



White Buffalo Inc.

Conserving Native Species and Ecosystems

SUMMARY REPORT

2017-2018 Managed Archery Program

Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Submitted by

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White Buffalo Inc.

5 February 2018



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 first two years of the archery program, the Board of Commissioners voted again 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:

- 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 discreet program.

METHODS

Interested property owners, both new and old, were directed to contact WBI for participation. Once contact was made, all properties were evaluated either via satellite imagery, in person, or a combination of both. Five public properties were offered: McNeilly Park, Municipal Golf Course, the Conservation District, Twin Hills, and Robb Hollow. Multiple private properties also were considered and/or used. We continued to use the same seven proven participants from the 2015-2017 seasons.

Summary Report
5 February 2018
Mt Lebanon, PA



RESULTS

White Buffalo archers harvested a total of 25 white-tailed deer in the 2017-2018 season. This number was comprised of 23 females (92%), and 2 males (8%). Only one antlered deer was harvested. There were no unrecovered deer.

Archers volunteered 420.5 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 were >30 hours during the first three weeks of the program needed for landowner communications. WBI archers donated eight deer to the *Hunters Sharing the Harvest Program*; totaling approximately 414 pounds of venison to food banks in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

DISCUSSION

As in past years, the 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.

Private landowners again were pleased with the archery program. Most, if not all, of those revisited reported a noticeable decline in deer sightings. We continued to get new inquiries for enrollment from residents, with property that had never been hunted. Unfortunately, with the close proximity to other homes, unsuitable terrain, and/or unacceptable site requirements, these areas could not be hunted. We also have lost some private property access through landowner turnover. We will make a concerted effort next year to see if some of these new property owners will support the program. It has been hard to convince the new landowners to participate given, from their perspective, they do not have a deer problem with reduce deer numbers in their neighborhoods.

Overall harvest numbers continue to decline as deer densities decrease in areas with suitable access. The past two years of deer management activities are clearly having deer population impacts. Given the favorable results for three consecutive years of the archery program, we recommend that the municipality continue to include this program as part of the overall deer management strategy.

Summary Report
5 February 2018
Mt Lebanon, PA



APPENDIX A

Total Deer Harvest: 25

White Buffalo Hunters – 25

Hunter Cooperative – No data

Antlered – 1

Antlerless – 24 (1 male, 23 female)

Total Female Harvest – 23

Total Male Harvest – 2

% Female Harvest – 92%

Public Property Harvest – 18

Private Property Harvest – 7

White Buffalo Public Property Harvest Summary

Conservation District – 0

McNeilly Park – 4

Municipal Golf Course – 10

Public Works/Robb Hollow – 4

Twin Hills – 0