

# **HIGHLAND CITY URBAN DEER CONTROL PLAN**

## **Introduction**

Human encroachment into natural environments traditionally reserved for wildlife continues to create human–wildlife problems with little end in sight. Urban sprawl, housing developments and new roads and highways destroy more and more acres of animal habitat each year. Wild area losses are alarming. Utah is not immune from this problem.

The adaptability of mule deer to human encroachment is surprising to many residents of new subdivisions. Deer not only accept their new human neighbors but have flourished in an environment never before believed possible. Deer feeding in backyards, flower gardens, parks, and playgrounds and along suburban byways are now a fairly common occurrence. Any little thicket or woodlot can hold mule deer year-round.

Many new suburbanites don't know how to address the backyard deer situation. They see deer, at first, as beautiful animals indicative of the wild and natural state of the region in which we live. They are correct in this assessment. But, as the number of deer increases the problems they cause increase, as well. Deer often consume expensive ornamental plants, vegetable gardens, flowers and shrubs. Small trees are killed by antler rubs made by bucks. Deer/vehicle accidents cause thousands of dollars of damage and raise the potential for serious injury to drivers and passengers. It doesn't take long for suburbanites to identify deer as "a problem."

Left to breed and populate an urban area, mule deer can quickly become a problem as many municipalities in America have found out the hard way. Since the discharge of firearms and other projectile-firing devices has been banned within most suburban communities for safety reasons, deer populations will grow, unchecked. One breeding pair of deer could lead to 40 deer in seven years!

Many forward-looking city councils have come to accept the use of trained veteran bowhunters to maintain deer herds. Bowhunting has an impeccable record of safety, is an efficient and proven method of killing big game and is quiet and unobtrusive – the perfect solution to urban deer problems.

Highland City has asked a group of certified bowhunters to remove certain problem deer from within the Highland City limits. The goal of this program is to safely, quietly and efficiently remove these deer. In doing so, all bowhunters must comply with DWR's rule for urban deer control and the Highland City COR.

## **Purpose of Plan**

Human encroachment into traditional wildlife habitat by urban sprawl and housing subdivisions has created problems mule deer within Highland City. Couple that with the ability of deer to adapt to their new neighbors and to multiply unchecked and really big problems like health concerns, property damage, ecological damage, and deer/vehicle accidents occur. Highland City has determined that new management controls are needed.

History has shown that the bowhunting option for removal of urban deer is more effective than trapping and relocating deer, birth control of deer, special fencing, deer repellents, firearms hunting and using sharpshooters. These other methods have been found to be impractical, prohibitively expensive, unpopular and limited in application. Properly implemented bowhunting is the key to success.

Bowhunting is a safe and efficient method of managing the growing numbers of urban deer. The long-term survival of this program, however, depends upon each urban bowhunting specialist acting responsibly. Each hunter must play by the rules and always maintain the highest level of conduct while hunting. He/she must show respect for private landowners and their property. Hunters must maintain impeccable landowner relations if the program is to work.

### **Goals**

- >Improve safety on major roads and highways
- >Significantly reduce deer numbers within city limits
- >Promote safe and cost effective deer removal, as a public service to the local community
- >Reduce property damage caused by urban deer

### **Deer Removal Methods**

Lethal removal using archery equipment is the only method recommended by Highland City to remove deer during the two-year pilot program.

### **Bowhunter Selection Process**

Because this is a pilot program, participation in the program will be limited. Highland City has asked Brian Cook from Humphries Archery in American Fork, Utah, to serve as the Program Coordinator. Bowhunters who want to participate in the program should contact Highland City to be placed on a list. As Program Coordinator, Mr. Cook will select a small group of experienced bowhunters to participate in the program. Prior to being certified as an “urban bowhunting specialist,” each hunter selected by Mr. Cook must demonstrate that they understand the applicable rules and pass a shooting proficiency test. Once that is completed, the Program Coordinator will certify the hunter as an urban bowhunting specialist.

### **Bowhunter Participation Requirements**

Each urban bowhunting specialist that is selected and qualified to participate in this program must:

1. Always put your best foot forward in appearance and conduct, and always be considerate of others.
2. Never drink alcohol or use drugs before or while hunting.
3. Only hunt in areas pre-approved by the Program Coordinator and Highland City.

4. Make sure no other bowhunter is already scheduled to hunt the area you are planning to hunt.
5. Respect landowners and their land. Obtain prior-written approval to hunt on private land. Assume that landowners are concerned about the deer, your bow and arrows being safe, parking problems, neighborhood relations.
6. Know state, county and city hunting regulations and abide by them. Be familiar with the requirements and obligations of the Highland Urban Deer Control Plan.
7. Before hunting, know where you can take a safe shot and where you may not.
8. Be certified as an urban bowhunting specialist and have a valid written authorization and urban deer control permit issued by Highland City.
9. Only hunt out of an elevated stand. Always wear a certified safety harness. Only high downward angling shots are allowed for maximum effectiveness and safety, and guaranteed arrow recovery.
10. Install your stand to provide shots that will be 40 yards distance or less.
11. In order to achieve close shots, baiting is permitted.
12. Take only responsible shots at deer that are relaxed and not on alert. Don't shoot unless you're certain that your arrow will strike the vitals and produce a quick and ethical kill.
13. Razor sharp broad heads are mandatory.
14. Only hunt with arrows that have a unique fletching and crest pattern that have been pre-approved by the Program Coordinator.
15. Retrieve all arrows and arrow parts shot at deer.
16. Once the deer is struck, do not trail it until you're sure it's down for good. It is your responsibility to ensure that no animal will travel very far after being hit.
17. Do not trespass on neighboring land to retrieve a deer without permission. Contact the Program Coordinator prior to seeking permission to initiate "retrieval trespass only". The local conservation officer and/or police may be of assistance when retrieval trespass cannot be obtained.
18. Deer hit or killed but not retrieved must be reported to the Program Coordinator and Highland City.
19. Properly tag the deer immediately upon recovery. Promptly notify the Program Coordinator of all kills and submit the Deer Control Harvest Survey to Highland City for their records.
20. Avoid confrontations with neighbors and others.
21. Keep a low profile. You will be under the microscope, so be as inconspicuous as possible. When walking to and from your hunting area, try to minimize the appearance that you are hunting.
22. All evidence of the deer must be removed from the property. Field dress the deer at another permissible site.
23. Be discreet when removing a deer from the property. You may wish to cover the deer with a plastic tarp while it's being removed. Most people don't like seeing a dead animal so keep it out of sight as much as possible. You may wish to use an alternate, less conspicuous, route when removing a deer. Think about removal before your hunt.
24. Stay on your assigned property during the hunt and when accessing the hunting area. Do not take shortcuts across ground where you don't have permission to trespass.
25. Don't invite friends to hunt with you. Certification is for you and you only.

26. Avoid confrontations, no matter the circumstances. Utah has a hunter harassment law that protects you while engaged in legal hunting pursuits but it is best not to argue with an antagonist. You may wish to report harassment to local authorities if confrontations continue.
27. Shoot only does. The object of the program is to help control deer numbers inside the Highland City limits. Bowhunters can only accomplish this goal by shooting does. If a buck is inadvertently harvested, the antlers must be surrendered to the Highland City for temporary storage until DWR can collect them.
28. The hunter is allowed to keep the animal if desired. Donations of venison are also encouraged. If the hunter does not desire to keep or donate the animal, then the hunter will take the animal to a game processor as designated by Highland City .

Bowhunters who are selected and qualified to participate in this program play a vital role in solving the problem of managing the ever-growing urban deer population. They must, however, maintain safe, ethical hunting practices and be fully responsible for their actions if they're to be recognized as the best option for controlling urban deer. Mistakes and/or irresponsible behavior could jeopardize the program.

### **Hunter Identification Process**

Cards will be issued by Highland City, to all certified bowhunting specialists.

### **Conditions and Restrictions for Baiting and Spotlighting**

Bowhunters may use bait to facilitate safe and effective deer removal activities at their shooting locations. They may use a flashlight while walking to and from their stand/area in low light to distinguish themselves from intruders. The casting of a light across the landscape to detect deer is illegal. Highland City will authorize spotlighting to facilitate carcass recovery efforts.

### **Hunting Locations and Time Periods**

Hunting locations have been identified by Highland City – See attached map

Bowhunters will be allowed to remove deer from ½-hour before sunrise to ½-hour after sunset, unless stated otherwise on the urban deer control permit.

The season for the 2013 urban deer control hunt will run from August 9 - October 31. In 2014, the season will run from August 1-October 31.

### **Written Authorization and Permitting Process**

All certified bowhunting specialists must receive a written authorization and an urban deer control permit from Highland City prior to participating in deer removal activities (see attached copies of the written authorization and permit/tag). Upon being successful, the bowhunter must

notch the tag to indicate the sex, month and date of kill, detach the tag from the permit and attach it to the carcass. The tag must remain attached to the carcass for processing. Also, the bowhunter must fill out and return the Deer Control Harvest Survey portion of the permit to Highland City.