



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Valley Forge
National Historical Park

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Valley Forge NHP News Release

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Valley Forge National Historical Park concludes the second year of the lethal reduction phase of the plan/EIS

Valley Forge, PA – The White-tailed Deer Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS) for Valley Forge National Historical Park addresses browsing of tree and shrub seedlings by an increasing deer population over the last two decades which has prevented the ability of native forests to grow and mature and has reduced habitat for a range of native wildlife species. In March 2012, the park concluded the second year of the lethal reduction phase of the plan/EIS.

Over the last two winters, park staff worked with the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services on 36 nights between November 2010 and March 2012 to remove 977 deer from the park. Meat resulting from this action was donated to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and provided to food pantries, soup kitchens, and other organizations across 21 counties in Pennsylvania. A total of 29,822 pounds (over 13 tons) of venison was donated, including 3,000 pounds of venison donated locally in Chester County. A total of 504 deer were tested for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and all of these deer tested negative for the presence of the disease.

This action includes extensive measures to ensure a safe, humane, and successful operation, such as using highly qualified and experienced marksmen familiar with the park's geography and with conducting reduction activities in a highly suburbanized environment, conducting population reduction actions only when the park is closed, observing safety zones, using bait to attract deer to safe removal locations, shooting from an elevated position with an adequate backdrop, and utilizing special, non-lead ammunition that is safe for use in urban areas and in the environment. The NPS closely coordinates all activities with township and state law enforcement officials and with the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

During the lethal reduction phase, sharpshooting and capture and euthanasia will be implemented over four years to reduce the deer population from an estimated 241 deer per square mile (1,277 deer) to the initial density goal of 31-35 deer per square mile (165-185 deer). This operation will continue each winter until the initial target deer density is achieved. It is estimated that deer density as of March 2012 is 71 deer per square mile (374 deer). The number of deer removed each year will be based on the results of annual deer population monitoring conducted in the spring. Subsequently, the park will maintain the park deer population level through reproductive control, once an acceptable agent becomes available.

For additional information please contact us at Valley Forge NHP, 1400 North Outer Line Drive, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania 19406 or via email at vafo_superintendent@nps.gov

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