



# COUNTY OF BERKS

## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT



2083 Tulpehocken Road  
Wyomissing, PA 19610

Phone: 610.372.8939  
Fax: 610.373.7066  
E-mail: [parcs@countyofberks.com](mailto:parcs@countyofberks.com)

Christian Y. Leinbach, Commissioner  
Kevin S. Barnhardt, Commissioner  
Michael S. Rivera, Commissioner

Cathy Wegener, CPRP, Director  
Brendan Lederer, Assistant Director

## **Berks County Deer Management Program 2021-2022**

**Berks County has contracted with the USDA Wildlife Services to manage the Antietam Lake Park Natural Resources Stewardship Plan Deer Management goals for the Antietam Lake Park Properties.**

- The program will begin September 18, 2021 and end January 29, 2022. There will be no Sunday hunting except for November 14, 21 and 28.
- This is a Controlled Hunting Program and there will be no hunting in the park without authorization from USDA Wildlife Services with a valid permit.
- The intention is to reduce deer populations until the negative impact to our parks is alleviated, and then to maintain deer populations as needed to have a balanced ecosystem.
- The overarching goals of the Deer Management Program are to reduce park land damage and forests property damage, minimize the threat of disease, reduce deer-related accidents and re-balance the ecosystem.
- The program will entail only the use of archery equipment with experienced archers following all Pennsylvania Game Commission rules.
- Selected hunters have completed the application process, passed a proficiency test, attended an orientation which included safety and hunting ethics and hunters will be carrying a hunting permit card for identification purposes.
- Hunting may take place from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes following sunset.

### **Statement of Objectives**

**The primary stewardship goal is to protect and enhance the Antietam Lake Park Properties conservation priorities**

- Conservation Priorities for Antietam Lake Park Properties are:
  - Plant/forest communities and water resources that support wildlife
  - Safe and enjoyable environment for passive recreation and environmental education activities
- Have an adaptive resource management approach to:
  - initiate a long-term plan
  - be environmentally sustainable
  - use forest regeneration surveys
  - have an integrated approach to managing damage by deer
- To preserve a natural diversity and abundance of flora and fauna
- Promote a healthy, sustainable forest and native, wild plant communities

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### Additional Information

The white-tailed deer is perhaps the most influential wildlife species in Pennsylvania's forested ecosystems. When their population is out of balance with habitat, they impact County forests and parks by browsing tree seedlings, shrubs, and wildflowers beyond their capacity to reproduce, impacting the ability to sustain a healthy, fully functioning forest.

Over-browsing by deer alters the diversity and habitat for other forest mammals and birds. For example, acorns and other tree nuts, known as mast, fluctuate greatly from year to year and are an important food resource for many forest mammals and some birds. Competition for mast can cause a reduction in these forest mammals and birds. This in turn, reduces the predator populations that feed on them.

In addition, over-browsing can eliminate the shrub layer and greatly reduce the diversity of forest-floor plant species. Many wildlife species utilize the shrub layer and feed on forest-floor plant species. This means fewer nesting places for birds, and a loss of natural food sources and fewer areas of protection for countless other species, including the deer themselves.

A lack of ground cover can also contribute to nearby flooding as rich topsoil is washed away and erosion is accelerated, changing the quality and composition of streams and creeks.

For these reasons Berks County has instituted this Deer Management Program to address the needs of the Antietam Lake Parks Properties as identified in the Natural Lands report "Antietam Lake Park Natural Resources Stewardship Plan."

**For more information about the program or application process please contact:**

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