



Controlled Bow Hunting Program Rules and Regulations

Updated May 2024

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 are required to bring proof of successful completion of a certified "Hunter Safety Education Course" approved by any of the 50 states. Those who need to take the bow hunter safety course can fulfill this requirement through ODNR.
2. 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. If any part of the arrow tip touches the outer black line of the target, it will be considered a miss.
3. Once on the qualification range, each applicant has one opportunity per bow to pass. You may only hunt with the bow(s) you used to qualify with. However, you may qualify with up to two bows.
4. 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.

Packet Selection

1. A "packet" is your hunting assignment which consists of a four-to-five-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 ranked, you will be able to choose from remaining packets.
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 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 qualifying to make sure there are no issues.
3. All prequalification requirements must be completed before qualifying. If not completed, the hunter will be asked to complete before attempting any shots and the hunter's qualifying time will be moved to the end of the time block assigned. If not completed by beginning of the following time block, the

hunter's qualifying time will be moved to the end of that time block. If not completed by the end of the day, the hunter will have to return to the next available qualification day or they will be ineligible to hunt that season.

4. After qualifying, hunters may scout areas until the start of the season. Hunters can only place equipment and/or bait in the woods during their session.
5. 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.
6. Only currently-assigned bow hunters can have tree stands and equipment up.
7. No bow hunter can use another bow hunter's tree stand without permission.
8. Only limited clearing of shooting lanes is allowed. Cutting of sticks, branches or bushes larger than ½" is prohibited.
9. Bow hunters will be able to bait anywhere within the hunting area 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 assigned session.

Equipment

1. All equipment must conform to the State of Ohio requirements.
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 are permitted. No more than two (2) trail cameras may be installed in the hunter's area.
6. Hunter orange must be worn during the Youth Deer Gun Season, Deer Gun Season, and the Statewide Muzzleloader Deer Season.

Bow Hunting Areas and Safety Zones

1. Hunting activities (deer stands/blinds, baiting, trail cameras) are only permitted in designated GPHC hunting zones. It is the responsibility of hunters to determine if they are in a hunting area. GPHC will provide paper and digital maps of hunting areas. Volunteer Coordinators mark high-profile hunting area boundaries with orange tape with silver reflective stripes or orange and yellow tags
2. At no time is a bow hunter allowed to shoot on private property as part of this program. No access from private property is permitted.
3. Bow hunters will maintain a safety zone of no less than 31 yards (100ft) inside GPHC boundaries. At no time is a bow hunter allowed to hunt in the safety zone (area between hunting boundary and park boundary).
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. Hunters may only 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. 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.
5. The permission letter provided by Great Parks must be carried at all times.
6. 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.
7. A hunter's parking ID must be placed on the dashboard of the vehicle any time the hunter is engaged in hunting activities, ie, baiting, scouting and checking trail cameras.
8. Motorized vehicles are not 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 hunters may harvest as many deer as are allowed by State Law for Hamilton County.
11. 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.
12. 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 on-line within 24 hours via your MyImpact "Hours" page. Hunters are also required to report any unrecovered deer. You can view your submitted harvests on this page. If you have any problems with the online form, contact bowhunting@greatparks.org within 24 hours of harvest. Include your name, deer's sex (buck, button, doe), approximate age (adult or yearling), date and time of kill, location, and deer tag number.
13. Failure to report a harvested deer in MyImpact within 24 hours as described in item 12 above will result in disciplinary action.
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. Borrowing time must be approved by a Coordinator.
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. Baiting is prohibited by the borrower without permission.
4. The borrower cannot hunt over another bow hunter's bait without permission.

Transition

Transition day is the last Friday of each hunting session. This is best time for exiting bow hunters to remove their stands and the next bow hunters to put up 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. Winton Woods Area A is reserved to accommodate hunters with disabilities, here defined as anyone with a permanent medical condition who meets the criteria established for [ODNR's All Purpose Vehicle Permit](#).
2. Hunters who meet the above criteria are permitted to be accompanied by a non-hunting companion or one hunting companion. Only companions who are actively qualified for the 2022-23 GPHC Bow Hunting program are permitted to hunt. Companions may only hunt when a hunter with disabilities is present and has requested a companion.
3. 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.
4. If you need further accommodations, please contact us at bowhunting@greatparks.org.

Removal from Program

1. Bow hunters engaging in behavior including but not limited to acts or threatened acts of intimidation, violence, discrimination 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

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

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.

Rangers	Coordinators	Great Parks of Hamilton County Staff
Dispatch: 513-825-2280 General Info: 513-521-3980	coordinators@greatparks.org	General Info: 513-521-3980 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