



BIODIVERSITY



Presented at the
Kansas Department of
Health and Environment

2009 Built Environment and the Outdoors Summit

Capitol Plaza Hotel
Topeka, Kansas

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JOHNSON COUNTY
PARK & RECREATION
DISTRICT

Michael Meadors, Director of Parks & Recreation
Bill Maasen, Supt of Parks & Golf Courses



Learning Outcomes

- Why a Biodiversity Policy is needed
- Assembling a community oversight committee
- How to develop a Biodiversity Policy
- Implementing a Biodiversity Policy
- Developing and maintaining measurable objectives for biodiversity
- The role of students and educators in biodiversity strategies

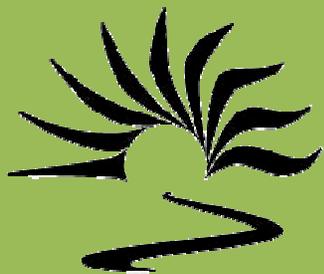


Why a Biodiversity Policy is Needed



Why a Biodiversity Policy is Needed

To clearly define the guidelines and procedures required for the proper stewardship of the natural resources Johnson County residents have entrusted to our care.



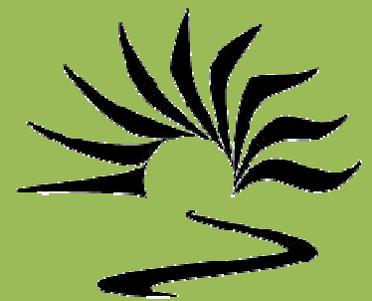
Greater Shawnee Mission Park

2,230 Acres





Assembling a Biodiversity Committee



BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE

A Biodiversity Committee shall be developed and maintained for the purposes of monitoring the District's Biodiversity Policy and Resource Management Plan.

A. The committee shall be comprised of 5-6 citizen members who have science and biology education backgrounds as assigned by the District Board and 4-5 District employees as assigned by the Director of Parks and Recreation.

B. The committee will meet at least quarterly to evaluate the District's biodiversity practices and, when necessary, identify suitable adaptations to ensure the health of the District's natural resources.

C. The committee will present an annual report to the District Board and make recommendations for revisions to the Biodiversity Policy and/or Resource Management Plan as necessary over time.





Biodiversity Committee

Mission Statement

To provide guidelines and strategies for maintaining optimal biodiversity in Johnson County Park and Recreation District parkland by combining scientific expertise with public involvement, specifically the committee shall provide recommendations for:

- Managing resources to ensure rich varieties of habitat for native species while monitoring and controlling invasive and nuisance species,
- Balancing recreation and conservation uses of park resources for current and future generations.



2008-09 Science/Biodiversity Committee Members

Margaret Estrine Drinkwine
Representative
Sierra Club

Grant Evans
Senior Park Manager
Shawnee Mission Park
Johnson County Park & Recreation District

Andrew Friesen
District Wildlife Biologist
Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks

Ben Long
Environmental Law Student
Undergraduate Degree/Wildlife Biology

Bill Maasen
Superintendent of Parks & Golf Courses
Johnson County Park & Recreation District

Michael Meadors
Director of Parks and Recreation
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Randall A. Root
Senior Project Manager
Environmental Studies & Permitting Division
Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co., Inc.

David Seibel
Biology Department
Johnson County Community College

Billie Thompson
Park Police Community Relations Officer
Johnson County Park & Recreation District

Jeff Witters
Biology Department
Olathe South High School





How to Develop a Biodiversity Policy

- Work with Biodiversity Committee to draft policy based on:
 - Agency's mission, vision and values
 - Responsible and benefitting stewardship of environmental and natural resources
 - Welfare of lands and inhabitants
- Present draft policy to governing body for preliminary approval
- Hold public hearings to solicit public comment
- Board consideration of public comments
- Board adoption of final Biodiversity Policy





BIODIVERSITY **POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Johnson County Park and Recreation District (District) to serve as an innovative and ecologically responsible land steward in its efforts to protect the District's biological diversity and ecological processes and systems (e.g. air, soil and water quality), particularly within the District's natural areas and linear corridors, by balancing the protection and enhancement of natural flora and fauna with increasing demands for quality public recreation experiences on District properties.



Implementing a Biodiversity Policy



Forest Stewardship Plan

The Forest Stewardship Plan shall manage and protect the forested areas within the District's ownership that will be used for forest recreation uses, watershed management, and wildlife management benefits.





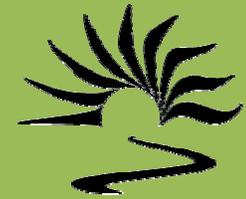
Prairie Stewardship Plan

The Prairie Stewardship Plan shall manage and protect pastures, fields, meadows, and other open areas of the District. The plan may include conversion of cool-season prairies to warm-season prairies through reintroduction or promotion of native grasses and forbs as defined in the Resource Management Plan for each park site.





Riparian Areas, Lakes, and Wetlands Plan



The Riparian Areas, Lakes and Wetlands Plan shall manage and protect streams, creeks, rivers, open waters, wetlands, and associated riparian areas (waters) throughout the District to provide for a higher water quality of all District waters to maximize the potential habitat quality by fostering diverse native plant communities, both terrestrial and aquatic, and for public recreation and enjoyment. To this end, the District shall:

- Natural resources of the waters and watersheds within the parks.
- Delineate agency responsibility for management of waters
- Use best management practices for natural resource protection and recreational opportunities
- Monitor human activity

Invasive Plant & Nuisance Wildlife Plan



The Invasive Plant & Nuisance Wildlife Plan shall manage varying control categories and strategies related to overpopulation of deer, geese, rodents, beavers or other species. The plan shall also manage excessive wildlife populations to address health and safety concerns, conflicts with people and other wildlife, and the health of native plant communities.





Invasive Plant Species

- Sericea Lespedeza
- Bush Honeysuckle
- Garlic Mustard
- Johnson Grass
- Musk Thistle









UGA2146038





Nuisance Animals

- Canada Geese
- Starlings
- House Sparrows
- Raccoons
- Beaver
- Deer











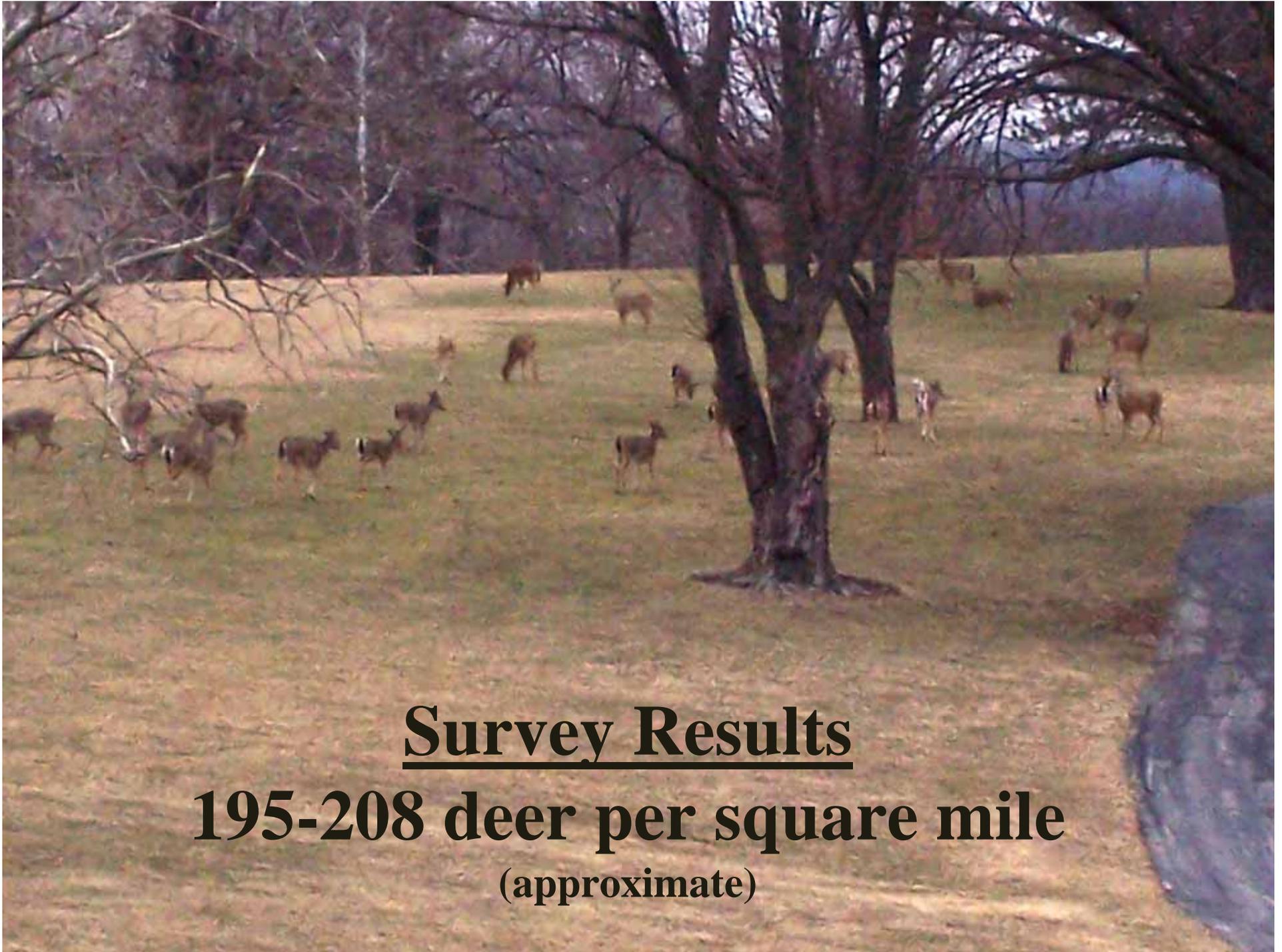


White-Tailed Deer



- 2007–2008 Survey
- Damage
- Browse Line
- Feces
- Ticks





Survey Results

195-208 deer per square mile
(approximate)

















Developing and Maintaining Measurable Objectives for Biodiversity





Resource Management Plan

The District shall develop, implement, and maintain a Resource Management Plan with *adaptive* procedures based on currently acceptable best practices to achieve the desired conditions intended in the Biodiversity Policy.



Resource Management Plan

The Resource Management Plan shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Biodiversity inventory/mapping/habitat assessments,
2. Overview of restoration and renovation areas,
3. Recommendations on monitoring methods for all categories of resource areas,
4. Maintenance standards for all categories,
5. Control of invasive vegetation species including sericea lespedeza, bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, Johnson grass, Russian thistle, and other noxious weeds and problematic species not officially listed (e.g., red cedar), and



6. Endangered Species, Threatened Species, Species in Need of Conservation, and Critical Habitat.
 - a. The District shall provide diverse habitats including those that may provide essential physical and biological features necessary for the support of populations of species listed as endangered, threatened, and/or in need of conservation as determined by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDW&P) under Kansas State Statutes (K.S.A 32-957 through 32-963; K.S.A. 32-1009 through 32-1012, and K.S.A. 32-1033). (NOTE: Kansas law does not allow for the listing of plant species. Federal law is the only protector of plant species in Kansas.)
 - b. The District shall seek to assess, identify, and inventory properties for high-quality natural areas and remnant natural communities capable of hosting species that are endangered, threatened, and/or in need of conservation. If such plant and/or animal species are believed to be found on District properties, the following actions shall be taken:
 - 1) A recognized expert shall verify the existence of such species, and
 - 2) Upon verification, a specific management plan giving full consideration to the property's intended uses and District's mission shall be formulated with an effort to reclassify into a different maintenance category.





The Role of Students and Educators in Biodiversity Strategies

- Utilization of Facility for Research
- Implementation of New Technologies
- Public Education
- Involvement in Schools through Interpretive Programs



Thank You!



JOHNSON COUNTY
PARK & RECREATION
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