



Controlled Bow Hunting Program Rules and Regulations

Updated May 2025

All Great Parks of Hamilton County (GP or Great Parks) bow hunting rules are in addition to Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) rules and regulations. Each participant 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 the Great Parks program. Applicants are defined as persons who have submitted applications for consideration in the GP bow hunting program but have not passed the current year's qualifications. Participants 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 find courses 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. Applicants may only participate in the program with the bow(s) used to qualify. However, applicants may qualify with up to two bows.
4. Except for youth or applicants with disabilities, applicants must be able to draw their 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.
5. Applicants must log in to the Better Impact website before qualifying to complete all prequalification requirements. If prequalification requirements are not completed in advance, applicants will be ineligible to participate in the program.
6. Applicants who arrive late or unprepared for their assigned qualification time are not guaranteed a later qualification time and may be ineligible to hunt that season.

Packet Selection

1. A "packet" is the wildlife bow management assignment unique to each participant which consists of a four-to-five-week session in a particular bow hunting area.
2. Everyone who qualifies will be allowed to select at least one packet as a participant in the program. Based on the order in which you are ranked, you may be able to choose from remaining packets.
3. Participants who have either taken two (2) antlerless deer the previous year or retain a minimum score may also eligible for a second session.

Preparation

1. All participants are required to meet with the coordinator of the parks where they will be participating. If a participant has previously met with the coordinator at the park they are assigned to, they do not need to do so again unless there have been boundary changes.

Participants who do not meet this requirement before the September 15 deadline will be ineligible to participate.

2. Participants may scout their currently assigned bow hunting area(s) beginning September 1st and ending September 15th.
3. Session 1 participants may place equipment in their areas and begin baiting 1 week before session 1 begins.
4. All bow hunting items left in the field by participants must be marked with the participants' name and contact number. These items include but are not limited to: tree stands, trail cameras, blinds, and feeders. Marked equipment tags must be no higher than 6 feet off the ground. Equipment without legible contact information will be removed.
5. Participants, including Coordinators, must remove all bow hunting equipment when not assigned to a session, except as described in the Borrowing Time section below. Session 4 participants have until March 1st to remove all equipment. Failure to remove equipment may result in confiscation and removal from the program.
6. Only currently assigned participants can have tree stands and equipment up in their assigned session.
7. No participant can use another participant'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. Participants may bait anywhere within the bow hunting area assigned to them 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 participants are off the ground. Failure to do so will result in loss of bow hunting participation permission for a full season and a warning. Climbing, ladder, tripod stands and pop-up blinds are allowed. Bow 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 Great Parks property.
4. Check stands for signs of tampering before each use. Great Parks cannot be responsible for any equipment left unattended.
5. No more than two (2) tree stands/blinds per participant are permitted. No more than two (2) trail cameras per participant may be installed. Equipment may only be installed in a participant's currently assigned area and session.
6. Hunter orange must be worn during the Youth Deer Gun Season, Deer Gun Season, and the Statewide Muzzleloader Deer Season.
7. Bow hunting equipment (ie, bait, deer stands) must be directly transported to the bow hunting area. It must not be stationed to be carried in at a later time.

Bow Hunting Areas and Safety Zones

1. Bow hunting activities (deer stands/blinds, baiting, trail cameras) are only permitted in designated GP bowhunting zones. It is the responsibility of participants to determine if they are in a bow hunting area. GPHC will provide paper and digital maps of bow management areas. Volunteer Coordinators mark high-profile bow hunting area boundaries with orange tape with

- silver reflective stripes or orange and yellow tags
2. At no time is a participant allowed to shoot on private property as part of this program. No access from private property is permitted.
 3. Participants will maintain a safety zone of no less than 31 yards (100ft) inside GPHC boundaries. At no time is a participant allowed to conduct activity in the safety zone (area between bow hunting boundary and park boundary).
 4. Participants 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 participant 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 participant shoots towards the interior of the bow 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 Ohio Hunting & Trapping Regulations published each year. Be sure to use the times for Western Ohio.
2. Participants may only park in designated areas. Lock gate properly while participating to prevent unauthorized access to area. Be sure gate is secured when leaving.
3. If you will be in a park more than 1 hour after sunset you must notify a Ranger at 513-825-2280.
4. Only participants are permitted in bow hunting areas during the season with the exception of youth and participants 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 participating. Grid locations can be determined from the topographic area maps on our website.
7. A participant's parking ID must be placed on the dashboard of the vehicle any time the participant is engaged in bow hunting activities such as 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.
 - Updated road closures can be found on the website;
<https://www.greatparks.org/alerts-and-closures>
9. If road conditions hinder your vehicle from accessing a parking area, please notify the Rangers or bowhunting@greatparks.org. Tire chains and other modifying equipment are not permitted for use in our parks.
10. 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.
11. Participants 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 on-line within 24 hours via your MyImpact "Hours" page. Participants 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.

14. Failure to report a harvested deer in MyImpact within 24 hours as described in item 12 above will result in disciplinary action.
15. Be discrete and field dress your deer out of view of any roads or trails.
16. Participants may be checked periodically by Ohio Division of Wildlife Officers or GPHC Rangers to ensure compliance. The harvested deer will belong to the participant. Field dressed deer from the program can also be donated to local charities at no cost to the participant.
17. Call GPHC Rangers at 513-825-2280 to report injured or sick deer.
18. One (1) non-participating youth can accompany a participant in the Great Parks Wildlife Bow Hunting Program. The non-participating youth must purchase an apprentice license.
 - [Per ODNR Hunting and Trapping Regulations](#), "Accompany means to go along with another person while staying within a distance from the person that enables uninterrupted, unaided visual and auditory communications."
19. Participants must only be engaged in bow hunting activities when parked in specified Bow Hunting Parking areas.

Borrowing Time

1. Participants may only borrow time within parks that they are assigned to in the current season. Borrowing time must be approved and recorded by a Coordinator. Coordinators must be able to answer calls from Great Parks Ranger Dispatch regarding who is in a bow hunting area at any given time.
2. The participant who is borrowing time must maintain at least 67 yards (200ft) from the current participant's tree stand.
3. The borrowing participant must carry their tree stand in and out with them unless they have received prior approval from the Great Parks Bow Hunting Program Coordinator.
4. Baiting is prohibited by the borrowing participant without permission from the currently assigned participant. The borrowing participant cannot hunt over another participant's bait without permission.

Transition

Transition day is the last Friday of each bow hunting session. This is best time for exiting participants to remove their stands and the next participants to put up their stands. However, exiting participants may still be engaged in activities on the last day, so be considerate and coordinate the timing of your transition.

Bow Hunting with a Disability

1. Participants with disabilities may participate in any bow hunting area. Winton Woods Area A is reserved to accommodate participants with disabilities, here defined as anyone with a permanent medical condition who meets the criteria established for [ODNR's All Purpose Vehicle Permit](#).
2. Participants who meet the above criteria are permitted to be accompanied by a non-participating companion or one participating companion. Only companions who are actively qualified for the current season are permitted to participate. Companions may only participate when a participant 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 participant 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. Participation in the program can be terminated at the discretion of GP. Any combination of verbal warnings, program infractions or citations over one (1) or more bow hunting seasons may result in temporary or permanent 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 Bow Hunting Coordinator
Dispatch: 513-825-2280 General Info: 513-521-3980	coordinators@greatparks.org	General Info: 513-742-7623 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 participants• For bow hunting advice/guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative questions• Permission to keep stands and other equipment up outside of assigned session(s)