



## **Wildlife Management Policy Controlled Bowhunting Program**

### **SECTION 1: GENERAL**

**A.** MetroParks recognizes that the population of white-tailed deer must be controlled to ensure the maintenance of a healthy ecological system throughout the various lands owned by or under the control and management of MetroParks of Butler County. The most humane and effective method for controlling the white-tailed deer population is through the implementation of a wildlife management policy that establishes a controlled bowhunting program. This policy establishes the Controlled Bowhunting Program; hereinafter known as "the program" for all lands owned and controlled by MetroParks.

**B.** The program is used to manage deer populations in identified areas of selected MetroParks. This program is an ecological management tool for white-tailed deer only. The use of this program is based upon reported or observed damage to the ecology of MetroParks property or tenant farmers crops due to an overpopulation of white-tailed deer. Occasionally the program may be used to protect human health where evidence exists that an overly dense population of white-tailed deer has been demonstrated to play a role in the spread of infectious disease or serious risk of accident or injury to park customers/visitors. Species other than white-tailed deer are protected and shall not be taken by any individual to include those authorized to participate in the program. Bowhunting is an effective wildlife management tool used to promote the growth of healthy animal populations and improve habitats, especially in areas overpopulated with deer and in places where modern firearms are restricted. It is important to note that the program is NOT an Ohio Division of Wildlife Controlled hunt.

**C.** "Controlled hunt" as used in this policy means any controlled opportunity, as authorized by the Board of Park Commissioners of MetroParks of Butler County (known as "the Board") or its designee, to take wild animals, open to any person that meets stated criteria, and only through a random drawing or selection process and issuance of a permit to the person or persons selected, allowing him/her to participate in that opportunity at a specified location and time.

**D.** Federal, State, & Local laws, and MetroParks Rules & Regulations apply to all hunting activities within and upon lands owned or controlled by MetroParks of Butler County. This policy establishes the program by which the Board authorizes individuals to hunt on MetroParks property and does not nullify, modify, or otherwise change established laws, rules, and regulations. This policy does not modify or supersede Ohio hunting laws and regulations. All program participants must comply with this policy

and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

**E.** The Board of Park Commissioners shall designate annually which MetroPark, or MetroParks property, will be included in the program. The Board may delegate this responsibility to the Executive Director. The Land Stewardship Unit, under the direction and oversight of the Environmental Projects Manager, shall implement and administer the program. Any area identified for inclusion in the program shall, at a minimum, be closed to the public throughout the duration of the controlled hunt.

**F.** The Land Stewardship Unit, under the direction of the Environmental Projects Manager, may establish separate hunting zones within the MetroParks identified for inclusion in the program for that year. Determination of hunting zones will be based upon the size and location of the identified MetroPark and may include the deer population in the area.

**G.** As used in this policy, the terms "sportsman", "participants", and "hunters", refer to an individual or individuals, male or female, who make(s) application and is selected to participate and engage in hunting activities through the bowhunting program.

**H.** The term "bow season", as used in this policy, refers to the period of time established by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife for archery hunting of white-tailed deer only.

## **SECTION 2: REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION**

**A** All hunters must be at least 18 years of age and submit a complete application.

**B.** All hunters must submit proof of a hunter education course or pass an equivalent safety test administered by MetroParks.

**C.** All hunters must attend and successfully complete an archer proficiency test (A.K.A. qualification) administered by the Ranger Department (A.K.A. Division of Public Safety).

**D.** Hunters must complete a safety orientation and agree to abide by applicable federal, state, & local laws as well as all MetroParks program policies and Rules & Regulations while participating in the program and controlled hunt.

**E.** Hunters must be selected by a lottery system, or other process that affords equal chance of selection to all applicants before they may participate in a controlled hunt. No individual or group of individuals will be authorized to participate in a controlled hunt, or hunt on lands owned or controlled by MetroParks and designated as a location for a controlled hunt, unless he/she is selected to do so in accordance with the program.

**F.** Only those applicants who successfully complete all portions of the application and selection process and are subsequently selected by process as described in Section

2Paragraph (E) of this policy, will be allowed to participate in a controlled hunt.

### **SECTION 3: APPLICATION REQUIRED**

**A.** All sportsmen who desire to participate in the program shall submit an application to the Environmental Projects Manager by application deadline posted on MetroPark website at [www.yourmetroparks.net](http://www.yourmetroparks.net) or equivalent news release. Applications must be received by MetroParks by the submission deadline. Applications mailed in must be postmarked by application deadline and received within 5 days of application deadline.

**8.** Sportsmen can obtain applications from either the MetroParks Administrative Office or from the MetroParks of Butler County website at [www.yourmetroparks.net](http://www.yourmetroparks.net) . All applications must be completed in their entirety without any omissions. All applications must be legible. Incomplete applications, applications that are not legible, or applications that omit ANY information will be rejected without further recourse. Sportsmen whose applications are rejected will be permitted to file a second application, as long as any subsequent applications are received by the deadline. In no case, will an application be accepted after the established deadline.

**C.** An application fee of \$20 to offset the cost to administer the program must be submitted with the application. Failure to submit the required fee will result in a rejected application. Payment may be made by credit card, debit card, or by check or money order made payable to MetroParks of Butler County. If the application is made in Person, then a cash payment will be accepted, and the applicant will be issued a receipt. Application fees are non-refundable regardless of whether the applicant is selected for participation in the program.

**D.** All applications made in person must be made by the person listed on the application. Applications may not be submitted by an agent, representative, on behalf of, or by any other person other than the named sportsman.

**E.** Any applicant who falsifies his/her application or provides false or misleading information on his/her application or during the selection process will be immediately disqualified from participating in any MetroParks controlled hunt for a period of 5 years. Applicants may also be subject to investigation and criminal prosecution as determined by MetroPark Rangers.

### **SECTION 4: MARKSMANSHIP QUALIFICATION**

**A.** Applicants are required to complete a qualification test to ensure safety and accuracy while hunting within the MetroParks. All sportsmen who submit an accepted application and the associated application fee will be notified of the date, time, and location of the qualification. Any applicant who fails to arrive at the qualification at the specified time, or fails to satisfactorily complete the qualification course, will be disqualified from the program, and will be denied participation in the program for that year. Any applicant who is disqualified for non-participation or for failure to qualify may submit an application during the following year or any subsequent year and receive equal consideration with

all other applicants. Applicants must qualify Each Year regardless of whether they qualified during prior years.

**B.** Upon arrival to the marksmanship qualification, each sportsman will be required to present evidence of completion of a hunter education course. Those who do not present proof of completion will be required to take and pass a hunter safety test administered by the MetroParks Rangers and/or Land Stewardship Unit. The test will be administered upon arrival and check-in. Those sportsmen who fail the safety test will be dismissed from the qualification and disqualified from the program for that year's controlled hunt. Those sportsmen who pass the safety test will be permitted to participate in the marksmanship qualification along with those sportsmen who presented proof of completion of a hunter education course.

**C.** A hunter may qualify with up to three types of weapons (compound bow, crossbow, long/recurve bow) but may only hunt with weapons with which he/she has passed qualification. For example, if a hunter fails with a compound bow, but passes with a crossbow, he/she may only hunt with a crossbow.

**D.** The marksmanship live fire qualification will be administered by the MetroParks Ranger Department. MetroParks Rangers will ensure all safety rules are followed and will set the order in which participants qualify. The Rangers administering the marksmanship live fire qualification will score each sportsman's marksmanship as pass or fail based upon his/her ability to meet the minimum standards established in Section 4 Paragraph (D) of this policy. A sportsman will be afforded one opportunity to qualify. An attempt to qualify shall consist of the release of five arrows/bolts. Those who fail to qualify on the first round will be disqualified for participation in that year's controlled hunt. Applicants who pass the marksmanship qualification will be entered into the lottery drawing for participation in the controlled hunt. Applicants will be notified of the date, time, and location of the lottery after the conclusion of the marksmanship qualification course.

**E.** Sportsmen are required to place four out of five arrows into an 8½ inch x 11 inch target from a distance of 20 yards to qualify. Sportsmen must use ODNR Division of Wildlife approved bow and arrows to qualify.

## **SECTION 5: SELECTION FOR PARTICIPATION**

**A.** A lottery will be held to select those sportsmen who will participate and be authorized to participate in the program. The lottery will be held prior to the first day of bow season as established by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. The Land Stewardship Unit, or its designee, will conduct the lottery. The Environmental Projects Manager may establish an alternate system other than a lottery to select applicants; however, the alternate system must be completely random and afford each applicant an equal opportunity for selection. The use of the word "lottery" in this policy is synonymous with "selection process" as established by the Environmental Projects Manager. The word lottery shall not be interpreted as a strict requirement for use of a true lottery drawing or system.

**B.** A separate lottery drawing will be held for each MetroPark that has been selected for

a controlled hunt by the Board. Sportsmen may select the MetroPark for which they desire consideration. While the MetroParks staff conducting the lottery will ensure that each sportsman's request for a specific park is honored, the staff member may make suggestions about which MetroPark to consider to ensure an equal distribution of sportsmen among the included MetroParks. The equal distribution will help to maintain equal odds for selection among sportsmen and ensure that each MetroPark receives equal consideration. Sportsmen will be informed of the number of hunting zones established for each MetroPark prior to making their entries.

**C.** Upon arrival at the lottery, each sportsman will be required to provide proof that they have been issued a valid Ohio hunting license, have met all the requirements established by the Division of Wildlife to bow hunt in Ohio, and be in possession of a valid deer permit issued by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. Sportsmen will be given their lottery ticket upon satisfactory proof of eligibility to legally hunt in Ohio. A sportsman will choose for which MetroPark he/she desires consideration if more than one MetroPark is available and will enter his/her ticket into the drawing for that MetroPark location.

**D.** Each sportsman selected will be authorized to participate in the program for a specified period and shall be restricted to the MetroPark for which he/she was selected. Both the sportsman and the participation period will be selected by a lottery.

**E.** The Land Stewardship Unit will conduct a separate lottery drawing for each MetroPark if more than one MetroPark is available. The number of primary hunters for each MetroPark will be established by multiplying the number of hunting periods in that year's bow season by the number of hunting zones in the MetroPark. One entry will be drawn at a time until the number of entries drawn equals the established number of primary hunters. Those sportsmen whose tickets are drawn will be considered the primary hunters for that year's controlled hunt. The process will be completed for each MetroPark included in that year's controlled hunt. Additional lotteries will be held in the event there are more primary hunters required for a specific MetroPark than there are entries to fill the spots. Those sportsmen not already selected as primary hunters in any MetroPark will be permitted to enter into the second and subsequent lotteries until all primary hunting spaces are filled. If all participating sportsmen are selected as primary hunters, then all sportsmen may enter into the additional lotteries until the identified number of primary hunters is obtained.

**F.** Sportsmen not selected as primary hunters will participate in a final lottery to be identified and ranked as alternate participants. The drawing for alternate hunters will be conducted the same as the drawing for primary hunters except that all tickets will be drawn, and each sportsman will be listed in order of selection as an alternate for their desired MetroPark. The process will be repeated for each MetroPark until all selections are made. Those sportsmen who are not selected as a primary participant will be prohibited from participating in the program for that year unless they are contacted by the Land Stewardship Unit and agree to participate as an alternate. Alternates will be used if the primary sportsman is unable or unwilling to participate once the controlled hunt commences.

**G.** The hunting season will be divided into hunting periods for the purpose of the

program. Each hunting period will begin on the first day of the month and continue through the last day of the month. If there are less than 7 days remaining in the calendar month that includes the first day of bow season, then the first hunting period will commence on the first day of bow season and continue through the last day of the following calendar month. If the first day of bow season is 10 days or more before the end of the month then the first hunting period will commence on the first day of bow season and continue through the last day of that calendar month and not extend into the following calendar month. If the last day of bow season is less than 6 days after the first day of the calendar month, then those days will be added to the last hunting period, which will commence on the first day of the month preceding the end of bow season and continue through the end of bow season. If the last day is 10 days or more after the first day of the month, then an additional hunting period will be created and will commence on the first day of the calendar month during which bow season ends and will continue through the last day of bow season.

H. Sportsmen who are selected as primary participants will be entered into a lottery to select the hunting period for which they will be authorized to participate. MetroPark staff will draw tickets and assign the sportsman whose ticket is drawn to the first available hunting period and continue to assign sportsmen chronologically until all hunting periods are filled. The first sportsman's ticket drawn will be assigned the first hunting period that begins on the first day of bow season, the second sportsman's ticket drawn will be assigned to the second hunting period and so on until all hunting periods have been assigned.

I. All sportsman, primary and alternate, will receive a mandatory safety orientation at the conclusion of the lottery. Only those sportsmen selected for participation will be permitted to remain for the safety orientation. Failure to participate in the safety orientation will result in disqualification and assignment of time to one of the alternate sportsmen.

## **SECTION 6: PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTROLLED HUNT**

A. Hunters are expected to participate in the controlled hunt during their assigned hunting period in their assigned hunting zone. Hunters who are unable to do so are required to contact the MetroParks Land Stewardship Unit in advance of their intended absence. Participants may contact the Land Stewardship Unit via phone or email. Contact information will be provided at the conclusion of the lottery. Contact with the Land Stewardship Unit is required if a hunter will not be able to participate for a period of 6 days or more. Hunters will provide the Land Stewardship Unit with the exact days they are unable to participate. The Land Stewardship Unit will contact the alternate hunter in order of lottery selection to inform the alternate of the vacated time and offer them an opportunity to participate in the controlled hunt. Should an alternate sportsman accept, they will only be permitted to hunt during the vacated time as specified by the Land Stewardship Unit and they must cease all activities and remove all equipment upon the conclusion of their authorized time period. Alternate hunters may not disturb any equipment, stands, or other property placed by the primary hunter. The Land Stewardship Unit will contact alternate hunters in order of lottery selection until an alternate agrees to participate. Alternate hunters will have 12 hours from the initial attempt by the Land Stewardship Unit to contact them to accept

the offer to participate. All alternates must provide the Land Stewardship Unit with a valid telephone number AND voicemail/messaging system, or a valid email address.

**B.** Hunters are permitted to hunt their assigned zone during their assigned hunting period until they reach their bag limit as established by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. Once a hunter reaches their bag limit, they must vacate their zone and remove all stands, equipment, and property. No stand, property, or equipment may be left in place from one hunting period to the next. Failure to remove all stands, equipment, and property will result in removal from the program and disqualification for the remainder of the season. MetroParks Rangers or staff members will remove and confiscate any stand, equipment, or property left behind by a hunter after they vacate their zone. Hunters will remove ALL trash, debris, and other similar items daily.

**C.** Hunters will notify the MetroParks Administrative Office each time a deer is taken. The hunter will provide the Administrative Office with the sex and the location taken within 48 hours and a white-tailed deer harvest report within 7 days. A white-tailed deer harvest report form will be provided to the hunter at the conclusion of the lottery and a completed form may be emailed to [info@yourmetroparks.net](mailto:info@yourmetroparks.net), or delivered to the administration office. Text messages are not accepted by the Administrative Office. The Administrative Office will provide the information to the Land Stewardship Unit.

**D.** All hunters shall abide by all federal, state, and local laws as well as MetroParks Rules & Regulations and program requirements while participating in the controlled hunt. Failure to do so will result in immediate disqualification for the remainder of the season and for the following five years. Hunters who violate this section may be subject to criminal prosecution.

**E.** The only person permitted to hunt in the controlled hunt is the hunter selected in the lottery. Others may accompany the hunter as guests; however, only the hunter selected for the program and authorized to participate by MetroParks may handle any weapons or engage in any hunting. A hunter may not allow any other person to participate or hunt on his/her behalf. All guests must remain with the selected hunter all times while in the MetroPark. A hunter who allows another person to participate in his/her place, or to participate along with him/her, will be disqualified from the program for the remainder of the year and will be prohibited from participation in the program for the following five years.

**F.** Tree stands are authorized, but all persons in the stand must use a safety harnesses and other safety equipment. Under no circumstances are sportsmen permitted to damage or destroy any tree, plant, vegetation, or other natural resource while in the MetroPark. All other equipment, devices, and weapons must comply with Ohio Division of Wildlife regulations. Use of a firearm of any type in any MetroPark is prohibited. All hunters are required to utilize bows while participating in the program.

**G.** Vehicles of any type are not permitted in the MetroPark for use during the controlled hunt. All vehicles must conform to park rules & regulations and may not be operated off any paved roadway.

**H.** Baiting is legal in the State of Ohio but IS NOT allowed in this program. Hunters may NOT place bait in any form, to include salt blocks and automatic feeders, in any area in or around any MetroPark.

**I.** Participants may hunt white-tailed deer ONLY. Hunting of any other wildlife or species is prohibited and violations will result in criminal prosecution.

**J.** A hunter must wait a minimum of one-hour before following up after a shot unless he/she observes the deer fall within his/her sight. A hunter may follow-up and track a shot deer into other areas of the MetroPark property.

**K.** A hunter must exercise care in dressing the deer so as not to disturb park guests. MetroPark Rangers and Land Stewardship Unit can assist with deer that travel into other areas of the park that are in vicinity of park visitors. Under no circumstances will participants dress a deer in the view of any non-program participant. Hunters are responsible for removal of deer entrails and/or carcasses recovered which have spoiled. Entrails are not to be placed near trails, parking areas, or in any other place easily visible by other park users. The MetroParks rule prohibiting hunting knives is waived for participants who are hunting pursuant to the program.

**L.** A participant must maintain awareness of his/her location and under no circumstances is he/she authorized to enter onto any private property adjoining or adjacent to MetroPark property unless WRITTEN permission is obtained from the property owner.

**M.** All deer harvested in the program must be taken and claimed by the hunter. Hunters shall not leave any deer behind and shall not fail to claim any deer. A hunter will make every reasonable effort to follow-up and locate deer for which he/she is responsible.

**N.** All Ohio Division of Wildlife tagging procedures must be followed. Once a deer is harvested, the deer must be checked through the proper check-in procedure. The deer is the property of the participant. Participants must keep a daily log of number/sex of deer observed while hunting and any shots taken.

**O.** If a participant determines a deer was hit (blood or missing arrow) and does not locate the deer within 1 hour of searching, then the participant should notify the Land Stewardship Unit by contacting the MetroParks Administrative Offices during business hours at 513-867-5835, or by contacting the Butler County Sheriff's Communications Center after normal business hours at 513-785-1300. In the event the deer is not recovered after substantial searching, then the participant is required to notify the MetroParks Land Stewardship Unit. This is especially important if the blood trail leaves the designated hunting area. Sportsmen will not incur any penalties for reporting a wounded deer; however, failure to report a wounded deer will result in disqualification for the remainder of the season for the first offense. A second offense will result in permanent disqualification from any MetroParks wildlife management program.

## **SECTION 7: SCOUTING**



**A.** Scouting or visiting the assigned location while not hunting, for the purpose of determining the location of deer or the likely future location of deer is permitted, but only during the hunting period and in the zone for which the hunter was selected. Scouting outside of the assigned hunting period, or outside of the designated zone, is prohibited and will result in disqualification for the remainder of the season.

**B.** While scouting, participants are permitted to set up stands and clear shooting lanes in accordance with the program requirements.

**C.** Only the selected hunter may participate in scouting. Any other person who engages in scouting within a MetroPark is in violation of the program and MetroParks Rules & Regulations. Unauthorized scouting may result in prosecution.

**D.** The use of trail cameras is prohibited. A hunter who places a trail camera will have his/her camera confiscated and will be disqualified for the remainder of the year in which he/she was selected to participate.

## **SECTION 8: RULES AND PROVISIONS**

**A.** All rules and provisions of the program and/or contained in this policy shall be followed by all sportsmen who participate. Failure to adhere to the participation requirements will result in disqualification.

**B.** Videotaping or photographing a deer harvest is prohibited. Sportsmen may video tape live deer and may take still photos after the hunt, but video or photographs of the harvest are prohibited. Anyone who videotapes or photographs a harvest will receive a lifetime permanent disqualification from the program.

**C.** Non-hunting minors may accompany a permitted hunter, but the minor(s) may not carry a weapon or participate in the hunt. Minors must remain with the permitted hunter at all times.

**D.** All equipment must conform to the State of Ohio requirements. Compound, long, recurve, and crossbows are allowed. Longbows must have a minimum draw weight of 40 pounds and crossbows must have a draw weight of not less than 75 pounds or more than 200 pounds.

**E.** A tree stand and safety harness are required. Participants are limited to two stands (or combination of stands and blinds if permitted) per participant in each area. All shots must be downward into an earth backstop. A harness must be worn while hunting. Failure to comply will result in disqualification from the program for a period of five years. All stands must be at least 60 yards from other stands unless an agreement is reached between the respective hunters. All stands (or blinds if permitted) must be at least 60 yards away from any MetroPark boundary. Climbing, ladder, and tripod stands are authorized. Hunters should lock stands or remove them at the end of each day.

F. No person may place a permanent stand, or place spikes, nails, wires, or other metal or non-metal objects into a tree for uses as steps, to secure a stand, or for any other reason or purpose while on MetroParks property.

G. Sportsmen are required to place a durable name tag with contact information on stands or blinds left in the field and shall lock or remove the equipment daily after departure from the designated area. Stands or blinds left behind without name tags will be confiscated.

H. Hunting from the ground is specifically prohibited. Limited clearing of shooting lanes is permitted as long as the sticks, branches, or bushes are smaller than ½ inch in diameter. Cutting of any foliage larger than ½ inch is prohibited and is a violation of MetroParks Rules and Regulations. Removal of Amur Honeysuckle and Autumn Olive is authorized and encouraged regardless of the size.

I. Archery season hours are from one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset as set by the Ohio Division of Wildlife regulations. Sportsmen should use the times for Western Ohio.

J. Pater Park is not covered by the Controlled Bowhunting Program. As a small property, adjacent to Pater Wildlife Area, Pater Park has been leased to the MetroParks by the Ohio ODNR Division of Wildlife and State regulations covering general hunting apply there as they do at the adjacent Pater Wildlife Area.

## **SECTION 9: HARVEST PROCEDURE**

A. There is a limited antlered harvest in each area. Participants must harvest antlered and antlerless deer in accordance with Division of Wildlife regulations. If hunters are required to harvest an antlerless deer first, they must do so and will then receive permission from MetroParks to harvest an antlered deer.

B. If the Division of Wildlife requires hunters to harvest an antlerless deer before taking an antlered deer, then hunters will adhere to the following process: After the required number of antlerless deer are harvested; the successful hunter must contact the MetroParks Land Stewardship Unit before leaving the MetroPark. The hunter will receive authorization to harvest an antlered deer and will receive a written permission via email on the next business day. The hunter must still complete Ohio Division of Wildlife check-in procedures. For additional antlerless or antlered deer harvests, hunters are required to report harvests and submit harvest reports to the Land Stewardship Unit as soon as possible, but no later than 7 days after the harvest.

C. All applicable Ohio Division of Wildlife rules and regulations apply to the program. MetroParks controlled bowhunting program is not an Ohio Division of Wildlife controlled hunt.

**D.** All designated hunting areas are located within Butler County. It is the participant's responsibility to have the proper tags and know the harvest limits before harvesting a deer.

**E.** Except as otherwise provided for under program rules and policies, only white-tailed deer may be taken under the program.

**F.** Participants are required to report feral pig sightings immediately to the Land Stewardship Unit.

## **SECTION 10: OTHER CONDITIONS**

**A.** Salt blocks, scattered bait and automatic feeders are prohibited. Stands must be at least 60 yards from any MetroPark boundary or any other participant's stands. All stands and blinds must be marked with name and contact information of the participant. Any unmarked stand or blind will be removed and confiscated.

**B.** All participants shall comply with all applicable federal, state, local, and MetroPark laws, rules, and regulations. Participants may be checked periodically by Ohio Division of Wildlife Officers or MetroParks Rangers to ensure compliance. Participants must have a copy of the MetroParks issued permit on their person while hunting. Participants must obey all commands from any MetroParks staff member.

**C.** All participants are required to report violations of law or the program immediately to the MetroParks Land Stewardship Unit when they are observed or discovered. Contact information and instructions for reporting violations will be provided to participants.

**D.** Participants must complete and return log sheets at the end of their hunting period and white-tailed deer harvest sheets within 7 days of harvest. Sheets may be emailed to the Land Stewardship Unit or submitted in person at the Administrative Offices. Contact information will be provided to participants at time of lottery.

**E.** At the discretion of the Land Stewardship Unit certain hunting areas and periods may be deemed as antlerless harvest only or hunters may be required to harvest an antlerless deer prior to harvesting an antlered deer.