

Some people who received this message don't often get email from trykowsd@uww.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

This is a followup to my in-person comment to the City Council on April 21, 2026, when I tried to get my points across in 3 minutes, but was cut short when I missed the time allowance.

I live in the Whitewater city limits. My new next door neighbor, whom I hardly know yet, started trapping 13-line Ground Squirrels (sometimes called Gophers) in the spring/summer of 2025, and probably chipmunks, on her property using black plastic traps or bait boxes. I've also seen a black plastic animal poison device on her property close to mine, labeled from the Animal Damage Control and Removal company of Elkhorn. These are lethal traps from a hired legitimate pest control company, and last spring/summer I saw a man in her yard setting up some traps on her lawn.

Shortly after that, a gray squirrel got painfully caught in one of the small traps, pulled it out of the ground, dragged it to my property with its face caught in it, screaming in pain. I released the gray squirrel from the trap, and it headed up a tree. I returned the trap back to my neighbor's property. But the squirrel was injured and suffered a slow painful death. I found the squirrel's carcass on my property several days later. I'm still sickened by this. This new neighbor, of just over 1 year, seems rather unapproachable, and doesn't talk to me at all when we're working in our yards close-by, unless I say something first. Then she doesn't make eye contact with me when speaking, and has never initiated a conversation.

I know that 13-line ground squirrels and chipmunks aren't protected by the DNR, but they are welcome on my property, and contribute to aerating soil, keeping it healthy, and eating weed seeds, ants, grasshoppers, and other insects, even Box Elder bugs. They haven't done damage to my plants, but have helped keep my ground aerated, and their entrance holes at about 3" or less are barely visible, nor pose any problem in my gardens and lawn. The native rabbits and gray squirrels can and have caused more damage to my property than these little creatures that stay underground more than above ground.

Also, the local red fox and hawks, which are protected species, need these kinds of rodents as food sources. This year I haven't yet seen either of those species in my neighborhood, especially with the nearby housing complex development construction off Mounds Parkway, which borders my back yard. It now appears that my neighbor's traps have removed the ground squirrels that were also living underground with entrances to their holes on my property, because those tunnels and burrows reach long distances and cross property lines. The ground squirrels are welcome on my property, but now I see that they are mostly all gone, along with the chipmunks. The ground squirrels never caused any harm to my plantings.

I saw the City of Whitewater regulation about killing "squirrels" within the city limits, although it appears it doesn't apply specifically to 13-line ground squirrels, that are smaller and much less damaging than gray squirrels. But, if the lethal traps can injure other creatures, like gray squirrels, birds, etc. can something be done to prevent their use? Are these considered humane methods of trapping? In my opinion, NO. According to the Wisconsin DNR, landowners are permitted to manage ground squirrel and chipmunk species using both nonlethal and lethal techniques. But I think that only non-lethal and humane methods should be permitted in the city, regardless of the DNR's policy. The DNR does not mention many options for lethal and non-lethal removal or repellents, but does mention shooting. The DNR does support live trapping and removal. There are other options for deterring and repelling wildlife besides killing them off, especially when they aren't even a "nuisance" (whatever nuisance means).

Just because the DNR doesn't protect these species doesn't mean that they shouldn't and can't be protected. There are plenty of humane, non-lethal, **SAFE** deterrents that property owners can buy, as I do, to repel rodents and other wild animals from damaging landscapes and gardens, such as:

TOMCAT Animal Repellent, a ready-to-use Spray

VICTOR Mole & Gopher sonic Spike REPELLER, solar stake

REPELS-ALL Animal Repellent Granules

REPELS-ALL Animal Repellent Ready-to-Use Spray

The above are just a few examples, not as costly as hiring a licensed animal control company using lethal methods. They are "people and pet safe".

I think that lethal trapping, and bait and poisoning of any wildlife in the city is a serious offense to our environment as well as a danger to other native wildlife for which it was not intended, as I witnessed next door. Additionally, the consequences from using poisons and lethal traps can have collateral damage to other native species such as amphibians, birds, and other small mammals that explore it's bait. Just because the DNR permits lethal killing doesn't mean that it would be wrong for a municipality to protect its wildlife from pain, injury, and death. Our wildlife species are an important part of our environmental interactive ecosystem, which is supported by an abundance of wildlife like microbes, fungi, native birds, native caterpillars, butterflies, moths, bees, other pollinators, and right on up the food chain for amphibians, reptiles, foxes, ground squirrels, ducks, predator birds like hawks, rabbits, woodchucks, geese, deer, cranes, etc. and on up to humans, especially for the produce we depend on for food.

What good is it to have an Urban Forestry Commission to support the planting of urban trees, when the City lets residents kill the wildlife that the trees are planted to sustain? The little 13-stripe ground squirrels are now out of hibernation, as I see them out and about on my property and nearby on my neighbor's lawn. It means that this neighbor will be trapping them soon. I'm so distressed over this, as these creatures do no harm, and are part of the native food web, ecological biodiversity, soil health, and balance of nature, what little of it remains in Whitewater. All I see around me is destruction of wildlife habitat on this side of town, along with expanding farm fields, new businesses, and housing developments just putting in toxic lawn turf grass, with no native plantings for all of the habitat they destroyed during construction. The native trees planted by the City on the new terraces among swaths of new pavement and concrete are out of sync with the ground and soil needed by native wildlife, destroyed by housing developments that eradicated all of that. Wildlife also includes the microbes, fungi, and micro-flora native to healthy soils.

The paragraph below is all I could find on the city website for wild animal removal. I don't think that residents or any persons should need permission and approval from the Chief of Police for humane trapping and removal of wildlife. I think that the Chief of Police can and should help residents remove wildlife to a safe habitat. I think that the lethal rodent head-chopping traps are inhumane, and I think that INHUMANE KILLING should be forbidden under any circumstances, and should be reported to the Chief of Police. If the COMMON COUNCIL is considering changing this ordinance below to comply with the DNR, I'm against allowing all killing and injuring of native animal species, that includes the mammals that visit our yards. Instead, I think an ordinance should support the trap and release/remove method of controlling animal species within the city limits, which IS in compliance with the DNR. It is also humane.

9.04.010 - Injury to squirrels and pets—Permission required.

No person shall, within the limits of the city, harm or kill squirrels or pets at any time without first obtaining permission from the chief of police of the city. The humane nature of the method and duration of any trapping of squirrels shall be subject to the approval of the chief of police.

Sincerely,

Denay Trykowski

262-473-2300

248 Woodland Dr.

Whitewater, WI 53190