



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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National Park Service News Release

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National Park Service Completes Winter/Spring 2013 Deer Management in Rock Creek Park

Washington, D.C. – The National Park Service has concluded deer management operations in Rock Creek Park for the winter of 2013. Firearm experts culled the deer population by 20 safely and without incident.

“During the past week, Rock Creek Park resource management specialists, in coordination with United States Park Police and local law enforcement, worked closely with highly trained marksmen from the United States Department of Agriculture to reduce the deer population in the park,” said Rock Creek Park Superintendent Tara Morrison. “Public safety was the highest priority during this operation. We operated at night when the park is normally closed, observed safety zones surrounding the park boundary, and used lead-free ammunition during our operations.”

These actions were part of the first year of a three-year white-tailed deer management plan for Rock Creek Park. Over the last 20 years, the park’s white-tailed deer population has grown so large that the deer are eating nearly all tree seedlings, preventing forest sustainability. The plan calls for reducing the deer population to support the long-term protection, preservation, and restoration of native vegetation and to allow for the forest to regenerate.

In accordance with the park’s approved White-tailed Deer Management Plan, thinning operations will resume in the fall of 2013, as the park works towards reducing the deer population from more than 70 per square mile to between 15-20 per square mile. Scientists have determined that this level will allow the forests of Rock Creek Park to regenerate. Once the deer population is reduced to this level, management efforts will focus on maintaining a sustainable deer population.

Rock Creek Park will donate all suitable venison to a food bank or homeless shelter in the Washington, D.C. area.

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America’s 403 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.