



INTRODUCTION

The Village of River Hills has a proud history of maintaining a delicate balance between the wishes of its citizens and the wildlife that also call River Hills home. The animals are attracted to the Village for some of the same reasons that its residents are – particularly the wooded geography and wide residential spacing. While observing wildlife can be a pleasant experience, there have been concerns voiced about the presence of coyotes in River Hills. Coyote populations in River Hills, and the metropolitan Milwaukee area in general, have increased substantially over a short period of time. As a result, interactions involving coyotes and residents are becoming more numerous.

COYOTE MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE

The Village of River Hills Coyote Management Plan is intended to provide a guide map for strategic action based on the level of encounter with a coyote. This plan should also increase the residents’ knowledge and understanding of how coyotes behave and how such behavior can be managed with human safety as a priority. The Village of River Hills recognizes the environmental benefit of maintaining natural wildlife populations and will make every effort to maintain the natural ecosystem. It is not the intention of the Village, nor is it the objective of this plan, to carry out a wholesale coyote eradication program. The Village’s Coyote Management Plan will provide strategies for responses to live compatibly with coyotes, while providing guidance for appropriate levels of response to varying types of

coyote interactions. The Village's Plan will need to remain flexible and be reevaluated as necessary when new information becomes available or when conditions necessitating this plan vary.

SUBURBAN COYOTE BEHAVIOR and POPULATION

Coyotes are naturally secretive and elusive animals. They are most active at night, with common sightings at dawn and dusk. Although rare, daytime sightings do occur. Coyotes are opportunistic hunters, eating whatever is available to them. Common foods include; small rodents and animals, insects, fruits and vegetables, household garbage, pet food, and garden/landscape plants. Additionally, River Hills' coyotes particularly prey on turkeys, geese, rabbits, squirrels, birds, and even deer. On rare occasion, house cats and small dogs have been preyed upon in the Village. Food abundance is what regulates coyote population densities. Where resources are plentiful, coyotes' territories are significantly smaller than where resources are scarce. Research has shown that suburban coyotes have a documented home range of .25 to .56 square miles, and that environments that are very rich in resources will lead to higher population densities. It is no accident that coyotes thrive in areas such as River Hills, where food, water, and shelter are abundant.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN COYOTES and HUMANS

Due to the aforementioned increase in coyote populations, it comes as no surprise that interactions between residents and coyotes are on the rise. Coyote interactions can range from sightings of an occasional coyote without incident, to pet killings, to even the extreme case where coyotes attack people. When a coyote sights a person, its general response is one of avoidance. However, on rare occasion, a coyote may become conditioned to human presence and lose its natural fear. These coyotes may become aggressive and are known as "nuisance coyotes". A nuisance coyote may attack a pet or become threatening when it encounters a human. It is important to keep in context that the overwhelming majority of coyote interactions in River Hills are of benign sightings without further incident. These are not nuisance coyotes. Almost always, the coyote runs away upon recognizing a human. Pet attacks perpetrated by coyotes in River Hills are rare. In the past decade, there are only two documented cases that the River Hills Police Department is aware of. An attack on a human has never occurred in River Hills. In Midwestern metropolitan areas where coyotes are a relatively recent phenomenon, coyote attacks on people are isolated and extremely rare. The majority of those cases involve younger children. There is only one documented fatal human attack on record nationwide.

NUISANCE COYOTES

The River Hills Coyote Management Plan shall define "Aggressive Coyote Activity" as a meeting between a pet or human and coyote(s) that result in one or more of the following types of coyote behavior: growling, baring teeth, lunging, scratching, flanking, stalking, chasing, or biting. "Nuisance Coyote" activity shall be defined as a pattern of aggressive coyote activity that has been established through multiple reports of threatening interactions towards humans and/or a report of a verified pet attack.

Research tells us that coyotes who become nuisances typically became habituated through feeding by people. In other words, people were feeding wildlife and either intentionally, or unintentionally, fed

coyotes. Once those coyotes associated human occupied homes or yards with food, they increased daytime activities and thus were seen more easily by people. In those areas where attacks have become more common, researchers have reported a high frequency of human-related food in the diet of nuisance coyotes. This was indicative of feeding by people, or coyotes seeking food in their yards or garbage. In either case, it has become apparent that feeding of coyotes should be discouraged. A common pattern for many of the documented human attacks has been feeding prior to the incident – in many cases intentional feeding.

EDUCATION and PUBLIC INFORMATION

A critical element of the River Hills Coyote Management Plan is the education and awareness of residents. The education of the public is an important tool for the coexistence of residents and coyotes in a safe environment. Residents will be provided with easily accessible information on how to discourage coyotes from their residence, as well as how to interact with coyotes when they are encountered. This plan, including that educational information, shall be made available via the Village of River Hills website, as well as in printed format to be provided at the River Hills Police Department or dropped off at a residence via request made to the River Hills Police Department. Appendix A will also provide internet links to additional information regarding suburban coyotes.

COYOTE DISCOURAGEMENT INFORMATION

There are numerous ways to manage the presence of coyotes on your property:

DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE The Village of River Hills encourages all residents to take steps to eliminate food attractants on your property in order to minimize interactions with coyotes. Residents are encouraged to share this information with neighbors because minimizing interactions is most effective when entire neighborhoods work together.

- Do not provide food and water for coyotes or any other wildlife. In addition to eating bird seed, coyotes will often prey upon the critters that come to a residential bird feeder.
- Do not store pet food outside, and keep pet bowls inside when not in use.
- Do not keep trash outside and use tight fitting lids when you take it out on the morning of collection.
- Do not leave grilling and outdoor cooking food behind.
- Pick up fallen edibles from fruit trees and vegetable gardens.
- Composting should be done in a secure compost container with cover.

ALLOW FOR ARCHERY HUNTING Residents can allow for archery hunting of coyotes on their property, consistent with all State Laws, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources laws/regulations, and River Hills Ordinance 2.05. It is important to remember that River Hills Ord 2.05 contains three provisions; First, it allows *only* for archery and crossbow hunting with landowner permission. Second, it requires that the arrow/bolt must travel on a downward path. Lastly, it **DOES NOT ALLOW** for any hunting in a location within 100 yards of any occupied building without that owner's permission as well. This last provision may require neighboring permission/consent depending on the proximity of residences to hunting locations. Discharge of any firearms in the Village of River Hills is prohibited.

PROTECT YOUR PETS

- Keep cats indoors and watch dogs when outdoors. Only leave pets unattended when they are secured in a kennel with a covered top.
- Do not allow your dog to interact or “play” with coyotes. Coyotes are territorial and can view your dog as a threat, not a playmate.
- Walk your dog on a leash. If a coyote is encountered on a dog walk, try to pick up and hold your dog while using hazing methods (described below).
- Accompany your dog outdoors, especially at night.
- Provide secure shelters for your poultry, rabbits, and other vulnerable animals.

YARD DETERRENTS

- Clear brush and undergrowth in your yard that can provide cover for coyotes or habitat for their prey.
- Fencing 6-7 feet high and buried 1 foot deep beneath the ground can help keep coyotes out of an area.
- Use of motion activated devices such as spotlights, flashing light deterrents, or sprinklers. These tend to be most effective when sound is also incorporated.
- Use of predator scent, such as wolf urine, in your yard may be an effective deterrent.

Appendix B provides a Coyote Yard Audit Checklist that residents can use to assure that they have followed all Village recommendations for elimination of attractants on their property in order to minimize interaction with coyotes.

COYOTE INTERACTION INFORMATION

Over the years, coyotes have had more contact with humans because of habitat encroachment and food supply. Research of coyote behavior has established that when coyotes settle in a suburban neighborhood and find abundant food sources, they can become increasingly bold and possibly even aggressive towards humans. Coyotes may feel that there are few real threats and approach people or feel safe visiting yards even when people are present. These bold coyotes should not be tolerated or enticed, but given the message that they should not be so brazen. One of the solutions to this problem is to re-instill the coyote’s natural fear of humans by adopting what is known as “Hazing”. Hazing is defined as an adverse conditioning method in which scare tactics and negative stimuli are used to scare off the coyote, thereby reinforcing its fear of humans. Hazing will encourage harassing actions towards the coyote without the use of weapons or causing bodily harm to the animal.

HAZING

When a resident or citizen encounters a coyote, the following hazing method(s) should be used;

- Wave/flail your arms, clapping of hands aggressively, stomping your feet, and shouting at coyote, while approaching it. Try to look as tall and large as possible. Stand your ground with the coyote – NEVER run from a coyote.
- Throw something in the coyote’s direction (not directly at coyote). Carry a ball, stick or rock with you for this purpose. Do not bend down to pick one up when confronting a coyote.
- Carry a noisemaker when outside, to use when hazing a coyote. A few examples – shake pennies placed in a soda can or use a pocket sized air horn, whistle, or bell.

- Try other repellents such spraying with a garden hose, a water bottle, or pepper spray.

The simplest method of hazing a coyote involves being *loud* and *large*. If a coyote has not been hazed before, he might not immediately run away when you yell at him. If this happens, you might need to walk towards the coyote and increase the intensity of your hazing. If the coyote does run, he might stop after a distance and look back you. It's important to continue to haze the coyote until he leaves the area completely.

When a resident encounters aggressive coyote activity (defined above under Nuisance Coyotes), they should contact the River Hills Police Department. An officer will respond to initiate an Aggressive Coyote Incident Report. Simple sightings of coyotes, or hazings without aggressive coyote activity, do not need to be reported to the police.

VILLAGE RESPONSE TO NUISANCE COYOTES

The River Hills Police Department will classify all resident/coyote interactions on a 3 part color coded scale, with categories of Green, Yellow, and Red - all depending on the level of interaction, as follows;

GREEN – Encounters that include a simple coyote sighting or hazing interaction will be established as Green incidents. The vast majority of interactions in River Hills will fall into this category. These are relatively common and do not require a Village notification and/or response.

YELLOW – Encounters that exhibit aggressive coyote activity (growling, baring teeth, lunging, scratching, flanking, stalking, chasing, or biting) will be classified as Yellow incidents, and should be reported immediately to the River Hills Police Department. Responding officer(s) shall verify the incident, and complete an Aggressive Coyote Incident Report. Aggressive coyote activity to a pet that is off leash and off the owner's property will not constitute a Yellow incident classification. The goal of the Aggressive Coyote Incident Report is to identify a trend of nuisance coyote activity within a specific area of the Village. Verified incidents shall confirm the presence of nuisance coyote(s). The location of the incident will be documented and mapped by the Police Department. Appendix C provides the Aggressive Coyote Incident Report to be used by the River Hills Police Department.

Multiple Yellow interactions within the same geographic vicinity (0.5 mile) *MAY* cause the Village to undertake any of the following public safety and abatement effort(s):

- Deploy the River Hills Police Department to remove the nuisance coyote(s).
- Contract with licensed trappers to remove the nuisance coyote(s).
- Contract with licensed sharpshooters to remove the nuisance coyote(s).

The River Hills Chief of Police shall consult with the Village Manager prior to any possible Village initiated response, to make a determination of its necessity. Factors to be considered, but not limited to, are; severity of incident(s), victim preferences, likelihood of reoccurrence, examination of victim property for compliance with Coyote Yard Audit Checklist, and any other circumstance(s) which may play a role. Public safety shall be the primary concern when it is determined that a Village response is to be undertaken.

RED – Encounters in which a coyote attacks a pet or human will be classified as Red incidents. Red incidents should be reported immediately to the River Hills Police Department. Responding officer(s) shall verify the incident, and complete an Aggressive Coyote Incident Report. Aggressive coyote activity to a pet that is off leash and off the owner's property will not constitute a Red incident classification.

Red category incidents *WILL LIKELY* cause the Village to undertake any of the following public safety and abatement effort(s):

- Deploy the River Hills Police Department to remove the nuisance coyote(s).
- Contract with licensed trappers to remove the nuisance coyote(s).
- Contract with licensed sharpshooters to remove the nuisance coyote(s).

The River Hills Chief of Police shall consult with the Village Manger prior to any Village initiated response, to make a determination of its necessity. Factors to be considered, but not limited to, are; severity of incident(s), victim preferences, likelihood of reoccurrence, examination of victim property for compliance with Coyote Yard Audit Checklist, and any other circumstance(s) which may play a role. Public safety shall be the primary concern when it is determined that a Village response is to be undertaken. Appendix C will provide a flowchart of response actions for both Residents and the Village.

River Hills Coyote Management Plan Flow Chart

Residents Response (any of):

- No response.
- Implement hazing measures.
- Allow for archery hunting.
- Eliminate food attractants and yard deterrents.



GREEN

No Village Response

Recommended Residents Response:

- Report to Police Department.
911 if Emergency
414-247-2302 Non-Emergency
- Any of **GREEN** responses.



YELLOW

Potential Village Response (any of):

- Deploy the Police Department to remove the nuisance coyote(s).
- Contract with licensed trappers to remove nuisance coyote(s).
- Contract with licensed sharp shooters to remove nuisance coyote(s).

Recommended Residents Response:

- Report to Police Department.
911 if Emergency
414-247-2302 Non-Emergency
- Any of **GREEN** responses.



RED

Likely Village Response (any of):

- Deploy the Police Department to remove the nuisance coyote(s).
- Contract with licensed trappers to remove nuisance coyote(s).
- Contract with licensed sharp shooters to remove nuisance coyote(s).

APPENDIX A

Further information on Coyotes and Suburban Coyote Management issues can be found at:

- Cook County (IL) comprehensive research study program <http://urbancoyotereseach.com/>
- WI DNR Article <http://dnr.wi.gov/wnrmag/html/stories/1999/dec99/coyote.htm>
- WI DNR Fact Sheet <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/wm/wm0567.pdf>
- USDA Article on Suburban Coyotes
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/wildlife_damage/content/printable_version/coyote_Dec2011.pdf
- AZ Fish and Game Department FAQ http://www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/h_f/urban_coyote_faq.pdf
- Humane Society Article
http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/wild_neighbors/preventing_coyote_conflicts.pdf
- Humane Society Coyote Hazing Guidelines
http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/wild_neighbors/coyote_hazing.pdf

APPENDIX B

COYOTE YARD AUDIT CHECKLIST				
ITEM	OK	FIX	N/A	WAYS TO MITIGATE
Food				Never hand feed or intentionally feed a coyote!
Pet Food				Never feed pets outdoors, store food securely indoors
Water				Remove water attractants such as pet water bowls
Bird Food				Remove bird or any other animal feeders, clean fallen seeds to reduce the presence of small critters
Fallen Fruit				Clean up fallen fruit around trees
Compost				Do not compost meat/dairy, use fully secure container
BBQ Grills				Clean up food around grills after each use
Trash				Secure all trash/garbage containers with locking lids and place outside only on morning of pickup
Landscaping				Eliminate and/or trim vegetation to reduce hiding/stalking places and den sites
Structures				Restrict access under decks and sheds, around woodpiles, or any other structure that can provide cover or a den site for coyotes or their prey
Fencing				Establish a 6 foot fence to deter coyotes. Bury fence at least one foot underground and ensure there are no gaps (only as permitted by Village Code and/or HOA)
Pets				Never leave pets unattended outside Never allow pets to “play” with coyotes Fully enclose outdoor pet kennels Walk pets on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length
<p>The Village of River Hills encourages all residents to take steps to eliminate attractants on their property in order to minimize interactions with coyotes. Residents are also urged to share this information with their neighbors because it is most effective when implemented congruously.</p>				

8) Was an attempt made to Haze/Discourage the coyote? Yes _____ No _____

If Yes, by who? _____

What efforts were made to haze? (e.g. shouting, waving arms, walk towards, noisemaker, throw object, etc.): _____

What was coyote(s) reaction to the hazing? (e.g. unfazed, walked away, ran away, ran away and stopped, ran away w/o stopping, etc.): _____

9) Please provide any additional information about the incident not covered elsewhere: _____

10) Please attach or include any other photographs or other documentation (veterinarian bill, etc.)