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Opener

Good evening, Councilmen and Councilwomen, and members of the public, My Name is Tyler Carter, I want to thank you for your questions and concerns, without those this wouldn't have happened.

In January of 2024, Little Forrest preschool was locked down during pick up time for a Mountain Lion that became too comfortable around humans. This is one of many incidents I witnessed caused by the growing problem of wildlife feeding and attractant use in our community.

I was born here in Los Alamos. I attended Mountain Elementary, Los Alamos Middle School and graduated a Hilltopper. I attended NMSU, where I received my bachelor's degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management, during which time I worked as a field tech on various studies with deer and elk of the course of four years- one in White Sands Missile Range, and one here on the Valles Caldera and surrounding area collecting vegetation data and effects of predators on elk. I've spent three years with NMDGF, more than a year of which as the District Officer for Los alamos and surrounding area. When I transferred to Los Alamos, I filled a district vacant for 4 years, to rejoin the community where I now raise my two children.

Body

I'm here to discuss the issue growing issue of feeding and use of attractants in Los Alamos and White Rock communities and ask for your help. The reports I received over the last year deal directly with deer, mountain lions, and bears. I will not be talking about Ashley Pond or bear carts here, that is a separate issue. In my experience, the issues do not stem from; properly hung bird feeders used for birding enjoyment, recreational gardens and fruit trees intended for human consumption, or ornamental plants, like roses. However, it is important to state the misuse of these attractant types being fed are the direct cause of some negative wildlife incidents.

Since we have started the Wildlife Education Plan, our recorded incidents show a direct correlation between feeding and increased wildlife-human conflict. Over the last year, I have talked to individuals feeding and using attractants, as well as the community surrounding these areas. Positive responses I have received include increased willingness to reports individuals feeding, an increase in education on why not to feed, and an increase in positive support on addressing feeding. On the negative side, I have seen an increase in the number of community members that view wildlife negatively. I have seen a very prevalent feud between the community regarding feeding and attractants, an increase in concern about the health and visual unsightliness of our wildlife, potential for disease, and concern from parents on safety of children around animals. Education alone has not reduced the behaviors of the community members that place these attractants.

Our problems today are that established feeding locations have disrupted the natural behaviors of animals and attract them to our more populated areas. This leads to property damage, vehicle collisions, and in some cases, dangerous human wildlife conflicts, with no way to mitigate the Increase and spread of feeding in Los Alamos and White Rock. Education alone is no longer enough. During encounters with members of the feeding community, I have witnessed open refusal to stop these behaviors, even after the understanding that violations are being committed. On several occasions there has been mention to escalate behavior with other violations. It is clear an enforcement mechanism is needed to deter harmful feeding practices.

The biggest problem at the beginning this year was not knowing the extent of our issue and how to address them. We have identified that our unique conditions here create a perfect storm. When I enforce a state law and regulation in Los Alamos County, that local LE statutorily cannot enforce, this causes confusion. LAPD/AC has no laws or ordinances, that I am aware of, that allow them to help address these types of issues. This ties LAPD/AC hands on enforcement. This is also the first authority the community looks to for guidance. To magnify this, our community is half of the county, which means a limited way to control any animal population.

Authority

19.30.2.8 TECHNIQUES/INTERVENTION:

D. Causing a nuisance game animal problem: It shall be unlawful for any person, by their action or lack of action, whether intentionally or through negligence, to cause a nuisance game animal or depredation problem by baiting, feeding, or otherwise enticing game animals to an area, and such persons, if convicted, may be punished under 17-2-10 NMSA 1978. The department shall not be required to offer or provide interventions.

17-1-26. [Commission's power to establish rules and regulations; predatory animals; eradication.]

The state game commission is hereby authorized and directed to make such rules and regulations and establish such service as it may deem necessary to carry out all the provisions and purposes of this act, and all other acts relating to game and fish, and in making such rules and regulations and in providing when, to what extent, if at all, and by what means game animals, birds and fish may be hunted, taken, captured, killed, possessed, sold, purchased and shipped, the state game and fish commission [state game commission] shall give due regard to the zones of temperatures, and to the distribution, abundance, economic value and breeding habits of such game animals, birds and fish.

17-2-19. Enforcement of game laws; powers of conservation officers.

The director of the department of game and fish, each conservation officer, each sheriff in his respective county and each member of the New Mexico state police shall enforce Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and shall:

19.30.2.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

17-1-14, 17-1-26, 17-2-7.2, 17-2-10, 17-2-26, 17-3-13.3, 17-3-13.4, 17-3-31, and 17-5-3 NMSA 1978 provide that the New Mexico state game commission has the authority to establish rules and regulations that it may deem necessary to carry out the purpose of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and all other acts pertaining to protected species.
 [9-1-89; 1-13-96; 9-15-97; 19.30.2.3 NMAC

Data

NMDGF or LAPD logged incidents (Calls) in Los Alamos County	2023 (Jan-Dec) 12 Months	2024 (Jan-July) 6 Months	2024 (Aug-Nov) 11 Months	Notes
Traffic accidents involving animals	64	23	68	
Traffic accidents involving deer on Diamonds Drive	56	20	34	
Dead, sick or injured animal calls	319	87		
Dead, sick or injured deer	93	39		
Confirmed sick animals	9	5	9	
Confirmed Mountain Lion attacks involving prey or humans	4	9	16	
*Wildlife report calls involving deer	15	Data presented Differently	Data presented Differently	
*Wildlife calls involving predators	8	15	27	
Confirmed bear attacks involving prey or humans	2	7	9	
Incident calls noted (minor)	Not reported	8	13	
* Wildlife incidents with immediate threats to human safety, resulting in euthanized predators (most severe)	Not reported	5	8**	**3 more confirmed but not reported (not added)
Active year-round feeding locations identified	Not reported	9	12**	**two currently under investigation Nov 24 (not added)
*Confirmed Deer attacks involving pets or humans	Not reported	Not reported	4	*New as of July 24
* Wildlife does not include Coyotes, Skunks, or small game animals.				

Figure (1). Wildlife calls broken down.

Please see Fig. 1 for number reference for Fig 2-8.

Figure (2) Deer vs Vehicle 23

Figure (3) Feed Area v Vehicle

Figure (4) Feed Area v Predator kills

Figure (5) Feed Area v euthanized Predators.

Figure (6) Feed Area v Sick Animals

Figure (7) Feed Area v Animal Attacks

Figure (8) Feed Area v All Incidents

Closing

Not only did we establish this is a nuisance but now a public safety issue. I do my best to prioritize calls based on severity and respond to calls here in LA alone. This can be difficult during certain times of year. We have enforcement at the state and local level in other areas of the country, I am not asking council to create something new, I am simply asking for a way to enforce feeding and attractants at a local level here. As an educator, father, public servant, and community member, I highly support the cooperative creation of a local ordinance allowing the LAPD to support us in enforcement. I am asking the community and council for their help moving forward. It is our job as leaders to find a well-managed balance between a healthy wildlife population and a harmonious human-wildlife coexistence