



February 22 , 2022

Mike Griggs, Director
Columbia Parks and Recreation
P O Box 6015
Columbia, Mo 65205

Mike:

Columbia Audubon Society is requesting that Columbia Parks and Recreation Department and Columbia City Council include Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary in its current deer management program. This request is being made by the Columbia Audubon Society (CAS) Board of Directors after careful consideration of the current and future harmful impact being caused by the overpopulation of deer on Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary and neighboring Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary.

For seven years, CAS has partnered with Parks and Rec to convert fescue pasture into a grassland restoration project that has garnered the attention and affection not only of wildlife but also park and trail users. CAS planted approximately 70 species of native herbaceous plants in the 15 acre grassland restoration project area that spans both properties. In January 2022, CAS planted an additional six acres on the west side of Scott's Branch Creek.

As you know, Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary and Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary (CANS) together host a contiguous woodland canopy dominated by old growth and maturing white oak timber. With the joint properties surrounded by highly developed neighborhood properties and the increased urbanization at the City of Columbia's borders, wildlife interactions are becoming increasingly common. The nature sanctuaries serve as habitat islands bound by houses and highly trafficked roads. The area has abundant wildlife including over 160 bird species, two kinds of squirrels, two species of box turtles, other herpetofauna and a large number of white-tailed deer.

Deer density continues to increase in the nature sanctuaries and is not self-limiting. The damage caused by an over population of white-tailed deer is evident in several ways:

1. Deer eat the tender shoots, sprouts and buds of tree seedlings.

Under normal conditions nature is able to compensate; however, when the deer become overpopulated their eating habits diminish and in extreme cases prohibit the growth of new trees necessary to replace those that die. Thus the lack of a characteristic mid-story that is indicative of a healthy native ecosystem. Additionally, their dietary preferences can literally change the natural composition of a forest.

2. Deer eat the normal lower story and forest floor vegetation.

Normally abundant lower story plants and bushes disappear. With nowhere to hide, rest, or nest, the usual abundant ground and near ground nesting birds leave.

3. Deer impact the properties of neighboring home owners.

Destruction of homeowner landscaping is both frustrating and costly. Efforts to control deer depredation at the Fairview Park community garden necessitates the use of fencing.

4. Statistically, car crashes make deer the deadliest animal in North America.

Deer vehicle collisions cause millions of dollars in property damage and personal injury. Bonnie View NS, Columbia Audubon NS and Dublin Park create a corridor to Scott Boulevard and its traffic.

On January 20th, Bill Mees, Allison Vaughn and I met with Mike Snyder, Gabe Huffington and Toney Lowery of your staff to discuss a proposal to add Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary to the city's managed deer hunt program. We all concluded that it would be beneficial to ask the Columbia City Council to extend its current deer management program to include Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary. This is one way to try to control the large and growing deer population on Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary, CANS and adjoining neighborhoods.

Columbia Audubon Society is available to discuss any questions or concerns, and how we might lend our support to this project.

Sincerely,

Jim Gast, President
Columbia Audubon Society
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enc: proposed hunting area map

c: Mike Snyder
Gabe Huffington
Toney Lowery

Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary

44.8 acres

Archery Hunting Allowed September 15 to January 15 by registration only.

- Hours: Beginning ½ hour before sunrise until ½ hour after sunset.
- No hunting or field dressing within 100 feet of trails and private property or within sight of park facilities (including parking).
- No four wheelers or motorized vehicles may be used in connection with archery program.
- Portable tree stands allowed with proper identification.
- No nails or screws in steps allowed.
- Park remains open to the public

