



**News Release**

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July 22, 2016

**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.

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 annually in the first three years of the program was between 15 and 18 and in some years has been as low as five or six. "According to spotlight surveys in the park, the population has stabilized, but is not decreasing," adds Kirkwood.

Kirkwood adds that interested parties should log onto the St. Joseph County Parks' web site ([www.sjcparks.org](http://www.sjcparks.org)) for the Request for Proposal and Archer Application forms listed under "Deer Management Information." The information will be available on the web site. Applications are due August 9. 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 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 agreement. "There is no organized recreational activity in that area of the park," adds Kirkwood.

Originally, the decision to institute a deer management plan in 2007, 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, had been hunted extensively in previous 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.

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