

Deer Management Project

Update on status and next steps

County Board Recessed Meeting
9.17.2024

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Deer Management Assessment Project Scope

Phase 1: (Q2 2022 – Q1 2023)

- Data collection and analysis
- Delivery of assessment results

Phase 2: (Q1 2023 – Q1 2024)

- Share assessment results and management options
- Community engagement #1
- Community education

Phase 3: (Q2 – Q3 2024)

- Draft recommendations
- Community engagement #2
- Final recommendations



A Tale of Two Forests



Lacey Woods

The forest is mostly untouched by deer



Barcroft Park

The forest is mostly eaten by₅ deer

Who Participated?



Online Feedback Form

601 Online Survey Responses

*Through these responses,
we received **1,100 comments.***



Virtual Community Meeting

158 Attendees

*Offered an opportunity for
participants to ask questions to the
project staff and learn more about
the recommendations.*

85% in Support of Deer Management

Which option best characterizes your opinion on a County program to manage the deer population?

Very Supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive	Unsure
73%	12%	3%	5%	6%	1%
Very Supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive	Unsure

80% in Support of Professional Sharpshooting

The County recommends professional sharpshooting to manage the deer population in County-owned natural land parks. Which option best describes your opinion on an Arlington County professional sharpshooting program?

Very Supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive	Unsure
70%	10%	3%	4%	12%	1%
Very Supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive	Unsure

Project Engagement - Overview

Online Engagement

In-Person Engagement

Education

Virtual Sessions

Targeted Outreach

Project Engagement

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	COMMENTS
2,524	36,132	6,028



The Facts:

100% of the 12 parks surveyed showed damage from deer overpopulation.

Arlington's 12 surveyed parks had an average deer population density of 124 deer per square mile in 2021. Research recommends a deer density of no more than 15 to 20 deer per square mile for forest regeneration.

124

1.9 to 17x Deer population in Arlington's surveyed parks ranged from 1.9 to 17 times higher than recommended levels in 2021.

Heard from respondents located in **all 62** Civic Associations



Committee and Commission Briefings (NRJAG, FNRC, PRC)

Final County Recommendations

- **Professional Sharpshooting:** Primary method to immediately reduce deer populations in County-owned natural land parks. Offers immediate impact and cost savings compared to surgical sterilization. Requires amendment to County Code.
- **Fencing/Repellants:** Recommended for small areas to protect priority plant species. Can only complement, not replace professional sharpshooting.
- **Continued Monitoring:** *Conduct periodic deer population surveys using drones. Implement two different herbivory impact assessments annually based on established methods.*
- **Review Deer Vehicle Collision Data and Intake Collection Methods:** Review ACPD, AWLA, and VDOT tracking methods.
- **Monitor Tick-Borne Disease:** Incorporate CDC annual Lyme disease numbers into monitoring program. Explore options for monitoring other relevant diseases such as alpha-gal.

Next Steps

- **Fall 2024:** County Board to consider amending County Code to permit professional sharpshooting in natural land parks.
- **Winter 2025:** Staff will develop a deer management plan.
- **Winter 2026:** Contracted professional sharpshooting will commence in natural land parks.



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