

Controlled Bow Hunting Program Rules and Regulations




Updated August 2021

All Great Parks of Hamilton County (GPHC or Great Parks) bow hunting rules are in addition to Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) rules and regulations. Each bow hunter must read, sign and follow the complete list of rules and regulations. Failure to comply with regulations will result in possible fines and disqualification from any Great Parks hunting program. Applicants are defined as persons who have submitted applications for consideration in the GPHC bow hunting program but have not passed the current year's qualifications. Bow hunters are persons who have successfully completed the qualifications process.

Qualifications

1. Applicants, regardless of age, will be required to bring proof of successful completion of a certified "Hunter Safety Education Course" approved by any of the 50 states. A previous year's hunting license does not substitute. Those who need to take the bow hunter safety course can fulfill this requirement through ODNR.
2. Eligible applicants should allow time to check in and receive their target prior to their scheduled range time. **Applicants who do not arrive to the range on time will not be allowed to shoot until the end of the next group's time.**
3. To qualify, each applicant must be able to place at least four out of five arrows in a 10" diameter target from an elevated 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 opportunity per bow to pass.
6. You may only hunt with the bow(s) you used to qualify with. However, you may qualify with up to two bows. Failure to qualify with the harder bow does not mean disqualification from program.
7. If your bow malfunctions while qualifying, you may step out of line and make repairs, but qualifications will proceed without you. When your bow is repaired notify the ranger and you will be allowed back in line to qualify and choose from the packets remaining at that point.
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. The pair will be scheduled together at the earlier time of the two.
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, the adult who passes will be hunting without a companion. 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-bow hunter adults accompanying youth must also read and sign acknowledgement of the rules, and remain present with the youth bow hunter who has a copy of the GPHC permission to hunt letter.
12. Applicants in need of accommodation and their adult companion must submit separate applications if both are hunting. However, the companion of the applicant with disabilities does not need to be

in this program if they will not be hunting. Hunting in areas designated for people with disabilities by companions when the person that they are assisting is not present is prohibited. Companions are permitted to hunt in their own area when not assisting the bow hunter with disabilities. 

Packet Selection

1. A "packet" is your hunting assignment which consists of a four-week session in a particular hunting area.
2. Everyone who qualifies will be allowed to select at least one packet . Based on the order in which you are drawn, and what is left over when you qualify, you will be able to choose a packet. www.greatparks.org/bowhunt
3. Bow hunters who have either taken two (2) antlerless deer the previous year or retain a minimum score determined by number of applications and available areas are also eligible for a second, four-week session.

Preparation

1. All bow hunters are required to meet with the coordinator of the parks where they will be hunting. If a bow hunter has previously met with the coordinator at the park they will be hunting then they do not need to do so again unless there have been boundary changes. Those who do not meet with their coordinator before the September 15 deadline will be **ineligible** to hunt in that park.
2. Bow hunters must log in to the Better Impact website before the deadline to make sure there are no issues.
3. Bow hunters who are unable to hunt during their hunting session should make their time available to other bow hunters. It is the responsibility of the bow hunter who is not hunting to: 1) notify other hunters within their park of the vacancy through Better Impact; 2) provide your coordinator with the name of the hunter replacing you and the dates they will be hunting. You may only borrow time using this process.
4. Scouting is arranged with the coordinator and can be done before and after qualifications. **However, applicants must successfully qualify to become a bow hunter to continue scouting after qualifications.** Two weeks prior to the hunting season all areas will be closed to scouting.
5. Baiting and placing tree stands by applicants are prohibited prior to season qualifications.
6. All hunting items left in the field by bow hunters must be marked with the bow hunters' 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.
7. Only currently-assigned bow hunters can have tree stands up, unless approved by a coordinator.
8. Bow hunters in the first session may put their hunting equipment up after qualifications. However, two weeks prior to the hunting season no one should be in the woods, other than first session bow hunters. If you need to move your stand please do so in the middle of the day when you are less likely to interrupt other bow hunters.
9. No bow hunter can use another bow hunter's tree stand without permission.
10. Only limited clearing of shooting lanes is allowed. Cutting of sticks, branches or bushes larger than 1/2" is prohibited.
11. Bow hunters will be able to bait anywhere using whole kernel corn or natural bait like acorns and apples. No powdery substance, salt or mineral blocks, or compressed corn blocks are allowed. **Baiting is only allowed during the current session if hunting during the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or extra session.**
12. Flagging of any kind by bow hunters is prohibited except reflective tacks.

Equipment

1. All equipment must conform to the State of Ohio requirements; see their website below for details: <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/hunting-trapping-and-shooting-sports/hunting-trapping-regulations/allowable-hunting-equipment>.
2. Tree stands that meet Tree Stand Manufacturers Association (TMA) safety specifications are permitted. For a list of products that meet safety standards go to www.tmastands.com/product/.
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 GPHC property.
4. Check stands for signs of tampering before each use. GPHC cannot be responsible for any equipment left unattended.
5. No more than two (2) tree stands/blinds or trail cameras may be installed.
6. Take all safety precautions when climbing a tree.

Bow Hunting Areas and Safety Zones

1. The hunting boundary of each area will be marked with orange tape with silver reflective stripes or orange and yellow tags indicating when entering or leaving a bow hunting area. Hunting is only permitted within each marked area. At no time is a bow hunter allowed to hunt in the safety zone (area between hunting boundary and park boundary). Although most of the park boundaries have been marked with carsonite and reflective tape, it is the responsibility of each bow hunter to know where the park boundaries are and to stay within them.
2. At no time is a bow hunter allowed to shoot on private property unless they have obtained written permission to hunt on said property. Safety zones must be maintained.
3. Bow hunters will maintain a safety zone of no less than 31 yards (100ft) inside GPHC boundaries.
4. Bow hunters must maintain a safety zone of no less than 67 yards (200ft) from any building, road, picnic area, official trail or developed area.
5. A bow hunter 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 bow hunter shoots towards the interior of the hunting area and the shot will be in a downward direction.

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. Be sure to use the times for Western Ohio.
2. You must park in designated areas. Lock gate properly while hunting to prevent unauthorized access to area. Be sure gate is secured when leaving.
3. If you will be in a park tracking a deer more than 1 hour after sunset you must notify a ranger at 513-825-2280.
4. No scouting is permitted during another bow hunter's session.
5. Only bow hunters are permitted in bow hunting areas during the season with the exception of youth and bow hunters with disabilities accompanied by a companion.
6. The permission letter provided by Great Parks must be carried at all times.
7. Place your parking ID card with your name and grid # on your dash along with a piece of paper indicating the grid location of where you will be hunting. Grid locations can be determined from the topographic area maps on our website.

8. Motorized vehicles will not be permitted beyond the designated parking areas. **Vehicles will not be allowed to access roadways closed due to hazardous conditions.**
9. For conflicts between visitors or landowners, or to report unauthorized activities, contact Great Parks Rangers at 513-825-2280. Do not confront these people yourself.
10. Bow hunter orange must be worn during the Youth Deer Gun Season, Deer Gun Season, and the Statewide Muzzleloader Deer Season.
11. Bow hunters may harvest as many deer as are allowed by State Law **for Hamilton County.**
12. In the event that a deer is wounded and reaches the park boundary, contact GPHC Rangers at 513-825-2280. **DO NOT FOLLOW A WOUNDED DEER ONTO PRIVATE PROPERTY AND DO NOT SEEK PERMISSION OF ADJOINING PROPERTY OWNER WITHOUT A RANGER PRESENT.**
13. Once a deer is harvested, the deer must be legally checked in to ODNR. In addition, GPHC must be notified of the location, sex, date and time of the kill **online within 24 hours at www.greatparks.org/harvest. Your harvest has not been recorded until you receive an email verification.** If you encounter any problems with the online form, reach out to your coordinator. If they are unable to assist, report your harvest within 24 hours of harvest to bowhunting@greatparks.org. Include your name, deer's sex (buck, button, doe), approximate age (adult or yearling), date and time of kill, location, and deer tag number.
14. Be discrete and field dress your deer out of view of any roads or trails.
15. Bow hunters may be checked periodically by Ohio Division of Wildlife Officers or GPHC Rangers to ensure compliance. The harvested deer will belong to the bow hunter. Field dressed deer from the program can also be donated to local charities at no cost to the bow hunter.
16. Call GPHC Rangers at 513-825-2280 to report injured or sick deer.

Borrowing Time

1. Hunters may only borrow time within parks that they have already selected to hunt in.
2. The bow hunter who is borrowing time must maintain at least 67 yards (200ft) from the current bow hunter's tree stand.
3. The borrower must carry their tree stand in and out with them unless they have received prior approval from their coordinator.
4. Baiting is prohibited by the borrower without permission.
5. The borrower cannot hunt over another bow hunter's bait without permission.

Transition

1. Transition day is the last Friday of each hunting session. This is best time for exiting bow hunters and the next bow hunters to either put up or take down their stands. However, exiting bow hunters may still be hunting on the last day so be considerate and coordinate the timing of your transition.

Hunting with a Disability

1. Bow hunters with disabilities may hunt in any bow hunting area. There are some areas that have been identified for better accessibility: Winton Woods Area A.

Criteria that qualify a person for hunting in Winton Woods Area A: Physically unable to move without aid of mechanized device.

2. Only bow hunters with mechanized devices are allowed companions
3. Companions are strictly prohibited from hunting or being present in the area without the bow hunter they are assisting. If you need further accommodations, please contact us at bowhunting@greatparks.org.

Companions must also display a parking ID card with their name and grid # on the dash along with a piece of paper indicating the grid location of where they will be

accompanying the bow hunter they are assisting. Grid locations can be determined from the topographic area maps on our website.

Removal from Program

1. Bow hunters 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. 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 GPHC Bylaws will result in a citation and removal for one (1) full season, including the remainder of the current season.
4. Three verbal warnings or citations over one (1) or more hunting seasons will result in permanent removal from the program.
5. Offenses or actions that seriously jeopardize the program will result in permanent removal from the program.

End of Season

1. All equipment must be removed by March 1st of each year. Failure to remove equipment may result in confiscation.

How to reach us

1. *For emergencies, dial 9-1-1*
2. To have a Ranger dispatched to your location 24/7, call the Hamilton County Communications Center at 513-825-2280. Ranger dispatch may have a ranger call you back.
3. For general information or to speak to a Ranger Dispatcher, call Ranger Headquarters at 513-521-3980. Office Hours: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm, 7 days a week.

Questions? Contact the following people for the corresponding issues.

Rangers	Coordinators	Great Parks of Hamilton County Staff
Dispatch: 513-825-2280 General Info: 513-521-3980	coordinators@greatparks.org	bowhunting@greatparks.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To report violations • To report unsafe conditions (ex: open pits, illegal activity) or environmental issues • Before tracking a deer off of GPHC property • To report negative contacts • Any time you are in the woods one hour past legal shooting times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To scout • For questions about borrowing time • To resolve conflicts between bow hunters • For hunting advice/guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative questions