

FAQs Deer Management—Professional Sharpshooting

Mt. Lebanon's controlled archery hunt ends January 23, 2016, with the deer herd reduced by more than 100. The second phase of our comprehensive deer management program, sharpshooting, begins February 1. Wildlife specialist White Buffalo Inc. is under contract to cull up to 150 deer. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has issued a special use deer control/political subdivision permit for this activity to take place from February 1 through March 31. Specific information follows:

1. Why is it necessary to reduce Mt. Lebanon's deer herd? Deer are a public safety issue. The number of deer/vehicular crashes, often with injuries and/or property damage, has increased dramatically as the deer population has grown in Mt. Lebanon's densely developed 6.2 square miles. There also is public concern about Lyme disease and the over-browsing of native vegetation. The goal of the Mt. Lebanon's comprehensive deer management program is to reduce the number of deer vehicular crashes by 50 percent over five years.

2. What are the components of the comprehensive deer management plan?

Commissioners studied the deer issue extensively before committing to a management program. A controlled archery hunt on private property and in some public parks that began last fall and will end January 23, 2016, yielded more than 100 deer. A majority of both the 2015 and 2016 Commissions approved the second phase of the plan—a cull using sharpshooting that will take place on private and public properties as permitted by the Pennsylvania Game Commission between February 1 and March 31

3. Did the public have input? Residents have commented at virtually every Commission meeting over the past several years. There have been televised public forums and hearings. The deer management issue has been featured prominently in **mtl** media, including *Mt. Lebanon Magazine* and on www.mtlebanon.org, where FAQs and the deer management plan have been posted and updated regularly for many months. Newspapers and television stations also have covered the issue closely.

4. Were non-lethal options considered? The Commissioners talked with many professionals, including representatives of the Humane Society of the United States, about fertility control research. They decided that fertility control should be an option that Mt. Lebanon and the Pennsylvania Game Commission continue to consider but that sharpshooting in conjunction with the organized archery hunting is the best way to move forward now. Mt. Lebanon successfully conducted a similar sharpshooting program in the past, safely removing 225 deer over a two-year period.

5. What permissions did Mt. Lebanon need from the state? Mt. Lebanon had to submit a plan for approval by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, covering topics such as public education, deer density surveys and collection of deer-vehicle collision data. The complete approved plan and the provisions of the agreement with White Buffalo, Inc. are posted at www.mtlebanon.org

6. What individuals will conduct the cull? Certified wildlife biologists and professional field technicians will conduct the cull. White Buffalo, which has been involved with many suburban deer management programs across the country, is responsible for the sharpshooting effort and has qualified all the sharpshooters. The Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator Association also has certified these personnel as suburban marksmen.

7. How are potential sites evaluated? The site inspection team consists of White Buffalo professionals and two Mt. Lebanon police officers who have extensive training as police marksmen and have participated on our regional Critical Incident Response Team. They evaluate each potential location based on a variety of factors, including shooter position, elevation to be used, sightlines/obstructions, proposed weapons (.22/.223), minimum/maximum target range, backdrop selection, potential for human activity, proximity to any safe walking route and compliance with the 1000-foot Gun Free School Zone criteria applicable to public properties.

8. What public parks have been selected as sites? McNeilly Park, Robb Hollow Park and the adjacent public works area, and the municipal golf course.

9. What process is involved in qualifying private properties? Interested property owners contact White Buffalo directly. A White Buffalo representative then meets with them, explains the program and determines if their property is suitable for participation. If a property is deemed suitable, White Buffalo then identifies other properties that may be either visually impacted by the operation or necessary for recovery and contacts those property owners to explain the program and obtain their consent.

10. How does the program operate? Bait sites are selected with the involvement of the property owner and the municipality, and baiting starts about three weeks before the operations begin. All sharpshooting occurs from a fixed elevated location providing a clear sight line. Most shots are fired from a distance of 40 yards or fewer after it has been determined that a sufficient backdrop exists. Frangible ammunition is used, further reducing the change of pass-through issues. Technicians conduct operations in areas of low human activity; however, they are trained to expect that people or animals other than deer might be in the area and will adapt their plans if necessary.

11. At what times and on what days would shooting occur? The special-use deer control/political subdivision permit allows culling to take place seven days a week. Operations will be conducted seven days a week on private properties beginning no sooner than 4 p.m. and concluding by 11 p.m. Operations will take place on public property Monday through Friday only beginning at 6 p.m. and ending at 11 p.m.

12. What safety measures will be implemented? Safety is the paramount concern. White Buffalo, Inc. has worked for nearly two decades to control deer in many different environments, and no injuries or deaths have ever resulted. White Buffalo, Inc. is recognized nationally as the leading expert in this discipline and has trained several law

enforcement agencies in deer sharpshooting techniques. Mt. Lebanon Police Department will remain in close communication with White Buffalo throughout the program. White Buffalo will inform the police approximately 24 hours in advance of where technicians plan to work and will report back to police each day when their field operations conclude. Signs will be posted at all public parks where shooting may take place. The parks will remain open, and police will monitor them as usual. White Buffalo sharpshooters immediately will contact the police chief or his designee should any culling activities not go according to typical operating procedures.

13. How can we be sure an injured deer will not run and die on a property where the owner has not consented? Deer will be shot as per American Veterinary Medical Association guidelines for euthanasia. The method used ensures that no deer will exit the property where permission has been granted. White Buffalo, Inc. has used these methods to lethally remove more than 10,000 deer in developed environments similar to Mt Lebanon.

14. What will happen to the deer that are harvested? The deer will be removed intact and taken to a local processor, with the meat then donated to Hunters Sharing the Harvest or its designated agents.

15. How will neighboring communities, schools and the public be kept informed about the program? Neighboring communities and school districts have received explanatory letters and have been asked to share the information. Information will appear in *Mt Lebanon Magazine*, on Facebook, on cable television, *lebomag.com* and *mtlebanon.org*. Digital information, including this FAQ, will be updated as appropriate and LeboALERTs may be sent as needed.

16. If a sterilization permit were approved by the Game Commission as a research project and a contract for a sterilization program approved by the Commission as part of a deer management program, when could it be implemented? The earliest a sterilization program could be implemented is November 2016.

17. How much will this sharpshooting program cost taxpayers? The total cost is \$80,750.

18. What should I do if I hear or see something that frightens me? Call 911 immediately.

19. Where can I get additional information? The municipal website: <http://www.mtlebanon.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=732>
Pennsylvania Game Commission Deer Management:
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/deer/11949> or White Buffalo, Inc.: www.whitebuffaloinc.org.

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