

Managing Suburban Wilds

About the project

We are an interdisciplinary team working to explore the social and environmental dynamics of wildlife in suburban and urban spaces.

White-tailed deer are an increasingly common sight in the streets and backyards of communities across Massachusetts. Several factors have contributed to the growth in deer populations, including the lack of predators and abundant food supplies in suburban yards. The growing numbers of deer in suburban and urban communities have caused a mixture of interest and concern from residents and officials across the state.

This research project will gather information to better understand deer populations and the factors affecting their numbers in your town and across the Northeast. Our work will provide information to residents and town officials that can support efforts to assess the number and impacts of deer and the evaluation of various options for management of white-tailed deer.

Research Questions:

1. *Why are deer numbers increasing in the suburbs and how are communities responding?*
2. *What concerns do communities have about the increasing presence of deer and potential management activities?*

Your property can inform wildlife management!

How do we estimate deer activity and measure deer impacts on forests in your area?

Our research team is using trail cameras, which have motion detectors to capture photos when large objects, such as deer, pass by. With the permission of town officials and land owners, we are strategically placing these cameras to capture pictures of deer and other species, and to monitor their behavior. Information from private properties are essential to understanding deer populations because deer frequently visit residential yards for food and shelter.

Aside from the potential human impacts, deer can profoundly change forests as their populations grow and they eat young trees, wildflowers, and other forest plants. We will collect information about plant life in the area to understand if and where deer populations are affecting forest health. In order to assess these impacts researchers will be gathering information about the presence of different plant species in surrounding forests.

By granting our research team access to your land to place cameras and examine vegetation, you will support improved estimates of white-tailed deer use and their impacts. Through this support, you will contribute to a better understanding of deer in your own community, and aid scientists in estimating changing deer populations across the country. To learn more about us and our project, visit our website at: <http://sites.bu.edu/urbanwilds/>.

This research is funded by awards from the National Science Foundation (Award #1832191 and Award #1923668).



What we will do on your property

Take pictures of wildlife

Place a trail camera on a tree on your property and access your property 2-4 times each year for the next 3 years to replace batteries and download pictures.

- These cameras will be secured to the tree with cable lock (similar to a bike lock).
 - Cameras will not damage your trees.
- We will place cameras in areas that minimize the likelihood of taking pictures of people (pointed away from houses, sidewalks, back yards, etc.).
- No photographs of people will be shared publicly.
- You will have access to all wildlife photos taken on your property and other properties across Massachusetts and New York.

***** We will be downloading the first round of pictures in the fall and provide further information about how to view photographs by December 2021 *****

Measure forest health

Perform one vegetation survey each summer for the next 3 years.

- These surveys will not affect your forest, we will simply identify, count, and measure plants, and look for evidence of deer browse.
- These surveys cover about a 50 X 50 foot area and will take approximately 1-2 hours for us to complete.

Respect you and your property

Perform all work in accordance with the following code of conduct.

- Conduct all activities in a polite and respectful manner.
- Leave the landowner's property and vegetation as we found it.
- Keep all pictures of the landowner, occupant, or other people confidential.
- Keep all of your contact information confidential, and only use it to contact you about property access and project updates.
- Follow any special instructions that you request regarding access to your property.
- **Visit your home to inform them that team members will be on the property.**
 - **If you are not home, team members will leave a notification that they are/were on the premises.**
 - The notification will include the activities team members were conducting, the time they were on the property, contact information for the Managing Suburban Wilds team member, and the approximate date of the next visit by Managing Suburban Wilds team members.

Private land locations: fill out landowner permission form
Public land locations: fill out public land manager permission form

Town Name _____
Survey Site Name _____
Team Member _____

Managing Suburban Wilds Landowner Permission Form

I, _____ [LANDOWNER], hereby give my permission to the Managing Suburban Wilds team members to access my property located at _____ [PROPERTY ADDRESS] at reasonable times to place, maintain, and remove equipment or collect images associated with the Managing Suburban Wilds project. I understand that I am not responsible for accidental damage to or theft by a third party of equipment placed on my property. I further understand that I may revoke or modify this permission at any time. In the event that I choose to revoke this permission, I agree to allow Managing Suburban Wilds team members to remove the equipment placed on my property.

- By signing this form I allow Managing Suburban Wilds team members access to my property to perform the following activities:
- Place a game camera on a tree on my property for the next 3 years (2021-2024).
 - Conduct vegetation surveys on my property 1 time each year for the next 3 years (2021-2024).
 - Access my property 2-4 times each year service the trail camera for the next 3 years (2021-2024).

This permission is subject to the following special instructions (e.g., access routes, notification, etc.):

- I, _____ [MANAGING SUBURBAN WILDS TEAM MEMBER], on behalf of the Managing Suburban Wilds project agree to the following:
- Follow the special instructions outlined above to the best of my ability.
 - Conduct all activities in a polite and respectful manner.
 - Keep all personal information gathered about the landowner confidential.
 - Leave the landowner's property and vegetation in its original state.
 - Keep all pictures of the landowner, occupant, or other people confidential.
 - Visit the landowner's home to inform them that team members will be on the property.
 - If the landowner is not present, team members will leave a notification that they are/were on the premises. This notification will include the activities team members were conducting, the time they were on the property, the approximate date of the next visit by Managing Suburban Wilds team members, and contact information for the Managing Suburban Wilds team member.
 - Allow landowners access to photographs taken on their property in a reasonable time frame.

Landowner's email address _____ Landowner's phone # _____

Landowner's signature _____ Date signed _____

Team member's signature _____ Date signed _____

Please contact Jamie Goethlich goethlich@wisc.edu or Tim Van Deelen trvandeelen@wisc.edu with any questions about the project.

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