

Murrysville Parks – site visit on Monday, 5/17/21 by Milt Lady, Ryan Shaffer, Ellen Yeager & Barb Hauge

Purpose: To discuss and view Deer Management and Invasive Plant Removal Programs

Deer Management Program (Archery Hunting) – discussions with Murrysville Rec Director

Started in 1979 (originally muzzleloader & archery) in two parks. Currently only archery in seven (7) parks ranging in size from 22 acres to 305 acres (approx. 70 hunters). The program runs very smoothly and very few complaints.

Follows all PA Game Commission regulations, laws and hunting seasons. Program charges \$35 in addition to all Game Commission hunting fees. There is a small profit from the program to help cover costs. All hunters must attend and pass a qualifying test day.

Hunting is from tree stands only (arrow project downwards). Each park has a volunteer "Hunting Coordinator" that maintains communications and records from the hunters. Hunters are required to hunt a minimum of 6 times per season or they're dropped the following year. All hunters must report to Coordinator when they plan to hunt and if they have a successful kill (picture). Hunters are rewarded \$7 if they harvest a doe.

Invasive Plant Removal – discussions with volunteer Program Director - Pia van de Venne

Program has been functioning 20 plus years. Director works with volunteers and some paid workers (\$10 per hour). Some are from Magistrate's office (community service requirement). Typically, daily crew is 5-12 people. Some work individually and others as a crew.

Most plant debris is carried out in large plastic bags. Other larger vines & plants are carefully placed on dead log platforms, without touching ground, to die. Plants are almost all treated individually either by cutting (painted with herbicide) or pulled out by the root.

The program operates on a \$35,000 annual budget and has one major contributor providing most of the funds. They have an organization that helps recruit volunteers called "FOMP" – Friends of Murrysville Park. Pia is incredibly devoted to the program and has become very knowledgeable on invasives. Murrysville is very concerned about the future when Pia retires which is in the near future. I would guess she is in her early 80's from the Netherlands and lives adjacent to one of the parks. We saw very little invasive plants in the park areas we visited. It is very hard work and has taken a long time to be so successful.

Summary – If we want to do a Deer Management Program, we need to start laying the groundwork and organizing now for the upcoming Fall Season of 2021. I have provided information on both programs and pictures of a lush understory of one of their parks – Duff Park.



