



2026-2027 CONTROLLED HUNT PROGRAM

Stark County Park District Controlled Bow Hunting Program Rules and Regulations

Stark Parks bow hunting rules are in addition to Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) rules and regulations. Each bowhunter must read, sign and follow the complete list of rules and regulations. Failure to comply with regulations will result in possible citation and disqualification from any Stark Parks hunting program. Stark Parks reserves the right to suspend, modify, or terminate the Controlled Hunt Program or individual hunting sessions at any time due to safety concerns, operational needs, weather, wildlife management, or other unforeseen circumstances. The Program Coordinator or Chief Ranger may issue additional instructions necessary for safety or administration of the program.

APPLICATION

1. Controlled hunting applications will be available on our website, www.starkparks.com. Each application is \$5 and is non-refundable.
2. One entry per person.

SELECTION

1. The drawing will be held virtually with the winners being notified of their selection.
2. All selected applicants are eligible for one (1) session during Ohio Deer Archery season. The sessions are as follows:
 - Quail Hollow: Two-week sessions, half of which are reserved for youth hunters under the age of 18.
 - Nimisila Preserve: Three-week sessions, open to adults and youth.
 - Fry Family Park: Two-week sessions, open to adults and youth.
3. Applicants will be assigned their session and site number in the order that they were chosen starting with Session 1 Site 1, Session 1 Site 2 and so on until all sessions are filled.
4. Applicants may assign one hunting companion to hunt with them during their session. Companions must meet the following requirements:
 - A. All companion hunters are subject to the same rules and regulations as the winning applicant.
 - B. Winners must declare their companion hunter upon getting assigned a session.
 - C. All companion hunters must pass the same qualification listed below.
5. If a winner does not want to keep their assigned session it will be forfeited and assigned to a subsequent winner.

6. No additional fee is required beyond the entry fee.
7. If any sessions are available after the drawing is completed, they will be offered to the next subsequent winner.
8. Rangers maintain a list of all winners and companions. You will receive a permit after qualification.

QUALIFICATIONS

1. Winners will be required to produce a valid hunting license and ***at least one \$15 deer management permit at qualifications.*** By submitting an application, the applicant attests that they have successfully completed a hunter's education course. Those who have not completed a hunter safety course can fulfill this requirement through ODNR.
2. Several qualification sessions will be offered. A successful applicant and their designated companion will need to attend one of the offered sessions.
3. To qualify, each applicant must be able to place at least four out of five arrows in a 10" diameter target from a position at 20 yards.
4. If any part of the arrow tip touches the outer black line of the target, it will be considered a miss.
5. Once on the qualification range, each applicant has one qualification attempt with each bow to pass. If they fail to qualify, they forfeit their session. If the winner fails to qualify, their designated companion will become the primary permit holder. They can then name another companion hunter subject to the same qualifications. If the designated companion fails to qualify, the primary permit holder can name a new companion hunter subject to the same qualifications.
6. You may only hunt with the bow(s) you used to qualify. However, you may qualify with up to two bows.
7. If your bow malfunctions while qualifying, you may step out of line and make repairs. When your bow is repaired notify the ranger and you will be allowed back in line to qualify.
8. All equipment must conform to the State of Ohio requirements.
9. Youth applicants and their adult companion must submit separate applications. Each applicant's name will be entered into the qualification process.
10. Except for youth or applicants with disabilities, you must be able to draw your own crossbow without help from another. Cocking devices are allowed, but no assistance is permitted for compound bows regardless of age or ability due to safety concerns.
11. If the youth applicant fails to pass the qualification they may not hunt in this program. If the youth qualifies but the adult does not, the adult may accompany the youth but may not hunt. Youth must be accompanied by an adult, as outlined by the state regulations. Non-bowhunter adults accompanying youth must remain present with the youth bowhunter.

12. Applicants requiring accommodations may designate an adult companion to assist them during the hunt. A companion who does not intend to hunt is not required to submit an application or participate in this program. If the companion wishes to hunt, they must submit a separate application and meet all eligibility requirements and rules of the program. Companions who are approved to hunt may hunt only in their assigned area when they are not actively assisting the approved bowhunter requiring accommodation.
13. Only arrows and bolts equipped with field points will be permitted during qualification.

PREPARATION

1. Scouting can be done by winners before and during qualifications. No scouting is permitted after the last published qualification date.
2. Baiting and placing tree stands by applicants are prohibited prior to your assigned session.
3. All hunting items left in the field by bowhunters must be marked with the bowhunter's name and contact number. Hunting items include but are not limited to: tree stands, trail cameras, blinds, and feeders. Tags must be no higher than 6 feet off the ground. Equipment without legible contact information will be removed.
4. Only currently-assigned hunters can have tree stands up, unless approved by the program coordinator.
5. Bowhunters in the first session may put their hunting equipment up after the last published qualification session. If you need to move your stand, please do so at midday if possible. This is less likely to interrupt other bowhunters.
6. No bowhunter can use another bowhunter's tree stand without permission.
7. Only limited clearing of shooting lanes is allowed. Cutting of sticks, branches or bushes larger than ½" is prohibited.
8. Bowhunters will be able to bait their zone using whole kernel corn or natural bait like acorns and apples. No powdery substance, salt or mineral blocks, or compressed corn blocks are allowed.
9. Any flagging applied by the bowhunter must be removed at the end of their 2-week session.

EQUIPMENT

1. All equipment must conform to the State of Ohio requirements for bow hunting.
2. Tree stands that meet Tree Stand Manufacturers Association (TMA) safety specifications are permitted.
3. Wearing of a safety harness is required with use of any tree stand. The harness must be worn while hunting off the ground. Failure to do so will result in loss of hunting permission for a full season and a warning. Climbing, ladder, tripod stands and pop-up blinds are allowed. Hunting on the ground is also permitted. It is unlawful to construct, place or use a permanent-type tree stand, or to place spikes, nails, wires or other metal objects into a tree to act as steps or to hold a tree stand on Stark Parks property.

4. Check stands for signs of tampering before each use. Stark Parks cannot be responsible for any equipment left unattended.
5. No more than two (2) tree stands/blinds or trail cameras may be installed in each zone.
6. Take all safety precautions when climbing a tree.
7. All equipment must be removed from the zone at the end of your assigned session.

BOW HUNTING ZONES AND SAFETY ZONES

1. The center of the hunting zone will be marked with an orange carsonite marker. The permitted hunting zone will extend 100 yards out from the marker in all directions to create a circle-shaped zone. It is the hunter's responsibility to find the marker in their zone and to maintain the 100 yard limitation. Hunters shall set up so that their arrows are not likely to exit the hunting zone. Maps will be provided to winners. It is the responsibility of each bowhunter to know where the zone boundaries are and to stay within them.
2. At no time is a bowhunter allowed to shoot on private property unless they have obtained written permission to hunt on said property. Safety zones must be maintained.
3. Bowhunters must maintain a safety zone of no less than 50 yards from any building, road, picnic area, official trail or developed area.
4. A bowhunter is not permitted to shoot into a safety zone unless the following applies: An injured deer may be shot in the safety zone provided the bowhunter shoots towards the interior of the hunting area and the shot will be in a downward direction.
5. The park is still open during the hunting season. Hunters should familiarize themselves with their assigned zone. They should note the location of trails and always be aware that patrons not involved with hunting could enter their zone unannounced. Always be aware of your target and what is beyond your target before taking a shot.

BOW HUNTING AND HARVESTS

1. Archery season hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. The official times for sunrise and sunset are found in the hunting digest.
2. You must park in designated areas.
3. If you will be in the park tracking a deer more than 1 hour after sunset you must notify a ranger at 330-353-2378.
4. No scouting is permitted during another bowhunter's session.
5. Only bowhunters or their designated non-hunting companions are permitted in bow hunting areas during the season. Always be aware that patrons not involved with hunting could enter a zone unannounced. Always be aware of your target and what is beyond your target before taking a shot.
6. Your hunting license must be carried at all times.

7. Motorized vehicles will not be permitted beyond the designated parking areas.
8. For conflicts between visitors, landowners, or to report unauthorized activities, contact Stark Parks Rangers at 330-353-2378. Do not confront these individuals yourself.
9. Hunter orange must be worn during the Youth Deer Gun Season, Deer Gun Season, and the Statewide Muzzleloader Deer Season.
10. Assigned hunters may harvest as many deer as permitted by state law for controlled hunts.
11. In the event that a deer is wounded and reaches the park boundary, contact Stark Park Rangers at 330-353-2378. DO NOT FOLLOW A WOUNDED DEER ONTO PRIVATE PROPERTY AND DO NOT SEEK PERMISSION OF ADJOINING PROPERTY OWNER WITHOUT A RANGER PRESENT.
12. Once a deer is harvested, the deer must be legally checked in to ODNR. At the conclusion of your hunting session, you will be contacted by a Ranger to record your harvests. We will request the following: number of deer harvested, deer's sex (buck, button, doe), approximate age (adult or yearling), date and time of kill, location, and ODNR deer tag number.
13. Be discreet and field dress your deer out of view of any roads or trails.
14. Bowhunters may be checked periodically by Ohio Division of Wildlife Officers or Stark Parks Rangers to ensure compliance. The harvested deer will belong to the bowhunter. Field dressed deer from the program can also be donated to local charities.
15. Call Stark Parks Rangers at 330-353-2378 to report injured or sick deer.
16. Harvesting an antlerless deer first is not required but is encouraged by the requirement to purchase a deer management permit only valid for antlerless deer.

REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAM

1. Bowhunters engaging in behavior including but not limited to acts or threatened acts of intimidation, violence or any behavior that causes a disruption to the harmony of the program will be permanently removed from the program.
2. Hunters must report unrecovered deer. Failure to report an unrecovered deer will result in removal for one (1) full season from the program, including the remainder of the current season.
3. Violating State Law or Stark Park Ordinances will result in a citation and permanent removal from the program.
4. Offenses or actions that seriously jeopardize the program will result in permanent removal from the program.

HOW TO REACH US

1. For emergencies, dial 9-1-1
2. To have a Ranger dispatched to your location, call the Stark County Sheriff's Office Dispatch at 330-430-3800.

3. For general information or to speak to an on-duty Ranger, call 330-353-2378.