



The City of Oxford  
(513) 524-5200  
15 S. College Ave.  
Oxford, OH 45056

## MEMO

TO: Douglas R. Elliott, Jr., City Manager  
FROM: Reena Murphy, Sustainability Coordinator  
DATE: 2/5/2026  
SUBJECT: 2025-2026 Deer Management Program Final Report

### Context

Following public complaints and a directive from City Council, staff has made significant changes to the Deer Management Program in order to address deer overpopulation. Staff worked with a Miami University Senior Capstone class to review effective deer management strategies in other communities. The city has implemented the group's recommendations, affirmed by Council, by expanding the bow hunting program and by pursuing professional population control services.

### Summary

Changes to the local bow-hunting program were effective and resulted in the highest harvest since the 2013-2014 season. 16 deer were harvested.

Contracting with White Buffalo for professional population control was effective at culling 117 deer in 4 nights. 98 deer were sent to processing for donation, resulting in 4,558 lbs going to 4 different food pantries. The remaining 20 deer were picked up by residents and processed at their own expense. The City was limited to 117 deer due to processing costs and our ODNR permit.

The professional control program required much more overtime and city staff time than expected. The total cost of the program was \$85,174.44. This cost does not include the work done during normal business hours or at staff's regular hourly rate.

### Implementation

Overall, the program's implementation was successful.

#### *Expanded Bow Hunting Program*

During the 2025-2026 Bow Hunting Season, the City of Oxford made multiple changes in order to increase the number of hunting locations and bow hunters involved in the program. Oxford's bow hunting program began in 2009 and few changes were made until the 2025-2026 season. Key changes made for the 2025-2026 season included:

- Removing the donation requirement for the first doe



The City of Oxford  
 (513) 524-5200  
 15 S. College Ave.  
 Oxford, OH 45056

- Lowering the antlerless deer requirement from 2 to 1 before harvesting an antlered deer
- Assigning new hunters per session, allowing more hunters to be involved.
- Reducing the size requirement for bow hunting on private property from 5 acres to 3 acres, increasing the number of bow hunting locations.
- Removing local proficiency tests and background checks, reducing the administrative burden to add hunters to the program

Oxford still requires hunters to have completed a state-approved hunter safety course.

These changes were successful, resulting in 16 deer being harvested. 2025-2026 was the best season since the 2013-2014, despite being shortened by 6 weeks due to the professional population control program. Furthermore, Oxford had 20 new participating bow hunters and 4 new hunting locations in the program. In total, 42 hunters participated across 11 locations. We had more hunters apply than we could accommodate this season; Oxford residents were given priority for hunting permits.

Session #	Deer Harvested	Locations	Hunters
Session 1	3	7	22
Session 2	12	11	26
Session 3	1	9	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>40</b>

### *Professional Population Control*

The City contracted with White Buffalo Inc. to perform a population study and for sharpshooting services. The study found a deer population of 37.7 deer per square mile. This was over the recommended level of 10-15 deer per square mile recommended by the Capstone class and the 25-30 deer per square mile recommended by ODNR.

Staff prepared the necessary Deer Management Plan and obtained the permit from ODNR for the culling program. Originally, ODNR permitted Oxford for 100 deer. Given that White Buffalo was able to cull 98 deer in the first 3 nights, ODNR increased the permit limit to 117 at the request of the City. The 117 was determined by the City's processing budget.

The culling program occurred on mostly city owned property and some private properties. The city received over 35 private property owners who volunteered their land for the program, 9 of which were used.

Culled Deer Demographics	
Category	%
Antlered	17%
Antlerless	83%
Male	33%
Female	67%
Fawn	14%
Yearling	34%
Adult	52%

Logistics of the hunt are included in Appendix A.



The City of Oxford  
(513) 524-5200  
15 S. College Ave.  
Oxford, OH 45056

## Cost and Staff Capacity

The total cost of the program was \$85,174.44. This cost does not include the work done during normal business hours or at staff's regular hourly rate. The program took significantly more staff capacity than expected between the Police Department and City Manager's office. There were 7 full time staff members and 1 intern involved in the successful implementation of this program.

Item	Cost
Sampling Survey	\$12,745
Culling Contract	\$49,941.02
Processing of deer	\$11,640
Overtime	\$10,848.42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$85,174.44</b>

## Recommended Next Steps

Successful deer management programs require annual commitment, as the deer population is expected to grow 15-20% annually. In order to maintain our reduced deer levels and reduce the need for professional population control in the future, staff recommends:

### *Expanded Bow Hunting Program*

- Implement land rotations based on previous year's harvest numbers and site conditions (i.e. construction)
- Consider a stipend to bow hunters to offset processing costs
- Provide priority sign up to successful bow hunters
- Include consequences for violations in the program description
- Clarify that baiting is allowable on city owned property
- Ensure private property is suitable for tree stands
- Explore allowing accompanied youth partners with bow hunters
- Consider local proficiency tests, only if needed for specific locations
- Require bow hunters to provide their tag confirmation number and photo of the deer

### *Professional Population Control*

- Continue annual sampling, conducted by Animal Control Staff
- Explore OPD performing small culling programs, only as needed, to meet annual maintenance numbers
- If culling in the future, expand resident pick up to reduce processing costs
- Utilize city staff to transport the deer to the processor

## Other considerations

*If Oxford utilizes OPD for deer culling, costs to consider are:*

- Bait
- Equipment, such as scopes, trail cameras, and frangible bullets
- Overtime for both animal control staff and hunters



The City of Oxford  
(513) 524-5200  
15 S. College Ave.  
Oxford, OH 45056

*If Oxford contracts with White Buffalo again, consider:*

- Establishing a clear, contractual division of labor between White Buffalo and City
- Requiring OPD staff to be present during the mobile loop
- Reducing the amount of baiting time, as the deer seemed to acclimate quickly



The City of Oxford  
(513) 524-5200  
15 S. College Ave.  
Oxford, OH 45056

## Appendix A: Logistics: Baiting, Hunt, Transportation, and Resident Pick Up

### *Baiting before the program*

Starting on December 14th, animal control staff baited twice daily at 4pm and 10pm. 24 locations were baited each day, some at 4pm and others at 10pm. The timing of baiting and hunting was important to acclimate deer to human presence and establish a routine for deer. White Buffalo would instruct Animal Control staff to adjust baiting amounts as needed. Animal Control staff also set up trail cameras provided by White Buffalo on December 14th at select locations.

A total of 4,500 lbs of corn was used to bait.

### *Hunt and transportation*

Each day, there was a seated hunt (early hunt) and a mobile loop (late hunt). The hunting locations were baited either by Animal Control or White Buffalo on the day of the hunt. Baiting instructions during the hunt were fluid and at the direction of White Buffalo.

The seated hunt began midafternoon and occurred at 4 different locations each day. At the end of the seated hunt, Animal Control transported the deer back to the city garage. We used two vehicles with two staff members in each. This occurred around 8-9pm.

Around 10pm, animal control staff baited the mobile loop locations. The mobile loop involved White Buffalo shooting from a pick up truck with an elevated platform and moving quickly between locations. The mobile loop lasted until 1am. White Buffalo would deliver the deer to the city garage when their truck was full.

White Buffalo provided summaries of the deer killed at each site, which made tagging a smooth process. City staff submitted the tags to ODNR and provided documentation for H&M processing.

Additionally, White Buffalo removed all antlers from all antlered deer. Antlers went to the processor for disposal, per permit conditions.

For nights 1 and 2, all deer went to H&M for processing. H&M transported the deer from the garage to their facility. Pick ups were at 8pm and 1am. On night 3, the city transported the deer from the early hunt to H&M. H&M picked up the deer from the late hunt at 1am. White Buffalo also delivered deer to H&M at 2:30am. On night 4, the city transported the deer to H&M. Night 4 was only the seated hunt, as White Buffalo reached the 117 total by 9pm.



The City of Oxford  
(513) 524-5200  
15 S. College Ave.  
Oxford, OH 45056

The City utilizes two trucks from the service department for transportation: one pick up with a lift gate and one with a dump attachment. These were adequate for transporting the deer to the processor.

### *Resident Pick Ups*

On nights 3 and 4, staff contacted residents for pick up from the early hunt. Only antlerless deer were given away, as the paperwork was simpler. All antlered deer went to H&M processing.

Staff notified residents to come to the city garage at a specific time to wait for a deer. Residents waited between 30-45 minutes between their arrival and leaving with a deer. We intentionally asked residents to wait to reduce the time between the kill and processing. Residents understood this and did not complain.

Once the deer were at the garage, it was first come first served. If we were able to give two deer, we did. We utilized carbon copy paper tags for the residents, which worked out really well.

We could easily expand resident pick up in the future, as we received 40+ requests. We were intentionally conservative this year with pick-ups, as we did not know what to expect from the hunts.

Staff used an available cell phone from OPD to contact residents via text. This worked out well.

### *Sample schedule with resident pick up*

3pm	White Buffalo sets up for seated hunt, residents notified they're eligible for deer pick up the same night
4pm	Animal Control staff baits
8pm	Seated hunt ends, Animal Control picks up deer, residents arrive for pick up
9pm	Deer tagging and resident pick up
9:30pm	Transportation of the remaining deer to the processor
10pm	Animal Control baits the mobile loop
10pm-1am	White Buffalo hunts mobile loop
1 am	Transportation of deer to the garage for processor pick-up and tagging



The City of Oxford  
(513) 524-5200  
15 S. College Ave.  
Oxford, OH 45056

### *Food Pantry Donation*

4,558 lbs of ground venison were donated to 4 food pantries listed below. The venison was packaged in 2lb bags and labeled for donation, per state requirements. H&M processing coordinated pick up with the food pantries directly. There was no additional paperwork required, the City only needed to report how many lbs of venison each pantry received.

Talawanda-Oxford Pantry and Social Services 500 lbs (maximum requested)

Community Meal Center 1500 lbs (maximum requested)

Shared Harvest 1,180 lbs (no maximum)

Open Hands 1,278 lbs (no maximum)



The City of Oxford  
(513) 524-5200  
15 S. College Ave.  
Oxford, OH 45056

## Appendix B: Harvest per Location

Location	Amount
Landfill	14
Country Club	11
Water Treatment Plant	10
Chestnut St.	10
White Oak Dr.	9
Community Park	8
Leonard Howell Park	8
Hilltop Rd.	7
Wastewater Treatment Plant	6
Cobblestone	6
Cemetery	6
47 Acres	6
Fairfield Rd.	4
Peabody Dr.	3
Brown Rd.	3
Triangle	3
Hester Rd.	2
Locust St.	1