

Hello: My name is [REDACTED] and I am the person who is in charge of the deer culling for the City of Helena. What we do in the City of Helena use full time and reserve Police Officers to do the actual culling. I am the retired City of Helena Assistant Police Chief and got the program going just before I retired and they asked me if I would continue doing the program as a Reserve Officer. I agreed and pretty much handle all of the work of finding trapping locations (we mostly use private property), back yards etc. During the actual culling of the deer it takes two people to control, kill and transport the deer to a location for cleaning. I set and bait the traps myself, however each time a deer is caught there is about 15 minutes of cleaning the area and putting the trap back together so it is ready to catch another deer. I often times keep the person who was helping me cull and clean the deer, get the traps ready to use again. I then go out at night and bait the traps and set them to catch deer. For the 12 traps we have, it takes about two hours to do this. This is how we do it and the main reason for this is the landowners feel comfortable having officers on their property and if there is any problems with the public we have the authority to handle the incident, however in the 3 years I have done this trapping I have only had the netting on one trap damaged and only one deer I could prove anyway released.

There are companies out there that will do the culling for you but they are very expensive and usually charge between 300-400 dollars per deer, and they usually don't process the animal as far as cleaning them. I hope this information helps; a couple of your members from your committee came down and observed our operation. Carmen Purdy and Ron Kerr.

Regarding type of person to hire:

They have to be honest, have a good attitude and a good listening ear, they need to be understanding when someone who is against the program offers their opinion, they need to be reasonably strong and have a good back. They also need to not mind getting very dirty. They need to be the type of person who can handle the killing of lots of animals at a very close range. Some of our officers didn't want this and one person I tried as a auxiliary officer, couldn't handle the killing of the deer, was having bad dreams. This is not for everyone and before you invest money in training them, you would want to know that mentally they can handle it. They also need to be able to work a schedule that is very flexible. They must have a driver's license and a good driving record, be able to drive 4 wheel drive vehicle and be able to fix problems that come up. Work with tools and be able to adapt if something needs a temporary fix. I grew up on a farm and learned most of this from farm work, except for the working with different types of people, now that one I will have to say, Law Enforcement taught me that.

I hope I answered your question, I too am retired after 32 years as a Helena Police Officer and you would figure I would be smart enough to go fishing or golfing. I have been up to your beautiful city a few times, we have purchased three horses from the Rad family in Invermere and were there last fall getting the last one. I noticed you had quite a few deer wandering around your city. My wife and I are hoping we can come back up to your area again this summer and go through the Park. To sum up your question on who to hire, if you have a couple of guys in the employment of the City who are good working with tools, good with the public and can handle the stress of the culling then that would be your

best and cheapest way to do the trapping method. You only need one to do the planning, arranging where to put the traps and to set and bait the traps each night your trapping. The second person is necessary to do the take down of the animal and for lifting and the cleaning of the animals, transport to the meat processing plant etc. Additional information for you to think about as far as how long the trapping would take. We have removed a total of 426 deer from Helena over the past three years, the first year we took out 200 , the second year 200 and now our numbers are down to the level where we only had to take out 26 this year. We have 12 traps and averaged 4 deer per night. Of course some nights we got more, with our best night being 8. Some nights because of the weather, below zero, snowing, raining, etc. we just didn't trap. With our set up the cleaning of the animals when the temp. falls below 26 degrees F. we find cleaning of the processing area very hard and time consuming. This is why the folks you hire have to be flexible regarding when you trap. I believe you get more rain and snow then we do and this is a factor in the trapping. Full moon clear nights and just before a storm is expected to arrive are the best nights for trapping. One other thing to consider, we don't trap during the day time to avoid having the public watching how we do the culling, some folks just can't handle or understand what needs to be done. If you City choose to trap during the day time and during the night, I'm sure you could increase your numbers per day. This was just such a explosive issue when we first begin the program that we decided to trap only at night. This has worked out quite well for our City and the only complaints our City Commissioners are getting now is from the public who wants us to remove more deer. Best of Luck with your program, I have been working with Carmen and Ron and depending on what route is finally agreed upon, I may be up in your area to help get the program started.

