

## County To Allow Bowhunting Of Park Deer

### Bowhunters will thin deer herd

By Amena H. Saiyid-*Journal staff writer*

Pre-qualified bowhunters from local field-archery clubs will be used for the first time this fall in a pilot program at four Fairfax County areas in hunts to thin the county's burgeoning herd of wild whitetail deer, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors decided yesterday.

By a 9-1 vote, the county board endorsed the county Park Authority Board's decision to use the archers as part of the third consecutive annual hunt to curb deer overpopulation.

Supervisor Michael Frey, R-Sully District, voted against the proposal, calling it "inhumane" and "unnecessary."

"Bows and arrows kill by bleeding," Frey said. "Hunters claim bows and arrows kill instantaneously. That doesn't happen."

Previous hunts have been conducted at night with police sharpshooters using rifles and night-vision equipment, and during the day with pre-certified shotgunners chosen from public applicants.

The bowhunters, who will be chosen from local archery clubs on the basis of accurate archery marksmanship, will target deer herds during daylight hours in Huntley

Meadows, Scotts Run, Colvin Run Stream Valley and Difficult Run.

County officials estimate the cost of hunting a single deer at \$4.

Earl Hodnett, the county's wildlife biologist, justified the use of archers, saying they could get close to the quarry and target does in narrow stream valleys found in Colvin Run and Scotts Run parks, where it has proven difficult for police sharpshooters and qualified shotgun hunters to go.

"A combined approach is the ideal approach," Hodnett said. "What works in one part of the county may not necessarily work in other parts."

To date, Hodnett said, 70 percent of the deer killed by hunters in this county were accounted for by archers on private property.

"In fact, there are more deer-related accidents, rather than alcohol-related accidents," Hodnett said, referring to an earlier presentation at the board meeting on the county's DWI program.

Supervisor Stuart Mendelsohn, R-Dranesville District, disagreed with that percentage.

"The vast majority of deer are killed in collisions with citizen automobiles," Mendelsohn said. "Probably 70 percent of those that remain are targeted by archers."

Mendelsohn said the rapidly growing deer population has practically wiped out the foliage in the area parks to such an extent that

some local environmental groups and such conservation organizations as the Izaak Walton League of America support the county's efforts to thin deer herds.

Frey disagreed with Mendelsohn. "I don't think there is a countywide problem," Frey said. "There may be some in certain parts of the Sully District, such as Bull Run, but that depends on how you define the health of a deer. There are no deer dying of starvation. If they were, that would be a reason to kill them."

County officials, including Hodnett, selected the target sites on the basis of high incidence of deer collisions with automobiles, severe damage to foliage, poor and deteriorating health of the deer population, and persistent and measurable damage to a community.

Last year, residents living next to Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna complained their flowers and shrubs had become browsing grounds for deer inhabiting Difficult Run Park.

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