



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Ron Rosenthal – Director of Engineering
Tim Sletten – Police Chief

Agenda Item No.: **8J** 2011 Special Hunt

Meeting Date: April 11, 2011

ACTION REQUESTED: Approval for 2011 Special Hunt within the city limits of Red Wing.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) 2010 CITY OF RED WING HARVEST REPORT BY LOCATION.
- 2) 2010 CITY OF RED WING TYPE OF DEER HARVEST REPORT.
- 3) 2011 CITY OF RED WING HUNT APPLICATION AND RULES with revisions.
- 4) 2011 CITY OF RED WING HARVEST REPORT with revisions.
- 5) 2011 CITY OF RED WING EARN-A-BUCK PROGRAM GUIDELINES with revisions.
- 6) Letter from Mike Tenney, Minnesota DNR area Wildlife Manager.
- 7) 2011 MINNESOTA DNR SPECIAL DEER HUNT RECOMMENDATION FORM.
- 8) 2011 CITY OF RED WING HUNTING ZONE MAP with revisions.

BACKGROUND: Several years ago, as a response to extensive deer complaints relating to flower and shrub destruction and traffic safety, the City established an archery deer hunting program within areas of the City that were previously closed to all hunting. The program was expanded in 1998 to include intensive harvest permits (now called Bonus Permits) from the State. These permits allow a single hunter to harvest up to 5 deer and the availability of these permits substantially increased participation. The permits and allocations change each year as determined by the State to properly manage deer herds.

Each year staff meets with Minnesota DNR officials to go over the prior year's Special Hunt and to discuss any changes that need to be made. Attending this year's meeting were: Tim Sletten – Chief of Police, Ron Rosenthal – Director of Engineering, Joe Juliar – Training Specialist for the Red Wing Police

Department, Mike Tenney – State of Minnesota Assistant Area Wildlife Manager and Tyler Quandt – State of Minnesota Conservation Officer.

DISCUSSION: The DNR Deer Bonus Permits, up to four per hunter, that will be authorized for this special archery hunt increase the number of antlerless deer hunters can harvest, and since this is a population reduction program, the more deer taken the better. This program has also been a very low cost means of controlling the population of deer as compared to vary costly alternatives such as "sharpshooter" and baiting programs. It is believed that the cost of using "sharpshooters" to take deer would be approximately \$300 per animal or more and possibly higher for any trapping program that could be conducted. The deer numbers are lower than they once were in the City, and complaints are likewise down, but if some population control doesn't continue, the problem will quickly resurface as the deer here have proven to be very prolific. The hunt should be evaluated in more detail and possibly altered to better suit our needs if we see another lower harvest or if the complaints move into areas that we aren't reaching with the current program.

In the last five years the City has seen an increase in special deer hunt participants and in the number of deer taken. It is believed that the adoption of the Earn-A-Buck Program for Memorial Park, Oakwood Cemetery, Coon Hill and Sand Hill has been one reason for this. Right now bucks can be harvested in any archery only zone within the City limits of Red Wing other than those areas mentioned above. It is believed that by opening these areas to an Earn-A-Buck Program that it has been an incentive for more archers to harvest antlerless deer within the Cities archery only zones.

Staff feels that this process will further improve the special hunt and harvest potential to better address the deer problems in the City. In all, this program has worked well to meet the need for deer control in the City. Each year the revisions that are proposed are a way to further refine the process and manage the deer population and provide necessary tools to be proactive on this issue. The recreational needs of the hunters are accommodated, but still regulated to ensure safety and uniformity within the City.

It should also be noted that in October of 2008 the City passed a ban on the recreational feeding of deer. The purpose of this artificial feeding ban is to eliminate those deer attractions which when combined with other management strategies, like the harvesting of deer, should reduce, over time, the depredation impacts to adjacent residents, as well as assure the safety of the traveling public on City streets and thoroughfares.

As you will see in this year's recommendation for change, we have made it clearer that other species may be harvested during the year but only west of Bench Street since this area is more rural related with larger open areas. The most common question we have is if people can hunt turkeys and we have allowed this with limitations. It is hoped that the language changes will clarify what is allowed and what is not.

Recommended changes for APPLICATION AND RULES: (Refer to attachment #3)

- At top of page “Back Tag” was added since this is will be the number used on all forms.
- At the top of form the term TRANSACTION was added since this is the specific name of the number on hunting licenses to identify individual applicants.
- Under #12, “other species” was added since this application can be used for more than deer.
- Under #15, “west of Bench Street” was added since this would be the only area where other species could be harvested in archery only zones and then a special NOTE was added that if hunting on City owned property elevated stands would have to be used.
- Under #17, Special Hunt date time frame is given along with hunting for deer is only allowed during approved DNR deer hunting season dates.

Recommended changes for HARVEST REPORT: (Refer to attachment #4)

- The term TRANSACTION was added for the same reason as mentioned in #3.
- “Other Species” was added to track other species harvested.

Recommended changes for CITY OF RED WING EARN-A-BUCK PROGRAM GUIDELINES: (Refer to attachment #5)

- At top and near bottom of page “Back Tag” was added since this is more accurate than Deer Hunt Permit number.
- The term “legal” (buck) was added since there are antler restrictions now on bucks that can be harvested.
- The term “anterless deer” was added instead of doe since this is more correct.
- The terms “ARCHER’S COPY” and “CITY OF RED WING COPY” added so it is clear which part of the form the archer retains and which part the City retains.

Recommended changes for CITY OF RED WING HUNTING ZONE MAP: (Refer to #8)

- Added area between #61 and bike trail and Spring Creek and Spring Creek Road Avenue north. There was a complaint from a nearby business and it may help to open this area to reduce deer numbers. This area is private property and permission would have to be obtained to hunt.

ONGOING OPERATING & MAINTENANCE COSTS: There is a new \$30 application fee that the City of Red Wing needs to pay to the Minnesota DNR to apply for the Archery Special Deer Hunt. The exact amounts of operating and maintenance costs are unknown but it is believed that these costs should be covered by the City fee charged to participate in the Special Hunt.

FUNDING SOURCE(S): General fund

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Authorize 2011 SPECIAL HUNT with additional Bonus Permits; recommended 2011 DEER HUNT APPLICATION AND RULES, recommended 2011 CITY OF RED WING EARN-A-BUCK PROGRAM GUIDELINES, recommended 2011 HARVEST REPORT and 2011 CITY OF RED WING HUNTING ZONE MAP.
2. Not authorize recommended revisions to 2010 DEER HUNT APPLICATION AND RULES.
3. Not authorize recommended revisions to 2010 CITY OF RED WING EARN-A-BUCK PROGRAM GUIDELINES.
4. Not authorize recommended revisions to 2010 HARVEST REPORT.
5. Not authorize recommended revision to 2010 CITY OF RED WING HUNTING ZONE MAP
6. Not authorize 2011 SPECIAL HUNT.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Alternative #1 above as we believe it will further improve the special hunt and harvest potential to better address the deer problems in the City.