



White-tailed Deer Management Plan/EIS: Chronology of Major Events

- 1983** First deer survey. Population size estimated to be 165-185 animals. Habitat condition described as “excellent” and no browse line evident. Damage to ornamental plantings and crops on adjacent lands reported to be insignificant.
- 1986** Deer spotlight counts conducted by park staff begin.
- 1992** Browse line along the forest-field interface clearly visible to park managers. Long-term vegetation monitoring using paired, fenced and unfenced plots, on Mount Misery and Mount Joy initiated. Data collected in 1993, 1995, 1998, and 2003.
- 1997** Study of deer population size, home range, and movements relative to park boundary initiated. Spring deer counts begin.
- 1998** First response to Congressional inquiry regarding deer management from NPS Director, Robert Stanton.
- 2000** Congress directed the NPS to develop a plan to address the issue of deer management at Valley Forge NHP.
- 2002** Planning for new General Management Plan initiated, including evaluation of management goals related to natural resources.
- 2004** Cultural Landscape Report completed.
- 2005** Mapping and classification of park vegetation communities completed.
- 2006** Draft General Management Plan provided for public comment.
- 2006** House Appropriations language directing park to start EIS and complete in 2008.
- “The public has been patient as the NPS has worked through its process in regard to management of the over-abundance of white-tailed deer at the park. Within existing funds, NPS is directed to begin the environmental impact statement for deer management. The Committee expects that the plan will be funded fully so that it can be completed in fiscal year 2008. The Committee further expects that implementation of the selected action will begin immediately upon signing of the Record of Decision.”*
- 2006** Notice of Intent to prepare a White-tailed Deer Management Plan/EIS published in *Federal Register* September 7, 2006. Public scoping meetings held to solicit input on purpose and need, objectives, and proposed management strategies held in November 2006.

- 2007** Final General Management Plan released calling for biological resources to be *“managed to preserve and restore natural abundances, diversities, dynamics, and distributions of native plants and animal populations within forested and other naturally occurring communities. In naturally occurring communities where species populations occur in unnaturally high or low concentrations as a result of human influences or extirpation of predators, and such occurrences cause unacceptable impacts on natural resources and natural processes, biological and physical remedial actions would accelerate natural recovery.”*
- 2007** Alternatives development meeting to revise proposed deer management strategies, based on input from the public.
- 2007** Science team meetings held to facilitate development of deer management alternatives based on the best available science.
- 2008** Science team meetings held to facilitate incorporation of response to chronic wasting disease into the deer management alternatives.
- 2008** Internal review of the Draft White-tailed Deer Management Plan completed and document revised.
- 2008** Draft White-tailed Deer Management Plan/EIS provided for public review and comment between December 19, 2008 and February 17, 2009 (60-days). Public meetings were held in January 2009 to present the Draft plan and solicit comments. During the comment period, 1,168 pieces of correspondence were received representing a total of 3,884 comments.
- 2009** Each public comment was carefully evaluated and changes to the plan were made, if appropriate.
- 2009** A Notice of Availability of the Final plan/EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on August 28, 2009. The 30-day no-action period ended on September 28, 2009. A Record of Decision was prepared summarizing the Final plan/EIS.
- 2009** The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed by the NPS Northeast Regional Director on October 1, 2009. The ROD documents NPS approval of the plan, selects the alternative to be implemented, and sets forth stipulations required for implementation.
- 2010** The lethal reduction phase of the plan was implemented with professional biologists from the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services. A total of 600 deer were removed between November 2010 and March 2011, resulting in the donation of 18,330 pounds of venison to food banks, soup kitchens, and other organizations.