

SHARK's Will County Forest Preserve Statement - March 12, 2015

Good morning. My name is Steve Hindi. I live at 43W799 Oakleaf Drive, in Elburn, Illinois, in Kane County. My phone number is 630-640-1889.

I am the president of SHowing Animals Respect and Kindness, or SHARK; an animal protection organization.

From December 11, 2014 to February 5, 2015, SHARK placed a number of video cameras in Will County forest preserves that were part of the deer kill program.

What we documented raises numerous questions about not only the way the program operates, and the treatment of the deer, but why there is a deer killing program at all.

Issue one, we question the training of the shooters, because one of our clips documents a deer that was shot, and is still moving as she is dragged away.

Another clip shows a deer running from a site after being shot at. Was she hit and injured, or missed entirely? No one knows.

The shooter searched for the deer, mainly in the opposite direction she ran, but did not find her.

We video documented blood trails that clearly show animals were injured but not killed. This evidence challenges the proficiency of the shooters.

Issue two, deer that were shot but not necessarily killed, were left unattended for extended periods, ranging from three to five minutes, to in once case, more than an hour.

Three to five minutes causes us concern for the humane treatment of the deer, because if the victim is still alive, there can be a lot of suffering in those minutes.

Leaving a deer for more than an hour; a delay for which we can imagine no legitimate explanation, causes concerns not just for humane treatment, but also for the District's claim of delivering meat for human consumption.

Leaving a deer on the ground for more than an hour, plus the additional delay of transporting the deer to where they will be butchered, would likely render the meat useless.

Issue three, our documentation shows that in an environment when the food supply is bare minimal save for these bait sites, few if any deer show up.

The baits sites are the equivalent of the only restaurant in town. Nevertheless, there were almost no customers.

Even when the corn piles were later augmented with lettuce and carrots, there were still very few deer.

Locals have told us there are very few deer, and our documentation supports their eye witness accounts.

We have read the report listing the number of deer supposedly killed at various preserves.

We find those numbers difficult to believe in the preserves wherein we placed cameras.

If those numbers reported were accurate, we'd have a lot more video of deer at bait sites, and of deer being killed.

The lack of deer raises issue four, which is shooters apparently straying from the deer management program parameters.

If the shooters were supposed to only shoot deer over bait, this was not always the case.

Especially later in the program, the shooters were roving in their vehicles, with spotlights, apparently looking for any available strays to shoot.

The roving resulted in some of the blood trails I mentioned earlier.

Roving shots not only challenges the need for a deer kill, but also raises concerns about public safety.

The bait sites are chosen for a reason - to protect people in surrounding homes from haphazard shots.

We believe an independent review is in order to look at the disturbing issues raised by our video documentation.

We will be happy to work with those who might conduct such a review.

Is there a need for a deer reduction program? Our documentation strongly suggests the answer at this time is no.

If there is a need, must it be a lethal program? There are nonlethal options available, and they should be thoroughly explored.

We are well into the 21st century. Surely we can do better than to simply slaughter innocent animals.

The deer belong to all of us. They are held in the public trust, live on public lands, and are managed with our tax dollars.

Government funded killing, if it is truly needed, should be transparent and open to scrutiny.

We're confident that at least some of the things that occurred would not have happened had the shooters been wearing body cams.

The kill teams should include a representative from the humane community with a video camera.

If we as a society have no more imagination or compassion than to simply kill any being that gets in our way, the taxpayers should see exactly what they are getting for their money.

Thank you.