



# Glencarlyn Civic Association

## February 5, 2024

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### *DRAFT*

The meeting was called to order by Brandon Hemel.

**Guest Speaker: Alfonso Abugattas, Natural Resources Manager, Arlington County**

#### **Background:**

High deer density cause issues with local ecology; what they eat shapes the landscape  
No such thing as a “deer proof” plant—they will eat everything eventually  
The deer are eating key native plants too fast, faster than they can regenerate  
Other animals lose food  
Too many deer will eventually destroy the habitat

#### **History:**

Years of anecdotal evidence of overbreeding  
Biotic inventory in 2011 resulted in report warning to watch out as deer could cause issues  
In April 2021, Arlington did an aerial drone survey:

- At least 290 deer county-wide
- Average density 124 deer per square mile in 12 key forest parks

Fall 2022, county conducted browse surveys in 12 forest parks to evaluate deer impacts

- 80-92% of native plants browsed per plot; “a lot of unsustainable damage”

Arlington County has done more to compile evidence of the problem than any other jurisdiction

#### **Deer population:**

Concentrated in 12 parks  
Arlington County is perfect for deer (and foxes, and raccoons)  
More deer now than in Jamestown times  
Less than 5% natural/wild areas left in county  
Recommended concentration of deer: 15-20/square mile  
Arlington: 124/square mile  
12/12 surveyed parks showed damage from deer. Densities 1.9-17x recommended levels in 11/12 parks.  
Lacey Woods – not too many. Barcroft: plants cannot maintain themselves

#### **Suitable options:**

Nothing chosen yet  
Every method requires maintenance  
Deer reproduce exponentially (1 fawn in first year, 2-3 fawns in following years). 25% population increase/year  
Some options must be a hybrid solution (must be used in combination with another method)

- Sharpshooting/culling. Lethal shot by professional marksman. Only done at night, baited area, non-frangible bullets, shooting down from on high. Deer are tested and meat donated if safe to eat. Cheaper than other methods, effective, proven. Will require amending county codes (for firing weapons in proximity to neighborhoods (?)). Herds are matrilineal and territorial; rarely move from home range. So unlikely other deer would move in to replace those culled.
- Surgical sterilization. Tranquilize and operate/sterilize does. Not yet proven—no study has shown yet that veg increases in years after sterilization; still considered experimental. Will require amending county codes (for darts).
- Controlled archery hunting. Vetted archery hunters who have proven proficiency. Donate meat. Less practical in long narrow parks. One study shows this is not effective on its own.
- Fencing. Protects trees or an area. 8' minimum. Requires maintenance. Limited expansion of habitat inside deer enclosure. Requires monitoring and testing to confirm effectiveness.
- Deer repellent. Wears off in rain. The novelty also wears off and it becomes less effective.

### **Deer management in Arlington:**

Deer proof plants = other animals won't eat it either  
Scare tactics, e.g., water shooter

### **Adjacent jurisdictions:**

Only the city of Alexandria is not doing anything (waiting to see what we do)  
MD—combination of sharpshooting and hunting (they have different hunting laws and regulations)  
FFX—archery—finest suburban archery program in country

### **Acceptance of December Minutes**

#### **Civ Fed:**

Sue attended joint meeting with Board, discussing ranked choice voting, crime, general land use planning (GLUP), visioning

#### **ArNac Report:**

100% design not yet approved—hopefully in February. Construction in summer? Will be more native plants. County agreed to do trash can (neighbors will empty), educational signage.

### **Upcoming Dates**

- March 4<sup>th</sup> – GCA Meeting with Susan Cunningham
- March 16<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM – Spring Stream Cleanup
- April 8<sup>th</sup> – GCA Meeting with Mark Schwartz
- May 4<sup>th</sup> – Family Movie Night
- May 18<sup>th</sup> or June 15<sup>th</sup> – Community Yard Sale pending volunteer
- May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup> – Glencarlyn Days