

# The Deer of SIU

## Abstract

Easy access and close proximity to wildlife offer some of the best ways to change peoples' attitudes and gradually engage them towards greater understanding of environmental questions. Democratizing access to information on animal species' ecology by creating engaging platforms can potentially act as a catalyzer to promote favorable attitudes towards environmental issues within the broader community. I propose to use white-tailed deer inhabiting SIU's campus to develop such a platform. The project is divided into two sub-objectives: 1) capturing and tracking the movement of five white-tailed deer on SIU campus to study their movement, and 2) developing a web platform and a companion social media account where deer movement will be observable in near-real time and auxiliary information will be produced by students. I explain how a small project centered around these two objectives would: 1) improve ecological understanding of deer behavior, 2) improve teaching and training of SIU students in five classes in the zoology program, 3) promote visibility of the Zoology program, the School of Biological Sciences, the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory, and overall SIU, and could serve as a recruitment tool, 4) improve safety of students and employees, and 5) serve as a proof of concept and improve my future ability of securing funding from federal awards.