

NOVEMBER 2020

# GREENWAY DEER REPORT



---

**PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY**

GUNNAR PATZ, GUNNAR PATZ, A FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BIOLOGY MAJOR  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA  
AND THE GREENWAY TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Greenway provides a natural setting that attracts both people and wildlife throughout the year. Reports of a growing deer population in the Greenway have increased in recent years, but this information has been mostly anecdotal. These reports have shifted from seeing deer near the river to sightings closer to the trails, roads, and nearby yards.

In early 2020, Gunnar Patz, a Fisheries and Wildlife Biology major at the University of North Dakota, approached the Greenway Technical Committee about a public survey on deer populations along the Greenway. Gunnar received funding through the Main Street Initiative to fund the project. The purpose of the survey was to build baseline data on the deer population and deer-related property damage on private property near the Greenway.



## METHODOLOGY

Work began on the project in March 2020. A twelve question online survey was created to gather information from residents living along the Greenway. Survey questions focused on the average number of deer sightings, property damage, and deer populations' observations. Participants could also register to receive greenway-related email updates.

Postcards with survey information were mailed in early August to nearly 1,500 residents living along the Greenway in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. Recreational greenway users were not included because of their irregular visiting hours and limited exposure. If this group were included in the study, the data results would be skewed. The postcards also had instructions for the online questionnaire and how to request a paper copy of the questionnaire, if preferred.

# DATA COLLECTION

The survey was available online for one month. The data collected shows citizen insight at the time of the survey. A survey done during the winter months, when people reported deer population is highest, may produce different results in some categories.

The overall response rate was good, with almost twenty percent of the residents sampled completing the survey. The highest number of responses came from Grand Forks, between 13th and 49th Avenue South. This was followed by residents in southern East Grand Forks. Participation was minimal in the Riverside Park and downtown areas. It is possible that deer are not seen in the downtown area due to a lack of food and shelter available.

# FINDINGS

Citizen responses echoed a few common themes.

- Voluntary feeding of deer is a problem. Both communities have ordinances banning the feeding of wildlife, but compliance is not perfect. Some feeding is done involuntarily with apple trees and other existing vegetation, but several respondents reported that neighbors place food out for the deer. This has caused a problem when the food is no longer available and the deer search for food in other yards. Deer searching for food outside the greenway are in close proximity motor vehicle traffic and increases the potential for collisions
- Survey participants were given the opportunity to provide comments about the deer population in their neighborhood (Exhibit A). These comments ranged from appreciation of the deer presence to more details on property damage and concern for the deer's safety.
- Over half of the respondents have lived in their home for ten years or more. Of the 174 in this category, most reported seeing an increase in the deer population in and near the property. This data is a useful tool for assessing the growth in herd size over time.
- Those who reported severe damage to property expressed significant frustration with the deer. Depleted gardens (both vegetable and flower) and feces were the most common complaints.

# BY THE NUMBERS

Combined survey results can be found in Exhibit A

## NORTH EGF

- 13 of 26 Reported seeing 1 - 5 deer on their property daily.
- 12 of 26 Reported seeing no deer on their property daily.
- 8 of 26 Reported moderate to severe damage from deer to vegetation or property
- 12 of 25 Believe there are too many deer in their neighborhood.
- 11 of 25 Believe the deer population is just right in their neighborhood.
- 16 of 26 Responded that they have seen an increase in deer population in their neighborhood over the past five years.
- 8 of 26 Responded that the deer population in their neighborhood has remained the same the past five years.
- 19 of 26 Of the respondents have lived in their current home for 10 years or more. text

## SOUTH EGF

- 38 of 68 Reported seeing 1 – 5 deer on their property daily.
- 26 of 68 Reported seeing no deer on their property daily.
- 21 of 69 Reported moderate to severe damage from deer to vegetation or property.
- 30 of 69 Believe there are too many deer in their neighborhood.
- 35 of 69 Believe the deer population is just right in their neighborhood.
- 40 of 67 Responded that they have seen an increase in deer population in their neighborhood over the past five years.
- 17 of 67 Responded that the deer population in their neighborhood has remained the same the past five years.
- 41 of 69 Of the respondents have lived in their current home for 10 years or more.

## NORTH GF

- 0 of 4 Reported seeing 1 – 5 deer on their property daily.
- 4 of 4 Reported seeing no deer on their property daily.
- 0 of 3 Reported moderate to severe damage from deer to vegetation or property.
- 0 of 3 Believe there are too many deer in their neighborhood.
- 2 of 3 Believe the deer population is just right in their neighborhood.
- 1 of 4 Responded that they have seen an increase in deer population in their neighborhood over the past five years.
- 1 of 4 Responded that the deer population in their neighborhood has remained the same the past five years.
- 2 of 4 Of the respondents have lived in their current home for 10 years or more.

## SOUTH GF

- 40 of 167 Reported seeing 1 – 5 deer on their property daily.
- 125 of 167 Reported seeing no deer on their property daily.
- 27 of 165 Reported moderate to severe damage from deer to vegetation or property.
- 48 of 161 Believe there are too many deer in their neighborhood.
- 104 of 161 Believe the deer population is just right in their neighborhood.
- 75 of 160 Responded that they have seen an increase in deer population in their neighborhood over the past five years.
- 72 of 160 Responded that the deer population in their neighborhood has remained the same the past five years.
- 113 of 166 Of the respondents have lived in their current home for 10 years or more.