FOLK LAND MANAGEMENT, INC.
WOODLAND & WILDLIFE CONSULTANTS

3515 White Hall Road
Green Pond, S.C. 29446
Office: (843) 844-2290
info@folklandmanagement.com http://folklandmanagement.com

July 30, 2025

Tim Gillette, Operations Director for Tega Cay

RE: Deer Spotlight Survey Report, 2025

Mr. Gillette,

Folk Land Management, Inc. conducted a deer spotlight survey Tega Cay on the nights of July 22nd and 23rd, 2025. We were assisted each night by Tim Gillette as the driver of the survey vehicle and Chad who served as our data recorder. Your participation was very important and thank you both for the tremendous help.

We followed the survey routes established by the SCDNR in 2022 which had a visibility area of 212 acres. When deer were seen we stopped the vehicle so that I and my colleague, Jack Robinson, could inspect each animal with our binoculars and accurately identify the sex (buck or doe) and age class (adult or fawn). If an animal had an ear tag, we attempted to determine the number on the tag. The results of the surveys are presented in Tables 1-3.

We counted a total of 57 deer on the night of the 22nd and 44 deer on the 23rd. Based on the highest count total of 57 deer, the calculated deer density is: 212 ac/57 deer seen = 3.7 acres/deer. This density equates to an overall deer population on Tega Cay of about 432 deer, or about 57% fewer than the number of deer counted in 2024.

While we expected to detect fewer deer on this survey because 160 deer were culled and 200 does sterilized and did not produce fawns since our last count, the number of deer counted in the current survey was somewhat lower than anticipated. Still, the counts indicate the deer management program has been successful in reducing overall herd abundance, but the calculated deer density of 3.7ac/deer is still very high.

Based on actual data for an urban community in South Carolina that has been in a deer management program for more than 20 years, to obtain a sharp reduction in overall abundance requires removing on average about 33% of the estimated herd size over multiple years (Figure 2). Once herd size has been reduced to an acceptable target, then a reduced rate of culling of about 20% is needed to hold and stabilize the herd at this new density.

Because Tega Cay has also included the sterilization of does in their management plan, the rate of culling deer needed to hold the population at a lower density may be below 20% culling or even no culling in some years if a high proportion of the doe population has been treated. The culling rates cannot be determined without the input from annual deer counts.

Therefore, we recommended the deer management program be continued in 2025-26 and have as one objective to remove and/or sterilize at least 33% or 140 deer from the current estimated herd size of 432 deer.

We recommend continuing the annual deer counts so the deer management program can be evaluated using updated data, and adjustments made based on and supported by these data.

Further, the deer survey this year was conducted in mid-July at the request of Tega Cay while prior surveys were conducted in August or September. The earlier count this year may have contributed to an undercounting of fawns because very young and small fawns may not be with their mothers at the time of the survey. FLM is willing to conduct surveys later this summer for comparative purposes if desired by Tega Cay.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you, and I hope your management program continues to be successful.

Regards,

Ernie P. Wiggers

Ernie Wiggers, PhD
Certified Wildlife Biologist

SURVEY DATA

Table 1. Number of Deer Observed by Sex and Age class during spotlight survey counts on Tega Cay. Survey area = 212 acres; total land area = 1,600 acres.

DATE	BUCKS	DOES	FAWNS	UN-IDENTIFIED	TOTAL	ACRES/ DEER	Estimated herd size
SC DNR 3/21/22	0	0	0	101	101	2.1	762
SC DNR 9/14/22	NA	NA	NA	NA	117	1.8	889
9/11/23	19	69	20	10	117	1.8	889
9/12/23	19	96	42	0	157	1.3	1,230
8/26/2024	12	71	29	2	114	1.9	799
8/27/2024	16	74	42	10	142	1.5	1,012
7/22/2025	**6**	**46**	**2**	**3**	**57**	**3.7**	**432**
7/23/2025	**8**	**34**	**2**	**0**	**44**	**4.8**	**333**

Table 2. Number of deer counted on each survey route segment (See Figure 1 for route segments) including number of tagged animals seen and tag number if detected on July 22 and 23, 2025.

Date	Start	End					
7/22/2023	9:00 PM	11:15 PM					
Segment	**Bucks**	**Does**	**Fawns**	**Unknown**	**Tagged**	**Total**	**Tag numbers seen**
1	1	3	0	1	16	21	1, 2, 66, 72, 105, 110, 115, 163, 190
2	0	3	0	0	1	4	
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5	1	0	2	0	6	9	46, 71, 119, 162, 164, 177
6	4	3	0	0	7	14	99, 113, 140, 155, 173, 180, 194
7	0	1	0	2	6	9	49, 50, 58
Total	**6**	**10**	**2**	**3**	**36**	**57**	**25/36=70% of does seen were tagged**
7/23/2025	9:00 PM	11:15 PM					
Segment							
1	1	2	0	0	12	15	1, 2, 45, 52, 57, 62, 66, 68, 72
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5	1	2	2	0	0	5	
6	2	4	0	0	11	17	71, 99, 105, 110, 115,119, 162, 177, 180, 190
7	4	1	0	0	2	7	48, 50
Total	**8**	**9**	**2**	**0**	**25**	**44**	**21/25=84% of does seen were tagged**

Table 3. Population Parameters for deer herd observed during spotlight survey counts on Tega Cay.

YEAR	AVERAGE DOES/ BUCK	AVERAGE FAWNS/ DOE	HERD INCREMENT	AVERAGE % UNIDENTIFIED
SC DNR 3/21/22	NA	NA	NA	NA
SC DNR 9/14/22	2.5	0.70	NA	NA
2023	4.3	0.4	0.31	4%
2024	5.2	0.5	0.4	4.7%
2025	**5.7**	**0.05**	**0.04**	**3%**

Figure 1. Outline of the Tega Cay deer survey area and survey transects followed for counting deer.

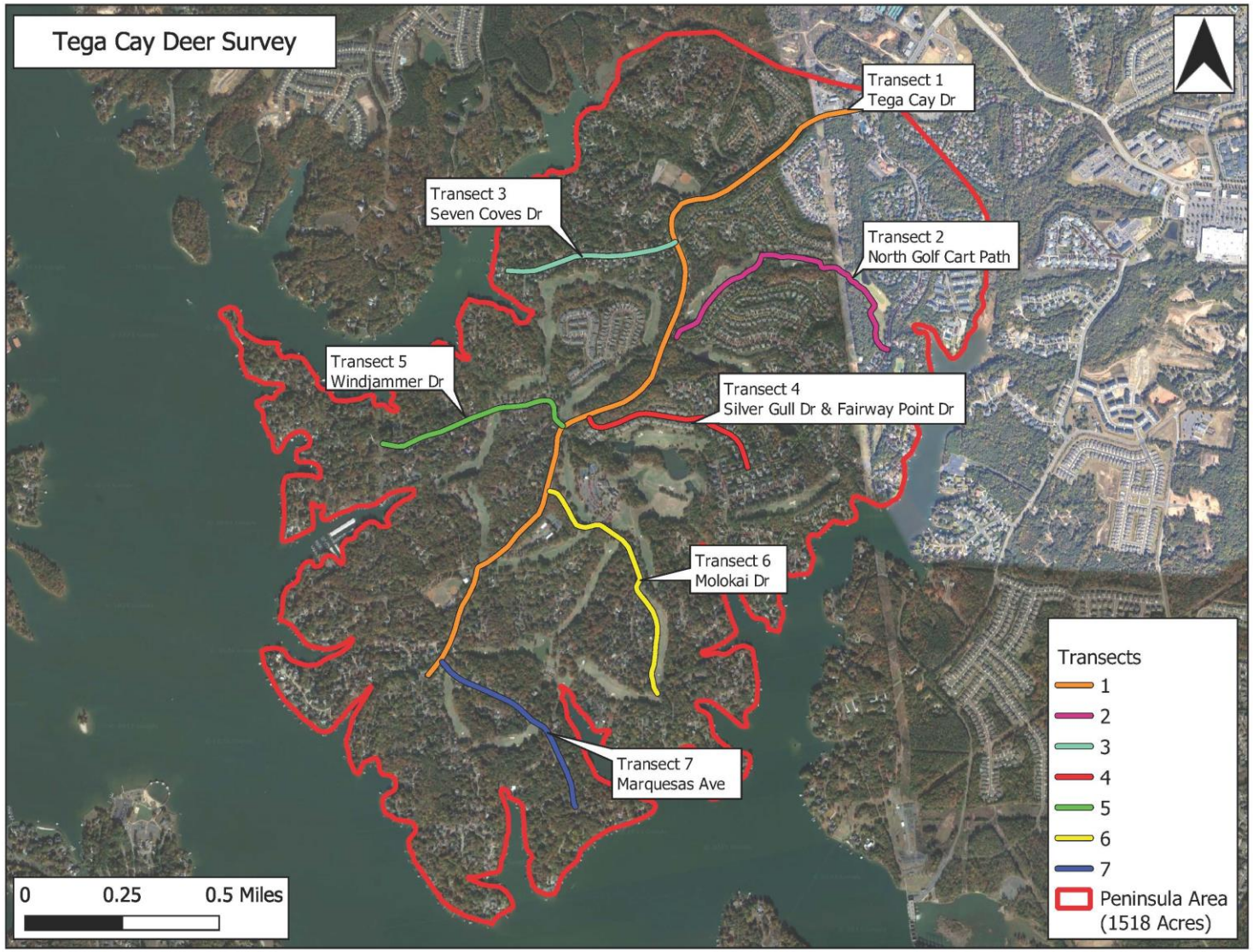

Figure 2. Graph of actual data from an urban community showing initial high deer harvest rates needed to reduce deer abundance and then a lower harvest rate used to sustain deer herd abundance using sharpshooting as a management tool. Note average harvest rate in year 2000-2003 was about 33% of the total estimated population which resulted in a sharp decline in deer abundance. Then from 2004 – 2015 the harvest rate was reduced to about 19% of the total estimated population which resulted in a fairly stable population trend. In 2017 – 2020 the average harvest rate dropped to about 11% and at these lower harvest rates the deer population slowly increased. This graph is intended to demonstrate how a deer management program can be used to reduce deer abundance in an urban community and then sustain deer abundance at a lower density which might be more desirable community wide. Actual harvest rates may vary for individual communities as this is only representative of what has occurred on one community.