means to discourage deer from becoming a nuisance, including fencing and repellants.

6. Aggressive deer that threaten human safety, or that habitually cause property damage, threaten pets, or otherwise threaten public safety will be dispatched as soon as possible by appropriate officers in a humane manner. The Sheriff's Office, Town Office, and FWP will each be notified of the removal of deer in Town. Lethal means of deer control will be implemented in such a fashion as to avoid the risk of property damage and to avoid unnecessary risk of injury to persons or property, giving due consideration to the time, place, and manner of dispatching problem deer.

7. Minor or occasional property damage caused by wild deer shall not be a basis for removal of animals. State law and the culture of the Town recognize that wild deer are an important part of the community, and some small impacts are part of living in rural Montana.

8. Carcasses of dispatched deer will be given to a local food bank or other charity, organization, or individual when suitable for human consumption. The Sheriff's Office will coordinate directly with the donee to donate deer carcasses. FWP will provide Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing of dispatched deer upon request, prior to any carcass donation.

9. The Sheriff's Office or Montana Department of Transportation (DOT) will be responsible to remove and dispose of deer carcasses of deer that have been killed by a vehicle.

10. Private citizens may dispose of deer carcasses found by them in Town, but are encouraged to contact the Sheriff's Office prior to disposal in an appropriate landfill.

11. Between August 15 and February 15 each year the Town may choose to euthanize a set number of resident deer within Town limits each year to reduce deer population density. The non-emergent removal of deer shall be limited to the terms of a Permit to Destroy Game Animals Causing Damage issued to the Town by FWP.

12. The parties agree to regularly consult upon the performance of this Deer Management Plan, and may modify this plan, in writing, to maximize its effectiveness.

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Monitoring:

The Town Council, Sheriff, and FWP shall jointly monitor and coordinate the implementation and effectiveness of this Deer Management Plan, including the development of effective management strategies.

The Town Clerk, Sheriff, and FWP will document all complaints received regarding aggressive deer. The complaints shall include reporting party, date of report, and reference to the appropriate agency. All reports will be provided to the Town Clerk.

All deer euthanized under this Plan will be documented by the Sheriff or other removal agency, and a record of removal kept by the Town. An annual report will be submitted to FWP to include: (1) the number of deer dispatched; (2) the date(s) of removal; (3) the method of removal; and (4) the disposition of the carcass.

Goals:


1. Reduced complaints about deer and incidents of negative human-deer interaction, including property damage.
2. Reduction in deer population densities as appropriate to living within the limits of an incorporated town.
3. General improvement in public perceptions of deer in Town.

Signatures:

DATED the dates written below, and effective upon full execution. This Plan will remain in effect until modified or terminated by the Town or the FWP.

Town of Circle:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks:



 Garry Johnson, Mayor
 Date: 11 SEPT 2023

By: _____
 Date: _____

McCone County Sheriff:

 Paul Skyberg, Sheriff

Date: _____