



News Release

March 1, 2010

Contact: Evelyn Kirkwood, Director --- 574-277-4828 x 14

Deer management program to continue at St. Patrick's County Park: Applications for management team now available

St. Joseph County Parks will continue its deer management program at St. Patrick's County Park this fall. This will be the fourth year the management program will be in place.

Originally, the decision to look into a deer management plan was based on four factors: (1) the staff observed more deer and deer trails within the park property, and observed more damage to landscaping trees and herbaceous ground cover; (2) neighbors communicated they were suffering deer damage to landscaping, but efforts to cull the deer population were likely hampered by the fact the deer were retreating into the park property; (3) the park acquired an additional 105 acres in early 2007, and that property contiguous to the rest of the park, has been hunted extensively for the past seven years, resulting in a harvest of roughly ten deer; (4) the staff wanted to act proactively, NOT reactively, to protect the forest ecosystem and woodland wildflowers.

The recommendation was supported by input from a deer stakeholders group, the IDNR and a private natural resources consultant.

Applications for volunteer teams are available exclusively on the St. Joseph County Parks web site. Applications from individual hunters are not accepted. Interviews and skills tests will be part of the review process for the hunters. "We are requesting applications from teams or organized groups of Indiana-licensed archery hunters and one team will be selected to conduct the management program for a maximum three-year contract," says Evie Kirkwood, Parks Director.

The area where the management program will take place is primarily limited to 105 acres in the southeast corner of St. Patrick's County Park during the archery season. Kirkwood says that area of the park has limited public access, and over 30 acres is currently farmed under a lease. "There is no organized recreational activity in that area of the park," adds Kirkwood.

Management activities for deer reduction will take place throughout the legal archery season beginning in fall. "Each year we evaluate the harvest numbers through surveys and hunting records," says Kirkwood. The number of deer harvested in the first three years of the program was between 15 and 18.

Kirkwood adds that interested parties should log onto the St. Joseph County Parks' web site for the application materials which will be available March 1.

A number of agencies and individuals provided input on the deer management process to date including park interpreters at several state parks in Indiana that conduct regular deer management hunts. The staff has met with Linda Byer, District Wildlife Biologist for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and received input from Dr. Jim Mitchell, deer biologist with Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Administrative Offices
X St. Patrick's
50651 Laurel Road
South Bend, IN 46637
574/277-4828
Fax: 574/273-2334

Bendix Woods
32132 SR 2
New Carlisle, IN 46552
574/654-3155
Fax: 574/654-3674

Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
57057 Ash Road
Osceola, IN 46561
574/674-9765
Fax: 574/674-9778

Spicer Lake
County Line Road
New Carlisle, IN 46552
574/654-0361
Fax: 574/654-0362