

East Goshen Township Deer Management Program



Updated August 15, 2023

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Introduction

The East Goshen Township's Board of Supervisors approved the framework of a deer herd reduction program submitted by the Township's Deer Management Committee at the end of 2007. The Deer Management Committee's title was changed to Deer Committee in 2009. The Deer Committee was disbanded in 2017.

This document is arranged in eight parts, each devoted to critical control procedures of the program. Each part is briefly described below:

1. **Goal** – The background and goal of the program
2. **Land** – The parcels, boundaries, and setbacks of the land to be bow hunted
3. **Deer Management Groups** – How groups will be selected to perform bow hunting
4. **Assignment & Scheduling of Bow Hunting Areas** – The methods deer management groups and the Township will use to assign archers to locations
5. **Bow Hunting Procedures** – Controls and requirements imposed on bow hunting activities
6. **Reporting** – Requirements for deer management groups and their archers to inform the Township of hunting activities and results, and for the Township to inform residents of the program's performance
7. **Complaints** – Describes how issues raised by residents, archers, groups, or the Township will be handled
8. **Program & Change Management** – Which Township organization(s) shall manage the program and the general process for how changes will be made

Anyone with questions or comments regarding this program should submit them in writing to the Township office at the address below or by emailing Derek Davis:

ddavis@eastgoshen.org

East Goshen Township
1580 Paoli Pike
West Chester, PA 19380

Part 1 – Goal

East Goshen Township launched a study of deer within the Township in January 2007. The study found a deer problem existed based on observations of the following symptoms:

- Deer-vehicle collisions are at unacceptably high levels (50 – 70+ per year).
- Lyme disease density within Chester County is among the highest in the country.
- Severe depletion of the understory in East Goshen's public and private woodlands
- Damage to private landscaping

The Township counted approximately 300 deer (30 per square mile) in March 2007 using an overhead thermographic scan. Long-time residents reported that in 1995 there was no deer problem when there were 157 deer counted using similar technology. A pellet count assessment conducted during the summer of 2008 by Tri-County Deer Management Association in the Wentworth open space concluded there were approximately 40 deer using that space.

The best information the Township obtained regarding sustainable deer densities was that a target of 4 – 13 deer per square mile is recommended for a suburban landscape, up to a high of 20 for large open spaces. Valley Forge Park published a proposed deer management program in December 2008 recommending a population density of 10 deer per square mile.

The goal of The Deer Management Program (the "Program") is to first return the deer population size in the Township to its 1995 level by 2018. To accomplish this goal by 2018, the Township set an annual harvest goal of 36 deer from the Program based on the following considerations:

- The deer population growth must be arrested to maintain the population size. It grew from 157 to 300 in 12 years, approximately 7% or 21 deer per year.
- The deer population must be reduced by 15 deer per year, in addition to maintaining the population size, to achieve a target of 150 by 2018.
- The deer population was reduced through traffic accidents and private hunting during this timeframe. Approximately 50-70 deer were killed per year on East Goshen roads since 2001. An unknown number of deer were harvested through hunting on private land.

The Program's annual activities shall continue through the season, even if the season's minimum goal has been met. The reason for this is to accomplish the goal sooner and to mitigate risk that future seasons' annual harvests may be lower.

The Program shall continue beyond the achievement of this goal to maintain the deer herd size at appropriate levels. The intensity and approach of the Program may change at that time.

Part 2 – Land

The parcels listed within this section are Township-owned open spaces that will be bow hunted during the PA Game Commission's (PGC's) deer hunting season. The following land-related regulations apply to each parcel:

1. The boundaries of the parcel and bow hunting areas within the parcel that may be hunted shall be clearly marked by the Township. The Township shall post outwardly facing signs informing residents the area is a part of the Township's Program and that hunting is not permitted without prior Township approval.
2. The parcels to be managed by this Program are Bow Tree/Clocktower (115 acres / 100 huntable), Supplee Valley East and West (28 and 18 acres / 24 and 17 huntable), Grand Oak and Mill Creek (28 acres / 24 huntable), and Wentworth (21 acres / 16 huntable).
3. Bow hunting areas are defined as the parcels above, less a setback of 150 feet (50 yards) from any potentially occupied dwelling, except for any attached or detached playground of any school, nursery school, or daycare center which has a 450-foot (150-yard) setback requirement. Occupied dwellings consist of structures that often contain humans. Examples include any house, residence, or other building or camp occupied by human beings, or any barn, stable, garage, shed, or other building used in connection therewith or any attached or detached playground of any school, nursery school, or daycare center. This regulation is from the PGC.
4. All property lines of adjoining developed properties shall be protected by a minimum safety zone of 50 feet except those property lines in which the Township owns both sides of the line. Adjoining landowners to the Township open spaces may request the Township waive this safety zone for their property. The Township may choose to waive or retain the minimum guaranteed 50-foot safety zone on a per-property basis, with or without such a request.
5. Parcels may be subdivided into multiple bow hunting zones based on size, geography, and land features to improve management of the parcel.
6. Each deer management group shall provide the Township with the approximate locations of each of their proposed tree stands by the first business day of September. The Township reserves the right to deny any proposed location. Groups may assume their approximate locations are approved if they do not hear otherwise from the Township by the opening of the deer hunting season.
7. Deer management groups may inform the Township they will exclude hunting from certain zones in a parcel. The Township will mark such zones as dormant on the Township's map for the entire season. Groups are not obligated to hunt all zones if they do not mark any zones dormant, but they are not permitted to hunt dormant

zones for the entire, current season. A dormant zone may be reactivated for the next season by request of the group managing the parcel.

8. These parcels are public open spaces and accessible to the public while bow hunting is occurring. Archers shall not make any attempt to harvest a deer while any non-archer is within 150 feet (50 yards) of the targeted deer.
9. Entry and exit points for the bow hunting areas shall be identified for each area.
10. Parking locations for archers shall be identified for each area. Deer management groups shall provide vehicle information regarding vehicles that may be parked in the Township in the context of the Township's archery hunting program. The information shall include owner identifying information and the vehicle's make, model, year, and license plate.
11. The Township shall disclose to archers any hazards in the open spaces that are not typically found in a natural environment.
12. Hunters are permitted in the parcels identified in this section before sunrise and after sunset to retrieve deer previously shot. This retrieval activity is not permitted between the hours of 10pm and 4am.
13. Hunters may set up a stand, observe deer patterns, and perform other hunting-related activities, subject to PGC regulation, outside of regularly-scheduled hunting times, such as on Sundays. They shall not carry archery equipment when performing these activities outside of the PGC hunting schedule.

Part 3 – Deer Management Groups

The Township Program shall be open only to selected organizations recognized by the Township as deer management groups. Such organizations shall possess the following attributes:

- Agreement to adhere to the PGC's rules and regulations regarding bow hunting in Pennsylvania
- Commitment to ethical bow hunting standards and practices
- Focus on deer management best practices, versus bow hunting for recreation
- Certification of members' bow hunting marksmanship and safety at a higher level than required of recreational archers
- Minimum requirement for member bow hunting experience and track record
- Charter or similar document describes the goals of the organization. These goals are consistent with the above points.
- Track record of deer management experience for the organization
- Minimum insurance on members and the group of approximately \$1M per incident and \$2M aggregate per year is required. The Township shall be named as an additional named insured on the group's policy, if the group is selected to participate in the program.

Deer management groups shall apply to the Township by April 30th to be included in the Program. The Township may elect to continue to accept applications beyond this date if one or more hunting areas remain unassigned. The application may be submitted as a free-form letter and shall include the following information:

- The name of the organization, their contact information, and current member list. The member list shall include members' addresses and indicate if the member is a resident of East Goshen Township. All eligible members shall have an address in Pennsylvania or a state bordering Pennsylvania.
- Describe deer management experience in East Goshen Township in the prior year, if any, and nearby areas.
- Indicate if participation in the Program will be staffed by new recruiting. If so, how many archers will be recruited? If not, indicate which members are likely to participate in the Program and the number of deer they individually harvested in the prior year.
- Indicate the parcels the group is interested in managing, in order of preference.
- Indicate the average number of archer hours your members invest in harvesting a deer in existing Programs similar to the East Goshen Township Program (tree stand only, archery only).

- Agree to abide by all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, including those limitations and requirements imposed by the Township through this Program.
- Indicate if any members of the group are responsible for any violations of the PGC rules and regulations. These members will not be permitted to participate in the Township's Program.
- Indicate if complaints, grievances, or any other issues have been lodged against members of the group within the past 3 years by landowners, neighbors to hunting areas, or other individuals through the activity of hunting. Briefly describe how those complaints were handled and their outcome.
- Provide a schedule or schedule strategy to appropriately set the Township's expectations on when and how frequently hunting will occur. For example, "The group expects to provide 1-2 archers 1-2 days per week, occurring Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday. The archer(s) shall be available for all or part of the day, pending weather conditions and indications of deer."
- A description of the volunteer services the group is willing to offer the Township or its residents and how to engage such services. Volunteer services shall be described in relatively specific terms, though exactness is not required. For example, "The group commits to provide 40 hours of unskilled, low-intensity labor to the landowner to maintain the areas hunted by the group." is sufficient. Groups are welcome to offer specific skills as well.

Deer management groups shall be selected to participate in the Township's Program according to the following criteria:

1. The group's ability to meet the criteria set forth previously regarding common attributes of deer management groups and strength of the overall application.
2. Greater commitment and prior year success in harvesting larger numbers of deer, especially does, among members is a preference factor.
3. Membership and participation of East Goshen residents is a preference factor, as is the locality of likely member archers. Reliance upon recruiting to staff the Program is a negative factor.
4. Volunteerism is a preference factor.
5. The Township may limit a group's participation to reduce the risk of over-dependence upon that group.
6. Participation and effectiveness will drive ongoing evaluation of groups established in **the Program**. Groups with higher commitment and greater production will be chosen over groups with less. Successful incumbent groups shall be given preference over new group applications.
7. Grievances filed against a group that are found to have merit by the Township shall negatively impact the group's continued bow hunting privileges.

8. Violations of PGC rules and regulations, other applicable laws, the Township's Program rules, and any safety issues may subject the group to disciplinary action that could include disqualification of the group from the Township Program.

The Township shall notify groups of their selection for the Program in June for the coming archery deer hunting season.

Part 4 – Assignment & Scheduling of Bow Hunting Areas

Calendar

The permitted daily times and seasonal calendar for the program shall follow the PGC's calendar for whitetail deer archery hunting. Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday and Saturday, as well as the days between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day (inclusive) are excluded from the Program. Archery hunting is not permitted in the Township's open spaces on these days.

Area Assignment

One group shall be assigned to each area from among the selected groups for the Program. Criteria to be considered for area assignment include:

- Group preferences
- Size of group and archer commitment. Larger groups and/or more committed groups will qualify for larger areas.
- Groups with more productive members are more likely to receive the area assignment of their preference.

The Township shall notify groups of their assigned area(s) by the first business day in June prior to the start of the archery deer hunting season.

By July 15th, all hunting groups must provide to the Township:

1. Club roster in Excel format, including members' names, addresses, phone numbers, emails, and vehicle information including make, model, year, color, and license plate number
2. Insurance certificate
3. Stand map
4. Proof of completion within the last 10 years of the PGC Hunter/Trapper Education Course AND the Bow Hunter Safety Course by all members

After above-listed documentation is received, the Township will provide paint, tape, and hunter id cards to each group. The Township will notify the group contacts when these can be picked up from the Township building.

Archer Scheduling

Each group is required to perform its own archer scheduling for the areas it is managing. Groups may use any tools they prefer to schedule archers in stands.

Each group shall provide the Township with a weekly plan for what the group intends to do in its area(s) for the coming week, Monday through Saturday. The plan should be delivered to the Township by email to designated addresses by 12pm on the Thursday for the upcoming week (Monday through Saturday).

The purpose of this notification is to set appropriate Township expectations for the coming week. The Township shall specify what must be contained in the schedule prior to the start of the season.

The group may add hunters to the schedule at any time provided the addition is not for the same day as the request such that it activates a currently inactive zone. Intraweek additions to the schedule that activate planned inactive zones must be received by the Township by 12pm the prior business day for which the hunting is requested. Cancellations may occur at any time prior to the start of the scheduled hunting time.

Groups shall notify the Township of plan changes as soon as they are aware of them. Notification is not required if the change is only to swap one hunter for another in a previously planned hunting session. The Township expects the weekly schedules to be met if no notification is received otherwise. Notifications shall be conveyed to the Township by email to the designated email addresses.

The Township shall post the planned schedule for the upcoming week on the Township's website, www.eastgoshen.org. The Township anticipates posting the projected schedule by 5pm Friday.

The Township shall post intraweek changes to the plan on the Township's website on a best-effort basis. Additions to the plan that result in a previously planned inactive zone becoming active shall be posted by 5pm the business day prior to the change becoming effective.

The Township shall email schedules to anyone who signs up to receive the schedules through the Township's email service whenever a new schedule is received or an update occurs.

Part 5 – Hunting Procedures

The Township's Deer Management Program consists of archery hunting only. Archers must supply their own temporary tree stands, hunt only from those tree stands, and remove them by 30 days after the last day of the season. Hunting is not permitted when travelling to or from the tree stand. By September 1st, deer hunting areas must be clearly marked with paint and/or tape and temporary stands must be set up and marked with a stand number. All area and stand markings must remain visible throughout the season.

Archers shall follow all applicable rules and regulations from the PGC.

Archers shall be at least 18 years old and possess at least 2 years of archery deer hunting experience. A year of archery hunting experience is defined as any year in which the archer harvested at least 1 deer via archery.

Archers shall have completed the PGC Hunter/Trapper Education course and the Bow Hunter Safety course within the past 10 years to participate in this Program.

Tree stand installation and removal must not harm the tree. Stands may be left in place through the season at the archers' and groups' risk. Ladders to stands that are left in place may not be lower than 5' 6" to the ground when left unattended. Archers must use a safety harness whenever ascending or descending a tree and while hunting.

Baiting of deer is permitted and recommended, subject to the regulations of the PGC.

Archers shall display the Township-issued Deer Management Program ID card or tag while hunting.

Group-identifying information must be visible on all arrows. This is to facilitate identification of the arrow in the event it is lost individually or found in an injured deer.

Each group must harvest a ratio of at least 3 does to 1 buck per season for the area(s) they are managing as part of this Program. Archers are encouraged to continue hunting after harvesting a buck. Archers may not harvest albino, "piebald", or otherwise "mostly white" deer. Archers shall not be selective in harvesting antlerless deer. All such deer shall be harvested when an opportunity presents itself, subject to PGC regulations.

Archers must remove all harvested deer. All arrows must be retrieved.

Driving of deer in the context of this Program is prohibited.

Archers may field dress their harvested deer on Township land in a location that is generally out of sight of residents. Remains may be left behind, but must be concealed and placed away from likely human access. Archers are not permitted to field dress or remove any deer on private land without prior written permission from the landowner. Groups shall notify the Township of any such permission. .

Archers shall remove all material brought into the hunting area. Nothing shall be left behind except the tree stand

Archers shall collect minor litter they observe in the open spaces.

Archers shall act in a courteous and professional manner whenever they come in contact with members of the public. Archers shall anticipate that they may come in contact with neighbors who are blind, deaf, or possess another disability and need to communicate. Archers shall consider how they might communicate with these members of the public should they come in contact with them before entering a bow hunting area. For example, an archer may find carrying paper and a pen helpful to communicate with a deaf person.

Groups and archers shall feel free to contact the Township, police, or PGC if immediate assistance is needed in any situation. Archers and groups shall call 911 to report any instances of suspected illegal activity, as soon as it is observed.

Township staff, supervisors, and police may periodically verify that archers are in their prescribed locations according to their stated plans and adhering to the Program's rules and regulations. These checks shall occur without prior notice. Issues observed during these inspections will be treated as complaints (see Part 7 – Complaints).

Groups and individual hunters may make arrangements with members of the public to share the harvest. The Township is not a party to any of these agreements and accepts no liability for them. Groups and participating hunters shall make this clear to all parties to the agreement.

Part 6 – Reporting

Group/Archer Reporting Requirements

The Township requires that deer management groups report the planned week-ahead schedule to the best the group knows it as specified in Part 4 – Assignment & Scheduling of Bow Hunting Areas.

The Township requires that deer management groups report information via email when a deer is harvested within one business day of the harvest. The Township shall identify the necessary information.

Deer management groups shall report contacts with the public that occur in the context of the Program’s hunting activities. A “contact” is considered a close interaction or physical touch with a member of the public in a hostile, tense, or otherwise unpleasant situation. The purpose of this report is to keep the Township informed in a timely manner of potential issues and to provide the Township with an opportunity to proactively reach out to concerned members of the public to address their needs.

Groups are requested to provide the following information regarding these contacts:

- Date, time, and location of the contact
- Name(s) of the group members, members of the public, and any Township, law enforcement, or PGC staff involved in the contact, if the names are known.
- Description of the contact.
- Indicate if the member(s) of the public desires to be contacted by the Township to discuss the situation. If so, name and contact information will be needed.

The Township requires that archers immediately report the following:

- Suspected instances of poaching or illegal hunting as they are observed. Call the police at 911 if real time poaching with firearms is observed or 610-692-5100 for all other poaching. Notify the police at the earliest convenient time of past poaching evidence if the evidence does not appear to be from the same day.
- Any hazardous or unsafe conditions, regardless of whether or not they are related to hunting. Call 911 or the Westtown East Goshen Police Department at 610-692-5100 depending on severity.
- Safety issues and any violation of PGC rules and regulations or the Township’s Program rules.

The Township requires that archers report the following within one business day by email to designated email addresses:

- Significant or “large” item litter that cannot be easily carried out off Township land, such as tires, appliances, and vehicles. The Township requires that small amounts of litter be removed by archers, if they observe it. Reporting small

amounts of litter to the Township for removal, versus removal by the archers, is permitted.

- Items that require Township attention. Examples include damaged or dysfunctional 4-Post Feeder/Bait Stations, unauthorized permanent installations of material on Township land, tampering with the sewer system, and vandalism.
- Unauthorized stands.

The Township recognizes the significant additional value deer management groups provide to landowners through their volunteer efforts. The Township requires that groups inform the Township by email or postal mail of volunteer efforts by their members in the Township each month for the prior month. The purpose of this reporting is to ensure the Township and its residents are aware in a timely manner of the substantial additional value the groups provide.

Township Reporting Requirements

The Township has the responsibility to inform residents of the progress of the Program. The Township commits to provide the following information in an annual report to be delivered to the Board of Supervisors by the end of July following each hunting season in which Township-owned land was hunted.

Program Efficiency & Yield

- Number of deer management groups and archers participating in the Program
- Deer hunting breadth across areas, intensity, schedule, and other information pertinent to how often hunting is active in the open spaces
- Total number of deer harvested and by hunting area, their gender, age, and anything noteworthy or unusual about them
- Effort-to-Yield performance metric overall, by group, and by hunting area/parcel: number of archer hours that were invested per harvested deer

Other Benefits to the Township – Volunteer Efforts

- Summary of volunteer activity by each group
- Information to be provided includes a high-level description of the volunteer activity, each group's level of involvement in the activity, and the benefit to the Township

Issues

- All safety, PGC, and Program rule violation reports and their adjudication
- Poaching and illegal hunting reports by hunting area and any information pertaining to the reports or the outcome of the investigation
- Group performance issues
- Report of complaints from the public

Lessons Learned

- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- What changes to the Program are recommended?

Part 7 – Complaints

The Township shall advise a group's point of contact of any complaints brought against the group or activity in the group's area and will request a response. The Township shall attempt to investigate all complaints to the best of its ability and requires the support of the groups to accomplish this goal. The Township shall provide a timely response to the complainant by postal letter or email, depending upon the medium in which the complaint was filed.

The Township shall be the ultimate arbiter of disputes and complaints. Complaints against groups found by the Township to have merit may result in loss of hunting privileges for the group or its members.

Feedback regarding the conduct of the Program is welcome. Residents may send email to ddavis@eastgoshen.org to contact the Board of Supervisors. Postal letters and phone calls to the Township office are also welcome.

Part 8 – Program & Change Management

The Township staff shall be the administrators of the Deer Management Program, with assistance from the Township Board of Supervisors, Public Works Department staff, police, PGC, and related bodies. The Deer Management Program is codified in the Township Code, §163 Parks and Recreation Areas.

Clerical changes to the program that are not material to health, safety, and welfare may be made by the Township Manager with the advice and consent of the Board of Supervisors on an as-needed basis.

Changes affecting health, safety, or welfare may only be approved by the Board of Supervisors in a formal meeting. Changes deemed urgent by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors may be implemented outside of a formal meeting, if time is of the essence, and will be discussed at the next formal meeting.

All other changes shall be managed by the Township Manager, with the advice and consent of the Board of Supervisors.

The updated program shall be published on the Township's website within ten days of these changes taking effect.

Part 9 – Deadlines

- April 30th: Application deadline
- June, first business day: Township notifies hunting groups of assigned area(s)
- July 15th: Deadline for rosters, insurance certs, stand maps, & hunting course certs
- September 1st: Deadline for marking hunting areas and tree stands
- 30 days after last day of season: Deadline for removing tree stands and ladders