

Rights-of-Way Ecology at Penn State

Plant and animal community response to long-term vegetation management on rights-of-way
sites.psu.edu/transmissionlineecology



Deer Populations

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginiana*) habitat and its use were evaluated on the SGL33 right-of-way before and after vegetation management treatments and compared to the adjoining forest. Deer presence increased post-treatment on the right-of-way between 1982 (treatment year) to 1984 (post-treatment). The right-of-way continued to provide desirable habitat for deer following herbicide treatment.

Key Findings

1. Integrated vegetation management treatments within the right of way caused a shift in vegetation, but suitability of the habitat for deer remained high.
2. Deer use of woody plants was greater in the adjoining forest compared to the right-of-way where more herbaceous vegetation was browsed.
3. Deer use in the right of way was 48 percent greater than in the adjacent forest.
4. Deer can have a positive impact on a right-of-way by browsing on incompatible trees in wire and border zones, and by providing aesthetic value to a right-of-way.

Contact Information

Carolyn G. Mahan, PhD, Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies
209 Hawthorn Building, The Pennsylvania State University
Altoona, PA 16601
Tel: 814-949-5530, Em: cgm2@psu.edu