



LAKE METROPARKS RULES & REGULATIONS

2026/2027 Controlled Hunt Program

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**.

Eligibility

- Participants must be Lake County residents or business owners, 18 years of age or older. A resident is someone who resides in Lake County or pays property tax to Lake County.
- 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

- Pre-qualified applicants will be selected in a lottery and issued a permit to hunt on park property if they meet all criteria for the program.
- Selected participants will be assigned a three week slot, as determined by Lake Metroparks. These assignments (location and hunting time) are based upon the time in which an applicant's number is drawn in the lottery.
- Selected program participants may not trade or switch sites with another program participant without express authorization from the program coordinator.
- Participants who successfully harvest a deer will be entered into a guaranteed lottery for the next hunting season (**2027-2028**) if that participant registers to hunt for the next hunting season. This drawing will take place prior to the main drawing. A participant's number will be drawn followed by a hunting slot number to determine their hunting assignment. Hunting partners who harvested a deer are also eligible.
- There will be a mandatory online orientation that will take the place of the mandatory orientation meeting. Participants are required to complete this orientation before they may participate.
- Sites at River Road Park have been selected by Lake Metroparks and will be assigned for each hunter. A hunter may choose to hunt from this location or provide his or her own stand/blind for hunting as long as it is placed anywhere within 100 yards of their assigned stand location.
- Participants selected to hunt at Indian Point Park Lower (Vrooman Road Corridor) and Lake Erie Bluffs may choose a hunting site within the area assigned to them provided that the site selected is not within a designated safety zone. Hunters must provide their own stand/blind while hunting at these locations.

- Sites at Indian Point Park Upper (along Seeley Road) have been selected by Lake Metroparks. Participants may only hunt from the blinds at these locations.

- Participants selected to hunt at Hell Hollow Wilderness Area in Leroy Township hunt within an area identified by Lake Metroparks. Hunters must provide their own stand/blind while hunting at this location.

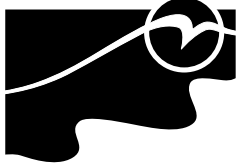
Mandatory Requirements

- 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 selected in the lottery 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 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Saturday, September 5 and Sunday, September 6, 2026. We ask that participants in groups 1-3 complete the test on Saturday, September 5 and participants in groups 4-6 complete the test on Sunday, September 6.**

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.
 - Driving of deer not permitted.

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- In addition to the guest, each participant will have the opportunity to name one “partner” who may hunt in that participant’s designated slot and stand when the participant chooses not to hunt.
- Each “partner” is required to fill out an application, pass the proficiency test and complete the online orientation before he/she can hunt.
- 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 ODOV 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 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.
- 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 new 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.