Rapid City Deer Management Program

Revised 2012

Prepared by the Rapid City Urban Wildlife Committee

Purpose of the Rapid City Deer Management Program

The purpose of the Rapid City Deer Management Program is to provide guidance to the Rapid City Mayor, Council, and staff, the Rapid City Urban Wildlife Committee, and involved stakeholders for the management of white-tailed and mule deer within the city limits of Rapid City. The Deer Management Program is an effort to foster healthy deer populations and to maximize aesthetic and recreational opportunities while minimizing negative impacts to private interests. The Deer Management Program addresses problems associated with an overabundance of deer within the established boundaries of Rapid City. Current problems include deer/vehicle collisions, landscape, garden or property damage, and public safety (aggressive encounters with deer).

Program Management

The Director of the Rapid City Parks & Recreation Department (Parks & Rec) will be responsible for the overall management and oversight of the Deer Management Program.

Rapid City Deer Management Program Background

The current Rapid City Urban Wildlife Committee has had many names since its inception in 1994 as the Urban Deer Citizens Advisory Task Force. Originally formed at the request of the mayor with a focus on only urban deer, the group has been referred to as the Deer Committee, Deer Management Task Force, Deer Task Force, and perhaps others. The present Urban Wildlife Committee is a sub-group of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board and is responsible for addressing all wildlife issues that affect the citizens of Rapid City.

In 1994 the Urban Deer Citizens Advisory Task Force was formed at the request of the mayor and published its Deer Herd Management Plan. The plan included several alternatives for to dealing with the problem of urban deer. The pros and cons of each method were outlined by the Task Force and after much consideration, the Task Force issued its recommendations.

One of the recommendations was to allow trained City shooters to kill deer within the city limits over bait at carefully selected sites. Implementation required the City Council to pass an ordinance creating an exception to the prohibition against discharge of firearms within the city. The ordinance to permit this exception failed to gain sufficient support of the majority of the City Council, so no deer herd management program was implemented in 1994.

On April 11, 1995, the citizens of Rapid City approved an initiated ballot measure by a vote of 6,567 to 3,658 to: “Establish the authority to cooperate with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks to establish and maintain a herd management program for the deer herd population within the City of Rapid City.” (See Appendix 1.) The approved ordinance read: “Be it ordained by the City of Rapid City that any other ordinance notwithstanding, the City of Rapid City is authorized to cooperate and to enter into agreements with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks to establish and maintain a deer herd management program for the deer population within the boundaries of the City of Rapid City, including but not limited to permitting persons authorized by the Department of Game, Fish and Parks to shoot, trap, or transport deer in order to implement and carry out an effective deer management program within the City of Rapid City.” This ballot measure eliminated the need to

pass an amendment to the Rapid City Municipal Code creating an exception to the prohibition against discharge of firearms within the city. After the vote, the newly formed committee recommended baiting, trapping and then transporting those deer alive to a processing plant with the processed deer meat donated to approved charitable organizations. The 1995 program was halted by a citizen lawsuit that ultimately resulted in dismissal on summary judgment motion filed by counsel for the city. The legislation at the heart of that litigation was amended in the 1996 South Dakota legislature to more clearly define the authority of the Secretary of Game, Fish & Parks (GF&P) to implement similar management programs.

The 1996 Rapid City Deer Herd Management Program, with a detailed plan for baiting and shooting deer at carefully selected sites, was prepared and presented to the City Council by the committee formed that year. In December 1996, in cooperation with GF&P, the City instituted a program using trained City shooters to shoot deer within the boundaries of Rapid City. While other tools of deer management were considered and are mentioned in earlier plans, harvesting by trained City shooters, who are city employees, has been the preferred method used. Based on annual urban deer survey data collected by GF&P and Parks & Rec personnel on selected routes within the city, kill permits were issued to harvest urban deer. Deer were harvested each winter from 1996 through 2001 with numbers ranging from a low of 100 to a high of 207 deer. No urban deer were killed in the winters of 2002 and 2003, but deer herd numbers grew considerably, and the program was reinstituted in 2004 and has continued each year since then with up to 300 deer removed per year. (See Appendix 2.) Deer were processed, and the meat donated to charitable organizations from 1996 through 2001. Starting in 2004, processing was no longer paid for by the City, and deer carcasses instead were provided at no cost to Rapid City residents. That approach continued through 2011.

In 2012 the Urban Wildlife Committee revised the Rapid City Deer Management Plan. This revised plan better defines problems with the deer population in specific areas of the city, includes additional strategies for deer management, and outlines the current program for distributing the harvested deer.

Rapid City Deer Population Monitoring

The deer population in Rapid City has been surveyed annually since 1995. (See Appendix 2, 3, & 4.) The survey consists of 3 fixed transects on city streets in the west side of Rapid City. An additional transect in the Robbinsdale neighborhood was added for the 2012 survey. The survey is conducted in mid to late October annually. It is coordinated by the GF&P and completed with assistance from Parks & Rec employees. The survey routes are run 3 separate times, 2 in the evening and 1 in the morning, over the course of 3-5 days. Weather conditions, participating observers, and moon phase are recorded as well. The resulting data is analyzed for trends in overall numbers, high counts by route, species, and age/sex ratios. The survey data produces an index of the deer population within the city and does not generate a population estimate. Trend analysis is then used to determine a recommendation for the annual deer kill permit request.

Citizen Complaints and Deer/Vehicle Collision Data

A dedicated phone line for wildlife complaints has been established in the Parks & Rec office to allow citizens to report wildlife concerns. The number is (605) 791-4WILD (*last digit is ignored, so number is actually 791-4945).* Collected data is entered into a spreadsheet maintained by Parks & Rec staff. (See Appendix 5.) A similar form will be developed on the Rapid City website (www.rcgov.org),

which will offer an alternative to calling the wildlife complaint phone line. Complaint data will be compiled and used to determine trends over time to aid in deciding where to shoot deer and how many from each area.

Deer/vehicle collision data is collected by the State of South Dakota Public Safety Department from local law enforcement agencies including local police, county sheriff, highway patrol, and GF&P. This information will be provided to Parks & Rec by the Rapid City Traffic Operations Section of the Engineering Services Division. This data will be organized and mapped to determine trends over time to aid in deciding where to shoot deer and how many from each area.

Deer Problem Mitigation and Deer Reduction Methods

Enforcement of the City Ban on Wildlife Feeding Rapid City Municipal Code 6.16.020 prohibits people from feeding wildlife anywhere in Rapid City. (See Appendix 6.) The Urban Wildlife Committee will work with the Rapid City Police Department and the City Council to seek enforcement of existing ordinances prohibiting the feeding of wildlife within the boundaries of Rapid City.

Deer Harassment Methods Deer harassment methods may be used by the City or GF&P as necessary and in accordance with state law to disburse deer from areas of complaints.

Deer Resistant Gardens, Repellents, and Fencing Methods may be used by the City and by residents to mitigate wildlife problems. (See Appendix 7.) Resources and information to aid in reducing deer damage to property is provided. Also included is information for avoiding collisions with deer and requirements for reporting collisions with wildlife.

Deer Reduction by City Employees

Approval by Secretary of GF&P The Urban Wildlife Committee will seek approval for the Deer Management Program from the Secretary of GF&P before it is presented to the Mayor and City Council for final approval. (See Appendix 8.) City deer reduction will only occur upon receipt of an annual kill permit issued by the Secretary of GF&P.

City Council Approval Each year the Rapid City Common Council will approve the number of deer to be killed that season based on recommendations from GF&P and Parks & Rec. The number will be based on the deer population monitoring data, number and location of citizen complaints, and deer/vehicle collision data. The approved number of deer to be killed will be presented to GF&P to be approved by the Secretary of GF&P. The final number approved by the Secretary of GF&P will be reflected in the issued kill permit.

City Shooter Selection, Training, Proficiency, and Compensation Each City shooter approved for participation in the Deer Management Program will be tested for firearm proficiency in cooperation with Parks & Rec management. The City shooters will complete a firearms safety course, undergo a background investigation check, and pass a proficiency test. The proficiency test will include a maximum 2-inch, 5-shot group at 50 yards for .22 Long Rifle caliber rifles and a maximum 2-inch, 5-shot group at 100 yards for center-fire caliber rifles. Groups will be shot using the same method of support used in the field, i.e. bipod, tripod, monopod or self-supported. Sandbag bench rest devices not intended for field use will not be utilized to demonstrate proficiency. City shooters may use only those rifles with which they have successfully demonstrated proficiency. Handguns will not be authorized

for use. Iron sights (open or peep) will not be used. Optical sights (telescopic, red dot, night vision, or laser) will be used to maximize accuracy and humane kills. These requirements must be met before a person is recognized as a City shooter. Previous proficiency testing will not be used to "grandfather" a person previously employed as a City shooter. GF&P will be consulted on the most humane and effective method of shot placement. City shooters will be employees of Parks & Rec while engaged in deer management activities.

All records and materials demonstrating City shooter training and proficiency will be maintained at the Parks & Rec office with copies provided to GF&P. Targets will be signed and dated by the City shooter and the person(s) conducting proficiency testing along with date, shooting range location, distance to target, rifle make and model, and optics make and model.

The City of Rapid City will provide bait to be used at the pre-selected kill sites. Vehicles owned by the City of Rapid City will be provided for use by the City shooters.

Compensation will be approved by the City Council.

Kill Site Locations Kill sites will be located in pre-selected safe areas determined by Parks & Rec in cooperation with GF&P. Each City shooter must have a clear and unobstructed view of the impact area and adjacent land. Shots will be fired from an elevated position to ensure bullets cannot escape the impact area. All persons present at any firing point will be employed as City shooters or authorized by the Parks & Rec Director. The maximum distance between the impact area and the firing point must be no more than 100 yards. Land within the corporate limits of the city will have preference. Private property will be used only with owner's written permission.

Kill Methods, Scheduling, and Oversight Every effort will be made to target only does. Any male deer killed, with or without antlers, will be reported to GF&P and the antlers surrendered as required. Detailed log entries will be made for every deer harvested. (See Appendix 9.) The deer will be harvested by the most humane means possible. Dates and times will be set by GF&P in the kill permit issued to the city. The Rapid City Police Department will be notified in advance of any shooting. City shooters will be dispatched to pre-selected kill sites nearest areas identified as having reported deer problems. City shooters will be informed by the Parks & Rec Director, the Parks Department Manager, or their designee where and when they may conduct deer management activities in order to optimize the removal of deer from identified problem areas.

Field Dressing Deer will be properly field dressed, transported, and stored prior to delivery for processing. Entrails will be disposed of at approved locations. Every effort will be made to handle the deer in a manner that preserves the quality of the meat.

Allocation of Meat Deer harvested using city funds will be donated to South Dakota Sportsmen Against Hunger (SAH). SAH will pay processing costs for the meat and will donate it to local aid agencies for distribution to people in need. SAH will follow their organization's directives for processing, storing, and distributing the meat and keeping accurate records of all transactions. Should funding not be available from SAH, the meat will be distributed to the public as directed by GF&P and Parks & Rec.

Oversight, Reporting, Annual Review

Ride-along evaluations by authorized personnel will be performed at least twice during any kill season and three times if more than 200 deer are to be harvested. For each evaluation, a report will be submitted to the Parks & Rec Director and the Urban Wildlife Committee Chairman. Any safety infractions will result in the immediate dismissal of the City shooter involved from the Deer Management Program. The Director of Parks & Rec will issue an annual report on the Deer Management Program to GF&P and the City Council. It will be available for public review at the Parks & Rec office and will include annual deer count data, deer harvest data, summary of wildlife complaints, a report on the number of feeding ordinance violations, and deer/vehicle collision data.

Authors, Approval, and Signatures

Authors:

This document was prepared by members of the Rapid City Urban Wildlife Committee:

Acting Parks & Recreation Department Director: Lon Van Deusen
Rapid City Parks and Recreation Board Members: Wes Storm and Rick Askvig
City Council Liaison: Bill Clayton
Urban Forestry Board Member: Bill Keck
SD Game Fish & Parks Representative: John Kanta
Biologist: James Good (Chairman)
Hunter: Terry Mayes
Parks Division Employee: Jeff Pansch
Members-at-Large: Bret DeBusk and Shirley Frederick

Approval:

Approved by the Secretary SDGF&P: _____ (See Appendix 8.)
date

Approved by the Rapid City Common Council: _____
date

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2012

CITY OF RAPID CITY

_____
Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Finance Officer

(SEAL)

Appendix

1. Copy of Initiated Measure Ballot - Rapid City Municipal Election Apr 11, 1995

OFFICIAL BALLOT
RAPID CITY MUNICIPAL ELECTION

A MUNICIPAL | B APRIL 11, 1995 | C

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS:

To vote for a person whose name is printed on this ballot completely blacken the oval ( ) next to the candidate's name. **YOU MUST USE THE PENCIL PROVIDED TO MARK BALLOT.**

FOR MAYOR,
YOU MAY VOTE FOR ONE

- ED McLAUGHLIN
- JERRY MUNSON

WARD ONE ALDERMAN
FOR A TWO YEAR TERM
YOU MAY VOTE FOR ONE

- ALLEN J. KLEINSASSER
- STANLEY W. PETRIK

The following question is brought before the voters of the City of Rapid City, South Dakota, for their acceptance or rejection:

TITLE OF MEASURE

For an initiated measure to enact a law: AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED, An Ordinance Establishing the Authority to Cooperate with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks to Establish and Maintain a Herd Management Program for the Deer Herd Population Within the City of Rapid City.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The initiated ordinance would authorize the City to cooperate and to enter into agreements with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks to establish and maintain a deer herd management program within the City. Notwithstanding any other ordinance, such program could include shooting, trapping, or transporting deer by persons authorized by Game, Fish and Parks to carry out the program.

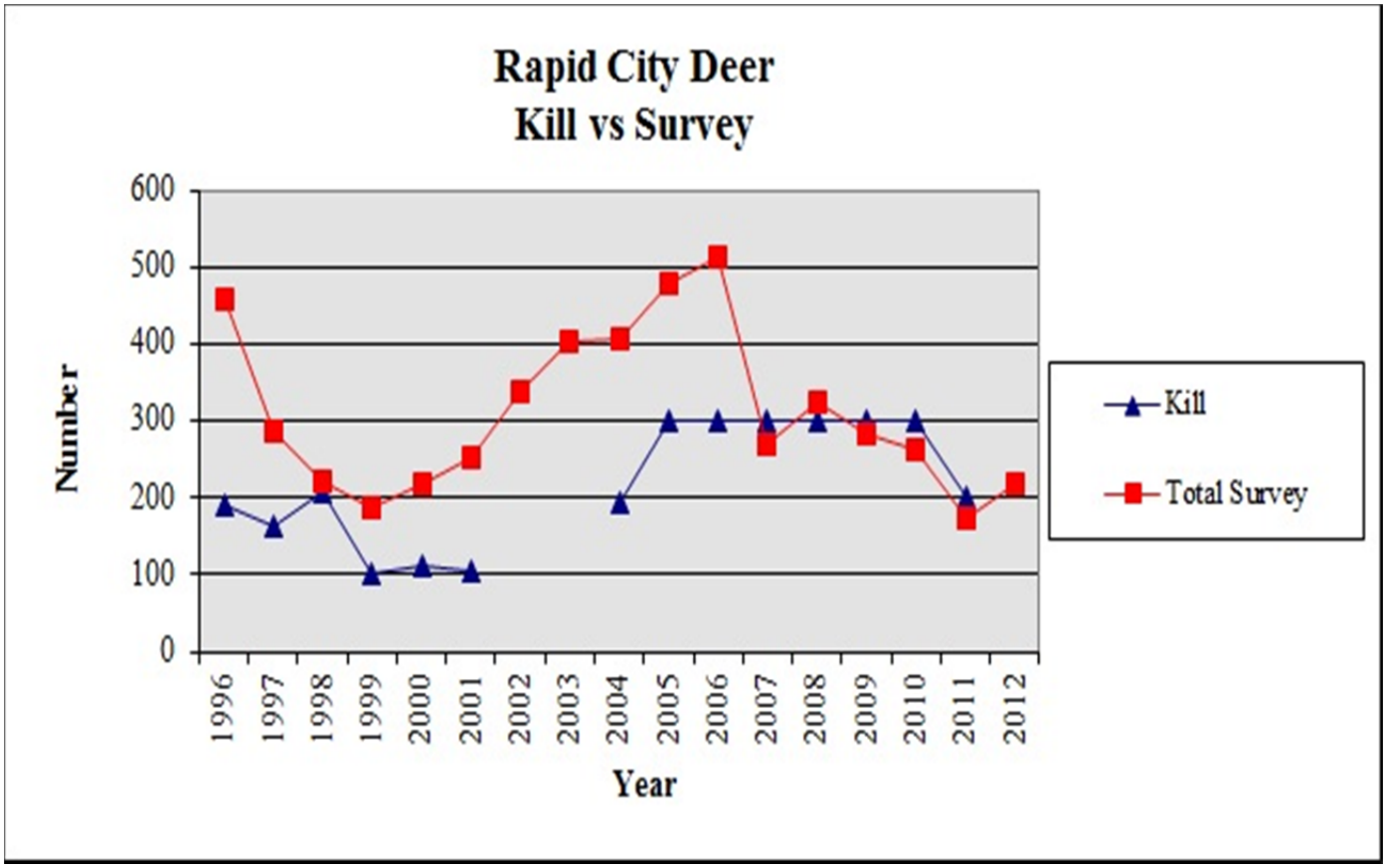
A VOTE "FOR THE MEASURE" IS FOR ENACTMENT OF THE PROPOSAL INTO LAW.

A VOTE "AGAINST THE MEASURE" IS AGAINST THE PROPOSAL BECOMING LAW.

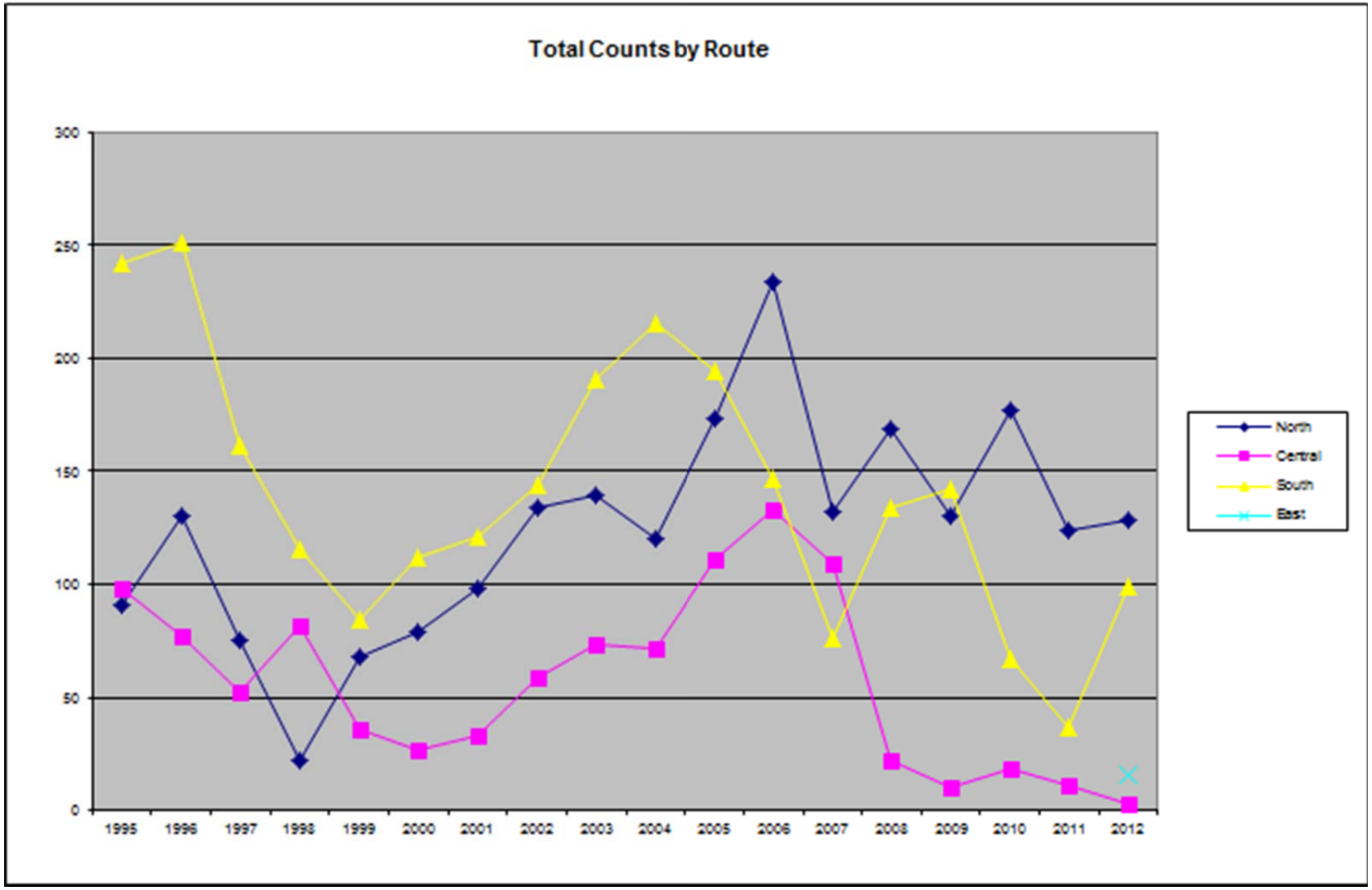
- FOR the Initiated Measure
- AGAINST the Initiated Measure

I, Coleen J. Schmidt, the duly appointed qualified and acting Assistant Finance Officer of the City of Rapid City, South Dakota, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a reduced size facsimile of the Official Ballot to be used at the Municipal/School Election to be held on April 11, 1995.
s/ Coleen J. Schmidt, Assistant Finance Officer
City of Rapid City, South Dakota

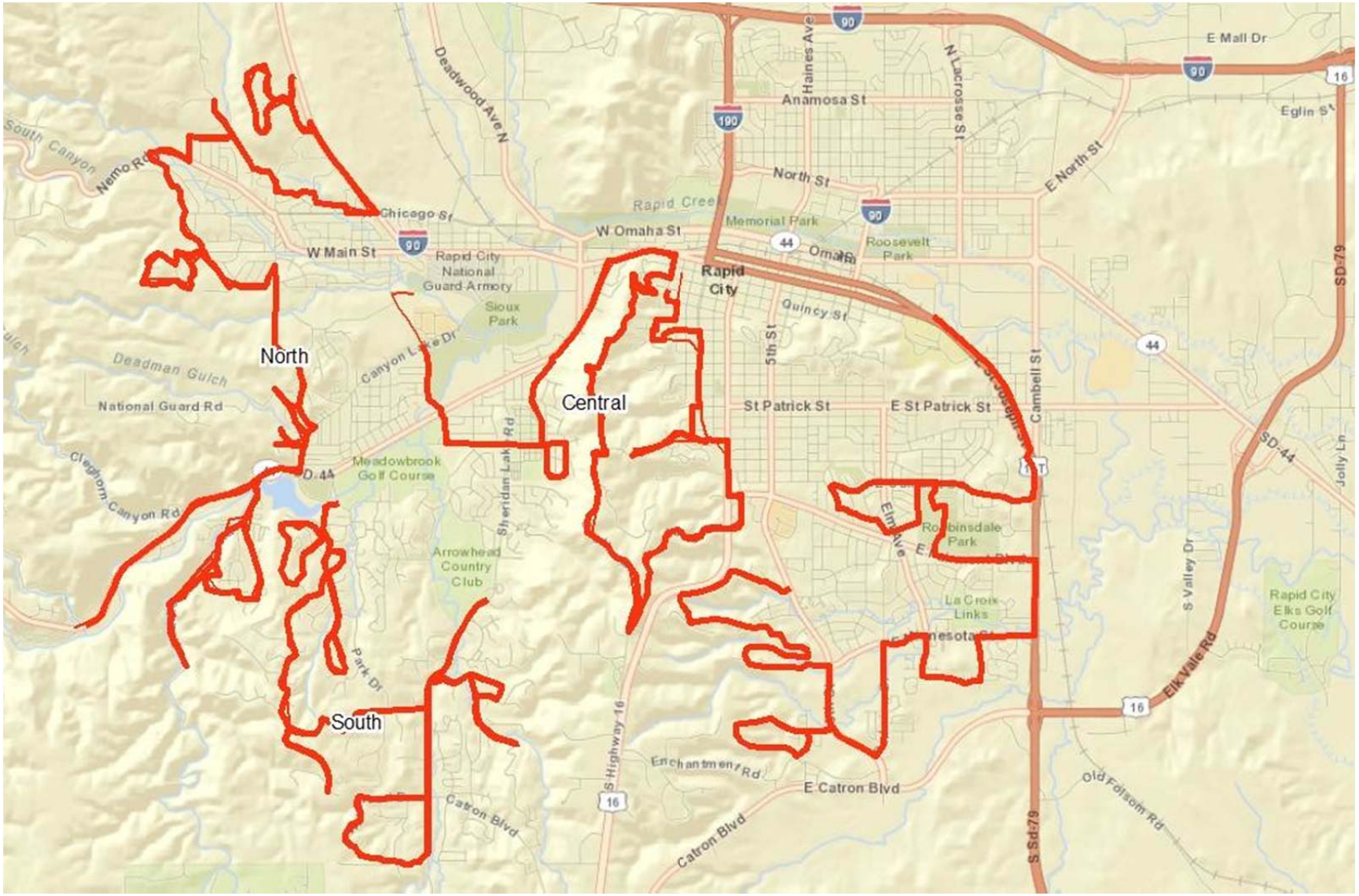
2. Graph of Deer Survey Results and Number of Deer Removed Annually



3. Chart of Deer Survey Results



4. Map of Deer Survey Routes



5. Wildlife Complaint Form (example only)

WILDLIFE COMPLAINT FORM											
#	KS	Date	Last Name	First Name	Address	Zip	Phone	email	Animal	Species	Problem
1	10	10/12/2012	Clayton	William	715 Field View Drive	57701	718-2580	bhmarketing@rushmore.com	Deer	White Tail	Deer are wandering through garden and pooping on lawn causing dogs and cats to be afraid to come out of house. Vegetable garden has been raided and shrubs are damaged.

6. Rapid City Municipal Code Prohibiting Feeding of Wildlife

6.16.020 Feeding of wild animals and waterfowl prohibited.

A. No person shall purposely or knowingly, with intent to provide such food, feed, bait, or in any manner provide access to food to any wild animal or waterfowl within the corporate limits of the City of Rapid City, on lands either publicly or privately owned. This section shall not apply to the feeding of farm animals lawfully kept within the city limits.

B. No person shall purposely or knowingly leave or store any refuse, garbage, food product, pet food, forage product or supplement, salt, seed, birdseed, fruit, or grain in a manner that would constitute any attractant to any wild animal or waterfowl.

C. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the actions of any agent of the State of South Dakota lawfully engaged in a wildlife or waterfowl management program.

D. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the actions of an agent of the City of Rapid City authorized to implement an alternative control method set forth in any approved community based deer management plan and possessing a special deer management permit issued by the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks.

(Ord. 5501 (part), 2010)

6.16.030 Feeding of songbirds and other backyard birds permitted.

Feeding of songbirds and other backyard birds shall be permitted outdoors at such times and in such numbers that: (1) such feeding does not create an unreasonable disturbance with wildlife; (2) any apparatus used to feed such birds does not become an attractant for wild animals and (3) bird feeders are placed where wildlife other than songbirds would have a difficult time eating from them.

(Ord. 5501 (part), 2010)

6.16.040 Continuing violation.

Failure to remove or remedy a violation of this chapter within 24 hours after notice from the city shall constitute a separate violation of this chapter.

(Ord. 5501 (part), 2010)

6.16.050 Penalty.

Any person violating any provision of this chapter shall be liable for a fine not more than $5 for each offense.

(Ord. 5501 (part), 2010)

Note:
Please consult Rapid City Municipal Code on city web site for most up to date information on city ordinances.

7. Deer Resistant Gardens/Repellents/Avoiding Wildlife Collisions

Deer-Resistant Gardens

Tips for reducing damage from deer:

- Choose deer-repellent and resistant plants. Because deer feeding preferences vary widely by region, check with a local nursery or university extension service when making landscaping decisions.
- Make property borders and entryways less attractive by lining them with repellent and resistant plants.
- Create a barrier of hedges to reduce a deer's view of the garden, and incorporate terraces into the garden design to minimize landing sites for deer.
- Keep grass and underbrush trimmed and pick up fallen fruits promptly.
- Protect susceptible plants by surrounding them with repellent ones.
- Substitute greenery with colored rock, attractive mulches, lawn furniture, and water fountains.

Deer Resistant Plants &Seeds, Repellents, and Netting or Plastic Mesh

Deer resistant plants, seeds, repellents, and fencing are available for purchase from local nurseries and hardware stores and online. More information is available at the local library and on the Internet.

Gardening/Living with Deer Books

- *Gardening in Deer Country* (Gardening Guides Series) by Vincent Jr. Drzewucki
- *Deer Proofing Your Yard & Garden* by Rhonda Hart Poe
- *Outwitting Deer* by Bill Adler, Jr.
- *Wild Neighbors: The Humane Approach to Living with Wildlife* by the Humane Society of the United States

Driving Tips for Citizens to Avoid Deer/Vehicle Collisions

The following are defensive driving tips to avoid hitting deer:

- Be attentive from sunset to midnight and hours shortly before and after sunrise. These are the highest-risk periods.
- Drive with caution when moving through deer-crossing zones, in areas known to have a large deer population and in areas where roads divide agricultural fields from forestland. Deer seldom run alone. If you see one deer, others may be nearby.
- When driving at night, use high beam headlights when there is no oncoming traffic. The high-beams will better illuminate the eyes of deer on or near the roadway.

- Brake firmly when you notice a deer in or near your path, but stay in your lane. Many serious crashes occur when drivers swerve to avoid a deer and hit another vehicle or lose control of their cars.

- Always wear your seat belt. Deer-vehicle collisions can result in serious injuries. People tend to underestimate how much damage collisions with animals can cause.

- If your vehicle strikes a deer, it’s best not to touch the animal. The frightened and wounded animal could hurt you or itself. If the deer is blocking the roadway and poses a danger to other motorists, you should call law enforcement. SD law requires notification of law enforcement to file a report if there is any vehicle damage. Contact your insurance agent or company representative to report any damage to your car. Collision with a deer or animals is covered under the comprehensive portion of automobile policies.

8. Approval Letter from Secretary SDGF&P

DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH, AND PARKS
Foss Building
523 East Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182

November 20, 2012

Mr. Sam Kooiker
Rapid City Mayor
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Dear Mr. Kooiker,

The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (SDGFP) has received and reviewed the document entitled "*Rapid City Deer Management Program*" from the City of Rapid City. SDGFP understand the City intends to follow the protocols and procedures identified within this document as we move forward with a cooperative effort to manage urban deer within the city. I commend the folks that worked cooperatively to develop this document and I believe it follows sound procedures. I hereby officially approve the procedures and policies identified within the document entitled "*Rapid City Deer Management Program*".

I want to thank you, again, for your continued cooperation with urban deer management within the City of Rapid City and I look forward to continuing our partnership.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey R. Vonk, Department Secretary

Office of Secretary: 605.773.3718 Wildlife Division: 605.223.7660 Parks/Recreation Division: 605.773.3391 FAX: 605.773.6245
TTY: 605.223.7684

9. City Shooter Log Format

Deer Management - 2011/2012							
				Start	Finish		
Daily Log			**PD Called:**			**Log #**	
Date:							
Shooter # 1:		W = Whitetail					
Shooter # 2:		M = Muley					
		F = Fawn					
Shooter							Harvest
#	Location	Buck	Doe	Time	Caliber	Tag #	Area #
		Muley	Muley	Whitetail	Whitetail	Fawns	To
		Buck	Doe	Buck	Doe	(incl with does)	Date
	Daily Totals						
	Previous Totals						
	Totals To Date						

10. Relevant Links to Additional Information

South Dakota GF&P Home Page - http://gfp.sd.gov/

Wildlife Management Plans - http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/default.aspx

Wildlife Diseases - http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/diseases/

Sportsmen Against Hunger (SAH) - http://www.feedtheneedsd.com/