

PROPOSED DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

Whitehall Borough is densely populated with deer resulting in various types of property and environmental damage. Borough elected officials, administration, and police department recognize deer over-population within the Borough as a major problem and seek to control it in the most humane and cost-effective manner.

This proposed deer management plan was developed in conjunction with Suburban Wildlife Management Associates and in consultation with other South Hills municipalities that operate similar programs.

Section 1: Problem Defined

To help Whitehall Borough Elected Officials make informed decisions about deer management, the Whitehall Committee for Environmental Action collected data and assessed program options.

- Whitehall Police began tracking the number of reports related to deer in 2017:
 - Reported deer vs. motor vehicle accidents increased from 8 in 2017 to 22 in 2020. This represents a **175%** increase in four years.
 - Reported Animal Complaints involving Wildlife increased from 72 in 2017 to 137 in 2020. This represents a **90%** increase in four years.
 - Reported injured / dead deer removed from roadways and yards by Animal Control increased from 61 in 2017 to 91 in 2020. This represents a **49%** increase in four years.
- Highlight of deer over-population issues that affect the entire Whitehall Community:
 - Vehicle accidents involving deer have increased over the years resulting in damage to vehicles and injuries to occupants. In addition, the animal often suffers severe injuries requiring the responding officer to discharge his weapon to humanely dispose of the injured animal.
 - Many residents have experienced deer venturing onto their properties and browsing in their gardens and landscape ornamentals. The ensuing damage to residential properties' landscaping is frustrating and expensive.
 - Whitetail deer serve as a host for the deer tick which is a carrier of the often-disabling Lyme Disease.
 - Whitehall Police has responded to over 478 calls for service for deer-related issues between 2017 and 2020. The average amount of time an officer dedicates to this type of call is approximately 20 minutes. In addition, animal control removed 309 injured/dead deer during the same time period.

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Section 2: Management Goals

The goal of the Whitehall Borough Deer Management Program is to reduce incidents of deer / human conflicts within the community.

Section 3: Management Methods

- Continue Public Education Campaign
 - Add Deer Management Section to the Borough website with documents relevant to the program.
 - Partner with Whitehall Library to host community series on how to coexist with wildlife (deer resistance landscaping, dangers of feeding of wildlife, etc).
 - Post Deer Crossing signs in high collision areas.
- Continue to discourage the feeding of wildlife on all properties within the Borough through education and enforcement activities.
 - Provide method for residents to make anonymous complaints to police and code enforcement.
 - Use Police Department social media page to remind residents of ordinances related to wildlife.
- Partner with Suburban Wildlife Management Associates to implement and manage a public archery program beginning in Fall 2022. The goal is to reduce the deer population to an acceptable level for the community.
 - Occurs during regular archery season that runs September through October.
 - Limited to Whitehall residents and borough employees.
 - Hunters are encouraged to participate in Sharing the Harvest program.
 - **Estimated cost is \$10,000 the first year** - includes public meeting appearances, hunting site survey and selection, discussions with property owners to obtain written permission, archer selection and testing process, liability insurance, and other administrative costs.
 - Borough and other entities can be added to liability insurance, hunters signed liability waivers.

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Section 4: Sample Narrative on Public Hunting Procedures

The Whitehall Borough Deer Management Program is a comprehensive approach to address the issue of deer / human conflicts within the community. One of the methods that will be utilized to accomplish this goal is deer hunting through a public archery program.

Whitehall's contractor, Suburban Wildlife Management Solutions, Inc., has a screening process through which all prospective archers must be certified before they can be a part of the program. The screening process is open to Whitehall residents that are qualified archery hunters. It is at the sole discretion of the contractor, who is tasked with the management of Whitehall's public archery program, to determine the distribution of qualified personnel throughout the program.

The distribution of personnel is based on both the number of hunters available at a given time and the number of deer within the identified public hunting areas as identified through reconnaissance measures including trail cameras. The Borough does not dictate means or methods to the contractor for how hunters should be assigned to sites. This is at the sole discretion of the contractor, based on their knowledge of the community, the topography of the public sites, a safe distribution of archers across those sites, the amount of deer activity being seen in those sites, and the number of available archers.