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For Immediate Release

Norristown Farm Park Accepting Applications for Annual Fall Archery Deer Hunt

Last year's hunt yielded 1,700 pounds in donated food

(Norristown) – With Norristown Farm Park housing more than three times the number of deer than the land can sustain, park officials have announced they will hold their annual regulated archery deer hunt throughout October.

Hunters can apply now through August 31 to participate. They are encouraged to keep and consume their harvest, but they can also donate it to be processed and distributed to area food banks. Last year, hunters donated 1,700 pounds of food.

According to park officials, “population counts conducted by the USDA earlier this year showed a higher than expected deer density within the park, even before the fawning season.” According to wildlife experts, a park the size of Norristown Farm Park (725 acres) can adequately support a herd of approximately 30-40 deer. Counts conducted at the Farm Park revealed a herd size of more than 150 animals. That is three-to-four times the recommendation for a healthy, sustainable population.

When formulating its management plan, park officials took a thorough look at the alternatives to hunting such as contraceptive vaccines, perimeter fencing, and the use of reflective barriers, but found these options to be illegal (in the case of contraceptives), very costly (if they were to fence the entire park), or woefully ineffective, or maintenance intensive (as is the case with fencing/reflective barriers).

With few options at their disposal, park officials have little choice but to cull some of the herd annually to slow the spread of certain diseases such as Lyme’s and Chronic Wasting Disease. The culling also reduces car-deer collisions, prevents the loss of the park’s bio-diversity and mitigates the damage to agricultural crops and newly planted plant species.

Hunters interested in applying, must submit a 3 x 5 card (along with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope) with the following information: Name, Address, Phone Number, Driver’s License, Hunting License Number, Antlerless Tag Number for Area 5D and indicate that they possess a safe bow hunting certificate from the Pennsylvania game Commission or similar accredited agency.

E-mail addresses are optional, but are preferred for future correspondence. Only one application may be submitted per person. Applications are to be mailed to the following address: **Norristown Farm Park, 2500 Upper Farm Road, Norristown, PA. 19403**. Please write “Deer Hunt” in the lower left corner of the envelope.

- The hunt is open to properly licensed archers over the age of 18. In addition to the “regular license,” a bow stamp is required.
- Hunters will be chosen in a random (public) lottery which will be held on Friday, September 8, at 1:00 pm in the park office.

- Forty individuals will be selected at that time. Dates and areas will be determined by the order in which the individual was drawn. Four groups of 10 hunters (each) will be assigned a specific week and an area in which they can hunt as determined by the order in which they were drawn. **Hunting will be confined to two remote areas within the park, all other areas are off-limits.**
- Hunters selected in the lottery will be required to attend a pre-hunt safety meeting at which time they must demonstrate their proficiency with a bow at 25 yards, on park-supplied targets.
- In addition to demonstrating proficiency, everyone applying for this hunt must provide their credentials, sign a waiver and show that they have successfully completed the Pennsylvania Game Commission's "Successful Bow Hunting Course," or a similar course through an accredited agency.
- Hunts will occur weekly (excluding Sundays) throughout October between the hours of 7am and 6pm. Each hunt will follow the requirements, standards and/or laws established by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, including but not limited to, safety zones, tagging, harvest/antler restrictions and orange requirements.
- These hunts will be strictly archery, utilizing either a compound bow or cross bow with expanding tip and/or fixed blade razor-tipped arrows/bolts, according to PA Game Commission specifications. Compound bows must possess a minimum draw weight of 35lbs and crossbows a minimum of 125lbs. Long bows and/or recurves are not permitted.
- Day of hunt - Hunters are permitted to check in at the park office on the morning of each hunt, beginning at 5am. Arrows will be counted and last minute instructions will be provided. Regardless of when a hunter wishes to hunt (during their assigned week) morning or afternoon, they must sign in at the park office, first.
- After checking in, hunters are to report to their assigned location and set up their (self-climbing) tree stand, or portable ground blind. Hunters must remain in their stand/assigned area for the duration of the hunt. Climbers and/or ground blinds may, at the hunter's discretion, remain in place for their assigned week, after which they must be removed.
- At the conclusion of the each hunt, hunters are to track and tag their deer.
- All hunters are to report to the park office after retrieving their deer and before leaving the park. Park staff will record hunters' harvests, count hunters' arrows and sign hunters out for the day.
- **Note:** Hunters (during their assigned week) may check in, or exit the park at any time during the hunt, providing they notify the park office. If arriving after 5am, or leaving prior to 6pm, hunters are asked to call the park office at (610-270-0215) to make sure a staff member is available to sign them in or out.
- Hunters are encouraged to harvest as many doe as they have tags for. Legal buck may be taken as well, providing they meet or exceed the required antler restrictions set forth by the Game Commission.

- Additional information and/or instructions will be provided to each hunter at the safety meeting.

For those who would like more information, the park has prepared a FAQ Sheet in an attempt to address misconceptions and lingering concerns over the need for such a hunt. To obtain a copy simply call, stop by, or email the park at Norristownfarmpark@montgomerycountypa.gov.