

DNR searches for 'brazen' poacher

Shooter got the deer, but not the trophy

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TOWN OF WATERFORD — Michael Brannen heard just one gunshot, but that was enough to take down a trophy buck that people in the neighborhood had come to know.

The 10-point buck stumbled onto Brannen's property, fell down and died.

Brannen ran to confront the shooter, who was behind the wheel in a passing vehicle. But the perpetrator sped away, leaving behind his illegally shot trophy.

Conservation agents now are searching for the poaching suspect, who could face criminal charges and hundreds of dollars in fines in the incident that occurred Nov. 12 in the Town of Waterford.

Investigators are hoping a

member of the public will help them find the suspect.

Brandon Smith, a warden with the state Department of Natural Resources, said the poaching episode was unusual because it occurred in broad daylight in a residential area.

"It was a pretty brazen incident," Smith said. "It was certainly a dangerous situation."

Brannen, himself a hunter, said he also wants to see the suspect captured and prosecuted.

The incident occurred across the street from the Buena Park subdivision — far too close to people's homes for anyone to be taking aim at a deer and firing a rifle, Brannen said.

"Before you know it, they're going to be shooting deer in every neighborhood," he said. "Where's it going to stop?"

The incident occurred eight days before Wisconsin's gun season opened for deer hunting on



Smith

Nov. 20. The only hunting permitted at the time was with bow and arrow.

At about 3 p.m. on a recent Friday, Brannen was working on a home remodeling project outside his house in the 30000 block of Grand Drive, just north of the Village of Waterford.

Deer roam the neighborhood frequently. Residents are accustomed to seeing the animals outside.

Smith said the 10-point buck had been in the area for so long, many residents knew him. With his size and picturesque antlers, the deer would have attracted the attention of any hunter, Smith said.

"For most people, that would be

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SUBMITTED

Homeowner Michael Brannen took this photo of a 10-point buck that was shot and killed near his home in the Town of Waterford on Nov. 12 — eight days before gun hunting season opened.