

White Clay Creek State Park

2023-24 Hunting Rules

Refer to map for approximate locations of indicated areas.

In addition to the rules and regulations found in the “Delaware Hunting and Trapping Guide: 2023-2024”, specific rules that apply to White Clay Creek State Park are listed below. **Registration of all hunters participating in the Delaware State Park Hunting Program is required. There is an annual \$10 hunting registration fee. This charge is waived for Delaware hunters age 65 or over and for juvenile hunters age 10 - 15.** Registration will take place at the White Clay Creek State Park Office.

1. General Deer Hunting Rules

- a. There is **NO SUNDAY HUNTING** in Delaware State Parks
- b. Failure to comply with any state laws, rules, regulations, and/or policies may result in arrest and/or suspension of all hunting privileges in Delaware State Parks.
- c. Handguns, rifles with straight-walled pistol-caliber ammunition and Sharps rifles are not permitted for deer hunting in Delaware State Parks.
- d. It is illegal to use or build a nailed or permanent tree stand or ladder.
- e. Use of trail cameras in Delaware State Parks is prohibited.
- f. Driving deer into and/or through hunting areas is prohibited.
- g. The clearing/cutting of vegetation to form shooting lanes or for any other purpose is prohibited.
- h. Baiting is prohibited in Delaware State Parks.
- i. Use of buckshot is prohibited in Delaware State Parks.
- j. Park only in designated parking areas (refer to map for approximate locations).
- k. Driving motorized vehicles off-road into fields, woods, or along trails is prohibited. No motorized hand carts or ATVs are allowed to recover harvested deer. E-bikes may be used on state park trails that allow bicycles. Bicycles, including E-bikes may not be ridden on paths from state park trails to the deer stand, pin or archery zone. Manual deer carts are authorized for use.
- l. **Note that for the 2023-24 season you must harvest a female deer (adult or fawn doe qualify) in White Clay Creek State Park first, before harvesting a buck.** To become ‘Buck Eligible’ you must have your female deer confirmed by contacting a Park Ranger (302)368-6900, (302)387-3515, (302)354-1386, (302)270-7316 and (302)943-0125. Archery hunters who harvest a female deer during archery season will be qualified to harvest a buck (by bow or gun) during the shotgun seasons.
- m. For safety reasons, only one adult and only one firearm (shotgun/muzzleloader/bow/crossbow) is permitted at each stand/post site.
- n. Dependent upon ongoing construction, weather, or other factors, one or more areas may be closed. Hunters are encouraged to carry a cell phone while they are scouting, hunting, and tracking. For updated or additional information, contact the park office at (302) 368-6900 or visit the Delaware State Parks website at www.destateparks.com. The White Clay Creek State Park office is located at the intersection of Chambers Rock Road and Thompson Station Road. Park office is open daily 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. through October. The office will be open Monday through Friday 8am to 4 pm beginning in November. Please immediately report any medical emergencies by dialing 911. Report non-emergency hunting accidents, or violations of any hunting laws, rules, or regulations to a Park Ranger or the park office.

2. Archery Deer Hunting Seasons

September 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024

- a. If you plan to archery hunt at White Clay Creek State Park, regardless of where you purchase your State Park Hunting Permit, you must appear in person at the White Clay Creek State Park office (during business hours) prior to hunting to sign the archery hunting registration form. There is no additional fee to archery hunt.

- b. Archery hunting is permitted only from elevated stands or from a portable non-damaging (without screw pegs) tree stand, or on the ground within the painted radius around each elevated stand/pin. When an elevated stand does not have a painted radius, archer must hunt from the elevated stand.
- c. Hunting in **Archery Zones** shall be from a portable non-damaging (without screw pegs) tree stand placed within the zone boundaries. Only one hunter is permitted in each zone. Hunting from ground level is permitted within the archery zones.
- d. Archery Zone 1 is now located on the south side of Chambers Rock Road west of White Clay Creek. The zone is bordered by Chambers Rock Road on the north side and an open field on the west. The boundary is marked by a painted perimeter. Hunters must be posted in an elevated stand when hunting Zone 1. Stands can be placed no closer than 20 yards from Chambers Rock Road. Shooting at deer outside of the painted perimeter is prohibited. Shooting at deer in the field in the interior of the zone is permitted from an elevated stand posted on a tree on or within the edge of the tree line surrounding the field.
- e. Archery Zone 2 is located in the wooded area southwest of the Upper Pike Creek Road bridge pull off. Zone 2 is bordered by Pike Creek and Upper Pike Creek Road. Zone 2 hunters must be posted in an elevated climber stand at least 20 yards away from Upper Pike Creek Road. Shooting at deer that are either in the creek or across the creek is prohibited.
- f. Archery Zone 3 is located in the wooded area at the south end of the Judge Morris property. This area is bordered by fields and by a private parking area. **Hunters are not allowed to park in the private parking area on the south side of this zone.** Hunters must be posted in an elevated climber stand at least 20 yards away from the private parking area. **Zone 3 is ONLY open to archery hunting on Saturdays, on Thanksgiving Day, and on the day after Thanksgiving.** *This area is subject to closure on Saturdays when the mansion grounds are being used.
- g. Archery Zone 4 is located in the wooded area north of Smith Mill Road, downhill from the Silent Knights flying field. Access to this zone shall be from the Smith Mill Road parking lot along the hedgerow along Paper Mill Road. Do not walk across the Silent Knights mowed runway.
- h. Archery Zone 5 is located in the wooded area bounded by White Clay Creek to the east, Thompson Station Road to the west, Chambers Rock Road to the south and a point 50 yards south of the Charles Bailey Trail to the north. Zone 5 hunters must be posted in an elevated climber stand at least 20 yards away from the bordering Roads and at least 50 yards from the Charles Bailey Trail. Shooting at deer that are either in the creek or across the creek is prohibited. Access to this zone will be from any of the three designated parking areas adjacent to this zone.
- i. Stands and pins will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis using the self-registration tag board system. Self-registration will take place at the tag board in the Smith Mill parking lot which is located off Paper Mill Road. The tag must be placed on the dashboard of the hunter's vehicle and be visible at all times when hunting. Reminder: Tags are not to be removed before 5:00 AM prior to the end of Daylight Saving Time. After DST ends, tags are not to be removed prior to 4:30 AM. As stated on the Self-Registration form, this applies to all stands including the Permanently Disabled Stands. During shotgun seasons tags may be removed 2½ hours prior to legal hunting time to avoid congestion in the Smith Mill parking lot during shotgun lotteries.
- j. When leaving the area for any reason (e.g. lunch, work, coffee, deer kill, etc.), hunters must sign out and return the tag to the bulletin board.
- k. Hunters that fail to sign out and return the tag to the bulletin board when leaving the area or that have another person sign in and pick up a tag for them will lose their hunting privileges for the rest of the season.
- l. The archery-only stations or 'pins' (Stations A-Z, AA-HH, UU-YY, J-PD, M-PD) and Archery Zones (1-5) will be open for archery hunting during both the archery season listed above and during legal firearm seasons, in accordance with all applicable regulations. Each of these stations is indicated by a labeled post. Hunting is permitted from within the painted radius around the labeled post.
- m. PD stands 1, 2, 19, 26, 38, 50, 51, J and M are only to be used by PD archery hunters during the archery season.
- n. Hunter orange must be worn by archery hunters at all times when dates overlap with any Statewide Gun Seasons, including early October gun seasons and November Youth/Non-ambulatory Disabled Hunt.

3. General Firearm Deer Hunting Seasons

November 10 - November 18, 2023

December 9 – December 16, 2023 – Special Antlerless Season

January 13, 15 - January 21, 2024

- a. Stands will be assigned by an on-site shotgun lottery each day of the hunt at the Smith Mill Parking Lot two hours prior to legal shooting time on the day of the hunt and again at 12:00 noon on the day of the hunt. Hunters are allowed only one entry in any lottery.
- b. Use of single-barrel muzzleloaders is permitted during the Shotgun Seasons. There are no Muzzleloader Seasons in White Clay Creek State Park.
- c. Hunters are required to hunt from their assigned elevated deer stand. All hunters picked for a stand in the morning must hunt in the morning and remain in their stand until 9 a.m. Afternoon hunters must be in their assigned stand by 3 p.m. With the exception of a personal emergency, a hunter may only leave their stand before 9 am in the morning or before the end of legal shooting time in the afternoon or evening to dispatch a downed deer that the hunter wounded provided that downed deer can be seen by the hunter from their stand.
- d. When shotgun hunters are finished hunting for the day, they must return their daily hunting permit to the permit box in the Smith Mill Road parking lot. Daily permits must be filled out completely before returning them.
- e. During the daily shotgun season lottery, if stand M-PD, PD1, PD2, PD19, PD26, PD38, PD50 or PD51 has not been assigned to a Permanently Disabled Hunter, then they will be included in the normal daily lottery drawings. If a PD stand is issued to a non-PD hunter in the morning lottery, the permit for the PD stand must be turned in prior to the noon drawing.
- f. During shotgun seasons, archery hunters wishing to hunt from the archery-only stations can use the self-registration tag board system as they do during the regular archery hunting seasons.
- g. Possession of a loaded firearm, except while lawfully hunting from an assigned deer stand, is prohibited.
- h. Use of buckshot is prohibited in Delaware State Parks.

4. November 4, 2023 Shotgun Youth Hunt

- a. There will be a Youth Shotgun Deer Hunt at White Clay Creek State Park on Saturday, November 4, 2023. This one-day hunt will be open to juvenile hunters ages 10-15 who have completed a Hunter Education course, possess a Division hunting permit, and (when age required) possess a Delaware junior hunting license.
- b. The buck eligibility requirement is waived for youth shotgun hunters during this one-day hunt. Only lottery selected shotgun youth hunters may harvest an antlered buck on this date without first harvesting a female deer.
- c. Each juvenile hunter must be accompanied by an adult mentor who is at least 18 years of age. The mentor must have the lawful right to hunt in the State of Delaware, possess a valid Division of Parks & Recreation hunting permit, and either possess a valid Delaware hunting license or be hunting license exempt.
- d. The accompanying mentor is not allowed to shoot. Only one youth and one adult will be allowed to occupy each deer stand. Youth hunters may use a shotgun or a single-barrel muzzleloader.
- e. Gun hunting, by juveniles or by adults, in other areas of White Clay Creek State Park on November 4 is prohibited. Juvenile archery hunters are still required to be “buck eligible” to harvest an antlered deer with a bow on November 4.
- f. Selected youth hunters, and their adult mentor, will participate in a traditional on-site stand lottery drawing at the Carpenter Recreation Area on November 5. The stand lottery drawing will take place two hours prior to legal shooting time. Once stands are assigned, youth hunters may keep their stands for the entire day. There will be no noon stand lottery drawing. A deer stand permit cannot be transferred to another youth hunter.

WCCSP 2023-24, updated 5/25/2023

White Clay Creek Hunting Opportunities for Permanently Disabled Hunters

Permanently Disabled Hunters are a small but important segment of our hunting population that is likely to grow larger in coming years. As we have increased hunting opportunities for all hunters, we have been increasing opportunities for Permanently Disabled Hunters. The rules that follow below are meant to accomplish these goals.

Before you consider registration as a Permanently Disabled Hunter, understand that this **will limit your hunting opportunities within the park to just a few stands or pins**, and you will still have to participate in the daily lottery for these limited opportunities with other Permanently Disabled Hunters. This is strictly intended for those hunters that are physically unable to access the majority of the stands in the park because of difficult terrain and long walking distances. Read the instructions below. **All of the White Clay Creek Hunting Rules in the park will also apply to the Permanently Disabled Hunter as well.**

- 1) **A hunter wishing to participate** must obtain a disabled hunter certification card to use all facilities and opportunities made available to disabled hunters on State Wildlife Areas and State Parks. For more information on obtaining this card, call the Division of Fish and Wildlife at (302) 739-9912
- 2) **Once registered, Permanently Disabled Hunters will be limited to the following stand/pin locations: Archery Stand J-PD, Archery Stand M-PD, as well as stands PD1, PD2, PD19, PD26, PD38, PD50 and PD51. By registering as a Permanently Disabled Hunter you are limiting your hunting to these locations.** These seven sites are for Permanently Disabled Hunters not confined to a wheelchair (Category 2). They will be equipped with stairs instead of ladders to facilitate access to the stands.
- 3) During the morning shotgun lottery, if Stands M-PD, PD1, PD2, PD19, PD26, PD38, PD50 and PD51 are not assigned to Permanently Disabled Hunters, these six stands become available to non-Permanently Disabled Hunters. If a PD stand is issued to a non-PD hunter in the morning lottery, the permit for the PD stand must be turned in prior to the noon drawing so that the stand once again becomes available to an afternoon lottery PD hunter.
- 4) During the archery season, stands M-PD, PD1, PD2, PD19, PD26, PD38, PD50 and PD51 are only available to permanently disabled hunters. PD archery hunters may hunt from the ground within the painted radius of any pin.
- 5) Stand J-PD is for Permanently Disabled hunters only. J-PD is not available at any time to hunters who are not permanently disabled.
- 6) Park staff will not be available to help the Permanently Disabled Hunter retrieve game or otherwise provide assistance except in the case of an emergency. **Permanently Disabled Hunters must make arrangements with a friend or family member to help them.**

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