

# **DEER MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN**

## Town of Jordan

### **Overview:**

A healthy wild mule deer population is important to the people of Jordan. Wildlife viewing is an esthetic value that will be preserved. However, high deer numbers and the habits of some individual animals can create a situation that threatens human safety, damages property and is not conducive to the long-term health of the deer population or its habitat.

### **History:**

A number of citizens have complained that the risk to human safety and the level of property damage have grown to unacceptable levels. A town council meeting was held March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 to meet with concerned citizens and with representatives from Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. A Public Hearing was held April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to discuss the plan with the public. The Garfield County Commissioners and the Garfield County Sheriff's Office were also contacted in regards to the plan.

### **The Action Plan's PURPOSE and SCOPE are:**

- *To reduce the negative impacts to people caused by the deer in and near the town of Jordan.*

**Note:** While the management of deer that inhabit Jordan occurs on a larger scale, the restrictions detailed in the PLAN are limited to within the boundaries of the Town of Jordan. This does not preclude additional coordination efforts with landowners adjacent to and near proximity to Jordan.

### **The specific GOALS are:**

- *To eliminate individual deer that threaten human safety;*
- *To reduce the potential for human-deer interactions by lowering deer numbers in the town.*

## **Deer Populations:**

The deer comprise two distinct populations. One population is transient still relatively wild and wary of human contact and the other resident. *Transient deer* generally occupy periphery areas but pass through and occasionally use residential or business areas. These deer do not cause as many problems but over time will contribute to the other population comprising of *resident deer* that remain year-around within the town.

## **ACTIONS needed to achieve the goals:**

- A. *Free public hunting will be used as the management tool of choice* to control the size of both populations and to keep individual animals wary of people, which will discourage them from becoming *resident deer*.
- B. *Aggressive deer that threaten human safety will be dispatched* as soon as possible after receiving a complaint. Montana Peace Officers, (including but not limited to Garfield County Sheriff and Deputies and Fish, Wildlife & Parks Wardens) acting in their official capacities, are the only persons authorized to use firearms for the purposes of dispatching animals within the city limits. Complaints should be directed to Garfield County Sheriff's Office.
- C. *Resident deer which are causing severe and persistent damage to gardens and ornamental plantings or threaten the safety of pets confined to yards will be dispatched*, by the Garfield County Sheriff and Deputies or Fish, Wildlife and Parks Warden. Incidents of severe damage may be referred to the warden. The intent is to eliminate *resident deer* where they are causing problems.
- D. *The people of Jordan must refrain from artificial feeding of deer* as a way to encourage them to stay near, or return to the city. Pursuit to MCA 87-3-130, it is a misdemeanor violation to feed deer. In addition, the diet is unhealthy and the practice induces the deer to adopt habits that put them in conflict with humans and ultimately means these deer must be destroyed. Wild and wary deer will stay out of trouble but will still be visible to those who enjoy seeing them as they pass through areas occupied by people.

**Note 1:** Our tradition and state law recognizes the importance of Montana's public wildlife legacy. Minor or occasional property damage caused by *wild deer* is a by-product of their presence that Montanan's have chosen to accept. This also is in accord with the expressed wishes of the residents of Jordan.

**Note 2:** Citizens who find a dead deer in town should call the warden who may inspect it and will authorize its removal.

**Note 3:** Carcasses of deer that must be killed will be given to the local food bank or other suitable charity.

**Note 4:** Deer that have been killed with a vehicle will be removed by the Garfield County Sheriff's Office or the Montana Department of Transportation depending on the location of the animal.

## **Management Process:**

Using the following strategies will facilitate free public hunting of deer:

1. Hunting will be in accordance with all Montana laws and regulations.
2. Hunting will be managed with safety as a primary consideration. - In some locations assigning and directing hunters to appropriate sites will suffice. In more sensitive locations hunters will actually be escorted to assure safe and successful harvests.

Hunting will be restricted solely to the use of archery equipment in town as defined by Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission Big Game Regulations.

3. Only open space property owners approved by the Town of Jordan may allow hunting on their properties. A list of approved property owners will be maintained at the Town of Jordan offices. Hunting is allowed on Town and County owned property with permission (see attached map). Contact Town offices during regular business hours to obtain permission to hunt. *Hunters are still required to check-in and obtain approval from a landowner before hunting on their property.*
4. Regular season hunts will be optimized and special damage hunts will be employed when needed and where they are affective.
5. Hunters will be required to bag and remove the deer viscera from areas where its presence may be offensive or a problem.

**Note:** Hunters, particularly those who might be interested in damage hunts but who don't need the meat, **may** have the option of donating their game to a suitable charity.

## **Monitoring and Responsibilities:**

The Town of Jordan and Fish, Wildlife & Parks will jointly monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this Action Plan.

The Garfield County Sheriff's Office will accept, and if necessary forward, complaint calls and will provide the assistance of a deputy, in response to complaints about aggressive deer. A deputy sheriff, or the highway patrol will continue to respond to auto/deer accidents. The number and types of complaints received, as well as the action taken will be tabulated.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks will continue ongoing efforts to gather hunter harvest data and population trend survey data to determine deer population levels within Jordan and surrounding areas.

Approved property owners will manage the hunting on their respective properties.

**Program Longevity:**

Consensus of the Town of Jordan and approval of Fish, Wildlife & Parks may modify this ACTION PLAN in writing.

This ACTION PLAN is effective upon authorization from Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Town of Jordan, and it will remain in effect until modified or terminated by the Town of Jordan or Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

**Representing Officials:**

For: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks \_\_\_\_\_

For: Town of Jordan \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of ACTION PLAN authorization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The following individuals' signatories represent their respective support for the ACTION PLAN:**

For: The Garfield County Commissioners \_\_\_\_\_

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For: Garfield County Sheriff's Office \_\_\_\_\_