

Here is a list of frequently asked questions and answers about the archery portion of Mt. Lebanon's annual deer management program

Deer Management Archery Program An Overview

Mt. Lebanon Commission has authorized an archery hunt by Suburban Wildlife Management Solutions, LLC (SWMS) as part of an ongoing deer management effort. The program will run September 19, 2020, through January 23, 2021, with a holiday break from November 27 to December 26. Landowners interested in donating their private property for the 2020-2021 hunt should contact the contractor directly at wildlifemanagementsolutions@gmail.com or contact Assistant Manager Ian McMeans, imcmeans@mtlebanon.org or 412-343-3620

How does the archery program work? Experienced archers hunt deer on private and specified public properties. The program involves legal archery hunting following all Pennsylvania Game Commission rules and requires no special permit. All hunters are required to harvest three antlerless deer before removing a deer with antlers. Suburban Wildlife Management Solutions will provide municipal officials with a report, including a count of deer taken, at the conclusion of the program.

What are the hours for hunting? Hunting may take place from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes following sunset. Hunters may work in designated public parks Monday through Friday and on approved private property Monday through Saturday. There will be no hunting on Sundays, except for Sunday, November 15 as authorized by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Are there programs like this elsewhere in the area? Many areas in the state have legal archery programs, including Allegheny County, Upper St. Clair, Bethel Park, Peters Township, South Park and Fox Chapel.

How experienced is Suburban Wildlife Management? These hunters have worked in other municipalities in the region, including conducting the archery program in Peters Township for the past 15 years. SWMS managed Mt. Lebanon's hunt last year and some of their hunters provided the previous contractor, White Buffalo, Inc. with help in designing the archery program. All hunters are certified in bow hunter education, including safety and ethics. They have passed a proficiency test with a bow or crossbow, attended an orientation and passed a criminal history check paid for at their own expense. The team leader has been a bow hunter education and safety instructor in this area for many years. The archers know Mt. Lebanon well, as they live in this area.

What safety measures are taken? Responsible hunting by responsible hunters is the best way to ensure safety. The Suburban Wildlife Management Solutions archers have been rigorously interviewed and selected, and they previously have participated in safe archery hunts in Mt. Lebanon and surrounding communities. They sign a pledge to hold the public interest above their own. All hunters in Mt. Lebanon's program will carry identification. Shots will be limited to 15 yards or closer to the deer and will either come from above the deer and into the ground, such as from a tree stand, or be shot into an earthen backstop, such as a hill behind the deer.

How are private properties selected? Interested private property owners volunteer to donate their properties for the program. Suburban Wildlife Management Solutions contacts each applicant and the applicant's neighbors to secure any additional permissions needed. Properties are rated based on Suburban Wildlife Management Solution's discretion, with more weight given to heavily vegetated areas or woods. Many properties that have been used in the past will be utilized, but more properties are welcome. (To volunteer, see contact information at the top of the page.)

What public areas are used for the archery hunt? The conservation area at Connor Road and Terrace Drive, wooded portions of the public golf course, Twin Hills Park, McNeilly Park, the public works facility and Robb Hollow Park.

Will the parks be closed? Public areas and parks will remain open.

Will safe walking routes to school be affected? None of the areas is within a recommended safe walking route.

What are the ecological impacts of Deer and the Deer Management Program? Deer extensively damage the young trees in our parks, evidence to which can be found by looking at the state of our woodland parks. Native plants in our parks, both natural and volunteer-planted, are already subjugated by invasive species. Excess pressure from the deer population has hampered natural woodland regeneration and volunteer efforts to help. The Mt. Lebanon Nature Conservancy invests significant volunteer time and effort into planting new trees in our municipal parks, and has reported substantial damage to tree plantings in the past due to deer foraging. Effectively managing the size of the deer herd in Mt. Lebanon is an important part of maintaining a vibrant and sustainable tree canopy throughout our parks and wooded areas.

White-tailed deer can have significant effects on forest health, species composition, and economic development. Because deer are herbivores, they dedicate a considerable amount of time to foraging, which can lead to several negative impacts when the population is unbalanced:

- Deer may browse herbaceous plants, shrubs, and seedlings, lowering local abundance of these plants.
- Browsing impairs plant regeneration and natural succession.
- Heavy browsing reduces the height, density, and diversity of the forest understory and midstory, lowering habitat value for other animals.
- Deer tend to avoid particular plants, leading to a shift in plant composition, often dominated by non-native plants or more invasive species.

How will the public know about the program? Public hunting areas are posted for the duration of the hunt. Updates appear in *Mt. Lebanon Magazine*, at www.mtlebanon.org and at www.lebomag.com. LeboALERTS are sent as appropriate. School officials are notified.

What happens to the harvested deer? Hunters must donate every third deer to Hunters Sharing the Harvest. Hunters likely will donate more than one in three deer there; however, many hunters have already established relationships with other donation outlets.

How much will the archery hunt cost? \$8,000

Will private properties used for hunting be identified? Mt. Lebanon does not maintain a list of the properties. Property owners coordinate with Suburban Wildlife Management Solutions directly and donate their properties based on a condition of confidentiality. The Pennsylvania Game Commission regulates all hunting in the state and permits hunting on private property, provided both homeowner and hunters follow Game Commission rules related to permits, safety zones, hours, etc. Game Commission laws supersede local ordinances. Owners are not required to notify the municipality that hunting is taking place on their properties.

How can I ask a question or express a concern? If you have a question/comment, contact Assistant Municipal Manager Ian McMeans, 412-343-3620, imcmeans@mtlebanon.org. To report an immediate safety issue, call 9-1-1.

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