

FINAL REPORT

2017 Deer Management Program

Mt Lebanon, Pennsylvania

by

White Buffalo, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Mt Lebanon contains a matrix of dense suburban and commercial development interspersed with a spectrum parks. The absence of any comprehensive deer management allowed the local deer population to increase to a level incompatible with some land use and human activities prior to our involvement. Although deer physical condition is not an issue, there is ongoing concern regarding numerous deer-vehicle collisions and other deer related issues. This is the Second year in which White Buffalo, Inc. has implemented deer population management program within the municipal boundaries. We harvested 115 deer during the 2016 program.

METHODS

Sharpshooting efforts were conducted from 16-22 February 2017. Seven days of fieldwork were required to achieve the harvest of 55 deer. We followed the operations protocol outlined in the contract and PGC Permit #39038. Sixteen sites were available throughout the area of operation. Two sites were not used during the removal period as unseasonably mild weather deteriorated predictable deer activity before sharpshooting efforts could be conducted.

RESULTS

We expended ~133.25 person-hours to harvest 55 deer (this does not include travel time, site preparations and set up, or baiting). The entire data set generated from harvested deer is represented in the spreadsheet entitled "Mt Lebanon - Deer Harvest: 16-22 February 2017 (Appendix A). The overall harvest demographics are summarized in Table 1. Harvest by day is summarized in Table 2. Harvest results from specific sites ranged from a high of 10 deer to a low of 0 for sites where effort was allocated.

Table 1. Sex and age class of deer harvested in Mount Lebanon, PA from 16-22 February 2017.

AGE	# MALE (%)	# FEMALE (%)	# COMBINED
Yearling/Adult	11 (20%)	23 (42%)	34 (62%)
Fawns	8 (14%)	13 (24%)	21 (38%)
Total	19 (34%)	36 (66%)	55 (100%)

Table 2. Number of deer harvested by day during the 7 days of field operations.

DATE	# Harvested	DATE	# Harvested	DATE	# Harvested	DATE	# Harvested
2/16/17	15	2/18/17	13	2/20/17	4	2/22/17	4
2/17/17	7	2/19/17	9	2/21/17	3		

Harvest by Deer Management Zone

To allow for a more comprehensive population management program, we summarized all the harvest data by management zone. Zone 1 was delineated as all land west of Cedar and Cochran to the municipal boundary. Zone 2 was composed of all land east of Cedar and Cochran, west of Scott Road, and north of Beadling Road and Mt Lebanon Boulevard to the northern municipal boundary. Zone 3 was south of Beadling Road and Mt Lebanon Boulevard, west of Castle Shannon Boulevard, to the southern municipal boundary. Zone 4 covered land east of Scott Road/Castle Shannon Boulevard to the municipal boundary. Harvest breakdown based on zone for the sharpshooting effort is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Deer harvest by Zone Mount Lebanon, PA 16-22 February 2017.

Zone	# Harvested
1	20
2	11
3	11
4	13

DISCUSSION

There was a very balanced harvest throughout the community for both archery and sharpshooting initiatives. When both management phases are combined, 91 deer were culled this past fall/winter. We expended ~133.25 person-hours to harvest 55 deer resulting in ~2.4 hours/deer harvested, similar to last year's effort. This was a high compared to other projects with similar local deer densities because of unusually warm weather, people intentionally feeding deer, and the challenge of working in a densely developed area with a "tree stand only" approach. The average annual temperatures were significantly exceeded (+20 degrees) on 5 of the 7 removal days. This diminished interest in bait by deer, but more importantly, there was a substantial increase in human activity often compromising removal efforts. This impact was evident with the rapid diminishing returns after the fourth day of culling (Table 2). The last 3 days (i.e., 42% of the total effort) resulted in only 20% of the total harvest.

We concluded sharpshooting efforts earlier than planned as an extended period of unseasonable warm weather diminished predictable deer activity at bait sites. Moreover, the long-term forecast projected continued temperatures well above average. In an effort to be good stewards of the municipalities funding it was decided to end the program early and conserve financial resources rather than deplete funding with little additional return.

Regardless of the relative success of the two harvest phases in some areas of the municipality, there continue to be pockets of more densely developed areas where deer have not been addressed (e.g., along Morrison Drive and Valleyview Road). We also received numerous correspondence since last year from residents that observed deer in their yards in other areas where it is not suitable/feasible to sharpshoot.

The Commission will need to decide whether to emphasize added non-traditional lethal management activities in very tightly developed areas or transition to sterilization in these areas of the community. The concern with culling in more congested areas is that there will inevitably be more neighbor conflicts because of the increased visibility of operations and locating parcels that will provide safe and discreet shooting locations. In respect to surgical sterilization, it is not currently a deer management option that is allowed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Mt. Lebanon was recently denied approval for a deer sterilization research project. A new submittal would be necessary with emphasis on maintaining, not reducing, the local population to the desired density. The added advantage of fertility control methods is that bait leverage is not critical like sharpshooting and can still be effective in less intense winter weather.

Appendix A

Mt. Lebanon, PA - Deer Harvest: 16-22 February 2017

DATE	TAG #	SEX	AGE
2/16/17	1020451	F	0.5
2/16/17	1020452	M	0.5
2/16/17	1020453	F	3.5
2/16/17	1020454	M	0.5
2/16/17	1020455	F	0.5
2/16/17	1020456	M	1.5
2/16/17	1020457	F	0.5
2/16/17	1020458	M	1.5
2/16/17	1020459	F	0.5
2/16/17	1020460	F	2.5
2/16/17	1020461	M	3.5
2/16/17	1020462	M	0.5
2/16/17	1020463	F	0.5
2/16/17	1020464	M	2.5
2/16/17	1020465	F	4.5+
2/17/17	1020466	M	3.5
2/17/17	1020467	F	3.5
2/17/17	1020468	M	2.5
2/17/17	1020469	M	1.5

2/17/17	1020470	M	1.5
2/17/17	1020471	F	4.5
2/17/17	1020472	F	1.5
2/18/17	1020473	F	4.5+
2/18/17	1020474	M	0.5
2/18/17	1020475	M	1.5
2/18/17	1020476	F	0.5
2/18/17	1020477	F	0.5
2/18/17	1020478	F	0.5
2/18/17	1020479	F	4.5+
2/18/17	1020480	F	4.5+
2/18/17	1020481	F	1.5
2/18/17	1020482	F	2.5
2/18/17	1020483	F	0.5
2/18/17	1020484	F	1.5
2/18/17	1020485	F	2.5
2/19/17	1020486	F	0.5
2/19/17	1020487	M	0.5
2/19/17	1020488	F	3.5
2/19/17	1020489	F	3.5
2/19/17	1020490	F	2.5
2/19/17	1020491	F	1.5

2/19/17	1020492	M	2.5
2/19/17	1020493	M	0.5
2/19/17	1020494	F	4.5+

2/20/17	1020495	F	4.5+
2/20/17	1020496	F	0.5
2/20/17	1020497	M	0.5
2/20/17	1020498	F	2.5
2/21/17	1020499	F	4.5+
2/21/17	1020500	F	0.5
2/21/17	1020501	M	0.5
2/22/17	1020502	M	2.5
2/22/17	1020503	F	4.5
2/22/17	1020504	F	1.5
2/22/17	1020505	F	0.5