



**MINUTES
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
CITY COUNCIL AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2018, 6:00 P.M.**

Councilmembers Present:

Mayor Larry Thompson
Mayor Pro-Tem John McCaw
Councilmember Robb Erickson
Councilmember Bryan Lantzy
Councilmember Todd Arvidson
Councilmember Kay Bower

Councilmembers Absent:

None

Commissioners Present:

Chair David Krawczynski
Vice-Chair Cynthia Shanahan-Segovia
Commissioner Troy Bippert
Commissioner Dawn Hatch
Commissioner Jeremiah McKinney
Commissioner Ken Kneupper
Commissioner Paul Sullivan

Commissioners Absent:

None

City Staff Present:

Nancy Cain, City Administrator
Marisa Spencer, Interim City Secretary
Christian Oehler, Patrol Officer

Other City Commissioners in Attendance:

Dr. Jim Miller, Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission
David Ringle, Planning and Zoning Commission
Jesus Valdez, Water Commission

1. Call to Order

With a quorum of the City Council and Wildlife Management Advisory Commission Members present, Mayor Thompson called the Special Joint Meeting of the City Council and Wildlife Management Advisory Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 11, 2018, in the City Council Chambers of the Garden Ridge City Hall, 9400 Municipal Parkway, Garden Ridge, Texas 78266.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Thompson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Introduction: Craig Hensley, Wildlife Biologist, Comal and Kendall Counties, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (Mayor Thompson)

Mayor Thompson introduced Craig Hensley, Wildlife Biologist, Comal and Kendall Counties, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and stated the City is lucky to have Mr. Hensley providing this public education session. He also stated Mr. Hensley would answer questions following the briefing.

4. Presentation/Public Education Session

a) “Separating Fact from Fiction: White-tailed Deer and Garden Ridge”

Craig Hensley reviewed “Separating Fact from Fiction: White-tailed Deer and Garden Ridge” (see attached).

b) Question and Answer Session (limited to 30 minutes total)

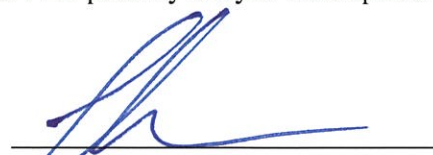
Mayor Thompson explained how the question and answer session would be handled in order to allow for everyone to get the opportunity to ask their questions. Mayor Thompson began the session at 6:44 p.m. and concluded the session at 7:40 p.m. The attached sheet reflects the members of the public that spoke during the question and answer session. The questions, discussions, opinions, and statements were inclusive of the following topics:

- The number and health of deer in Garden Ridge
- The health of the land and all wildlife in Garden Ridge
- Effects of overpopulation
- Lethal and non-lethal approaches to deer management
- Texas Parks and Wildlife’s Spotlight Survey
- Previously conducted research studies
- Science based research
- Research permits and grants
- U.S. Humane Society template on Urban Deer Management

Mayor Thompson thanked Mr. Hensley for his time and sharing his knowledge. Mayor Thompson explained how this has been a process over many years and the importance of public education. He also reminded everyone to please be civil about this and stick to the facts, otherwise it becomes discouraging since many efforts are being made to consider everyone in the City.

5. Adjournment

Motion: A motion was made by Councilmember Erickson, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem McCaw to adjourn. The City Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried unanimously. There being no further business, the Thursday, October 11, 2018, City Council and Wildlife Management Advisory Commission Special Joint Meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m. by Mayor Thompson.



Larry Thompson
Mayor

ATTEST



Marisa Spencer
Interim City Secretary

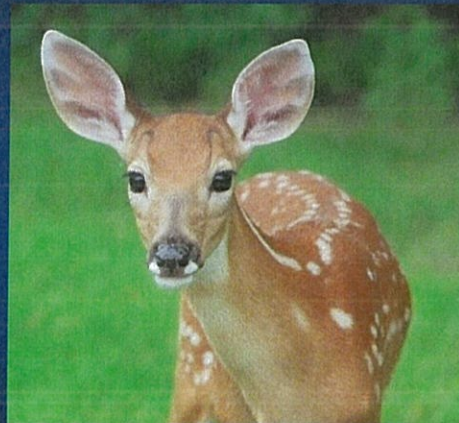
Separating Fact from Fiction: White-tailed Deer and Garden Ridge



Presented by Craig Hensley, Wildlife Biologist
Kendall & Comal Counties



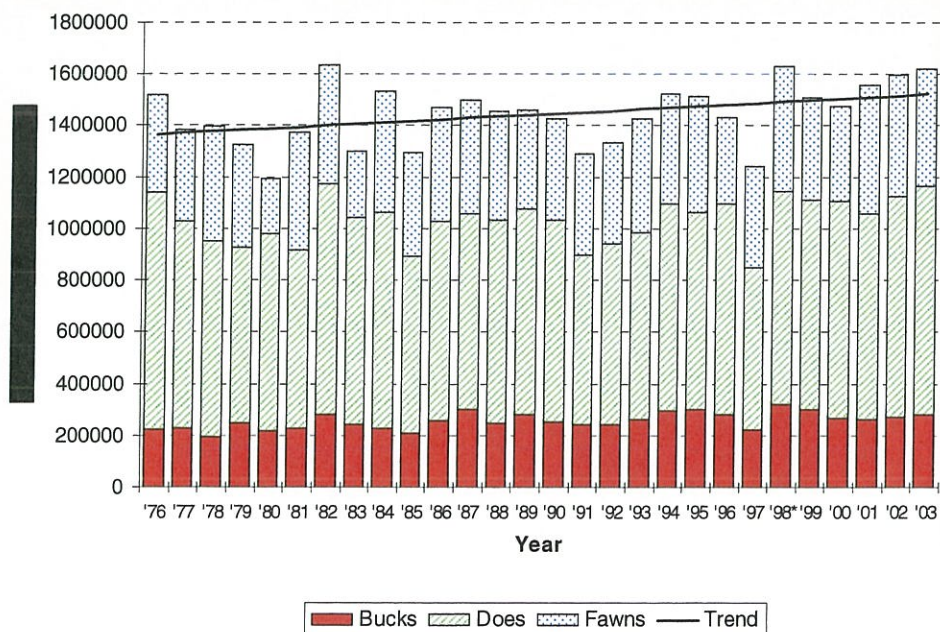
- How Many of us enjoy deer?
- How many of us want healthy deer and healthy habitat for those deer and other wildlife and plants?
- So let's see how we can make that happen in Garden Ridge



- White-tailed Deer are one of the most recognizable species of wildlife.
- From personal experience, many people get more enjoyment from a hike in the woods when they see a deer.
- In the Texas Hill Country, we have a lot of deer



Population Trends for the Edwards Plateau 1976-2003



Why So Many Deer in Urban Settings?

- Deer prefer fragmented or patchy habitat
- Often a diversity of planted trees, shrubs and flowers deer find palatable and plentiful
- Water may be readily available
- Deer find “free food” provided by well-intentioned people
- A scarcity of predators and hunting as found in rural settings; leads to abnormal fawn survival

Like all wildlife, white-tailed deer have four habitat requirements:

Food

Forbs (herbaceous plants)
Browse (woody plants)
Grasses
Mast (acorns, etc.)

Cover

Escape Cover
Bedding Cover
Thermal Cover

Water

Surface Water
Preformed Water
(water in foods)

Space

Activity Center
Home Range

Also to be considered as part and parcel to any species of wildlife is the LAND; a given piece of land can support a limited number of any species of plant or animal – this is referred to as the CARRYING CAPACITY.

Principles of Carrying Capacity

- The ability of the land to support a population
- Reproduction decreases as the population approaches carrying capacity
- As a population exceeds carrying capacity mortality increases
- **We also have what has come to be called a “cultural carrying capacity”** – this is often above the traditional definition of ecological carrying capacity

For white-tailed deer in the Texas Hill Country, the carrying capacity is 1 deer to 10 to 12 acres; the results of the 2018 spotlight surveys in Garden Ridge indicate 1 deer per 1.8 acres; this number reflects a deer population greatly exceeding the carrying capacity of a biologically healthy landscape.

As this pertains to the LAND, overpopulation of white-tailed deer can result in:

- **Loss of plant diversity, particularly those that are first and second choice plants for deer**
 - **This leads to a more limited supply of often lower quality foods and potentially less healthy deer**
- **Loss of viewable (and other) wildlife from butterflies to birds**
- **A decrease in vegetation quality**



As this pertains to PEOPLE in urban settings, overpopulation can result in:

- Damage to landscape plantings
- Increased concentrations of animal droppings in yards
- Increase in vehicle-deer incidents
- More conflicts between deer and people
- A potentially divided community when solutions are sought



Deer – Vehicle Collisions*

- 1,309,288 million vehicle-deer collisions annually (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016)
- Average claim was \$3,995.08 2015-16*
- Average Total Cost is \$5.2 billion
- In Texas, 54,408 claims in 2015-16 (3.1% increase from previous year)
- **In Garden Ridge 2015-17 an average of 165 deer carcasses were picked up by the city**

*State Farm Insurance – does not include policyholders with only liability coverage

As this pertains to **WHITE-TAILED DEER**, overpopulation can result in:

- Poor health
- Greater mortality
- Increase potential for disease and disease transmission to other deer



Let's take a look at what has been done and could be done in Garden Ridge

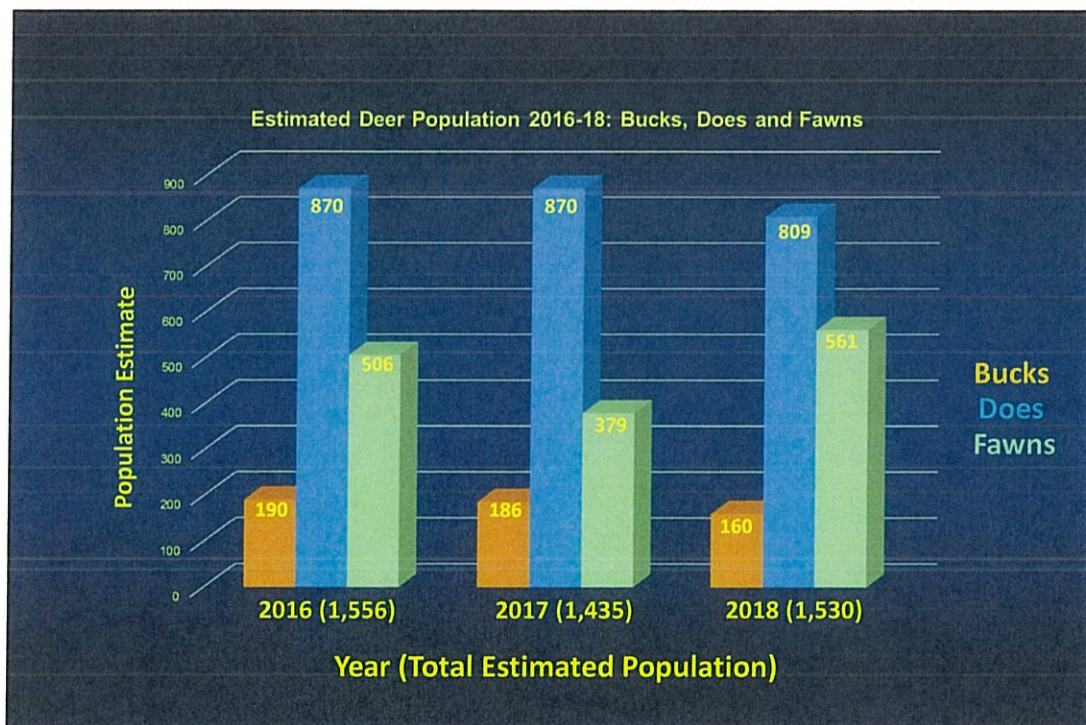
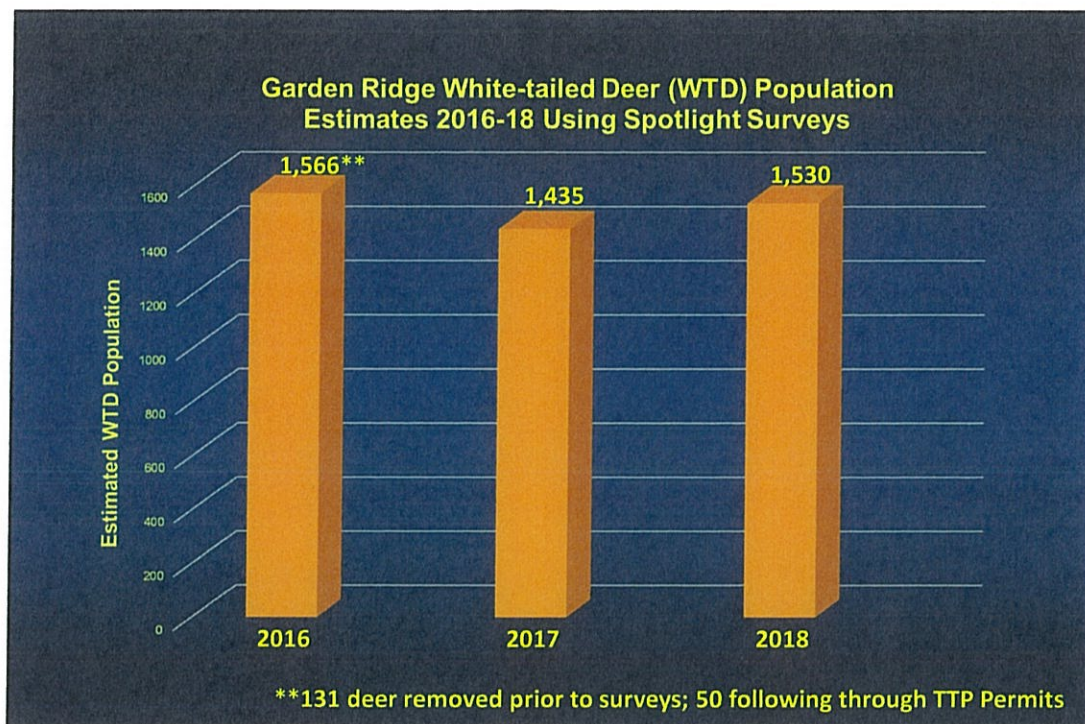


2017 Survey Results

- Too many deer in Garden Ridge:
Yes: 528 No: 500 **51.51% (Yes)**
- Support deer reduction:
Yes: 599 No: 383 **54.80% (Yes)**
- Support ordinance prohibiting feeding:
Yes: 737 No: 256 **67.43% (Yes)**
- Involved in deer-vehicle collision:
Yes: 298 No: 833 **26.35% (Yes)**

2017 Survey Results: Options

- TTT: 735
– \$150-750/deer
- Public Education: 609
- TTP: 557
– \$175-300/deer
- Do Nothing: 483
- Archery: 344



Summary of 2016 to 2018 Population Changes

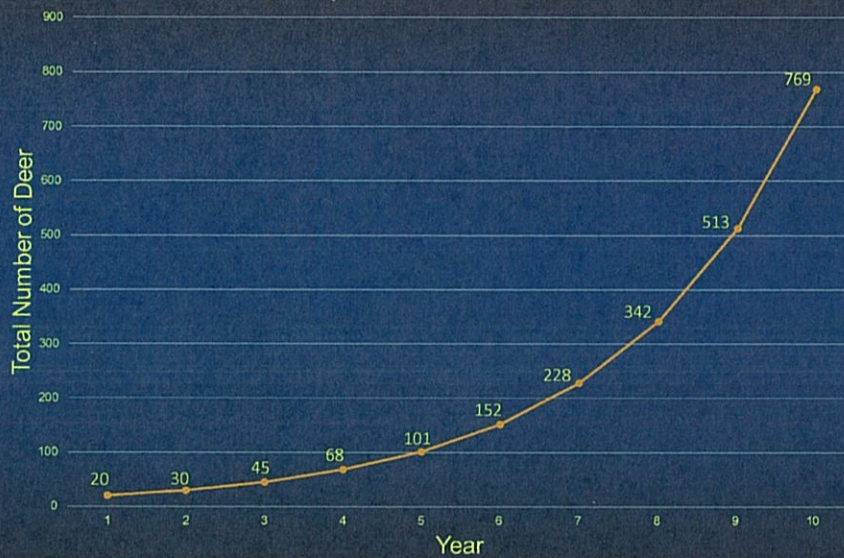
- 2016 July population estimate was 1,566 after removal of 131 deer in March (estimate would have otherwise been higher)
- 50 deer were removed post-survey for total of 181 for year.
- Population declined by 131 based on 2017 estimate though numbers of bucks and does remained almost to identically the same for 2017
- Decline came from decrease in fawn production
- 2018 buck and doe numbers declined but fawn production increased from 2017, increasing the overall 2018 population (lack of predators)

Deer Management Options

Do Nothing

- Not an option for the land, other wildlife, people – or for the health and survival of the deer

Deer Population Growth Chart*



*Beginning with 10 bucks and 10 does; assuming 50% fawn recruitment and 50% fawn mortality.

Deer Management Options

Population Monitoring

- Spotlight Surveys – 3 years of data to date

Education

- Public Hearings
- Educational Materials made available for community members

Deer Management Options

- Stop feeding of wildlife – **implemented**



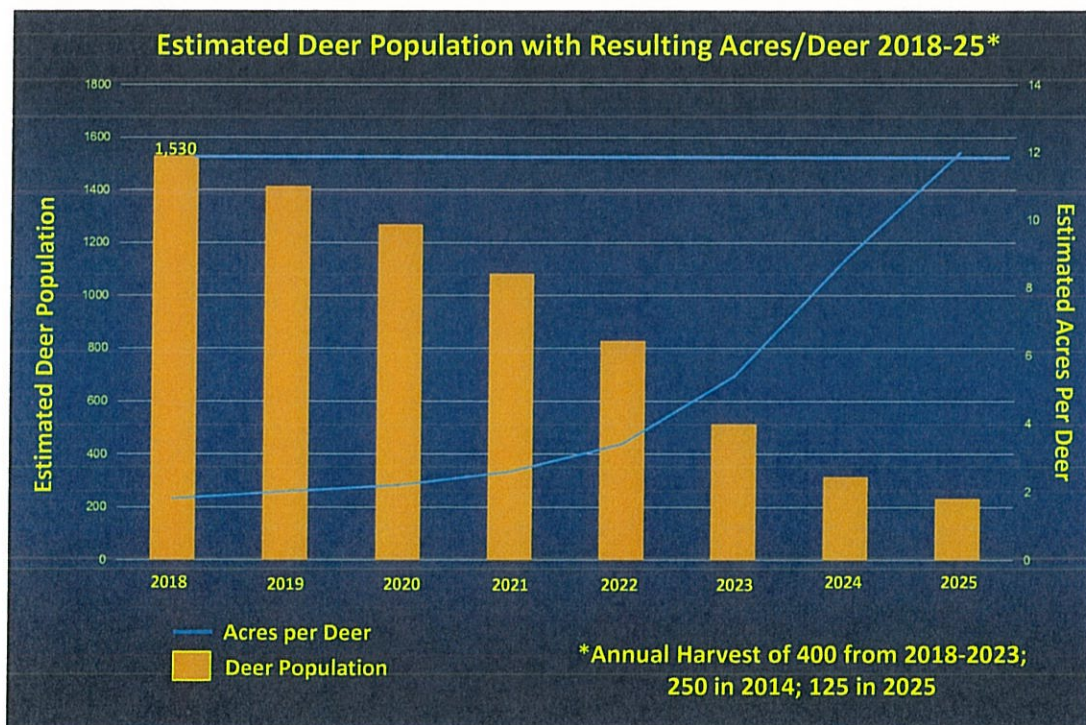
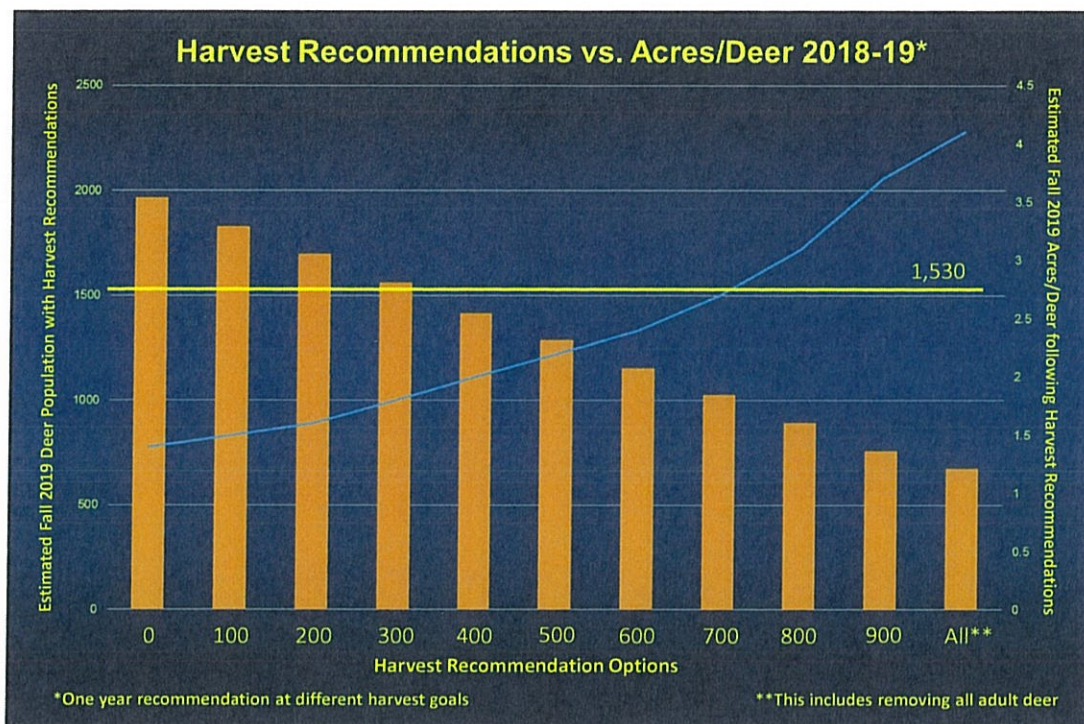
Deer Management Options

Population Control

- Birth Control (no approved products in Texas)
- Trap, Transport & Transplant (TTT Permit)
- **Trap, Transport & Process (TTP Permit)***
- Hunting (Archery)
- On-going – 1st reduction, 2nd maintenance



***Done in 2016 with 181 deer removed**



Thank You

Questions?



City Council and Wildlife Management Advisory Commission Special Joint Meeting

Thursday, October 11, 2018, 6:00 P.M.

"Separating Fact from Fiction: White-tailed Deer and Garden Ridge" Question and Answer Session

NAME	ADDRESS	SUBJECT
1. John McLean	21649 Forest Vale	300 + Removal
2. Dave Wood	9431 Garden View	14 FOX
3. Tony Frano	8802 Wildwind	
4. Marianne Sterling	9006 Cinnabar Ct	deer
5. Martha Stiff	21007 Cedar Branch	
6. Scott Kotowski	9319 Beacon Way	Deer
7. Frankie Fried	21419 Forest Waters Cir	Deer
8. Daniel C Ring	9234 Blazing Star Trl	Deer
9. Dawn Hatch	8377 Twisted Oaks	Birth Control
10. Lisa Swink	19910 Wild Hill	overpopulation
11. Diane Kruse	9315 Gardenia Bend	HSEUS - conflict mgmt
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
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18.		