

Willowsford Conservancy Deer Population Management Program 2019-2020 Season Frequently Asked Questions

Why is deer management needed at Willowsford? Answer: The deer population at Willowsford has increased beyond a sustainable level. Deer overpopulation negatively impacts the entire ecosystem when deer damage the forest understory. This can have a long-term negative effect on native plant communities and the wildlife that depends on them including songbirds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects. The loss of native plants contributes to a loss of biodiversity and a broad decline in forest-dependent wildlife. As forests become degraded, deer may also suffer from malnourishment and disease.

I love deer and enjoy watching them. Will I still be able to see deer at Willowsford? Answer: Yes. The goal of the Deer Management Program is not to eliminate deer from Willowsford, but to reduce their population size to a healthier, more sustainable level.

Who determines the hunting season and laws in Loudoun County? Answer: The Willowsford deer management program must comply with regulations set by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) which has primary responsibility for managing deer in Virginia; www.dgif.virginia.gov.

Will hunters hunt in all Willowsford areas? Answer: No. Only certain areas of open space in the Greens, Grant and Grove villages are included.

Can I use the trails during the hunting season? Answer: Yes, during archery hunting. This is similar to other Northern Virginia archery programs where public areas remain open for use. Trails will be closed on certain days between November and January, during firearms hunting in The Greens, The Grant, and The Grove.

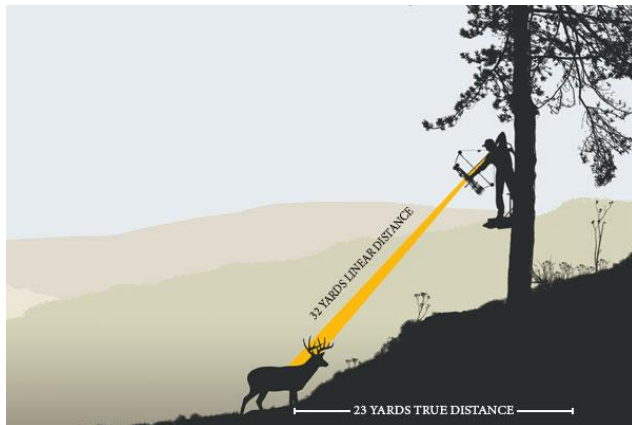
Can anyone participate in the Willowsford Conservancy Deer Management Program? Answer: No. Only authorized Willowsford residents, employees and a few eligible volunteers who are qualified to hunt may hunt in the designated areas.

What protocols does Willowsford have in place to ensure safety? Answer: Hunters must pass a marksmanship proficiency test, complete a hunter education program, keep a log of each harvested deer, and uphold respectful behavior toward residents, property and deer. Hunters must comply with all Federal, State and County laws and with Willowsford Conservancy Deer Management Program rules, and must possess all relevant Virginia hunting licenses. Hunters must have written permission to hunt, and must hunt from an elevated tree stand in their assigned Zone.

Should residents be concerned about personal safety? Answer: Archery is one of the safest methods for managing deer in urban and suburban areas. It is compatible with other land uses, including parks and residential areas. No safety incidents have been reported during the urban archery season, which started in Virginia in 2002 and now includes more than 40 cities, towns, and counties throughout the Commonwealth. Every

hunter at Willowsford must pass a target proficiency test and is required to follow specific procedures and rules of conduct during hunting.

Despite what has been observed in movies, the maximum effective range of crossbows and compound bows used for archery hunting is about 40-50 yards. While a range of 40-50 yards may be possible, trees, limbs, shrubs, etc. that hunters encounter in the woods mean that most hunters do not take shots past 30 yards. The Willowsford program requires hunters to hunt from a tree-stand, creating a downward trajectory with the ground as a backstop. The graphic below illustrates how each hunter at Willowsford will be taking deer.



When will hunting at Willowsford take place? Answer: Archery hunting will take place between October 5 – December 31, in certain areas in The Greens, Grant and Grove. There will be five periods (each 3-5 days long) when hunters are permitted to use muzzleloaders and/or shotguns in certain areas in The Greens, Grant and Grove. Please refer to the “Deer Management Program Schedule” for archery and firearms hunt dates in the respective villages.