

Deer Management Project

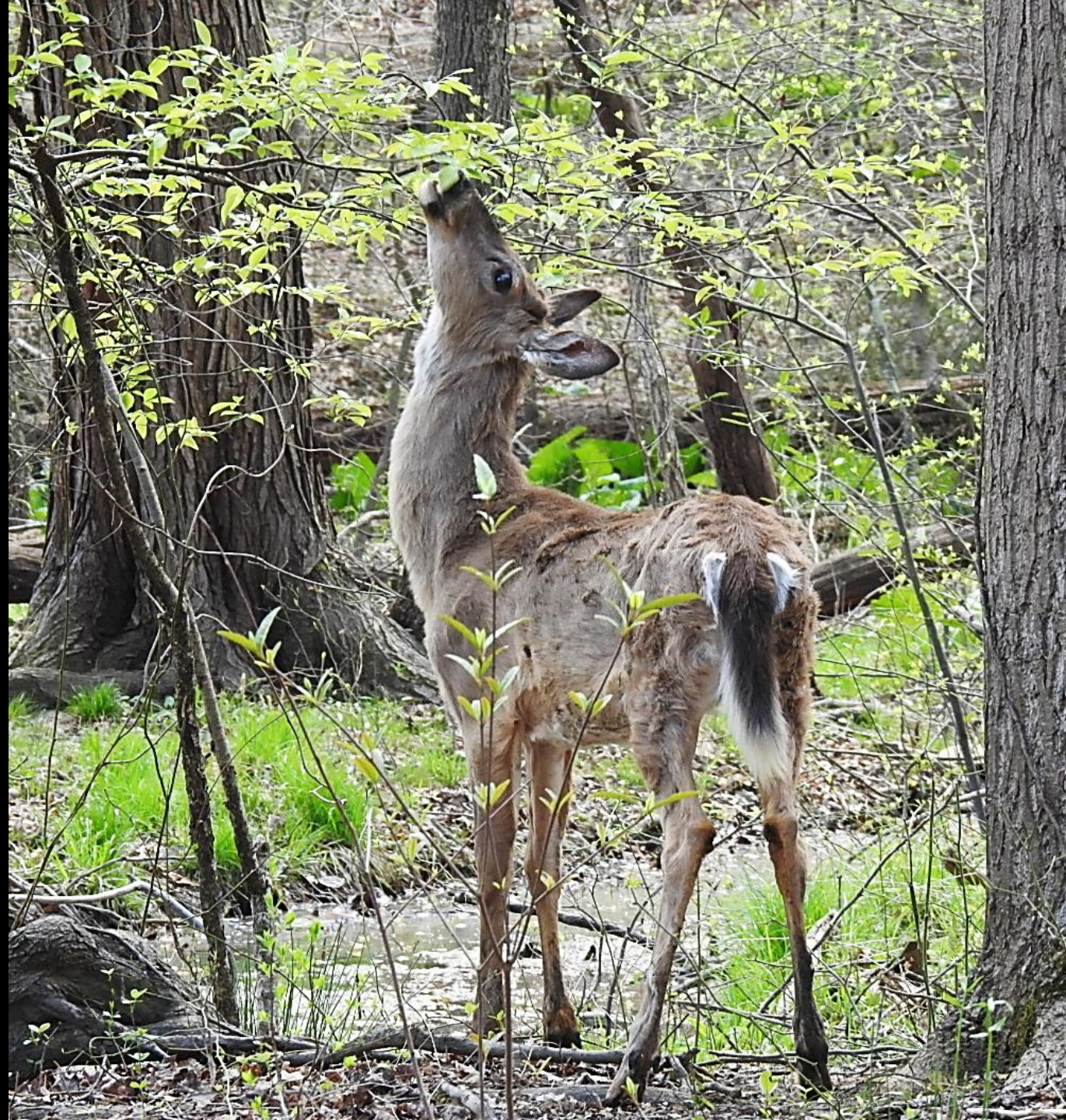
Alonso Abugattas

Department of Parks and Recreation
February 28, 2024



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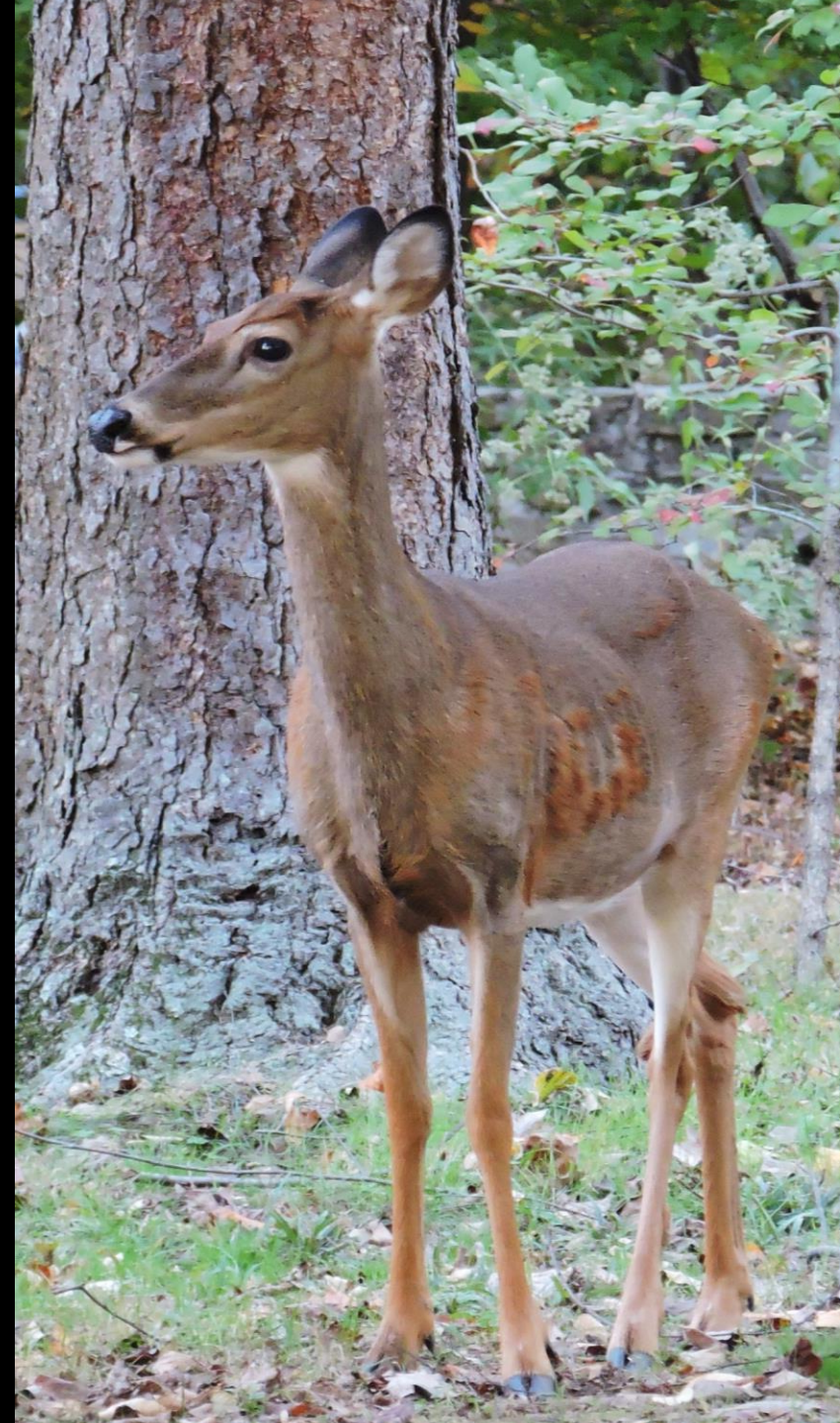
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Project Background

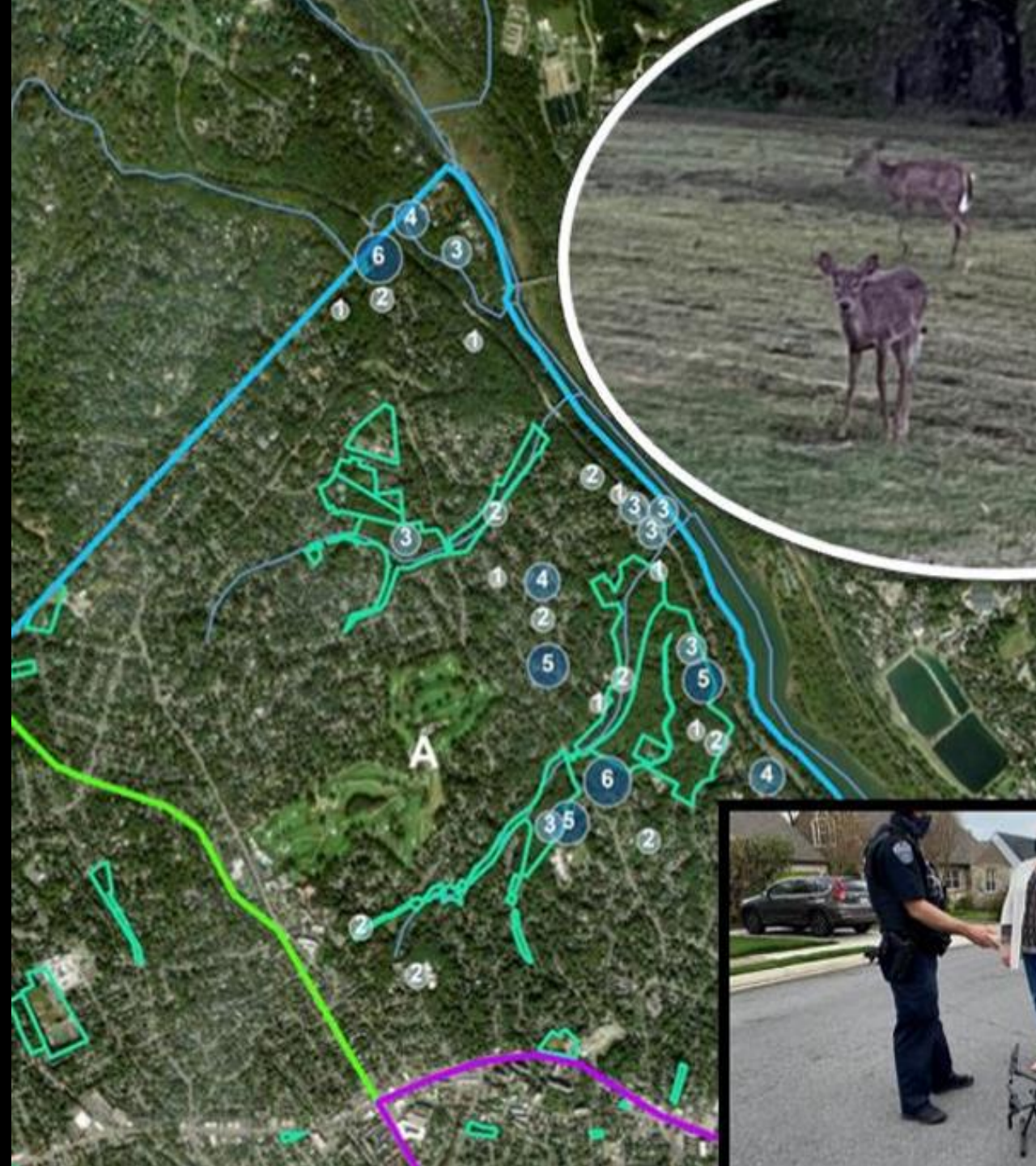
Deer are important but can be problematic

- White-tailed deer are important for Arlington's ecology
- High deer population densities can harm local ecosystems
- Deer eat key native plants faster than they can regenerate (Ecological Carrying Capacity)
- Too many deer will destroy the habitat impacting not only our forest's ability to regrow, but also animals that rely on the plants for food and cover

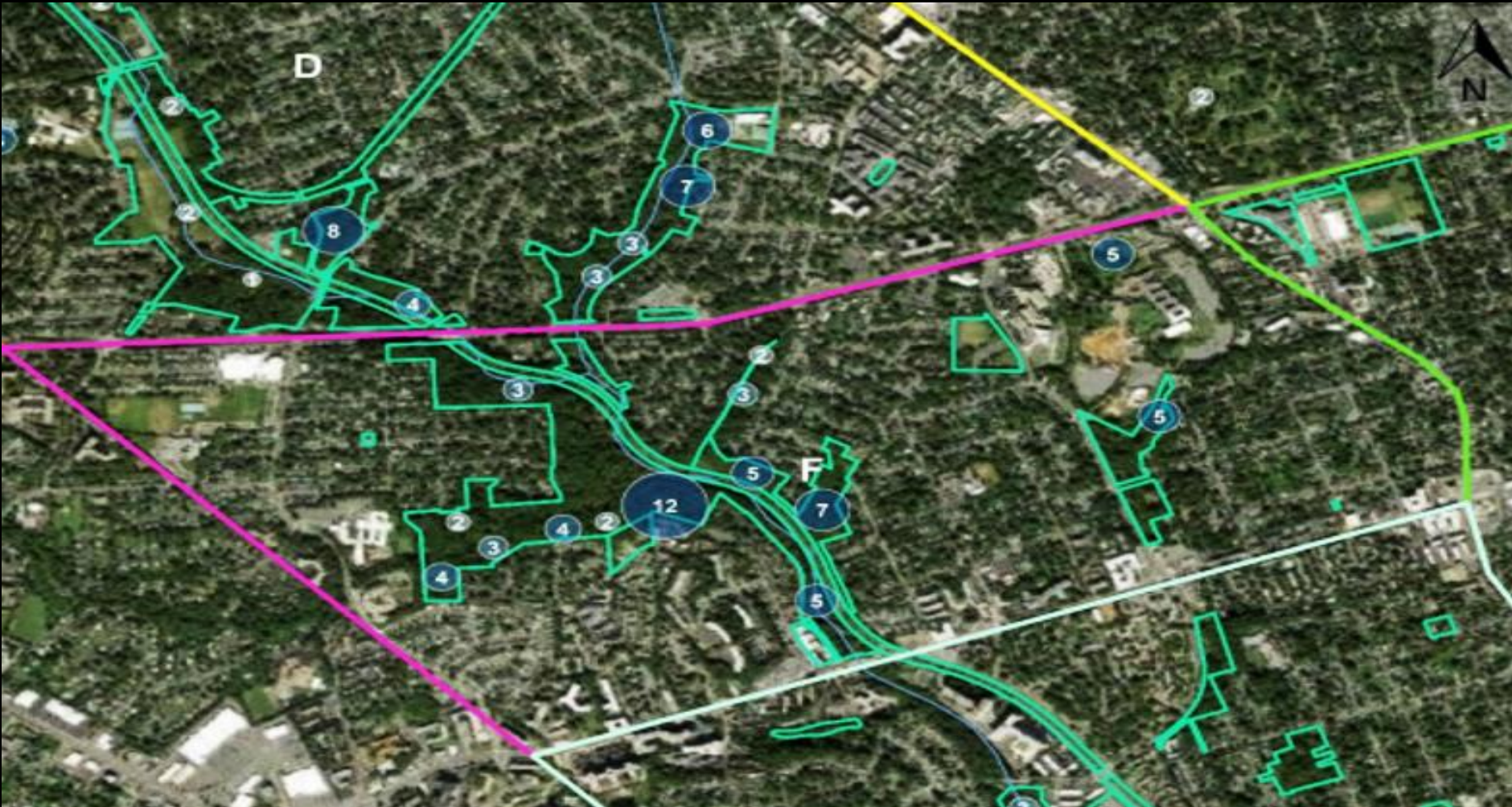


Project History

- Anecdotal **evidence of deer overbrowsing** has been seen over the years
- April 2021 - Arlington County conduct aerial drone surveys
 - Survey found at least 290 deer County wide. Average density of 124 per square mile in 12 key forest parks.
 - Fall 2022 – Arlington County conducted browse surveys in 12 forest parks to evaluate deer impacts to vegetation.



Deer Population



Concentrated in our Natural Areas

Our Forests Have Too Many Deer

- 12 out of 12 surveyed parks showed damage from deer overpopulation.
- The surveyed parks had an average deer density of 124 deer per square mile in 2021. Research recommends no more than 15-20 per square mile.
- Densities were 1.9-17 times the recommended levels in 11/12 surveyed parks.



A Tale of Two Forests



Lacey Woods Park

The forest is mostly untouched by deer



Barcroft Park

The forest is mostly eaten by deer

Suitable Options In Arlington

- Sharpshooting
- Fertility control (surgical)
- Controlled Archery hunting (hybrid only)
- Fencing (hybrid only)
- Repellents (hybrid only)



Sharpshooting



Surgical Sterilization



Controlled Archery Hunting



Fencing



Deer Repellent

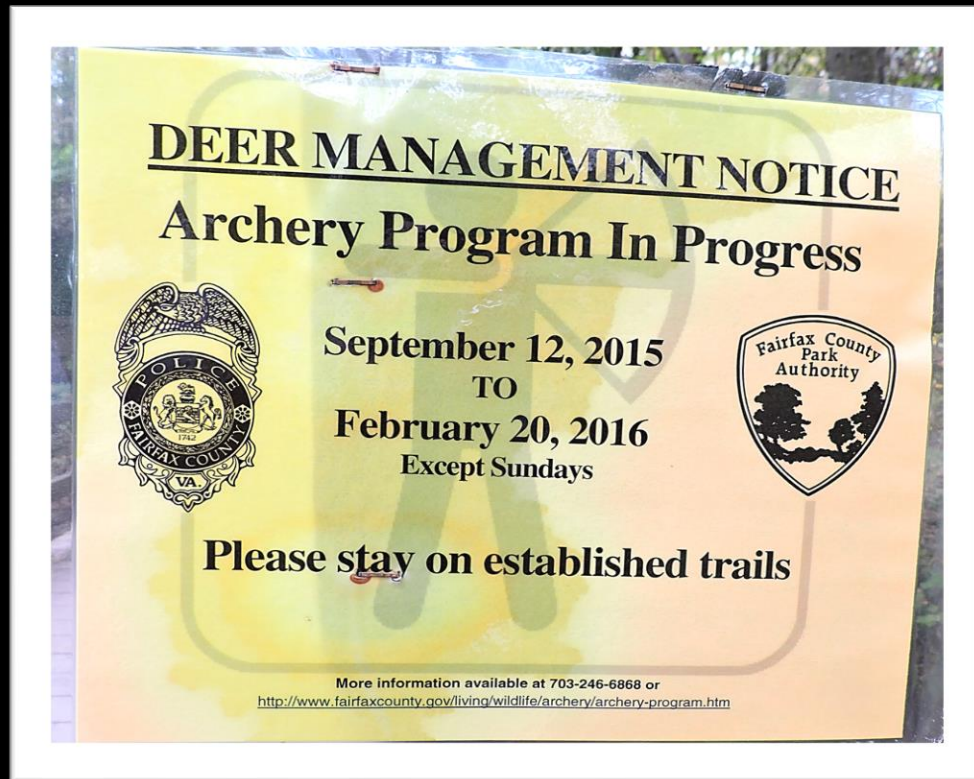


Deer Management in Arlington

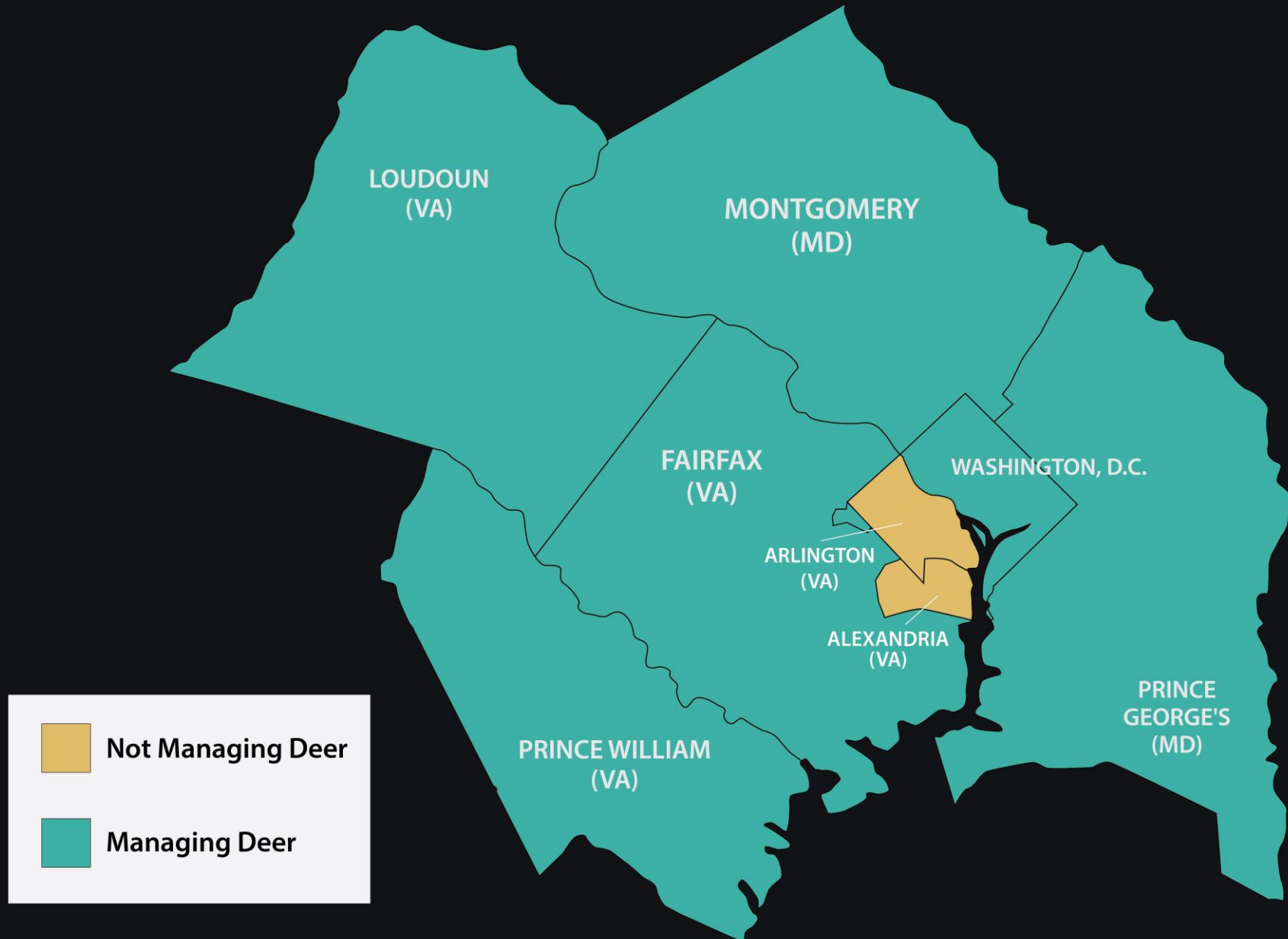
- Arlington County Parks
 - Repellents
 - Fencing
- Army Navy Country Club
 - Archery hunting - Fall 2012+
 - 97 deer culled
 - Still had 25 deer on property during 2021 drone survey
- Private lands
 - Fencing
 - Plants
 - Repellents
 - Scare techniques



Deer Management in Adjacent Jurisdictions



- **Washington D.C.** - Rock Creek Park
 - USDA sharpshooting program
 - Tree seedling density tripled since lethal control
 - Recently expanded to other NPS properties in D.C. and Maryland.
- **Maryland** - Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties
- **Virginia** - Fairfax County & NPS Manassas National Battlefield Park
 - Browse monitoring
 - Hunting
 - Sharpshooting
 - Meat donated

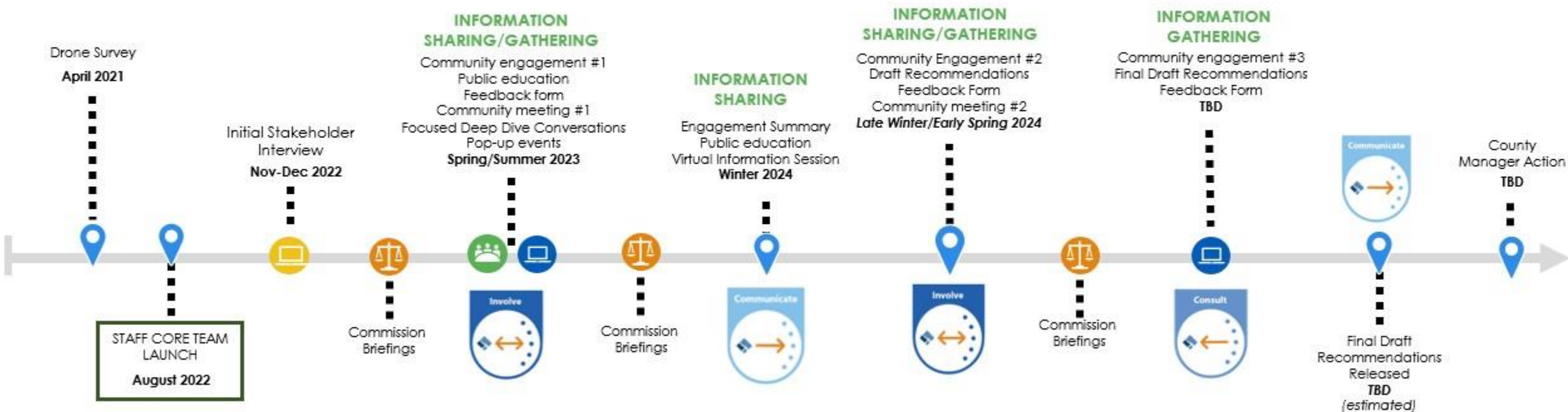


Deer Management Project Timeline

Origin: Natural Resources Management Plan

Funding: General Fund

Staff Contact: Alonso Abugattas
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Online Feedback
(e.g., questionnaire,
feedback form, etc.)



In-Person Engagement and Pop-Ups
(e.g., community meeting,
roundtable, tabling, walking/bus
tour, deliberative dialogue, etc.)



Virtual Meeting
(e.g., TEAMS, TEAMS
live, Zoom, etc.)



County Board Engagement
(e.g., public hearing, Board work
session, open door Monday,
commission meeting, etc.)



**Key
Milestone**

How can you participate?

- Sign up for updates on the Deer Management Project Page.
(Search 'Arlington Deer Management Project')
- Participate in upcoming engagement and events in early 2024.