



WHITE BUFFALO, INC.
HELPING RESTORE THE NATURAL BALANCE
a nonprofit organization

Summary Report Griffy Lake Nature Preserve Bloomington, Indiana

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Introduction

Bloomington city officials voiced concerns over habitat degradation and the potential loss of biodiversity and impacts to native vegetation because of a locally abundant deer population in Griffy Lake Nature Preserve. The potential for the furtherance of these conflicts prompted Park Board Members to consider implementing strategies to address the abundance of deer through sharpshooting.

Site Description

Griffy Lake Nature Preserve encompasses 1200 acres in the north central portion of the city of Bloomington, Indiana. The preserve surrounds 106 acre Griffy Lake and contains an extensive hiking trail system and boating opportunities which create a moderate to high seasonal user base. The area is dominated by mature hardwood forest and Karst type topography. Moderate density housing surrounds the southwest section of the park with low density housing, agricultural fields, a golf course, and additional wooded areas comprising the remainder of the perimeter.



Methods

Pre-baiting and Site Selection

Seven locations were selected, throughout the preserve, for removal activities. Because of high human activity throughout much of the Park and surrounding areas, deer were baited in select areas using three criteria: 1) **Safety**- ensuring the location had a suitable earthen back drop with good visibility 2) **Location** – suitable access from the road for ingress and egress purposes while providing adequate distribution to effectively cover the area. 3) **Discretion** – selection based on areas of low pedestrian use.

Initial bulk baiting began on 28 November 2014 and continued until 7 December 2014. Daily baiting took place from 8-17 December 2014. Game cameras were used to monitor consumption and provide deer arrival times and group composition for the three days preceding the first anticipated removal efforts. Secondary baiting began on 21 January 2015 and continued until 6 February 2015.

Results

Bait consumption at all of the bait sites were moderate to poor during the initial pre-baiting period. An unusually heavy mast crop (acorns) from both Black and Red Oak species provided enough natural forage that deer were not attracted to the bait sites with consistency. It was proposed to delay implementation of removal efforts until baiting conditions were more favorable, possibly later in the winter.

Conditions were re-evaluated in mid-January and it was determined that a secondary baiting attempt was worthwhile. During this period game cameras were used to monitor activity at the bait site locations providing deer arrival times and group composition data. Based on this data it was determined that accomplishing the goals, outlined in the parks plan, would have very little chance for success under the current field conditions. Deer were still actively feeding on acorns and arrival times at the bait sites were erratic. This would cause a significant reduction in operational efficiency and would provide very little return on investment.

It was proposed that implementation of the sharpshooting program be delayed until field conditions improved to the point where achieving the goals of the program were more likely.