

Donaldson Run Civic Association

September 27, 2021

Matt de Ferranti, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Deer Population Problem

Dear Chair de Ferranti:

On behalf of the Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA), I am writing with regard to Arlington County's continuing consideration of the problem of overpopulation of white-tailed deer. Donaldson Run is one of several neighborhoods in the County in which this problem is particularly acute, and we are pleased to see that the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is undertaking a series of steps to address it.

This past May, our civic association received an illuminating presentation from the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists (ARMN), a group that has sought to provide good information to our citizenry about the impact of our growing deer population on the precarious health of Northern Virginia's urban forests, tree canopy, and residential shrubs and gardens. In particular, ARMN documented that excessive deer browse has lessened forest understory, reduced nutritional variety of plant life and degraded the habitats of bird, insect and other wildlife. ARMN's presentation resonated with many of our civic association's residents whose properties have been adversely impacted by deer that seem to have become more and more domesticated in recent years.

Our residents were pleased to learn at our May meeting of the County's planned White-tailed Deer Population Density Survey to be performed in the Spring by the County's consultant, Steward Green LLC. The survey's report, which was released earlier this month, found that 4 of the eleven geographic sections of the County had unusually high deer populations. Donaldson Run is one of several civic associations within the report's Section A, which had 33 deer per square mile, well higher than the 5-15 that is considered healthy by experts.

We have been informed by DPR's Natural Resources Manager that going forward the County plans to conduct an assessment that will (1) interpret the completed survey, (2) include public engagement and benchmarking, (3) determine if a deer management strategy should be implemented, and (4) if necessary, develop an implementation plan. We look forward to the County's continued consideration of this serious problem, and believe that it should craft a sound implementation plan. Arlington is one of the only jurisdictions in the greater DC metro area that does not currently have a deer management program.

Sincerely,



Bill Richardson
President



John Seggerman
First Vice President and NC Representative