

**2018-19 DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR
UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
WATCHUNG RESERVATION
LENAPE & NOMAHEGAN PARKS
ASH BROOK RESERVATION & OAK RIDGE PARK
PASSAIC RIVER PARK - Summit
HAWK RISE SANCTUARY and LINDEN MUNICIPAL LANDFILL
CUSHING ROAD DETENTION BASIN - Plainfield
ELIZABETH RIVER PARK - Hillside**

Adopted 8/09/18; Last revised 8/21/18

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

LOCATION

- The Watchung Reservation encompasses 2065 acres (3.2 square miles) in the Townships of Berkeley Heights, Scotch Plains and Springfield; the Boroughs of Mountainside and Watchung; and the City of Summit.
- Lenape and Nomahegan Parks cover 480 acres (0.75 square mile) in the Townships of Cranford, Springfield, and Union; the Borough of Kenilworth; and the Town of Westfield.
- * The Ash Brook Reservation encompasses 667.45 acres (1.04 square miles) in the Townships of Clark and Scotch Plains. Oak Ridge Park includes 166.14 acres (0.26 square mile) in the Townships of Clark and Edison.
- * The Hawk Rise Sanctuary and Linden Municipal Landfill cover 181 acres (0.28 square mile) in the City of Linden.
- * The Cushing Road Detention Basin encompasses 31.26 acres (0.05 sq. mi.) in the City Of Plainfield, in close proximity to the Township of Scotch Plains and the Borough of Fanwood.
- * The Woodruff and Salem Sections of Elizabeth River Park span 125 acres in the Township of Hillside, between North Avenue and Route 22.
- * The Watchung Reservation, Lenape Park, Nomahegan Park, Ash Brook Reservation, Oak Ridge Park, Passaic River Park and Elizabeth River Park are units of the Union County Park System. The Cushing Road Detention Basin and Hawk Rise Sanctuary are municipally-owned properties.

PURPOSE

- * Forest ecologists recommend that white-tailed deer populations in Northeast hardwood forests should not exceed an overwintering density of 20 deer per square mile in order for deer browse to not impair forest health. In areas where the forest health is already compromised, deer density needs to be as low as 5 per square mile.
- * The results of spotlight counts conducted in April, 2018 suggest 2018-2019 overwintering densities of:
 - * 68 deer per square mile in the Watchung Reservation;
 - * 182 per square mile in and around Lenape and Nomahegan Parks;
 - * 90 per square mile in and around Ash Brook Reservation and Oak Ridge Park;
 - * 53 deer per square mile in and around the Hawk Rise Sanctuary and Linden Municipal Landfill;
 - * 183 per square mile in and around the Cushing Road Detention Basin; and
 - * 260 deer per square mile in Elizabeth River Park in Hillside.
- * The County of Union will utilize the assistance of community-minded licensed hunters with a proficiency in marksmanship to reduce the populations of white-tailed deer in the subject parks.
- * The goals of this program are to prevent overbrowsing of native vegetation in the park areas and allow forest regeneration, minimize browsing of residential landscaping surrounding the park properties, and minimize the incidence of deer-related motor vehicle accidents. Additional benefits that could result from this program are a reduction in the incidence of Lyme disease and an increased opportunity for homeowners to use and enjoy their yards for recreating and gardening.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

- * The County of Union will remove deer from various County and municipal park properties during the Fall and winter of 2018-19 in an attempt to bring the deer population densities down to levels that are more in balance with the ecosystems, with a specific goal density of 20 deer/square mile or less.
- * Such removal will be accomplished through the efforts of selected hunters, acting as agents of the County of Union, shooting over baited sites.
- * The County of Union, through its Department of Parks and Recreation, will administer and conduct all deer management activities defined in these Guidelines.
- * Specific details of this deer control program may be adjusted as field conditions necessitate while conforming to statutory law and NJDFW policy and maintaining the highest standards of safety.
- * Up to 49 agents will be selected from among experienced, licensed hunters who have demonstrated a proficiency in marksmanship and many of whom have participated in this program in the past.
- * Agents will take part in this program on a voluntary basis.
- * This program is designed to address a problem of population control; it is not intended to provide sport or recreational opportunities. These properties are otherwise closed to traditional hunting at all times.
- * The number of agents to be utilized and the number of days of operation are based on a goal to remove 130 deer from Watchung Reservation, 85 deer from Lenape and Nomahegan Parks, 100 deer from Ash Brook Reservation and Oak Ridge Park, 16 deer from the Passaic River Park in Summit, 20 deer from the Hawk Rise Sanctuary, 25 deer from the Cushing Road Detention Basin, and 25 deer from the Hillside sections of Elizabeth River Park.
- * This program will be conducted in two components. In the Archery Component, hunters will utilize crossbow archery equipment to cull deer during the Fall Bow, Permit Bow and Winter Bow Seasons. In the Shotgun Component, hunters will remove deer with shotguns during the months of January and February.

SELECTION AND QUALIFICATION OF AGENTS

- * Applicants must meet the following qualifications:
 - be at least 21 years old;
 - be able to speak and understand the English language;
 - possess a valid NJ Bow Hunting or All-Around Sportsman License (if participating in the Archery Component) or a NJ Firearm Hunting License and New Jersey Firearm Purchaser Identification Card (if participating in the Shotgun Component);
 - have not been convicted of any firearms violation, in any state, in the last 10 years or of any fish and game code violation in the last 5 years;
 - have at least 5 years successful experience in hunting white-tailed deer with a shotgun and/or bow;
 - be able to demonstrate an expertise in marksmanship;
 - possess and be comfortable with using a portable tree stand at a height of 12 feet or more for archery and/or 20 feet or more for shotgun; and
 - be available and willing to contribute voluntary service to the program for at least 70% of the available hunting shifts, if applying for the shotgun component.
- * Applications must be returned to the Division of Public Works, Union County Engineering Building, 2371 South Avenue, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076, by Wednesday, September 5, 2018 no later than noon.
- * Applications may be sent via FAX (908-789-3227) or e-mail (jpolicay@ucnj.org) before the deadline, but the original must follow by mail.
- * Up to 49 agents will be selected for the program.
- * All applicants will be informed of the selection process results via letter or e-mail.
- * All of the successful applicants will subsequently be required to pass a marksmanship proficiency test developed in consultation with the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife and administered by the Union County Police or a Union County certified archery range officer, unless they have already been similarly tested as part of a NJDEP-permitted Community Based Deer Management Program in the last 24 months.
- * Archery crossbow qualifications will be held on Sunday, September 9th, at Oak Ridge Park Archery Range, Clark.
- * All participants will be required to attend an orientation program.
- * The archery orientation will be held on Thursday, September 13th, 7 p.m., at the Union County Engineering Building, 2325 South Avenue, Scotch Plains.
- * Each selected agent will be required to possess and provide proof of a \$1 million general liability insurance policy, and to sign a Hold Harmless Agreement.
- * If information about one or more agents is requested by the general public, the agents' names, addresses, and other personal identifiers will be redacted by the County of Union from all requested documentation. The County of Union has a responsibility and an obligation to safeguard from public access a citizen's personal information with which it has been entrusted when disclosure thereof would violate the citizen's reasonable expectation of privacy.

SCHEDULING OF AGENTS

- Applicants are required to indicate their availability on the Agent Application.
- All selected agents will generally be scheduled for all shifts for which they have indicated their availability.
- The park or parks in which the agent will hunt, and the component during which they will hunt, will be assigned at the discretion of the Department Head of Parks & Recreation or his designee, depending on the component(s) for which the agent applied and qualified.
- If a park is to be hunted during both the Archery and Shotgun Components, an agent who is qualified and available will generally be assigned to hunt during both components in the same park.

PERMITS – ARCHERY COMPONENT

- * If authorized by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the appropriate municipalities, hunters selected for the Archery Component will hunt deer in the subject parks during the Fall and Permit Bow Season of October 1 to December 31, 2018 and/or the Winter Bow Season that extends from January 1 through February 16, 2019.
- * Hunting in this component will be conducted under the regular hunting season format.
- * Agents must utilize crossbows in the Archery Component.
- * Hunters selected for this program will be required to purchase a 2018 and 2019 hunting license, at their own expense.
- * Hunters who are selected and approved for participation in this program will also be required to purchase, at their own expense, a Fall Bow, Permit Bow and/or Winter Bow Season license and applicable permits for the zone(s) in which they will hunt – Zone 13 for the Watchung Reservation and Passaic River Park and Zone 36 for Lenape Park, Nomahegan Park, Ash Brook Reservation, Oak Ridge Park, Hawk Rise Sanctuary, Cushing Road Detention Basin and Elizabeth River Park.
- * If a hunter wishes to hunt for an antlered buck during the Permit Bow Season, then he or she must also purchase an Antlered Buck Permit.
- * Use of any permits must conform strictly to the statutes, rules and regulations as promulgated and administered by the State of New Jersey through the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

PERMITS – SHOTGUN COMPONENT

- The County of Union, through its Department of Parks & Recreation, will submit an application for a Special Deer Management Permit to the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW).
- If a permit is granted, the County of Union will administer and conduct all deer management activities per the terms of that permit.
- Agents selected for this program will be required to purchase a 2019 hunting license prior to participation.
- As agents of the County, participants in the Shotgun Component will not be required to purchase hunting season or zone permits.
- If a Special Deer Management Permit is not granted, this component will be conducted under the regular Permit Shotgun Season format. The need for season/zone permits and Antlered Buck Permits, as described above for the Archery Component, would then apply.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- * Shooting will occur only during daylight hours, which are defined as ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. Sunrise and sunset change daily, and will be determined by the U.S. Naval Observatory. Hunters may be in the park before and after those hours to set up their tree stands or to remove deer carcasses
- * Each shotgun shift begins with the deployment of agents into the field and ends after all deer taken on that shift have been processed for transport to a butcher.
- * Hunting in the subject parks during the shotgun component will be conducted simultaneously on one day per week during the time periods specified. Generally, hunting will occur on Mondays; if weather or a holiday precludes hunting on a Monday, the program will be rescheduled for that week only to Wednesday or Friday.
- * Hunting in the subject parks during the archery component may occur on any and all weekdays within the range of dates specified.
- * The specific date ranges and hunting shifts are as follows:

- * **Fall Bow and Permit Bow Seasons (66 days)**, October 1 – December 31, 2018; Monday through Friday at:
 - * Watchung Reservation, including Acadia Arboretum (Glenside Avenue, Scotch Plains)
 - * Lenape Park
 - * Ash Brook Reservation
 - * Oak Ridge Park
 - * Passaic River Park
 - * Hawk Rise Sanctuary and Linden Municipal Landfill
- * **Winter Bow Season (34 days)**, January 1 – February 16, 2019; Monday through Friday at:
 - * Passaic River Park
 - * Cushing Road Detention Basin - Afternoon shifts only
 - * Elizabeth River Park
 - * Nomahegan Park
 - * Watchung Reservation – Acadia Arboretum only
- * **Shotgun Component**, January 7 – March 1, 2019; 2 days of morning and afternoon shifts followed by 6 days of afternoon shifts only, at:
 - * Watchung Reservation
 - * Lenape Park
 - * Ash Brook Reservation
 - * Oak Ridge Park
 - * Hawk Rise Sanctuary and Linden Municipal Landfill
- * Hunting will be confined to the number of days and date ranges just defined. The program will not extend past those dates.

PROGRAM OPERATION

- * Baiting stations will be set up in a multitude of locations in the various subject park units.
- * Baiting stations will be carefully selected to provide the shooter with a clear and open view of the deer.
- * Agents must utilize crossbows in the Archery Component and 10, 12, 16 or 20 gauge shotguns with telescopic sights, shooting slugs only, in the Shotgun component.
- * All shotgun shooting will occur from tree stands, shooting near or over bait, with the tree stand base secured at a height of at least 20 feet above the ground.
- * All archery shooting will occur from tree stands, shooting near or over bait, with the tree stand base secured at a height of at least 12 feet above the ground.
- * No shots may be taken from ground level or across roads or paths.
- * Shots are limited to 20 yards with archery equipment and 40 yards with shotguns.
- * Hunting may not take place within 150 feet of any structure in the Archery Component or within 450 feet in the Shotgun Component.
- * Agents must provide their own portable stands and remove them as directed by the hunt manager, at the conclusion of the hunt. Ladder stands are acceptable, and placement location must be approved by the hunt manager. Safety harnesses must be worn.
- * Hunters in the shotgun component are required to wear at least 200 square inches of fluorescent orange, unless relieved of that requirement by a Special Deer Management Permit.
- * In the Shotgun Component, if operating under a Special Deer Management Permit, there will be no limit on the number of deer that may be culled. In order to keep age and sex ratios balanced, there will be no bias for or against the taking of antlered deer.
- * The maximum number of agents that may be deployed into a park at any one time is as follows:
 - * Watchung Reservation – 14 for archery; 14 for shotgun
 - * Lenape Park – 9 for archery; 9 for shotgun
 - * Nomahegan Park – 3 for archery
 - * Ash Brook Reservation – 8 for archery; 8 for shotgun
 - * Oak Ridge Park – 3 for archery; 1 for shotgun
 - * Passaic River Park – 3 for archery
 - * Hawk Rise Sanctuary and Linden Municipal Landfill – 3 for archery and 3 for shotgun
 - * Cushing Road Detention Basin – 3 for archery
 - * Elizabeth River Park – 3 for archery
- * Some portions of the parks may be closed or restricted during program operation as safety or operational needs dictate.
- * The County will provide notification to park users, adjoining homeowners and the community at large through signage, press releases, and printed literature.

REPORTING

- * Agents will not be restricted as to the total number of deer each individual can harvest.
- * In the Archery Component, although there will be no daily bag limit, the hunter must report any deer killed to the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife through its Automated Harvest Report System, and must be authorized by that system before killing more than two deer.
- * In the Shotgun Component, reporting through the Automated Harvest Report System will be required only if this program is not granted a Special Deer Management Permit by the NJDFW.
- * In the Archery Component, agents will be required to provide a completed End of Season Harvest Report and Survey to the Program Administrator, via email or hard copy, as directed. That report must include the hours that they hunted, the number of deer killed, the sex of those deer, and the disposition of the carcasses.
- * In the Shotgun Component, all agents will meet at a check station within the Union County Park System and provide a report on the age and sex of any deer culled, the disposition of all shots fired, and the number of volunteer man-hours expended.

DISPOSITION OF DEER

- * All deer harvested in the Shotgun Component will be transported to a secure site where agents will eviscerate the deer.
- * All deer harvested in the Archery Component will be field-dressed and the entrails will be bagged and removed by the agents.
- * All deer harvested in the Shotgun Component will be transported by the County to a NJDOH-approved butcher contracted by the County.
- * All venison derived from those deer will be distributed to the needy and homeless through the Community FoodBank of NJ.
- * In the Archery Component, if an agent wants to keep the carcass of a deer that he killed, he or she may do so. He can butcher the carcass himself or have it butchered professionally, at his own expense. The hunter can have the carcass processed by the butcher contracted by the County, at the hunter's expense, at a price negotiated by the County.
- * If a hunter in the Archery Component does not want to keep the carcass, he may donate it to the Hunters Helping the Hungry Program through a State-approved butcher.

COSTS

- * The County of Union will purchase any bait required for the conduct of this program.
- * The County will pay the fees for butchering deer carcasses in the Shotgun Component.
- * The agents will be responsible for the cost of licenses and permits, insurance, personal equipment, shotgun ammunition and crossbow bolts, and the butchering of deer kept by them in the Archery Component.