

FAQs

Comprehensive Deer Management Professional Sharpshooting 2020

Mt. Lebanon has hired White Buffalo, Inc. to cull the community's deer population using sharpshooting as part of a comprehensive deer management program. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has issued a special use deer control-political subdivision permit for this activity. Information about the municipality's comprehensive program, the planned sharpshooting phase, safety features and time frames is below. Further information can be found on the Municipal website's [Deer Management page](#).

Why is it necessary to reduce the size of Mt. Lebanon's deer herd? In the interest of public safety, Mt. Lebanon's elected officials implemented a comprehensive deer management plan in 2014 with the goal of reducing the number of deer/vehicular crashes by 50 percent over five years. A controlled archery hunt took place this past fall; a cull using sharpshooting will follow. 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. The program also addresses the public concern about Lyme disease and the over-browsing of native vegetation.

Who made the decision to cull the herd? Did the public have input? Mt. Lebanon's elected officials voted to cull the deer herd after extensive study. Residents have had an opportunity to comment at every Commission meeting over the past several years. There have been televised public forums and hearings. The deer management issue also has been featured prominently in Mt. Lebanon media, including *Mt. Lebanon Magazine* and on www.mtlebanon.org, where FAQs and the deer management plan have been posted. Newspapers and television stations have covered the issue closely.

What options were considered? Before making a decision, municipal staff and commissioners talked with many professionals regarding fertility control research, controlled hunting and professional sharpshooting. The Commission decided that although fertility control might be an option that Mt. Lebanon and the Pennsylvania Game Commission could consider in the future, sharpshooting in conjunction with the organized archery hunting was the best way to move forward now. Mt. Lebanon conducted a similar program involving archery and sharpshooting in 2019, safely removing 74 deer.

When will the sharpshooting phase begin and end? The sharpshooting will begin this winter, after the archery hunt concludes. The municipality has received a special use deer control political subdivision permit from the Pennsylvania Game Commission for the sharpshooting phase, which will run February 1 to March 31, 2020.

Who are the culling agents and how were they certified? Certified wildlife biologists and professional field technicians will conduct the cull. White Buffalo, Inc., 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.

Where and how will culling take place? White Buffalo, Inc. specialists will work on private property donated for the purpose, as well as in designated municipal parks. Parks include the municipal golf course, McNeilly Park, Robb Hollow Park and the adjacent public works property, and the conservation district on Connor Road. White Buffalo specialists will set out bait for the deer and then shoot from fixed, elevated positions, ensuring that the bullets will not stray beyond the targets. They will use suppressed rifles so that noise does not disrupt the community.

At what times and days will shooting occur? The special use deer control political subdivision permit allows culling activities to take place seven days a week. Shooting will take place in the late afternoon and after dark.

What criteria are used to determine if a private property can be part of the program? Safety is paramount, and therefore a shooting location must ensure safe operations. Discretion also is an important factor to ensure the least disruption to residents. Finally, support and cooperation from proximate landowners is a requirement to avoid conflicts between neighbors. In addition to White Buffalo personnel, a site inspection team from the Mt. Lebanon Police Department will inspect each proposed site. The goal of the MLPD's involvement in site inspections and operational oversight is to maximize public safety for our community during any deer management initiatives.

What ensures that an injured deer will not run for a while, ending up injured or dying on someone else's property? Deer will only be shot as per American Veterinary Medical Association guidelines for euthanasia. The method used ensures no deer will exit a property on which 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.

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

How can we be sure residents will be safe? White Buffalo, Inc. has been using these methods 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. The sharpshooting will occur only from fixed, elevated positions (providing an earthen backdrop at all times) and will use frangible bullets designed to prevent ricochets—both important safety measures. Police and the local wildlife conservation officer will be notified of the dates and times of the anticipated deer removal.

Is this approach humane? White Buffalo, Inc. uses only American Veterinary Medical Association approved techniques to euthanize deer.

Will culling take place near schools? How will schools and other parties who might be concerned be notified of the cull? No culling will take place near schools or safe walking routes. Various parties will be notified by letter, email or phone call, as was the case with the archery hunt. Updates will be posted at www.mtlebanon.org as appropriate.

How much will this sharpshooting program cost taxpayers? The total cost is \$47,538.

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

Where can I get additional information? Pennsylvania Game Commission Deer Management Program: <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/deer/11949> or White Buffalo, Inc.: www.whitebuffaloinc.org.

Prepared by Mt Lebanon's Public Information Office, January 2020.