# MEMORANDUM

**Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force**
**Tuesday, 26 April 2011, 5:30 PM**
**McCloskey Room (#135)**
**City Hall, 401 N. Morton St.**

**Present:**
**Task Force Members:** Dave Rollo (Chair), Keith Clay, Judy Granbois, Josh Griffin, Stefano Fiorini, Bob Foyut, Sarah Hayes, Thomas Moore, Iris, Kiesling, Laurie Ringquist and Judy Granbois. **Staff:** Stacy Jane Rhoads (City Council Office)

## I. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Rollo welcomed all to the fifth meeting of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force. Everyone present introduced themselves.

## II. REPORTS FROM TASK FORCE WORKING GROUPS

### A. Griffy Working Group

- Clay communicated that Angie Shelton, a research fellow at the IU Research and Teaching Preserve, is examining the relationship of pellet counts to vegetation. She is studying the Griffy Lake Nature Preserve, Moores Creek and Lilly-Dickey Woods in Brown County. All of these areas should be substantially similar as they are part of the Brown County Hills Sections of the Highland Rim Natural Region. Comparing all three areas, Shelton found that the deer pellets are 10-13x more abundant at Lake Griffy. Both Moores Creek and Lilly-Dickey are located adjacent to areas that are heavily hunted. Griffy receives no hunting pressure -- hunting is prohibited on IU and City Griffy property and the adjacent land is not hunted. Shelton conducted the count based on eight 60 m long transects. At Griffy, Shelton found an average of 29 pellet piles/plot compared to an average of three or fewer at the other sites.

- Currently, IU does not allow hunting on any of its property, include research preserves. Clay spoke with Lynn Coyne, Director of IU Real Estate. Coyne advised that if the Task Force decides to recommend a cull on IU Griffy property, the Task Force should submit an official request to IU VP for Administration, Tom Morrison. Clay said that IU will not do anything until there is an official recommendation from the Task Force – and then may not do anything.

- Any recommendation for culling on City Griffy property would have to go before the City's Parks Board and the Mayor. Steve Cotter relayed to Clay that he would be willing to help the Task Force make its case.

- Clay pointed out that the analysis of Griffy cannot be separated from the surrounding suburban areas.

- Griffin relayed that a cull at Griffy would have different effects on surrounding suburban areas in the short and long terms. In the short term, any culling effort would likely cause deer to migrate out of Griffy into surrounding neighborhoods. This would result in more human-deer interaction in these areas. In the long term, a sustained culling effort at Griffy would mean fewer deer in surrounding neighborhoods.

- Griffin advised that if any hunting were to occur in surrounding neighborhoods, best practice would call for five contiguous acres of greenspace. One of the biggest challenges of culling in urban areas is land access. Griffin reminded everybody that all property owners, whether public or private, could impose their own "earn-a-buck" requirement on any hunting effort, much like Hidden Valley. The efficacy of any sort of cull at Griffy would depend on the amount of hunting pressure.

  In addition to continuous greenspace requirement, other communities require hunter proficiency tests, place restrictions on time (*viz*. no weekends), place restrictions on hunting in certain proximity to occupied structures, hunting from tree stand, field dressing in designated areas, etc. Hidden Valley requires hunters to take five antlerless deer before taking an antlered deer.

- Clay said that he welcomes any suggestions the group may have about what can be done at Griffy.

- Griffin said that if the group recommends a hunt at Griffy, they might want to contact adjacent landowners to inquire if landowners would allow hunting on their property. In that case, it would be useful to determine who would allow hunting and who would not and create a buffer between such properties.

**B. <u>Outreach Working Group</u>**

- Rollo and Rhoads reviewed that the Outreach Group is working on scheduling a series of outreach meetings throughout the community to communicate the work of the Task Force to date and to solicit feedback from residents about how and where they are experiencing deer. Following a powerpoint presentation, there will be a structured discussion with participants.

- Moore said that based on his experience working on issues of human-bear conflicts in Japan, people do not like to feel as if wildlife management solutions are being imposed on them; instead, they want to feel as if they have a voice in the process. Many people just need a forum to vent. In addition to educating the public, these meetings will give people an opportunity to express their concerns.

- In addition, the group will hand out copies of the survey at these outreach meetings.

- The Outreach group will send a copy of the powerpoint and the survey for the whole Task Force to review.

- Once approved, the powerpoint will be posted on the website and the survey will be made available in electronic form.

- Hayes said that it might be helpful have some handout material at the Farmers' Market.

**III. MEDIA**

- Granbois has received confirmation from the Herald Times that the paper would welcome a Guest Editorial by the group. She is waiting to hear back if the paper will give the group space in the Outdoor section to run a series of seasonal tips.

- Clay pointed out that the Guest Editorial should run before the outreach meetings start.

- The group discussed Judy's draft Guest Editorial. The group agreed to make brief mention of a few commonly-discussed management strategies, such as trap and translocate to dispel misunderstandings.

- Granbois said that it is important to make clear that the Task Force wants to make thoughtful and prudent recommendations. It will not come up with solutions that will please everybody. Clay said it is important to emphasize the latter – that there is no unanimity of community opinion on this issue.

- Smith said that, in the absence of recommendations, it might help to point readers to the website for tips on mitigating deer damage.

- Clay said that it is important to highlight the fact the Task Force wants to hear from people, that the group wants residents' comments and opinions. He said that the neighborhood outreach meetings should be mentioned in the Guest Editorial.

- The group agreed to aim for finalizing the Guest Editorial at the next meeting.

**IV. DEER COUNT**

- At this juncture, it is important to decide whether the group feels it is necessary to engage in a count. IDNR relies on harvest data and accident trends and advises that when dealing with deer in urban areas, the more relevant measure is the social carrying capacity of the community. As funds are not available for a deer census or other scientific measurement, the group must figure out if it wishes to do its own count. Such a count would considerably prolong the work of the group.

- Moore pointed out that he thinks that it would be ideal to somehow be able to quantify deer in the City. It would be a very good way to measure the efficacy of any recommendation(s). While he thinks the number of deer within the City is an important piece of information, he feels that the group can still make thoughtful and prudent recommendations using trend data, concrete exclosure data from Griffy and data on the social aspect of the issue.

- Foyut said that the issue at hand is really one of public perception; that is what the group should measure.

- Griffin said that if an archery effort was made at Griffy or elsewhere, IDNR provides guideline on how to assess efficacy and to discern if sufficient effort is being applied.

- The Task Force agreed that while deer census figures would be helpful to its work, quantifying the number of deer in the City is not necessary to develop prudent recommendations.

## V. COMMUNITY FORUM

The group briefly discussed the pros and cons of having a community forum on any recommendations.

- Fiorini suggested that the group might want to post a provisional report on its website and allow participants to submit e-mail comments. Such comments might be appended to the Report.

- Moore said that anonymous web-based comments are not a good idea.

- Smith said that the benefit of community meetings is that not all people live or visit areas affected by deer. She said it is a good idea to connect people not directly affected with those who are.

- Sarah said that the Task Force will get flack from all sides. Maybe it might make sense if certain Task Force members address certain segments of society to help set the tone. For example, she might be able to speak to the animal welfare community and Susannah might be able to reach the hunters.

- Bob said that people will likely show up at the end of the process who did not participate in any of the outreach or regular Task Force meetings. There will be a lot of mad people not matter what the Task Force does.

- Rhoads said that this is not anything the group has to decide right now, but it is worth thinking about as the group moves closer to issuing its recommendations.

## VI. URBAN AGRICULTURE

The group agreed to invite a number of local growers in to one of its upcoming meetings to learn more about urban farmers' experiences with deer.

## VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None
- Rollo suggested that public comment should be moved to the beginning of the meeting, so members of the public do not have to sit through the whole meeting.

## VIII. ADJOURN

The Task Force adjourned at 7:26pm