

**Spring Creek Home Owners Association
Mule Deer Damage Management Plan**

**Approved
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Introduction:

The Spring Creek Homeowners Association (SCA) has seen steady population growth of new homes in recent years. With a rise in housing construction, vegetation manipulation for fire breaks, milder winters, what habitat that was once utilized by the resident mule deer population has been impacted which has led to a decreasing amount of green space and upland shrub habitat that mule deer depend on. Because of these factors, mule deer have caused damage in the SCA in various ways. To address property owner's concerns and to address damage management options, SCA has requested assistance from the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW). NDOW is the state agency designated to manage Nevada's wildlife. The mule deer issues faced by the SCA are very similar to those seen around the West near the wildland/urban interface. See Attached WAFWA MDWG Fact Sheet 9: Urban Issues

Per NDOW, SCA has taken an active role to reduce damages from mule deer. SCA has formed a committee, conducted an informal mule deer damage assessment, held multiple public meetings, formed a database, and made SCA rule changes. In addition to what has been done to date, SCA is pursuing additional management options; several of which require permitting through NDOW. In the process, NDOW has requested this Mule Deer Damage Management Plan to supplement damage management actions, including those requiring permitting through NDOW.

Assessment of Damages:

Primary damages caused by mule deer identified to date include but are not limited to; vehicle damage from deer/auto collisions, landscape and property damage, deer/pet conflicts injuries. Potential damages of concern that were identified also include disease transmission (mainly chronic wasting disease), negative influence on area 10 deer herd and migration, and threat to human health and safety.

To focus management decisions moving forward, SCA has developed a database to report and monitor mule deer damages (Appendix A). SCA residents will be required to also contact NDOW to report mule deer issues. SCA employees can also record damages from mule deer. The database will allow effective reporting of damages and pertinent information that can be used to help identify, monitor, and manage damages caused by mule deer. All information recorded by SCA will be forwarded to NDOW.

HOA rules have been updated to reflect the unlawful feeding mule deer. Nevada Revised Statute 501.382. The HOA is committed to the enforcement of this statute through documenting and reporting any cases of intentional feeding to NDOW law enforcement.

Damage Management Practices:

SCA has limited personnel and authority to manage all deer complaints. Currently SCA personnel may remove dead deer from roadways and SCA properties, and coordinate with NDOW law enforcement to enforce no feeding policies and statutes. SCA strongly encourages property owners to utilize best management practices that can reduce damages caused by mule deer throughout SCA. These damage management practices can be grouped into the following categories:

- Vector control
- Reduce attractants
- Exclusion
- Deterrents
- Avoidance
- Hazing and harassment (Permit required off property)
- Relocation (Not approved)
- Supplemental feeding (Not approved)
- Contraceptives (Permits required)
- Lethal removal (Permits Required)

Vector Control

SCA personnel and residents are urged to report sick and dying deer to NDOW, so disease samples can be taken by wildlife biologists or state veterinary staff. If a dead deer needs to be removed (recommended), SCA personnel should consider using personal protective equipment to prevent parasites and contamination of body fluids. The Elko landfill has a direct burial site dedicated to carcass disposal. See Attached WAFWA MDWG Fact Sheet 11: Disease, Parasites

Reduce Attractants:

Mule deer attractants include: food, water, shelter, and other deer. By reducing these attractants SCA residents can reduce damages caused by deer.

Feed for deer is a strong attractant that can lead to many damages. Food can include livestock feed, chicken scratch and bird seed, grain, dog food, and even open composting. SCA residents are urged to keep these food sources secured and unavailable to deer. When deer are intentionally fed, though well intended, it often contributes to starvation and death. See Attached WAFWA MDWG Fact Sheet 2: Winter Feeding

SCA home owners should avoid allowing deer access to fruit trees, berry bushes, and garden vegetables. Consider landscaping options that do not use vegetation that deer can eat or consider plants that deer do not usually eat. Options may include; pruning trees so deer cannot reach the leaves, xeric landscaping, or using deer resistant plants such as cactus.

Do not provide a drinking source that deer can use. Consider watering pets indoors or in their pens. Consider watering horses and livestock in a barn. Put a cover over outdoor swimming pools when not in use. For landscaping ponds consider alternative landscape options that do not include free standing water.

Deer will often use trees and bushes, sagebrush, tall weeds, and even structures as a form of shelter. Consider keeping trees trimmed up 5 ft, keep weeds mowed, landscaping with low growing plants, and/or rocky xeriscape options that do not provide shelter or a shady place for deer to comfortably lay and rest near buildings.

Exclusion:

Deer exclusion can be a very effective means of reducing damages on small areas such as trees, gardens, and landscaping, and livestock feed. Fencing materials and panels can be an effective means to exclude deer from small areas, so long as it designed for excluding deer. Electric fencing can also effectively exclude deer from certain areas.

Adult deer can jump a 6 ft fence. However, well built and maintained fences can minimize deer use. Consideration should be given to young deer that cannot jump fences, as they may become trapped or entangled in the fence and become injured or die. See Attached WAFWA MDWG Fact Sheet 13: Fencing

Deterrents:

Deer deterrents can provide short term protection against damages. Using more than one deterrent may be more effective. Also, changing deterrents over time may reduce the potential for habituation. Consider using deterrents where long-term management is not required. Deer deterrents can include playing a radio, motion detector lights and sprinklers, electric fence, reflective flagging, hot sauce, predator scents, and lawn ornaments that move with wind.

Avoidance:

Deer damage can also be reduced by avoiding deer when practical. Care should be taken to not approach deer when possible. Many deer in SCA are habituated to humans and can become aggressive and cause damages when approached. During certain times of the year, mule deer may become more aggressive, or less concerned with people. Bucks during the rut (mid-October through November) can become aggressive with each other and preoccupied with the does. Does in the spring can become protective of their fawns, and be very aggressive towards dogs and even housecats. Do not allow dogs to approach deer or fawns. Occasionally when a fawn becomes separated, such as in a fenced yard, the does can also become aggressive towards people. SCA homeowners are urged to be aware of these seasonal behavior changes and remain vigilant. See Attached WAFWA MDWG Fact Sheet 26: Encountering Fawns

Hazing and Harassment:

To haze and harass deer, options can be: a garden hose and sprinkler, a car horn, air horn, or even a tin can with rocks can be effective hazing techniques (see deterrents). In certain situations where consistent and continued hazing is necessary, a permit from NDOW may be required.

Relocation:

Relocation of mule deer is currently not approved by NDOW. See Attached WAFWA MDWG Fact Sheet 10: Translocation

Supplemental Feeding:

Supplemental feeding of mule deer is currently not approved by NDOW. See Attached WAFWA MDWG Fact Sheet 2: Winter Feeding

Contraceptives:

Certain contraceptives may be available for managing deer populations at reasonable levels. These contraceptives and the administration method would identify in permit through NDOW and other applicable regulatory agencies. To date, fertility control has not been proven to be a cost-effective long-term solution in dealing with urban mule deer herds. See Attached WAFWA MDWG Fact Sheet 14: Fertility Control

Lethal removal:

Currently, hunting in any form within the SCA is prohibited, so removal would be done under depredation permits. Lethal removal presents a myriad of concerns including negative public sentiment, SCA financial constraints, animal welfare considerations, and potential threats to public safety, and as such is not being pursued as a management option.

Spring creek deer management:

SCA involvement will be to educate the home owners with real or potential deer problem by following the above guide lines starting at education. This can be in the form of pamphlets, verbal advice by NDOW or SCA personnel.

All reporting, pertaining to any of the above criteria will be forwarded to NDOW for their records.

All actions requiring permits will be forwarded to NDOW by the President of SCA. A proper and expedited investigation by NDOW will be done to determine which proper application of the above techniques will be utilized to alleviate the deer problem.