Local Government Deer Management

Meeting Community Concerns When Stepping Out Of The Box

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Introduction

- Howard County general information
- The property and its surroundings
- Community concerns
- The hunt program
Howard County:

- Located midway between Baltimore and Washington, DC
- 251 square miles (650 km²)
- Population: 1990 - 187,328 (746/mi²)
- Population: 2008 – 282,675 (1,126/mi²)
- Reliable deer population estimates do not exist (in 2000, known mortality = 15/mi²)
Parks and Open Spaces
Total Recorded DVC’s since 1990

These years used an average from ‘03, ‘04,’07, & ‘08 for the state data in order to determine an approximate value for the total number of deer accidents.
Alpha Ridge Park
All the Standard Human - Deer Conflicts Were Observed

- Lyme disease – and fear of it
- Damage to landscapes, crops and forests
- Deer – vehicle collisions
- Demands that something be done – NOW!
- Demands that nothing be done – EVER!
- On 3 October, 1997, the County Executive ordered a hunt program by 1 November – hunting began 5 January, 1998
- The conflict had been engaged
- On 30 October, 2000, managed hunting began in David W. Force Park
Community Concerns

- Safety of children and pets
- Safety of houses and property
- Humane treatment of deer
The Hunt Program

- Legal necessities
- Safety features
- Humane treatment assurances
- Logistics
Legal Necessities

- Distances from roads and buildings
- Seasons, times, and bag limits
- Data collection and tagging
Safety Features Required of Hunters

- Hunter safety card required
- Questionnaire and interview required
- Marksmanship qualification required
- Scopes/sights & slugs/sabots required
- Tree stands/safety harnesses required
- Natural Resources Police background check
- Mandatory hunter orientation – encourage scouting
Other Safety Features

- Park closure while hunting
- Press releases, signs, mailings & meetings
- 150 yard safety zone, selected stand sites
- Hunt weekday mornings only
- Restricted firing lanes where necessary
- Full-time staff attendance
- Perimeter patrols
Humane Treatment Assurances

- Marksmanship requirement
- Stationary targets within 80 yards
- Baiting of stand sites
Logistics

- Work with MD DNR on seasons, bag limits, tags
- Work with shooting ranges for qualifying
- Schedule around school holidays
- Hunter safety instructors develop questions & scoring guidelines
- Hunter-volunteers scout, recommend stands
- Detailed stand maps with directions
Instructions for Dforce Area

Key

- = Fixed position stand
70 yds = yardage (paces)
△ = open field area
- - - = Cleared trail
- - - - = Masked path through woods
- - - = Stream

6 = From Tuff valley parking lot, follow tags on right side of stream XX yards to site 0
1/2 = From rear of parking area off Pebble Beach Dr (across from Concorde Ct), follow tagged path about XX yards where path splits left (for 1) and right (for 2).
For site 1: Continue on left path XX yards to site 1. For site 1A, turn right and follow tags XX yards. For site 2: at 1/2 split continue right XX yards to site 2.
For site 2A, turn left from site 2 and follow tags XX yards to 2A.

3/7 = At the end of Pinehurst Ct, Park at “PARK HERE” sign and walk about 200 yards along mowed path that parallels left of houses till you come to field. For site 3: Go to far left corner of field and follow markers from comer of field into woods to 3 woods.
For 3A continue XX yards alone marked path to 3A. For site 7, cut across to furthest right comer of field and at tree line marked trail to 7 bars left and 7A bars left.

4/5 = From drop off on golf course, follow tags into woods for XX yards till you enter field.
Another XX yards along edge of tree line path splits: left 40 yards to chump of trees in center of field (4A marked in middle); or continue straight at split 90 yards to site 4.
For site 5, from drop off follow path XX yards to marked tree. Continue along marked path XX yards for 5A.

6 = From drop off on golf course, follow tags into woods for XX yards. Trail splits right for site 6 and straight for site 8. For 6, continue 250 yards right along tagged path to 6. Continue another 70 yards along tagged path for 6A.
8 = From drop off on golf course, continue on marked trail XX yards. Path for site 8 is marked on left. Turn left onto marked path for 70 yards to marked tree. From where you turned left off trail for site 8, instead go straight along trail another 70 yards to marked path on left for site 8A. Follow path on left 40 yards to site 8A.
9 = Follow directions to site 10. Continue along trail 300 yards to site 9 on left. (trail makes a sharp right at 200 yards from 10). For 9A, with site 9 at your left, look to right and trail crosses stream, then turns right, then left (total of 90 yards to 9A).
10 = Park on Bethany Lane just south (about 100 yards from 170 over pass) on west side. Walk down into gully and turn right toward Bethany Lane. Walk along easement to just before 170. Trail enters woods to left. Continue on trail 160 yards to small field. Walk 50 yards across field and continue along marked trail for 230 yards. Site 10A is on left. Walk left of trail 50 yards to 10A. For site 10, continue along main trail (from split off to 10A) for 80 yards. Site 10 is 10 yards to right.
More Logistics

- Lottery for dates and site selection
- Hunter check-in and check-out procedures
- Perimeter patrols/deer drives
- Access for disabled hunters
- Procedural manual
- Responsiveness to resident’s inquiries and complaints
- Public outreach and other forms of management
The Results

1998 – 38 does, 12 bucks (76% female)
1999 – 98 does, 36 bucks (73% female)
2000 – 173 does, 83 bucks (68% female)
2001 – 103 does, 61 bucks (63% female)
2002 – 54 does, 36 bucks (60% female)
2003 – 121 does, 78 bucks (61% female)
2004 – 112 does, 87 bucks (56% female)
2005 – 105 does, 69 bucks (60% female)
2006 – 72 does, 48 bucks (60% female)
2007 – 123 does, 65 bucks (65% female)
2008 – 121 does, 67 females (64% female)
2009 – 141 does, 97 bucks (59% female)
2010 – 126 does, 63 bucks (67% female)

**Totals:** 1387 does, 802 bucks (63% female)
Before the 2000 Hunt:
And After:
Future Plans (as of 2003)

- Expand managed hunting to more parks - done
- Survey residents surrounding hunted parks - done
- Monitor deer movements in parks, adjacent communities, and along highways – some done
- More educational outreaches - ongoing
- Provide roster of willing qualified hunters to landowners – done
- Sharpshooting where hunts not feasible – done
- Roadkill monitoring and remediation - done
In Summary:

- Ascertain and maintain public support – it may be more favorable than expected
- Don’t cut corners with safety – even at the cost of efficiency
- Qualify your hunters – work with them, and kick them out if necessary
- Keep hunter roster manageable – about 125 in our case
- Do other things to manage deer – monitor, repel, educate the public