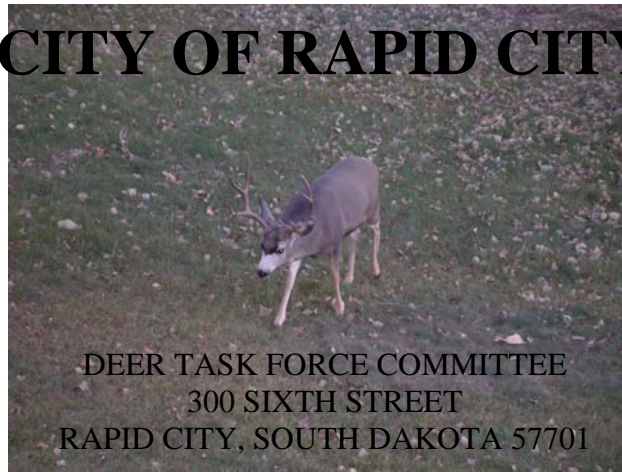


CITY OF RAPID CITY



DEER TASK FORCE COMMITTEE
300 SIXTH STREET
RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701

Date: December 4, 2006

To: Mayor Jim Shaw and Rapid City Common Council

From: Deer Task Force

Subject: Deer Task Force Report

Honorable Mayor Jim Shaw and Rapid City Council Members:

Recommendation: Budget for and create a long term Rapid City Deer Management Plan.

Summary: In the past two years the Deer Task Force has met to review a variety of ways to manage the City's deer population. The Committee has met with experts from Game, Fish and Parks, as well as representatives from the non-government, scientific world. Each of these disciplines has presented pros and cons covering all types of wildlife management methods. The Task Force then discussed the benefits and liabilities of each method, with discussion centered on the following topics: capturing and relocating the herd to different areas; administering birth control; installing traffic safety measures, harvesting by sharp shooters; issuing hunting licenses; and several other alternative measures.

Recommendations. The Deer Task Force believes that herd management continues to be necessary and strongly suggests that the Rapid City Council take steps to create and implement a long term deer management plan. A long term management plan is the only way to bring the deer population under control, and keep it under control. A long range plan would set a maximum carrying capacity for the City's herd and this number would be the goal for the City to maintain. A long range plan would also include several options on how to reach and maintain this capacity. With current survey practices detailed information about herd numbers, living and migration patterns and city carrying capacity aren't well defined. For these reasons the Deer Committee believes it important to hire a professional to create a long term deer management plan for Rapid City.

The plan should include the following:

- ▶ In depth City wide deer census
- ▶ In depth City wide deer migration study
- ▶ Implementation of non-lethal alternatives to assist in current management practices, including but not limited to:
 - ✚ Administering birth control methods
 - ✚ Road barriers and other technical devices along roadways
 - ✚ Cautionary signs along roadways with high auto/deer accidents
- ▶ Education and marketing to citizens on methods used to control the population and how the public can help
- ▶ Costs associated for each of the above managing methods.

It is hoped that the City Council will look favorably on the Task Force's recommendation to develop a City wide deer management plan, and make it a priority in 2007. The Deer Task Force will work diligently to prepare estimates for developing this plan and submit the information to the City Council as soon as possible.

A special thanks to the Mayor, members of the City Council, Game, Fish & Parks Staff, and City Staff for all the help that has been provided to the Deer Task Force.

Sincerely,

Karen Gundersen Olson, Chair
Rapid City Deer Task Force
Ward Three Alderman

See Attachment A for background

Attachment A.

Background. Since 1995 the deer population within the city limits, based on annual Game, Fish and Parks survey, has increased over 19%. A deer harvest program using sharp shooters was approved by the City Council in 1995. In the early stages, this deer harvest program curtailed the rising population of deer within the City. The City Council discontinued management in 2002 and 2003 because the City Council believed that population control had been achieved.

In 2004, after several mild winters, the deer population within the City's boundaries, based on the annual GF&P survey, showed increases. A harvest was again implemented in 2004 and 2005. Even with the implementation of an increased harvest in 2005 (300 deer taken rather than the usual 200), the population of deer is still on the increase. The deer census done in October/ November of this year by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, shows an increase in the City's herd of 8% over last year.