

Press Release

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FEEDING DEER IS DETRIMENTAL

GRAND HAVEN, MI, NOVEMBER 26, 2007: The City of Grand Haven's Urban Deer Management Task Force is forging ahead to sketch out the highly anticipated Urban Deer Management Plan. Public education regarding the subject is at the top of their priorities.

The Task Force believes that it is vital to inform the public that feeding the deer is harmful (rather than helpful) to the animals. A first step to reduce conflicts between deer and the human population is to refrain from feeding the deer. While recreational viewing is an enjoyable pastime, food placed to attract deer is not in the animal's best interest.

Providing a regular and reliable food source encourages deer to congregate, shifting their daily activity closer to the feeding area. Deer are grazers, and will continuously feed until they reach their destination. These actions lead to increased conflicts between the deer and their human neighbors.

“Feeding” is defined as placing food materials out that attract deer for reasons such as recreational viewing. Michigan DNR Regulations for feeding include:

- The feed material may be of any food type (including salt licks).
- The volume of feed material at any residence cannot exceed two gallons at any one time.
- The feed must be scattered on the ground. It can be scattered by any means, including mechanical spin-cast feeders.
- The feed must be scattered or dispersed at least 100 yards from any area accessible to farm animals and no more than 100 yards from a residence on their own land.
- Food plots, naturally occurring foods, standing agricultural crops, or food placed as a result of using normal agricultural practices are not considered feeding. For more information, please refer to www.michigan.gov/dnr.

Attracting and feeding deer supports an expanded herd size that is larger than the natural habitat can sustain. Increasing the herd increases the risk of vehicle/deer crashes and other nuisance issues. Additionally, the upsurge in contact between deer at the feeding site boosts their susceptibility to and transfer of disease. With this intensified exposure, the potential transmission of disease and parasites to humans escalates. A major concern of disease transmission is Lyme disease from deer ticks. Historically, the only endemic region in Michigan has been Menominee County in the Upper Peninsula, bordering a highly endemic region of Wisconsin. Recently, however, populations of infected black-legged deer ticks have been found in Southwest Michigan including Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, Allegan, and Ottawa Counties. For more information on this subject, visit www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases.

For the long term health of the deer herd, please refrain from feeding the deer and keep other food sources (such as bird food) out of the deer's reach. If you have questions or concerns, please call the City Manager's Office at 847-4888 or email Lisa Sutterfield at lsutterfield@grandhaven.org.

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