



Quality Deer Management Association Maryland State Chapter

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Vision 2030 Project Management Team
 Montgomery County Parks and Recreation

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Maryland state chapter of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) we thank you for the opportunity to provide input on Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation in Montgomery County. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat, and our hunting heritage. Among QDMA's 50,000 members are nearly 2,000 Maryland members and more than 2,500 wildlife biologists, foresters and natural resource professionals. As such, QDMA is widely regarded as the most respected whitetail organization in the U.S.

We would like to commend the Department on many facets of your deer management program. To add to a successful deer management program, we offer the following;

We request that you consider regulated hunting as an additional management alternative. Regulated hunting has been proven to be an effective deer population management tool, it is cost effective, it results in immediate removal of animals from the population, and it is the principal management tool used by state and county agencies to manage free-ranging deer. Wildlife management agencies recognize this approach as the only effective, practical and flexible method available for regional deer population management. By using regulated hunting, biologists can maintain deer populations at desirable levels or adjust them in accordance with local biological and/or social needs by manipulating the size and sex composition of the harvest; season type, timing and length; and by the number of permits.

Safety is paramount when using regulated hunting as a management tool. Fortunately, research clearly shows hunting is safe. American Sports Data, Inc. conducted an extensive study in 2002 that examined more than 100 sports and activities. Twenty-eight activities, including cheerleading and aerobics, had higher injury rates than hunting. Safety concerns with hunting can be minimized by having potential hunters pass written exams and weapon proficiency tests. Written exams can identify hunters who possess an acceptable level of knowledge on deer biology, management and shot placement. Weapon proficiency tests identify hunters who handle weapons safely and have the ability to consistently achieve proper shot placement. Hunters can even be required to hunt from elevated stands so all shots are directed at the ground and weapon type can be regulated to maximize public safety.

Where shotguns and muzzleloaders are not permitted, archery equipment can be used. Archery hunting has the advantage of being a relatively discreet and silent activity. These attributes and the limited shooting range make archery hunting a safe and non disruptive removal technique. Archery hunters have safely and effectively reduced deer populations, deer-vehicle accidents, the incidence of Lyme disease and other deer-human conflicts in many communities and military bases in the United States.

In addition to safety concerns, we understand that many segments of the public enjoy watching this highly visible deer population however when deer densities surpass the carrying capacity of the habitat, deer and habitat health decline. This situation is neither good for the deer population nor for the habitat or other wildlife species. We feel it is important for the Park administration and the public to be aware of this when considering management options.

We realize some Park administrations may not favor hunting as a viable alternative. However, many National, State and County Parks utilize hunters to meet their deer management objectives. Regulated hunting may not be applicable throughout the Park but there are areas where this alternative could be used. Regulated hunting is a proven approach and it is the most efficient and least expensive option for removing deer. It results in immediate removal of animals, and the meat can be used by hunters or donated to food banks.

We request that you include regulated hunting as a viable alternative for the Park's deer management program. A combination of alternatives including regulated hunting will likely provide the most successful results. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Vision 2030 Plan. Please contact me with any questions or comments or if I can provide additional information.

Respectfully,
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