

Washington Crossing State Park Deer Management Plan

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Washington Crossing State Park Deer Management Plan is to reduce the deer population in Washington Crossing State Park to an ecologically sustainable level, thereby reducing the negative impacts associated with deer overpopulation. These negative impacts include, but are not limited to, decreased diversity of native flora and fauna, proliferation of invasive species, and an increase in incidence of tick borne illness.

Scientific research suggests that an ecologically sustainable carrying capacity is 20 deer per square mile or lower. This is dependent on many factors, including habitat, land use, and the extent of damage to the environment. The Hopewell Township Deer Management Advisory Committee conducted a deer population survey in March 2015. The results of this survey suggested that the average deer population for Washington Crossing State Park may be up to 111 deer per square mile, which would mean there could be up to 620 deer present in Washington Crossing State Park. This population greatly exceeds the targeted carrying capacity, indicating a need to implement population control measures.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The State Park Service has determined that the most effective and practical method to address the current deer overpopulation problem is to permit limited bow hunting within Washington Crossing State Park. The program is intended to be implemented so as to minimize impact to current Park user groups.

The State Park Service proposes to open 200 acres of Washington Crossing State Park to bow hunting in 2016. Permitted hunters will be allowed to harvest deer from the designated areas from Thanksgiving Day through the end of the Winter Bow season. The area proposed to be opened November 25, 2016 is 140 acres of forest and meadow east of Brickyard Road, and 60 acres west of Brickyard Road bordering Church Pond. Please refer to attached mapping for the approximate location of the designated area.

The State Park Service will limit the total number of permitted hunters to 25 or less at any one time. Should the demand for hunting permits exceed the established limit, the Park Service will attempt to accommodate all interested parties by issuing permits with a limited range of effective dates to ensure that the number of permits in effect at any one time is below the established limit. The effective period of each individual's permit will be determined by a random lottery drawing.

The State Park Service will monitor the efficacy of the Deer Management Program and based on those findings, may supplement or modify the program to more effectively achieve an ecologically sustainable deer population. Possible future modification may include opening additional areas of the Park to hunting, expanding the timeframe during which hunting will be permitted, and allowing additional methods of take on a limited basis.

GUIDELINES:

NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife Regulations

All current hunting laws for the Fall- Permit- Winter Bow Season regulations shall apply. Please review the NJ Fish & Wildlife Digest for a more complete listing of New Jersey game laws. Legal hunting hours are one half-hour before sunrise to one half-hour after sunset (see the NJ Fish & Wildlife Digest for the exact time of sunrise and sunset for your hunt dates). The Sportsman's Responsibility Law provides for increased penalties for violators, including license revocation on the first offense for serious violations and permanent revocation for certain repeat offenses. Please note that hunters must adhere to Division of Parks & Forestry requirements in addition to NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife regulations.

Deer Management Program Permit

A permit will be required in order to hunt in Washington Crossing State Park. To obtain a permit, hunters are required to complete the Deer Management Permit Application form and return it to Washington Crossing State Park Visitor Center. Hunters must have a valid NJ Bow License to receive a permit. Youth hunters who apply with their adult sponsor may receive a permit. Hunters must carry a copy of the permit with them at all times while they are hunting. Permits are non-transferable, and may only be used by the permittee. Should the demand for permits exceed the appropriate level as determined by Park Management, measures to limit permit issuance may be implemented, including, but not limited to, a lottery drawing prior to the season. Other restrictions on permit use may be imposed by Park Management as needed to ensure a successful Deer Management Program.

Hunting Methods

Tree Stands

Only portable, non-harming tree stands may be used. No permanent tree stands may be erected. Temporary tree stands that screw-in or the use of screw-in steps, which would substantially damage the tree, are prohibited. Temporary tree stands and any other personal property must be removed at end of season.

Driving and Stalking

Driving and/or stalking of deer is not permitted.

Harvest

Hunters must comply with the rules set forth by the Division of Fish and Wildlife for Zone 41, Regulation Set # 7, which can be viewed in the Division of Fish and Wildlife Digest, 2013 Hunting and Trapping issue, or online at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/deer.htm>

A Harvest Log must be submitted to the Park Office at the end of the season. If a Harvest Card is not submitted, hunting privileges may be suspended for the following season.

Damage or Cutting of Vegetation

Damage to or cutting of vegetation must be kept to a minimum.

Permit Revocation

Failure to comply with the guidelines set forth for the Washington Crossing State Park Deer Management Program may result in immediate revocation of issued permit by Park Management, as well as prohibition from future participation in the Deer Management Program.

Setback Limits

Hunters are reminded that no hunting shall take place within 150 feet of a building; therefore hunters are cautioned to hunt outside of safety zones.

Signs and Markers

Only “cat eye” buttons are permitted. All buttons that hunters put up to assist with access to the site should be temporary and must be removed after the season. The Park should be left in the condition in which it was found.

Trash and Entrails

Hunters must take all trash and recyclables out of the Park with them. After field dressing harvested deer, hunters may do two things with the entrails; 1) place them a minimum of 30’ from any walking trails and cover them with brush so they are out of sight from the public, or 2) take them home with you and dispose of in your household trash.

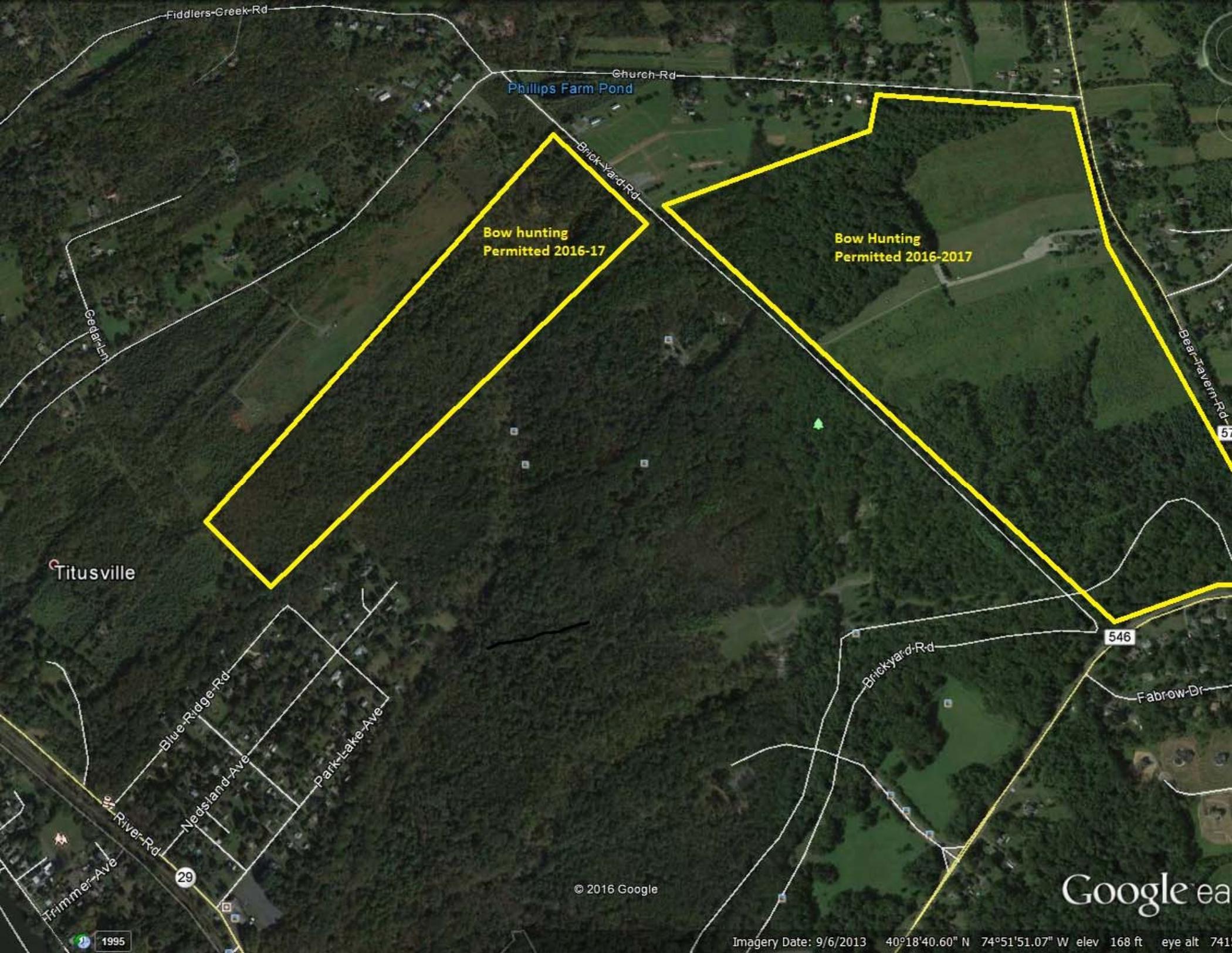
Youth Hunters

Hunters (10 - 13 years of age) MUST be accompanied by a properly licensed adult 21 years of age or older. Hunters (14 - 15 years of age) MAY be accompanied by a properly licensed adult 21 years of age or older. Only one adult will be admitted with each youth hunter. Please complete the appropriate section of the hunter information form for an adult accompanying a youth hunter.

Location and Parking

Mapping of the applicable hunting area will be provided at the time of permit issuance

Parking guidelines will be explained at the time of permit issuance. Vehicle parking during the hunt will be allowed ONLY where indicated on the provided map. When parking in these areas, a copy of the hunters permit, or a separately issued parking permit, must be placed on the dashboard of the vehicle. The permit allows the owner to have a vehicle in the parking lot beyond the normally imposed Park hours of operation. Failure to properly display the provided permit may result in the owner of the vehicle receiving a court summons.



Fiddlers-Creek-Rd

Church Rd

Phillips Farm Pond

Bow hunting Permitted 2016-17

Bow Hunting Permitted 2016-2017

Brick-Yard-Rd

Bear-Tavern-Rd 51

Titusville

546

Blue-Ridge-Rd

Nedland-Ave

Park-Lake-Ave

Brickyard-Rd

Fabrow-Dr

92-River-Rd
Trimmer-Ave

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Imagery Date: 9/6/2013 40°18'40.60" N 74°51'51.07" W elev 168 ft eye alt 741