



White Buffalo Inc.

Conserving Native Species and Ecosystems

SUMMARY REPORT

2016-2017 Managed Archery Program

Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Submitted by

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White Buffalo Inc.

7 February 2017



INTRODUCTION

The principal purpose for the continuation of this program is to address the deer-vehicle collisions and landowner complaints within the Municipality of Mt. Lebanon. Based on the safety and favorable outcome the 2015-2016 archery program, the Board of Commissioners voted to continue the program. In addition, the Pennsylvania Game Commission requires that any deer management initiative within the Commonwealth must include hunting as a part of the program.

The Mt. Lebanon archery program is a vital part to an overall deer management strategy that will help the community achieve their five year goal of a 50% reduction in deer-vehicle incidents. Most of the objectives set forth in the previous program were once again used during this season and include:

- Quickly build and execute a program.
- Locate interested landowners and determine the viability of each property.
- Utilize the previously established local leadership and community-minded team of archers.
- Carry out a humane, effective, and discrete program.

METHODS

Interested property owners both new and old were directed to contact WBI for participation. Once contact was made, all land was evaluated either via satellite, in person, or a combination both. Five public properties were offered: McNeilly Park, Municipal Golf Course, Public Works, Twin Hills, and Robb Hollow. Multiple private properties also were considered and/or used.

With the short amount of time given to select a team of archers, the decision was made to use the proven participants from the 2015-2016 season. Limited access to properties resulted in the use of seven archers operating from 17 September - 26 November 2016 and 26 December 2016 - 28 January 2017.

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RESULTS

White Buffalo archers and area cooperative participants harvested a total of 36 white-tailed deer in the 2016-2017 season. This number was comprised of 26 females (73%), 9 males (25%), and 1 unidentified. Only one antlered deer was harvested. There was one unrecovered deer by the WBI group and one not recovered from the Hunter Cooperative; resulting in a ~5% loss rate.

Archers volunteered over 538 hours to the program. In addition to the minimum one hour/deer handled for processing, it required >16 hours of hunting per deer harvested. Not included in this total was the >20 hours during the first three weeks of the season needed for landowner communications.

WBI archers donated 13 deer to the *Hunters Sharing the Harvest Program*. They also personally paid for and delivered another 5 deer to area families in need. Eighteen deer (55%), or approximately 855 pounds, were donated to food banks and families throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania.

DISCUSSION

Most programs of this type require 8-12 months to be established prior to the onset. Leadership advancement, screening and acquiring participants, researching landowner properties and surrounding areas are all including in this process. Building on the previous archery program was a major factor to the success of this year's program. Without it, organization for this year would not have been possible based on the given lead-time.

Another key factor to the program success was the continued involvement of volunteer archers and landowners. Securing all of the permissions necessary to operate an effective program included; direct hunting access authorization, safety zone sign-offs, deer tags, and recovery collaborations. Acquisition of these permissions continued to be a challenge in the highly populated project area. Residents familiar with their neighborhoods and fellow citizens proved to be assets once again; taking the time to talk with their neighbors paved the way for many of the access opportunities.

Hunter Cooperative numbers dropped significantly this year both in participation and harvest numbers. The consensus for this decline seems to be due to the decline of the deer population in their hunting areas. The Hunter Cooperative consists of individuals who had already obtained permission within the municipality prior to the WBI program. Data received from these individuals were included in the total deer harvest (Appendix A). Although we have no control over their harvest efforts or reporting, their assistance was greatly appreciated.



Private landowners again were pleased with the archery program. Most, if not all, of those revisited reported a noticeable decline in deer sightings. In contrast, there were other new inquiries for enrollment from residents, with property that had never been hunted, expressing the exact opposite. Unfortunately, with the close proximity to other homes, unsuitable terrain, and/or unacceptable site requirements, these areas could not be hunted.

As was stated in last year's report, anticipation of lower overall harvest numbers was to be expected. The prior program, followed by the sharpshooting efforts unequivocally had an impact on this year's totals. Given the favorable results from the second year of the archery program, we recommend that the municipality continue to include this program as part of the overall deer management strategy.

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APPENDIX A

Total Deer Harvest: 36

White Buffalo Hunters – 33
Hunter Cooperative – 3
Antlered – 1
Antlerless – 34 (8 male fawns, 26 female)
Unknown - 1
Total Female Harvest – 26
Total Male Harvest – 9
% Female Harvest – 73%

White Buffalo Harvest Information

Deer Harvested – 33
Male – 9
Female – 24
Antlered – 1
Antlerless – 32 (7 male fawns, 25 female)
% Female Harvest – 76%
Public Property Harvest – 16
Private Property Harvest – 17

Hunter Cooperative Harvest Information

Deer Harvested – 3
Male – 1
Female – 1
Unknown – 1
Antlered – 0
% Female Harvest – 34%

White Buffalo Public Property Harvest Summary

Conservation District – 5
McNeilly Park – 4
Municipal Golf Course – 7
Public Works / Robb Hollow – 0
Twin Hills – 0

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