



**To: Board Members 4-D**

**From: LuAnn Maisner, CPRP**  
**Director of Parks and Recreation**

**Date: March 29, 2023**

**Re: 2022-2023 Deer Management Program Final Report**

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The 2022 Deer Management Program concluded its twelfth year of the volunteer archery program and third year of the firearms cull conducted and managed by the Police Department. The combined archery harvest and the police cull resulted in a total deer harvest of 356 deer.

The ongoing success of this program is due to the effective collaborative efforts of the Township Board and Administration, Departments of Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Police, volunteer archery hunters, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division, and the Sportsman Against Hunger Organization.

An important component of the deer management program is the venison donation to local community foodbanks. Thanks to the generosity of Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger, Meridian Township was able to donate 7,964 lbs. of venison from this program to 14 local food banks and to participating families at the Santa's First Responders Party. The value of the processing fees donated to this year's program by MSAH totaled \$9,262.50.

Attached is the detailed 2022-2023 Deer Management Final Report for your review. A special thanks to the following staff members who lead and managed the successful implementation of this community-wide effort: Stewardship Coordinator, Emma Campbell, Water Department Utility Worker, Mike Ellis, Police Chief, Ken Plaga, Sergeant Andrew McCready, Stewardship Intern, Rebecca Sedam, Utility Workers Dan Inman, Don Cuson, Dan Palacios, James Arnett, D'Destin Kaufman and Derek Bobb.

As a side note, according to the MDNR, a total of 303,061 deer were harvested in the State of Michigan and 4,803 in Ingham County in 2022. There were also a total of 386 reported deer harvests within Meridian Township; 356 were harvested directly through our management program.

**Deer Management Final Report**  
**2022 - 2023**  
**March 29, 2023**



In 2022, Meridian Township conducted their 12<sup>th</sup> year of the Deer Management Archery Program. The archery portion of the program operates annually from October 1-January 1. The Meridian Police cull was added to the program in 2021 (January-February) and for the last three years has contributed to the overall success of management objectives.

The Township Board initiated this program in 2010 in response to the continued high number of car-deer collisions and concerns with ongoing destruction of vegetation in parks, land preserves and in residential neighborhoods. Deer management is also imperative to mitigate the return of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), which plagued the deer herd in 2015. The reported car/deer accidents have decreased over a ten-year period of 33%, ([2012] 153/103 [2022]) with 2020 reporting the least accidents at 100. Reports from residents regarding landscape destruction and a noticeable reduction in deer browsing damage in parks and preserves demonstrates a level of success while also fostering a healthier deer population. CWD has not been reported since 2016, which indicates the population is healthy enough to combat the disease.

The continued success of this program is a direct result of effective collaborative efforts with the Township Board, Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Police, together with volunteer archery hunters, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division, and the Sportsman Against Hunger Organization. **The culmination of efforts from these entities resulted in 356 deer harvested, 7,964 lbs of venison donated to local food banks for the 2022-2023 management year. There has been a 32% reduction in reported car/deer accidents since 2010.**

**Program Overview: Archery Program**

1. The Meridian Township Deer Management Program is highly managed and follows all Michigan Department of Natural Resources rules and guidelines in conducting this program.
2. All volunteer hunters must be residents of Meridian Township, submit to a criminal background check, pass an archery proficiency test, and attend the mandatory orientation each year.
3. Parks and Recreation staff provides clear, consistent communication and enforcement of program rules and guidelines throughout the season and communicates daily with program participants.
4. All parks and land preserves remained open to the public during the archery season.
5. DPW staff member, Mike Ellis led and managed the cooler's maintenance as well as conducted venison deliveries four times per week to the processor in Jackson.
6. In addition Mike Ellis contacted and nurtured outstanding relationships with 16 local food banks where he distributed a total of 7,964 pounds of venison throughout both the archery and extended cull seasons. American Sportsman Against Hunger covered all processing costs for donated venison, \$24,700 total for 2022-2023.

### **Program Overview: Police Cull**

1. A Damage and Nuisance Animal Control Permit was obtained from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The permit allowed the Police Department to cull 200 deer.
2. The Police Department utilized infrared technology, cameras, thermal imaging and suppressors to conduct the cull.
3. The Police Cull operated during the evening hours once parks and land preserves were closed.
4. No overtime pay was paid to the officers participating in the program.
  - Four DPW staff worked early morning hours, following the evening cull to field dress the deer before delivering them to the processor.
  - 6,052 lbs. of venison was donated from this program to 16 local food banks.

### **Program Statistics:**

#### **2022 Volunteer Archery Deer Management Program**

- Conducted under the Michigan Department of Natural Resources “Deer Management Assistance Permit” during the regular archery season of October 1st 2022 - January 1st 2023
- 70 resident volunteer archers participated
- **156** Deer Harvested from 41 Township properties and 22 private properties (*see figure 1 at end of report*)
- **Over 1,900** pounds of venison donated to local food banks (600 more than 2021)
- **7,600 meals** provided locally (1-pound equals 4 meals for 1 person)
- Retail price of amount of venison donated = \$9,500 (based on \$5/pound)
- Estimated **3,600 volunteer hours** served in the field

#### **2022 Police Cull**

- Conducted under a Damage and Nuisance Animal Control Permit from the Wildlife Division of the MDNR: January 2, 2023 – February 6, 2023
- **200** deer culled
- **6,052** pounds of venison donated to local food banks
- **24,208** meals provided locally (1-pound equals 4 meals for 1 person)
- Dollar amount of venison donated = \$30,260 (based on \$5/pound)

#### **Total Deer Harvested- 356**

**Total Donation to Local Food Banks** - A total of **7,964 pounds of venison** were donated to the following local Food Banks: (*see figure 2 at the end of report*)

- *Okemos Community Church*
- *Haslett Community Church*

- *Capital Area Community Services*
- *Community Baptist Church of Lansing*
- *Dansville Clothing & Food Bank*
- *St. Jude Catholic Church of Dewitt*
- *Community Baptist Church of Grand Ledge*
- *Santa's First Responders Holiday Party*
- *First Presbyterian Church*
- *St. John's Church of Christ*
- *Haslett Food Bank*
- *Redeemer United*
- *Our Savior Lutheran Food Bank*
- *Williamston Food Bank*
- *Leslie Community Outreach*
- *Mason Food Bank*

**2021-2022 Program Cost**

Staff Hours Regular- Parks, DPW, Police (12)	~ \$ 70,000.00	(2,100 est. staff hours)
Overtime Costs DPW Field Dressing: (4)	\$ 7,479.91	(210 OT hours)
Permits, Equipment, and Supplies:	\$ 10,036.16	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>~ \$ 81,7612.07</b>	

Deer Processing Costs (260 donated deer) \$ 24,700  
 (Funded by Sportsmen Against Hunger)

	<b>Total Hunters</b>	<b>Properties Hunted</b>	<b>Archery Harvest</b>	<b>Police Cull</b>	<b>Reported Deer/Car Collisions</b>	<b>Dead Deer Pickup</b>
<b>2011</b>	25	7	43	--	152	--
<b>2012</b>	50	18	90	--	153	--
<b>2013</b>	60	20	127	--	180	--
<b>2014</b>	73	21	150	--	137	--
<b>2015</b>	30	19	63	--	144	--
<b>2016</b>	73	31	73	--	164	--
<b>2017</b>	66	30	80	--	129	--
<b>2018</b>	74	38	57	--	129	--
<b>2019</b>	84	38	88	--	153	--
<b>2020</b>	75	42	176	150	100	46
<b>2021</b>	68	43	130	200	116	85
<b>2022</b>	70	63	156	200	103	134

Dead deer picked up and disposed of by Park Maintenance Staff (not included in totals):

**2022** – 134

**2023** – 30 (as of 3/29/23)

**Summary:**

Meridian Township's Deer Management Plan strives to focus on an ecosystems approach by creating co-existence among wildlife, citizens and our suburban/natural communities in a safe and efficient manner. The deer management plan recognizes that the use and enjoyment of deer by residents is highly variable. Selection of deer management methods requires consideration of general concepts and location-specific deer dynamics.

Meridian Township takes their role as an environmental steward seriously and as such, recognizes the need to implement science-based management of our fragile natural resources so that they may remain in perpetuity for future generations.

**Figures for 2022 Season:**

Figure 1: Total number of deer harvested at a property level. Only includes properties with >1 harvest.

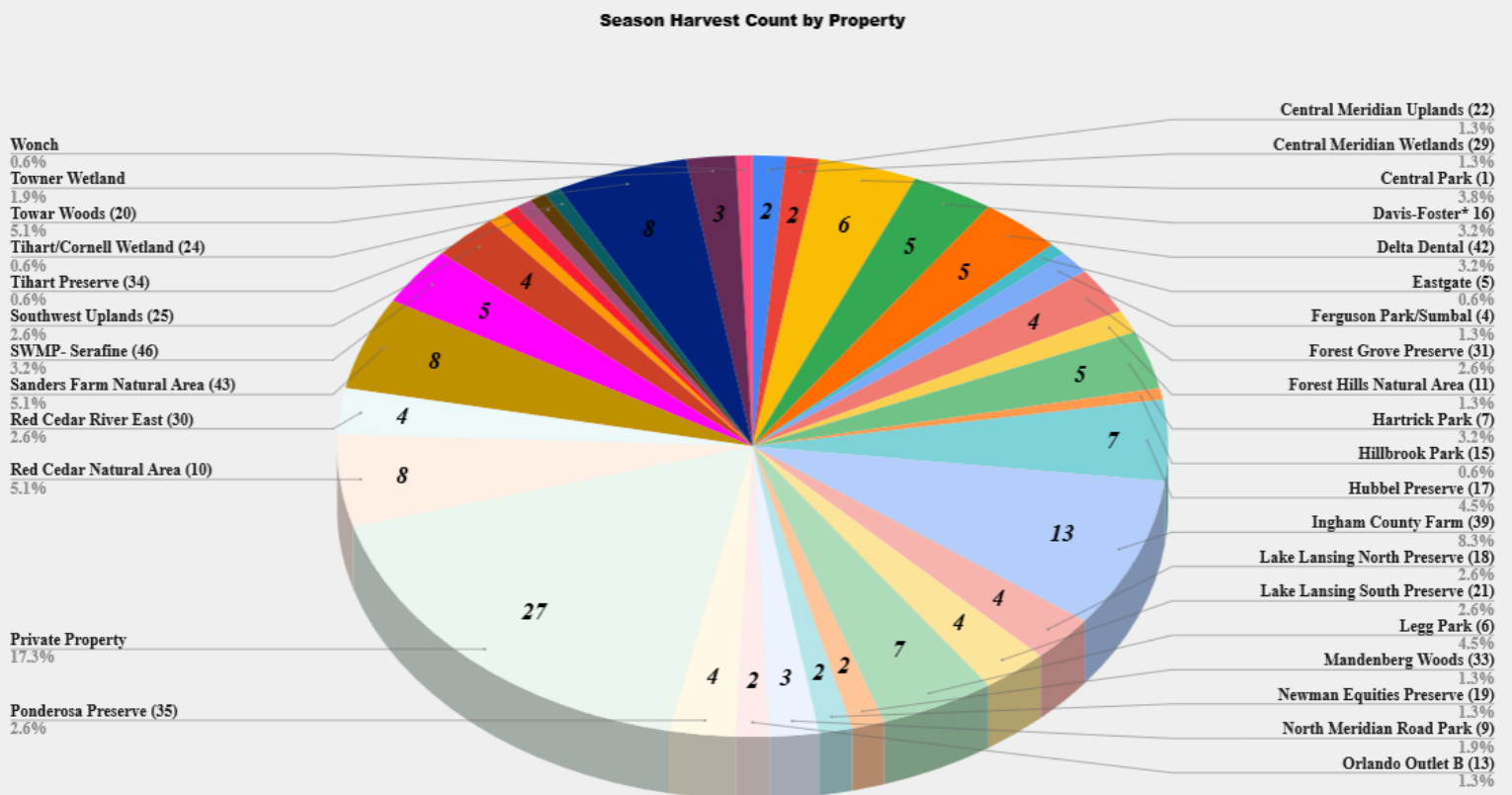


Figure 2: Total number of pounds of venison donated. Green rows correspond with volunteer archery donations. Orange rows correspond with police deer cull donations.

Haslett Comm	Lakeside Chapel	Catholic Comm	Okemos Comm	Capital Area	Dansville	Our Savior	Comm Baptist	Santa's	Williamston	Leslie	First Presbyterian	St. John's	Mason	Cristo Rey	Venison DONATED (lbs)
<b>2022 Volunteer Archery Donations</b>															
100	122		69	120	120			218				120			242
								78				160	140		490
	214	150													338
							100								378
															364
															100
<b>2023 Police Cull Donations</b>															
120	150	150	120		243					230					1,013
			100		250	563	869				250				1,119
	118			100					200	500			100		913
					200						800				1,018
							494								1,000
													495		989

**Figures for Multi-year Analysis:**

Figure 3: Number of deer harvest per property from 2021 to 2022. Shows a trend about deer movement.

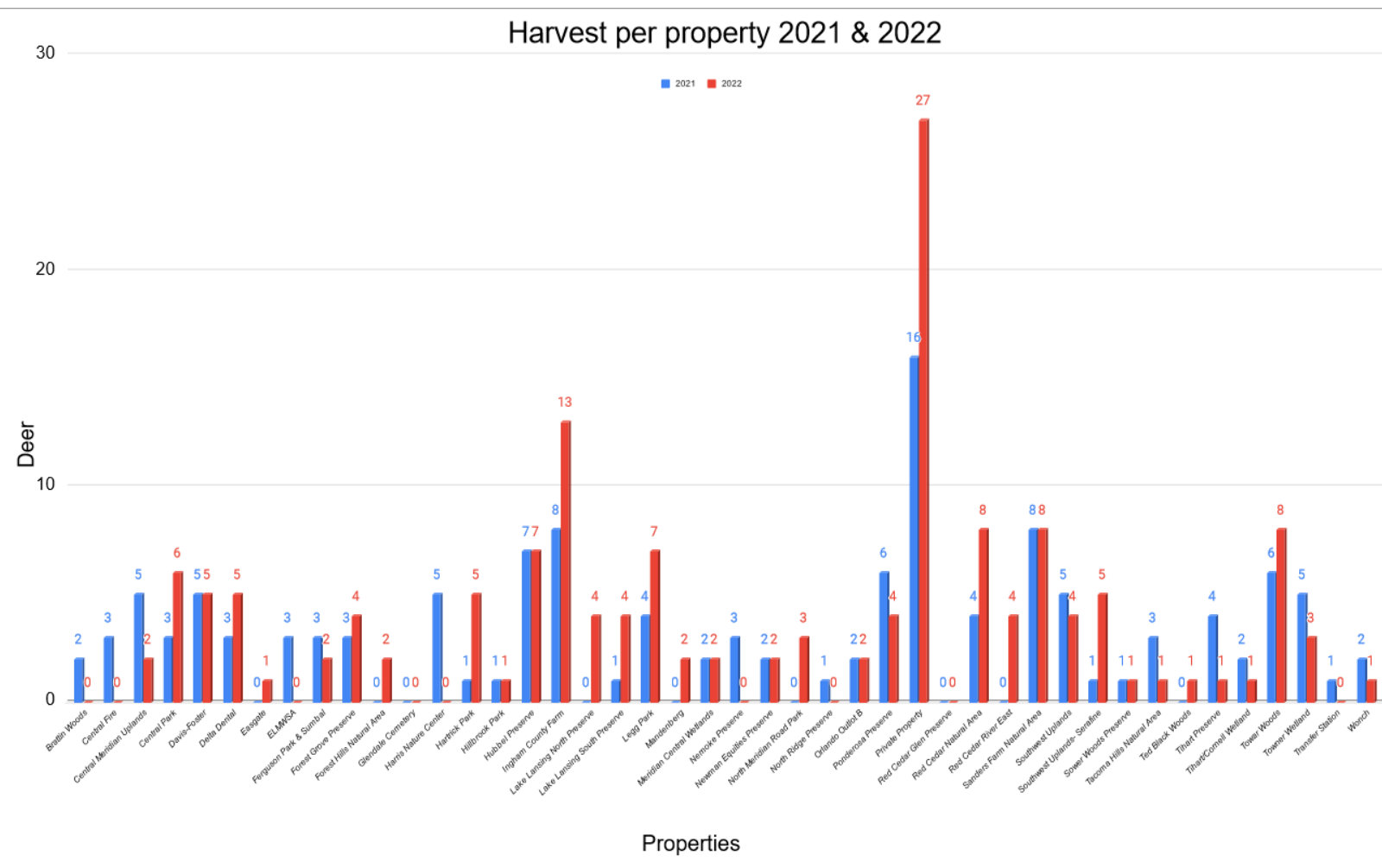
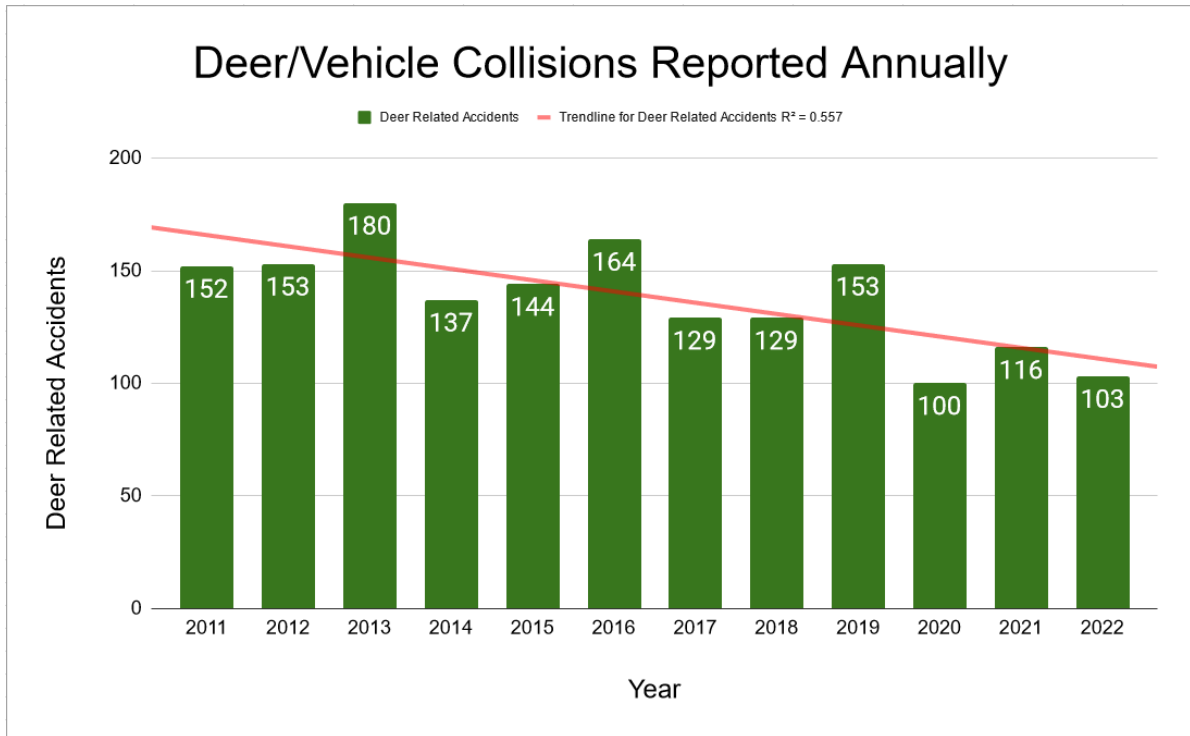


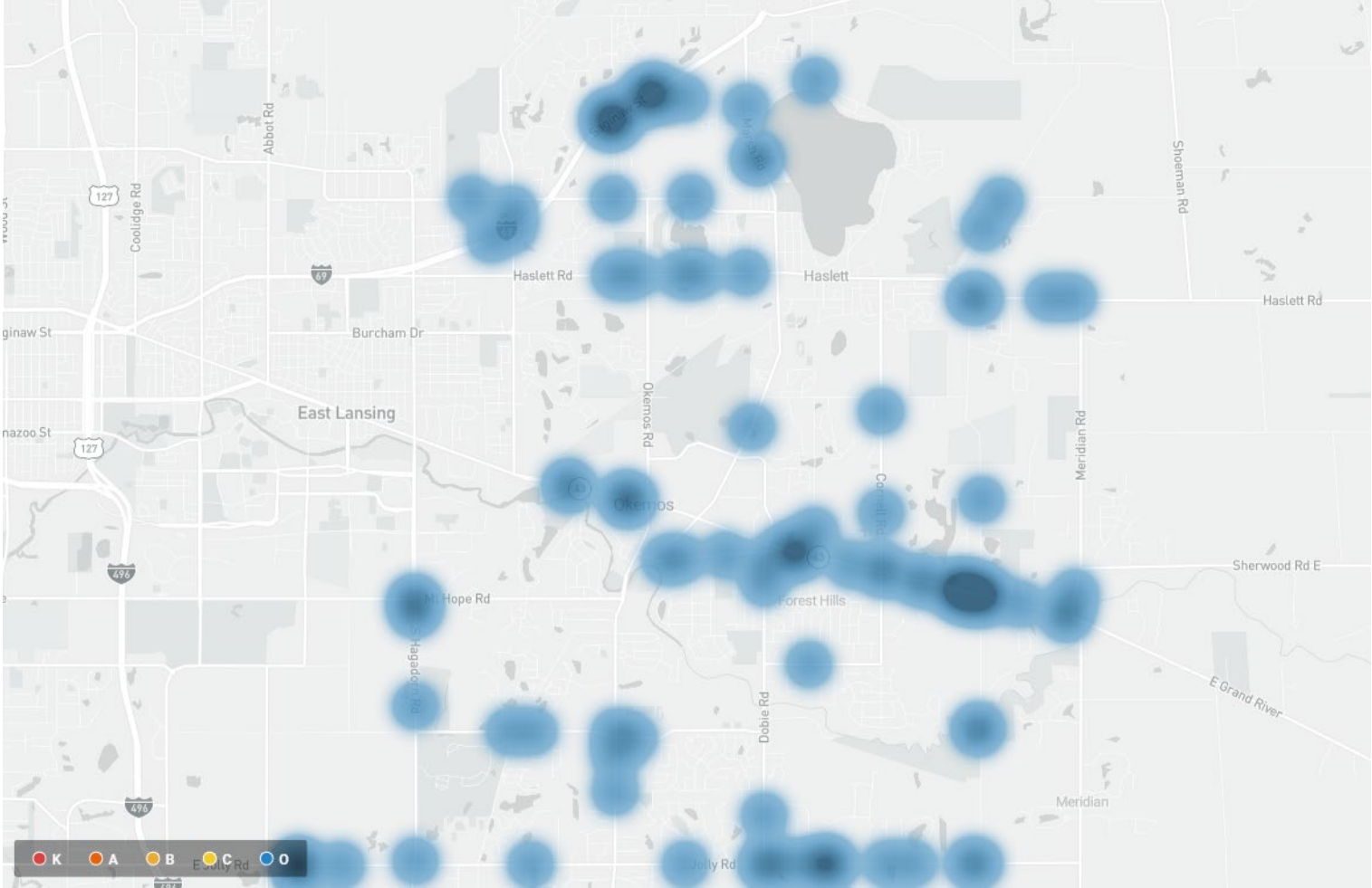
Figure 5: Deer vehicle collisions reported to the township police department annually from 2011-2021.  
Disclaimer 2022 statistic was unknown at the time of making this figure.



Providing a safe and welcoming, sustainable, prime community.



# Meridian Township Deer-Vehicle Collisions (2022)



## Legend

### Deer-Vehicle Collisions



**High**  
**Medium**  
**Low**

