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Arnold L. Randall

January 13, 2020

Eric Palm
Village Administrator, Village of River Forest
400 Park Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305

Mr. Palm,

I am writing this letter to respond to your supplementary questions submitted on January 13, 2020 regarding the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's (the "District's") management of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Please see responses below.

- 1. How do you determine how many deer to cull (tags) in the first year and subsequent years?** Biologists and ecologists from the District and the U.S. Department of Agriculture survey vegetation to ascertain the extent of deer damage to help determine whether a need for management exists. If the browsing pressure on native indicator plants exceeds threshold levels based on what would be expected to be present at a site based on its size, habitat type, and other factors, then a permit is granted. Likewise, the number of tags issued is scaled based upon the extent of damage observed. Based on our assessment of the Thatcher Woods Complex, we believe fifty (50) tags is the appropriate number to begin management.
- 2. In your other management, do the deer you anticipate culling and the actual amount you cull come close to one another?** In our experience, yes. When we receive a certain number of tags at a location, we reach that number or come very close.
- 3. What other Forest Preserves do you perform deer management?** The District is managing deer at the following locations: the Crabtree Nature Center Complex, Busse Woods, Camp Pine Woods, the Bemis Woods Complex, the Palos Complex, the Thornton-Lansing Complex and the Sauk Lake Complex.
- 4. What has been the overall results from that work?** The overall results on sites where management has occurred have been overwhelmingly successful. Deer impacts such as the consumption of plant flowers, seeds, branches, and stalks across the site are reduced to a level where plants can grow and spread. Visual indicators are the re-appearance of native shrubs, wildflowers, grasses and tree branches growing below 6ft. In addition to these benefits, the District's deer management program has been able to contribute data over many years used for monitoring the transmission of zoonotic disease; that is, diseases which can be transmitted from wildlife to pets or humans, some

of which can only be sampled post-mortem. This in turn informs public health advisories and research.

5. **Have you received any feedback from those neighboring municipalities?** Only from the municipalities that have worked directly with us to address issues in their communities. At most locations where we are managing deer on our property, we work independent of adjacent municipalities. For those locations, we have not received any feedback from neighboring municipalities.

6. **If you have any suggestions on which municipalities we could contact to determine what the effects [of deer management] have been, I would appreciate it.** I would recommend that you contact Elk Grove Village. Elk Grove Village managed deer on their property while the District was managing at Busse Woods. I believe that Elk Grove will concur the program was successful.

7. **Once maintenance mode is reached in 3-5 years, how do we proceed?** The District and the Village will meet to discuss options, which could include extending the pending Intergovernmental Agreement, the District taking on management responsibility independently, or discontinuing management altogether.

Sincerely,

John McCabe
Director
Department of Resource Management