

Written by Admin

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The Deer Survey Report submitted by Plateau Land & Wildlife Management (Plateau) is biased, inaccurate and intended to yield a specific result. It manipulates data to achieve a desired outcome; cites negative, misleading and anecdotal evidence as fact and is inaccurate. Examples are noted below, with supporting information attached. Page numbers refer to the Plateau report.

1. The report manipulates data to achieve a desired outcome. On September 8, 2010, the City of Austin sponsored a deer education question and answer session. Representatives of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Plateau were present to answer questions. Four members of DeerAustin attended. Many questions were asked specifically about objective deer population criteria and deer count methodology. TPWD stated that the optimal deer-to-land ratio is one deer to 7-12 acres. Plateau stated that it would count every deer, not estimate the number, and that the entire 6300 acres in the 78731 ZIP code would be part of the calculation. 7-12 acres per deer for 6300 acres would allow 900 to 525 deer.

According to those criteria, the number of deer counted did not nearly approach overpopulation. Plateau counted 156 deer (p.13). In order to reach "crisis" levels (p.28), Plateau had to [1] estimate the number of deer, which is admittedly unreliable (p.14) and [2] use an estimated amount of open space area (pp.5, 12, 16) rather than the entire zip code to achieve the desired result. This was true even though the deer count was timed to target the season when deer are most active and visible (Email, City of Austin, July 9, 2010). Plateau is a one-stop shop for "deer management" with an inherent conflict of interest, eager to assist with the recommended harvesting and continued surveys (Email to City, May 17, 2010). There is no future benefit to Plateau if there is no deer problem.

2. The report cites negative, misleading and anecdotal evidence as fact. The report, without appendices, is 28 pages long. Fewer than three sentences note positives about deer-human interaction (p.4). The report repeatedly mentions danger from Lyme Disease (p.4, p.21) and notes that "87 cases were reported in Texas in 2007" (p.21), but omits the fact that only two cases were reported in Travis County in 2007, down from 18 cases in 2005 (Email, City, Feb. 3, 2009 w/attachment from the Department of State Health Services). Plateau notes deer-pet confrontations (p.7) and pet attacks (p.21) citing the NWACA survey as fact, summarily

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dismisses non-lethal control methods (p.22), and implies that deer birth control is dangerous to humans (p.22).

3. The report is inaccurate. The NWACA survey was not a scientific survey, but a push-poll type survey that presupposed a deer problem and solicited negative feedback (see NWACA survey item #12). It is cited as an authority by Plateau (p.21). Further, its results are exaggerated by Plateau: "Results of that [NWACA] survey show that 84% of residents within Northwest Hills have experienced landscape damage, 49% have found dead deer, 34% have experienced tree damage, 8% have had a vehicular accident, "3% have experienced a pet attack, and 15% have experienced a personal encounter" (p.21). This is inaccurate. NWACA did not survey all of Northwest Hills. There are an estimated 26,681 residents in the 78731 ZIP code. NWACA distributed 1224 surveys and received 375 total responses. (NWACA 3/2010.)

More disturbing, however, is the use of animal vs. animal rationale (pp. 21, 26), such as, "the abundance and diversity of all of these types of wildlife are negatively impacted by the current deer overabundance," without support, as an argument in favor of lethal harvesting (See UPI.com, Oct. 22, 2008) and the misleading presentation of Trap, Transport and Process as a humane and humanitarian option (p.26). The City of Lakeway killed 2238 deer between 1999 and 2009. Only 9.2 pounds of meat per deer were donated. (City of Lakeway Report 2009 – Please note that Vehicle Collision levels are not declining.) TTP is one of the most brutal, inhumane methods possible for killing deer. Multiple deer are trapped in one net, bones are broken, antlers "removed" and injured deer can remain alive for days prior to slaughter. (Texas Parks and Wildlife TTP application.)

{jcomments on}