



LAKE METROPARKS RULES & REGULATIONS

2026/2027 Controlled Hunt Program for Veterans with Service-connected Disabilities

Procedural or date changes from the 2025/2026 season are indicated in **red**.

- The Controlled Hunting Program will run during the Ohio deer archery season from **9/26/26 until 2/7/27**.
- Controlled archery hunting for veterans with service-connected disabilities will take place in natural areas within Lake Metroparks. Properties contain both wooded and meadow habitats. Parking is available within close proximity to each site. Access to the interior of most areas is gained through unimproved and mowed paths.

Eligibility

- Participants must be 18 years of age or older and a veteran of the United States armed forces with a service-connected disability.
- Interested eligible applicants are required to fill out an application.
- Lake Metroparks employees and immediate family members residing within the employee's household are not eligible.

Selection

- Participants will be assigned hunting slots based on the number of applicants, available time slots and information provided by the applicant. A lottery system *may* be used to select participants if the number of applicants exceeds the number of available slots.
- Selected program participants may not trade or switch sites with another program participant without express authorization from the program coordinator.
- Participants will hunt from locations predetermined by Lake Metroparks.

Mandatory Requirements

- Participants must complete an online orientation that explains the operational aspects of the program, rules & safety information, and requirements of participants. This orientation will take the place of the mandatory orientation meetings of past seasons. Participants will receive information explaining how to access the online orientation. Participants must complete the online orientation and provide proof of completion before they will receive a permit to hunt.
- Participant must demonstrate skill proficiency using his/her own equipment. Four out of five shots OR eight out of ten shots must land into 7.5" target at 12 yards. No practice shots permitted prior to test; maximum of ten shots permitted per test. One "fail to qualify" permitted per season (test may be retaken one time).

- **Proficiency testing will take place at Lake Metroparks' Hidden Lake archery range at 7024 Kniffen Rd. Leroy Twp., OH 44077.**

- Participants must bring their bow and arrows equipped with target points in order to take the test. Targets will be supplied by Lake Metroparks.
- Testing will be administered by Lake Metroparks staff or volunteers who will determine whether a participant has successfully passed.
- **Testing will take place from 4:30 to 7:30 PM on Friday, September 4, 2026.**

Participation

- Participants are required to be in compliance with all Ohio Division of Wildlife regulations and have the appropriate license(s).
- Program participants may be accompanied by one non-hunting companion, who:
 - Must remain in the vicinity of permit holder.
 - Must wear orange.
 - May not be a Lake Metroparks employee.
 - If a participant requires more than one non-hunting guest, notification must be given to Lake Metroparks.
- Hunters are subject to visitation by appropriate law enforcement personnel while on park property.
- Participants are required to fill out the check-in sheet during each visit.
- Participants are required to carry the Lake Metroparks permit and all applicable ODOW licenses on their person at all times while on park property.
- Participants are required to display their parking permit on the dashboard of their vehicle while parked on Lake Metroparks property.
- Motorized equipment (excluding any self-propelled equipment primarily used for purposes of personal transportation) is not permitted for transportation to or from the hunt or for removing deer and/or equipment. Hand powered carts are permitted.
- Participants are required to carry an illuminated device and must wear hunter orange when on park property and out of their stand.
- Participants are strongly encouraged to carry a cell phone, whistle or other communication device while participating.
- Use of trail cameras by participants is permitted. Lake Metroparks is not responsible for loss of or damage to any property.

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- Supplemental baiting by participant, within Ohio Division of Wildlife rules and regulations, is permitted.
- Park maps will be issued. You must stay within the park boundaries at all times. Utilize GPS if available.
- All Ohio Division of Wildlife Laws and Regulations will be adhered to during concurrent hunting seasons:
 - Youth Deer Gun: **Nov. 21–22**, must wear orange
 - Deer Gun: **Nov. 30–Dec. 6 & Dec. 19–20**, must wear orange
 - Muzzle loader: **Jan. 2–5**, must wear orange
- Participants shall adhere to all Ohio Division of Wildlife proper tagging requirements. Be aware of online and phone deer check procedures.
- Only deer may be taken. No other mammals/birds may be taken.
- No drugs or alcoholic beverages are permitted within the park.
- Hunters will be permitted to bring in their own stand or blind (including hangers and climbers) provided that these are professionally manufactured and not “homemade.”
- Hunters are required to remove any personal stands/blinds by end of hunting as specified on their permit. Any personal items left on park property will be collected and disposed of by Lake Metroparks.
- Participants are required to use an approved harness when in their stand.
- No natural features can be disturbed with the exception of limited clearing for shooting lanes; limit damage to vegetation. No collecting of natural features.
- Be considerate of other hunters. You are not permitted to trespass on private property adjacent to the park to retrieve a deer. You must have landowner permission and a Lake Metroparks ranger must be present before proceeding onto private property. You may track wounded deer within the park.
Call 440-354-3434 to notify the Lake Metroparks Ranger Department if you have a wounded deer that leaves park property.

- Participants are required to be back to their vehicles within one hour of the close of legal hunting hours. Any participant not able to return to their vehicle within that timeframe is required to contact the Lake Metroparks Ranger Department.

- Hunting will close at 12:00 pm on following dates: 10/18/26, 11/8/26, 11/29/26, 12/20/26, 1/10/27. The remainder of those days is set aside as a site orientation program for participants.

Reporting emergencies/problems/complaints or violations

- For all emergency situations, Rangers/Law Enforcement/EMS may be reached 24 hours a day by calling **911**. For non-emergency or reporting violations, call Lake County Central Dispatch at **440-354-3434**.
- Violations and/or failure to follow all rules may result in removal from the program.