

For Immediate Release

County of Berks Press Release

Antietam Lake Park Deer Management Program to begin second year on September 17

Reading, PA— 8/29/2022 — The County of Berks is preparing to start the second year of the Antietam Lake Park Deer Management Program in September to help reduce deer populations to alleviate any negative impact to the park and create a balanced ecosystem. The Antietam Lake Park Deer Management Program is a joint venture between the Berks County Parks and Recreation Department and USDA Wildlife Services that was approved by the Berks County Commissioners in April 2021.

The overarching goals of the program are to reduce damage to park land and forest property, minimize the threat of disease, reduce deer-related accidents and re-balance the ecosystem. The white-tailed deer is one of the most influential wildlife species in Pennsylvania's forested ecosystems. However, when their population is out of balance with their habitat, deer can negatively affect County forests and parks by over-browsing tree seedlings, shrubs and wildflowers. Over-browsing alters the diversity and habitat for other forest mammals and birds, eliminates the shrub layer, greatly reduces the diversity of forest-floor plant species and creates a flooding risk.

The program will begin on September 17 and continue until January 28, 2023. During that span, there are only three Sundays when the program will operate: November 13, 20 and 27. This is a controlled hunting program that will entail the use of archery equipment by experienced archers only, following all Pennsylvania Game Commission rules. Participating hunters were selected after completing an application process, passing a proficiency test and attending an orientation which included safety and hunting ethics. All hunters will carry a hunting permit card for identification purposes. Hunting is permitted to take place from 30

minutes before sunrise and continue until 30 minutes following sunset. No hunting is allowed within the Parks without authorization from USDA Wildlife Services with a valid permit.

Any hunters who are interested in information about how to become part of the program should contact the Berks County Parks and Recreation Department at 610-372-8939 or email parks@countyofberks.com.

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