

CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

July 2026



1.0 INTRODUCTION

East Grand Forks, Minnesota, was established in 1887 and is located in northwestern Minnesota on the border with neighboring North Dakota at the intersection of U.S. Highway 2 and Minnesota Highway 220. East Grand Forks runs parallel to the Minnesota-North Dakota border on the Minnesota side of the Red River of the North. The Red Lake River also runs through the city and connects to the Red River of the North.

Following the flood of 1997, the areas close to the river have been turned into the Greenway system on both the Minnesota and North Dakota sides of the river. The Greenway system that include parks, a campground, golf courses, disc golf courses, over 20 miles of trails, with many areas being left as natural habitat. It is this natural habitat that has provided a safe haven for wildlife, especially the white-tailed deer.

In previous years the City Council has discussed issues and complaints that have been received regarding the deer population. Due to additional complaints staff started looking into what could be done, looking at addressing safety concerns, and amending ordinances to include among other things allowing the discharge of a bow and arrow within city limits.

The change in ordinances combined with (but not limited to) the following factors:

- Lack of natural predators
- Abundant food sources
- Wooded shelter
- Free flowing water sources

These factors have led to an increased deer population within the city limits of East Grand Forks. The East Grand Forks Police Department did conduct an informal survey by checking various locations from March 21st through March 28th in 2024. That count came to a total of 74 deer being visible in locations such as the greenway area, the campground, city parks, school property, and private residential yards.

2.0 Citizen Complaints

Over the past several years, numerous complaints have been received by the Administration Office about deer damaging gardens, lawns, trees, and shrubbery. There have also been several calls to the Police Department when there have been crashes with deer and vehicles. From January 1, 2020 until March of 2024 there were 90 deer related complaints that were received by the East Grand Forks Police Department.

3.0 IMPACTS

- Substantial reductions of natural vegetation in secure “bedding” areas
- Landscape integrity
- Public safety

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- Reported and potential car / deer collisions

4.0 POPULATION

The East Grand Forks Police Department did conduct an informal count from March 21st to March 28th in 2024 by marking down the time and location they saw deer in the community. That count came to a total of 74 deer being visible in various locations on both the north end and the south end of the city in locations such as city parks and private residential yards. It is likely the number of deer residing in and very near the city limits exceeds 100 individuals.

5.0 GOALS and OBJECTIVES

GOAL:

To manage the deer population within the city limits of East Grand Forks and to keep the population at an acceptable cultural and biological level.

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce the population to an acceptable level which reduces the yearly calls to the Police Department and the number of property damage complaints.
- Reduce the chances of car / deer collisions
- Reduce property damage
- Educate the public on the special hunt and the prohibition of feeding deer.

6.0 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Monitoring:

The City of East Grand Forks, with support from the City Council, will be holding a special hunt for 2024, 2025, and 2026 to help reduce the overall deer population. Counts will be conducted by the East Grand Forks Police Department in March of 2027 to review counts and determine if an annual special hunt should continue.

Education:

Publish an annual article in the Exponent and create a webpage on the City website educating city residents on the hunt and the prohibition of feeding deer.

7.0 POPULATION CONTROL

1) Regulated Archery

The City of East Grand Forks will work with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (through the Thief River Falls Area Wildlife Office) to allow for eleven (11) special antlerless permits and five (5) buck or antlerless permit to be used in special

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hunts during the 2025 archery season. The number of permits issued each year may vary. The City has planned to conduct special hunts through 2026 and will assess the deer population to determine if the special hunt would need to continue.

- 2) The local authority responsible for monitoring the regulated archery will be the East Grand Forks Police Department.
- 3) The City of East Grand Forks modified ordinances in 2024 to allow special city regulated archery hunts.

8.0 SUPPORT

The City Council and the East Grand Forks Police Department support this deer management plan.

9.0 City Maps

- See Pages 8-13

10.0 Replaced Ordinance

132.06 USE OF BOW AND ARROW

It is unlawful for any person to shoot a bow and arrow except in the Physical Education Program in a school supervised by a member of its faculty, or a community wide supervised class or event specifically authorized by the Chief of Police.

11.0 Amendments Made to Local Ordinance in 2024

Section 1. That Section 132.04 shall be modified by removing the current 132.04 (B) and replacing it with the following:

(B) Hunting. No person shall use a gun, pistol, or firearm of any description to engage in the practice of hunting wild game including deer within city limits or on city-owned land located outside of city limits.

1. Exceptions. White tail deer may be taken by lawful means of archery within the city limits during special archery hunts as approved by the State DNR. All State DNR rules and regulations will apply to any special hunt. The City of East Grand Forks may restrict the duration and location of said hunting activities. The City may also place local restrictions on said permits and develop a lottery system for the issuance of said permits.

2. Responsible party. The East Grand Forks Police Department will be responsible for the issuance of any special permits and the monitoring of any special hunts approved by the State DNR.

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Section 2. That section 132.06 Use of Bow and Arrow was replaced with the following:

132.06 USE OF BOW AND ARROW/CROSS BOW

(A) Bow and Arrow/Cross Bows. It is unlawful for any person to shoot a bow and arrow or crossbow within the city limits of the city, except in a school physical education program supervised by a member of its faculty, or a community wide-supervised class or an event specifically authorized by the City Council or a bow and arrow/crossbow or archery range authorized by the City Council.

(B) Deer stands and similar devices:

1. Generally deer stands and other similar devices which may be used in the taking of wild game including deer are prohibited within the city limits or on city owned property that is outside of city limits.

2. Exceptions. Individuals approved to participate in a special archery hunt approved by the State DNR may use deer stands and similar devices that comply with local restrictions.

3. Special hunt will have following regulations will be in place:

a. All hunters will have to attend the mandatory orientation put on by the city and demonstrate their proficiency in shooting archery.

b. Only those with permits issued by the City will be allowed to hunt on city property within city limits. No hunting is allowed on city property outside of city limits.

c. Only specific, designated areas can be used for the special hunt.

d. All hunters will be required to wear one piece of blaze orange that will be visible from all directions.

e. An ATV or UTV can be utilized to remove a deer from the designated hunting location and a permit will be issued for use when the permit for hunting is issued.

f. All deer harvested from city property will be reported to both the East Grand Forks Police Department and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

g. Any hunters found hunting on city property within city limits or on city property located outside of city limits without a permit from the City will be subject to City Code Section 10.99 General Penalty.

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Section 3. City Code Chapter 10 entitled "General Provisions" applicable to entire city code including penalty for violation and Section 10.99 entitled "General Penalty" are hereby adopted in their entirety, by reference, as though repeated verbatim herein.

12.0 Special Hunt Regulations

The special hunt will have the following regulations in place:

- All hunters will have to attend the mandatory orientation put on by the city and demonstrate their proficiency in shooting archery.
- In 2026 there will be two hunting seasons with permits being issued through a lottery system.
 - The first season is scheduled from October 8th through October 10th and a total of four (4) permits will be issued with preference given to city residents.
 - Two of the permits will be issued to people with disabilities, one will be issued an antlerless permit and the other will be issued a buck or antlerless permit.
 - The other two permits for the October season will be issued to veterans, one will be issued an antlerless permit and the other will be issued a buck or antlerless permit.
 - The second season is scheduled from November 14th through November 22nd and a total of 24 permits will be issued
 - Residents living within city limits will be given preference when issuing hunting permits for the second special hunt for 20 of the 24 permits for the November hunting season.
 - All of the permits issued to residents and non-residents will be Earn a Buck style meaning in order to tag a buck, you must tag an antlerless deer in the park or special hunt area first.
 - You do not have to register the antlerless deer prior to taking the buck, but you do need to validate your deer license and tag and have them available for inspection by a conservation officer. If you are found with a buck and no antlerless deer, you will be in violation of the hunt rules.
 - If you already have filled your buck license elsewhere, you still may hunt antlerless deer.
 - Two permits will be issued to non-residents they will be Earn a Buck style meaning, in order to tag a buck you must tag an antlerless deer.

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- Only those with permits issued by the City will be allowed to hunt on city property within city limits. No hunting is allowed on city property outside of city limits.
- Only specific, designated areas can be used for the special hunt.
- All hunters will be required to wear one piece of blaze orange that will be visible from all directions.
- An ATV or UTV can be utilized to remove a deer from the designated hunting location and a permit will be issued for use when the permit for hunting is issued.
- Any hunters found hunting on city property within city limits or on city property located outside of city limits without a permit from the City will be subject to City Code Section 10.99 General Penalty.
- All deer harvested from city property will be reported to both the East Grand Forks Police Department and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- All deer stands used for the special hunt can be placed no earlier than seven days prior to the hunt and would have to be removed no later than one day after the special hunt.
 - If placing a deer stand, all responsibility is on the hunter and the City will not be liable or responsible for any damages to stands or any stands that are stolen.
- Trail cameras can be placed out 14 days prior to the special hunt and will need to be removed no later than one day after the special hunt has been completed.
 - If a trail camera is placed, all responsibility is on the hunter and the City will not be liable or responsible for any damages to the camera or cameras that are stolen.
- Once a hunter has filled its antlerless tag fills a city tag they are eligible to harvest a buck once that tag is filled, then they are no longer eligible to hunt on city property until the next special hunt and receive a city-issued tag through the lottery system.

This Deer management plan is approved by the City of East Grand Forks:

Date: _____

Mayor: _____

Mark Olstad

City Administrator: _____

Reid Huttunen