



MEMO

To: Douglas City Council

From: Lisa Nocerini, City Manager

RE: Tri-Community Wildlife Committee – Deer Management Recommendations

Date: July 21st, 2025

Over the past several months, the Tri-Community Wildlife Committee—comprising representatives from the City of the Village of Douglas, the City of Saugatuck, and Saugatuck Township—has been actively working to address ongoing concerns related to deer overpopulation within our shared region. In response to extensive public input and intergovernmental discussion, the committee has developed two proposed approaches for managed archery-only hunts for each community to consider:

Option 1: Managed hunting on private properties, including individual property owners and homeowner associations (HOAs)

Option 2: Managed hunting on public lands

These options have been designed to align with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) designated hunting season and limit participation to archery equipment only for safety purposes. A comparative outline of both options is included in your meeting packet for review.

At this time, City Administration recommends that Council approve the implementation of the private property and HOA-based hunting program only for the 2025-2026 hunting season. Due to the potential sale and development of the City-owned 17-acre parcel—currently the only feasible public land for such use—we believe it is prudent to defer any consideration of public land hunting until a future date when land availability can be re-evaluated.

The Douglas Police Department has agreed to manage the application and permitting process for participating hunters. This will include background checks and verification of compliance with all safety and legal requirements.

Additionally, all approved private property owners and HOAs will be required to report the number of deer harvested following each hunting season. This information will be essential to tracking progress over time and evaluating the overall effectiveness of the program.

Suggested Motion: Motion to approve the Private Property and Homeowner Association (HOA) Guidelines and Application for Controlled Archery Hunts within the City of the Village of Douglas, as presented, and authorize the implementation of the program for the 2025-2026 MDNR-designated hunting season. This approval excludes the use of public lands at this time.



City of the Village of Douglas, Michigan Deer Population Management Program

PUBLIC LANDS ONLY

****ONLY ARCHERY EQUIPMENT** is permitted for all hunts in the City/Township.
The use of firearms is strictly prohibited in the City limits at all times without a permit from the City, including during the Michigan DNR-designated firearm season. Hunters conducting archery hunts during the firearm season must wear an orange vest in compliance with state safety regulations.**

Qualified Hunter Application

The City of the Village of Douglas is seeking qualified hunters to participate in a managed hunt on designated public lands to address the growing deer population. This controlled effort is intended to balance the herd size with ecological, safety, and property concerns in our community.

Applicant Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Driver's License #: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Hunting Qualifications

- MI DNR Hunter ID #: _____

- Valid 2025-2026 Michigan Hunting License: ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Hunter Safety Certified: ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Certification Number (if known): _____

- Years of Deer Hunting Experience: _____

- Prior Municipal/Special Hunt Participation: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify location/year: _____

Equipment-Count- Processing

Proficient with elevated stand use: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Planning to use a ground blind: ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many deer do you plan to harvest: _____

What are your plans for the harvested meat: (ex: donate, keep)

Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger:

<https://www.sportsmenagainsthunger.org/michigansportsmenagainsthunger>

Doe Patrol: <https://www.doepatrolmi.com/contact-us>

Blue Star Meat: <https://bluestarmeal.com/>

Willing to hunt in any City-designated location: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Acknowledgment

By signing, I acknowledge that:

1. This application does not guarantee selection.
2. Hunters selected by the City of Douglas must attend a safety orientation with the City of Douglas Police Department.
3. Hunting is restricted to designated times and areas that the City of Douglas will provide.
4. All DNR regulations and City ordinances must be followed.
5. Harvest data must be submitted by no later than January 30th of the year following the hunt to the City.
6. In order to hunt, retrieve a deer, field dress, or otherwise you **MUST** have the permission of the landowner. Field dressing a deer on private property without

the landowner's permission is strictly prohibited. Hunters must obtain explicit consent from the property owner before performing any processing activities on their land.

7. Must maintain a safe distance from other property lines and dwellings at all times.

8. Hunting under the influence of alcohol/substances is prohibited and is subject to revocation of the issued permit by the City of Douglas.

9. All Michigan Department of Natural Resources regulations must be followed. The City of Douglas has the right to revoke a permit for violations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Submission Instructions:

****Return this completed form to the City of the Village of Douglas Police Department, 47 W. Center Street, Douglas, MI 49406.**

Selection Process:

Applications will be reviewed and scored based on:

- Experience and safety certification
- Previous participation in similar programs
- Geographic preference and availability

Qualified applicants will be entered into a lottery if applications exceed permitted hunter numbers. Final decisions will be made the City of the Village of Douglas.

TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT :

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Approved by: _____

Date Approved: _____



City of the Village of Douglas, Michigan Deer Population Management Program

HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION (HOA)/PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR REGULATED ARCHERY HUNTS

****ONLY ARCHERY EQUIPMENT is permitted for all hunts in the City of the Village of Douglas. The use of firearms is strictly prohibited in the City/Township limits at all times, including during the Michigan DNR-designated firearm season. Hunters conducting archery hunts during the firearm season must wear an orange vest in compliance with state safety regulations.****

HOA Responsibility for Private Property Hunts – If an HOA or Private Property owner wishes to conduct a deer hunt on private property, it must coordinate and cover all associated costs. The City does not fund or organize hunts on private land. **The City is only allowing the use of Archery.**

- **City Approval Required** – All hunting activities, whether on public or private property, must receive formal approval from the City of the Village of Douglas.
- **State-Regulated Hunting Seasons** – Any hunting activities must take place within Michigan's official hunting seasons:
 - **Early Antlerless Firearm:** September 21–22, 2025
 - **Independence Hunt:** October 17–20, 2025
 - **Archery:** October 1–November 14, 2025, and December 1, 2025–January 1, 2026
 - **Firearm Season:** January 15th–January 30th, 2026
- **Licensed Hunters Only** – All participating hunters must obtain a valid hunting license through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). The City/Township is the permitting agency.
- **Compliance with State and Local Laws** – Hunters must adhere to all MDNR regulations, as well as any applicable City/Township ordinances regarding archery use.

- **Permission from HOA Property Owners** – Within an HOA, all individual property owners must give written permission before any hunting occurs on their land.
- **Safety Measures and Public Notification** – The HOA/Private Property Owner, must establish clear safety protocols, and residents should be notified in advance of any planned hunting activities.
- **Reporting Requirements** – The HOA/Private Property owner will be required to submit a post-hunt report by no later than January 30th, 2026, to the City of the Village of Douglas Police Department detailing the number of deer taken and any relevant observations. Failure to do so shall disqualify a hunter from future hunting permits from the City of the Village of Douglas.
- **Coordination with Local Authorities** – The HOA/Private Property owner must communicate with local law enforcement at the City of the Village of Douglas Police Department before conducting a hunt to ensure public safety and compliance with regulations.
- **No Baiting or Feeding** – Baiting is subject to MDNR regulations and is restricted in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Please refer to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Rules and Regulations regarding baiting and feeding.
- **Ongoing City and Community Discussions** – The City of the Village of Douglas will continue to evaluate deer management strategies, and HOA/Private Property Owners are encouraged to stay informed and participate in discussions about long-term solutions.

Acknowledgements:

Before submitting an application to the City of the Village of Douglas Police Department, please note that the following must be acknowledged by the HOA/Private Property Owner:

1. All DNR regulations and City ordinances must be followed.
2. If hunting with archery equipment during firearm season, an orange vest must be worn at all times.
3. Harvest data must be submitted to the Police Department by January 30th, 2026.
4. A City/Township-issued permit and identification must be carried during hunts.
5. In order to hunt, retrieve a deer, field dress, or otherwise you **MUST** have the permission of the landowner. Field dressing a deer on private property without the landowner's permission is strictly prohibited. Hunters must obtain explicit consent from the property owner before performing any processing activities on their land.

6. Must maintain a safe distance from other property lines and dwellings at all times.
7. The City of the Village of Douglas Police Department has the right to deny an application if it is not properly filled out and filed.



**City of the Village of Douglas, Michigan
Deer Population Management Program
Qualified Hunter Application**

Homeowner Association/Private Property Application ONLY

****ONLY ARCHERY EQUIPMENT is permitted for all hunts in the City of the Village of Douglas. The use of firearms is strictly prohibited in the City limits at all times, including during the Michigan DNR-designated firearm season. Hunters conducting archery hunts during the firearm season must wear an orange vest in compliance with state safety regulations.****

Applicant Information Name:

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Driver's License #: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Hunting Qualifications

- MI DNR Hunter ID #: _____
- Valid 2025/2026 Michigan Hunting License: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Hunter Safety Certified: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Certification Number (if known): _____
- Years of Deer Hunting Experience: _____

- Prior Municipal/Special Hunt Participation: ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please specify location/year: _____

Equipment-Count- Processing

- Proficient with elevated stand use: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Planning to use a ground blind: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- How many deer do you plan to harvest: _____
- What are your plans for the harvested meat: (ex: donate, keep)

****If donating, please consider reaching out to one of the organizations below or consider another organization with a mission to help feed others in need:**

Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger:

<https://www.sportsmenagainsthunger.org/michigansportsmenagainsthunger>

Doe Patrol: <https://www.doepatrolmi.com/contact-us>

Blue Star Meat: <https://bluestarmeats.com/>

Private Property Owner Authorization (To be completed by the property owner)

HOA Representative or Property Owner Name:

Property Address: _____

Parcel Size (acres): _____

Phone: _____

I, the undersigned property owner, grant permission for the applicant to hunt deer on my property as part of the City/Township Deer Population Management Program. I understand that the applicant is subject to all applicable laws, ordinances, and program requirements.

Signature of Property Owner: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgment By signing, I acknowledge that:

8. All MDNR regulations and City/Township ordinances must be followed.
9. If archery hunting during firearm season, an orange vest must be worn at all times.
10. Harvest data must be submitted to the City/Township by January 30th, 2026.
11. A City-issued permit and identification must be carried during hunts.
12. In order to hunt, retrieve a deer, field dress, or otherwise you **MUST** have the permission of the landowner. Field dressing a deer on private property without the landowner's permission is strictly prohibited. Hunters must obtain explicit consent from the property owner before performing any processing activities on their land.
13. Must maintain a 30-yard distance from other property lines and dwellings at all times.

Signature of HOA Authorized Representative/Private Property Owner

Owner: _____

Date: _____

****Please return this application to the City of the Village of Douglas Police Department, 47 W. Center Street, Douglas, Michigan, 49406.**

The application MUST be approved by the City of the Village of Douglas Police Department before any hunting activity can commence.**

TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT :

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Approved by: _____

Date Approved: _____