

## Field Veterinarian Needed

CliftonDeer.org, a non-profit organization, and the Cincinnati Parks are engaged in a three to five year program (Program) to study surgical sterilization of female white tailed deer as an alternative to lethal culling. The Program is privately funded, and is being conducted by environmental biologist Dr. Anthony DeNicola of White Buffalo, Inc. under a research permit from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife. Surgical oversight and training is provided by Dr. Randall Junge, DVM, DACZM, currently V.P. of Animal Health at the Columbus Zoo and the Wilds. The Humane Society of the United States is providing funding and staff support.

The Program is testing a sterilization method known as a "rapid ovariectomy," a procedure similar to, but less invasive than spaying domestic dogs and cats. The goal is to reduce fawning so deer populations can shrink through normal attrition. Over several nights in late Fall or early Winter, capture teams anesthetize does by darting and transport them to a field surgical facility where a veterinary team performs the surgery and monitors the does until they can be safely returned to field. **Detailed information about the Program generally is available on the Program's website at [www.cliftondeer.org](http://www.cliftondeer.org), and about the surgical procedure specifically at the "Frequently Asked Questions" page on that site.**

Assuming the study finds sufficiently low immigration of new deer into the area that fertility control is determined to be effective for deer population management, the next test of viability of this alternative to lethal culling is whether sterilization can be applied in a sustainable, economically viable way. This requires developing local expertise in both capturing and sterilizing deer without dependence on expensive consultants.

It's impossible to know at this time what organizational and financial structures might support this method into the future, but for now the project's goal is to develop local expertise for use over the five year life of the Program.

Finding one or more veterinarians to take part in, and even lead, these once-a-year or every-other-year, several night field surgical operations is a critical objective at this stage of the program. The hours and conditions can be challenging.

There appear to be a few specific qualities that could be important to doing this unique work well and, just as importantly, enjoying it.

- \* Personal interest in wildlife preservation
- \* Willingness to learn a new surgical procedure, and then teach it to other vets and vet techs as needed

- \* Surgical competence
- \* Good reputation (to avoid criticism from nay-sayers)
- \* Willingness and ability to work and lead a surgical team in field conditions  
(Think M.A.S.H. or Doctors Without Borders without the bombs!)
- \* Willingness and ability to work long, late hours for several nights in a row.

There is no money to pay the vet in this year's (2016) budget, though modest compensation may be possible in future years. There might be opportunities to take these skills to other communities as a consultant in future years, but this is not an expectation for the Program.

Potentially interested veterinarians are encouraged to **call or email Chris Lottman at 513 751-6601 ([christine.lottman@uc.edu](mailto:christine.lottman@uc.edu)) or Laurie Briggs at 513 276-0801 ([laurieabriggs@gmail.com](mailto:laurieabriggs@gmail.com)) for more information.**