



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS) VALLEY FORGE DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

WHAT ARE NPS' PLANS FOR VALLEY FORGE?

The purpose of the White-tailed Deer Management Plan/EIS (Draft/EIS) as stated by Kristina Heister, Natural Resources Manager, is to grow conifers and facilitate the growth of native plant species. Valley Forge National Historical Park has always been a Hickory and Oak tree based forest, not Conifer. Visitors to the Park today see a park lush with trees including conifers which does not support Ms. Heister's claim that there is an historic or immediate need to plant conifer seedlings.

WHAT IS NPS' PLAN FOR WILDLIFE IN THE PARK?

NPS plans to hire sharpshooters to kill 80% of the deer population to prevent them from browsing conifer seedlings. (NPS could put netting around the seedlings to prevent browsing). Besides the financial cost (2.4 million dollars), and safety concerns, the basic flaw in the plan is: NPS does not know how many deer are in the Park (there is a difference of 300% in their counts). Using sharpshooters to kill deer is neither safe for people nor humane for the animals. (Go to: www.sharkonline.org, search for the video: "What's the matter with Government deer culls", to see for yourself.)

IS SHARPSHOOTING DANGEROUS?

Both Penndot (Press Release, Oct. 3, 2008, para 4) and Erie Ins., the insurance company studying Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVC) (Press Release, Sept. 25, 2008, para 4) draw direct correlations between shooting at deer and wildlife vehicle crashes. Snipers with high powered rifles can be as close as 300' from roads (Final/EIS). Most bullets from high powered rifles travel 400' which means bullets will overshoot roads (and anything in them) by 100'. Deer can run 35 MPH (Bauer, "Whitetails", Voyageur Press, 1993, pg. 25) and cross 300' in @ 1 minute. At that speed they can run to Conestoga Rd., Tredyffrin Twp., @ 2 miles away, in 3-4 minutes, and from one end of the 5 mile Park to the other in 8.6 minutes, crossing Rt. 23 and Rt. 422 (heavily trafficked day and night) in 6-8 minutes or less. NPS' Draft/EIS calls for using sharpshooters for at least 4 years, and perhaps as many as 15 yrs. (Draft/EIS, pg. 2-43, item 2.8.3, para 2)

During the Jan. 15, 2009 Public Hearing about the Plan, Michele Batcheller, NPS wildlife biologist, stated sharpshooters will push deer out of the Park and into surrounding neighborhoods. Do you want deer living in your backyard?

Nothing can guarantee protection of residents from ricochet or misfired rifle shots. A bullet can be deadly for miles. Casey Kantner, 18, was struck in her head with a bullet traced to a hunter half a mile away. Last Fall, a toddler was killed in her home when a deer hunter's bullet 400 feet away ripped through the walls of her home (N.Y. Times, Nov. 17, 2008). Jim Wendlegass was driving on Rt. 100 when

a hunter's round went through the driver's side door and fractured his leg ("Accidents Can Happen", Daily Local News, Nov. 29, 2008). Chances are neither the sharpshooters nor NPS can be held accountable: the accident victim will bear the consequences including the cost of medical care for their injuries.

ARE THE DEER A PROBLEM?

The perception of too many deer occurs in winter when food is close to roads; in summer, visitors rarely see any deer. According to NPS' Fall Spotlighting method, there are 375 deer in this 3,452 acre park which reflects a decline of 150 deer in the past 3 years. (Draft/EIS, pg. 3-12)

According to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE has not been found in Pennsylvania. The PGC also states there is no evidence that CWD affects humans. The American LYME DISEASE Foundation reports most people contract Lyme Disease when they are bitten by a tick at its nymph stage of development. The nymph's hosts are field mice and birds, not deer. (Deer Tick Ecology, pg. 3, par. 4) A study of Chester County PGC Roadkill reports from 2008 shows there were only 3 deer killed on Penndot roads in the Park. (Note: all the roads with names and the ones most frequently used by motorists belong to Penndot.) Roads through State Parks are closed from dusk til dawn; NPS could close their roads during those hours to reduce DVC's on Park roads. (Note: roads which belong to the Park are those without names and used infrequently by motorists.)

ARE THERE SAFE WAYS TO MANAGE DEER?

Deer control their reproduction based on the food supply. When food is scarce, fewer fawns are born. If NPS conducts a reliable count, by infrared, aerial photography, and proves the deer population is growing, there are safe and humane ways of reducing it. IMMUNOCONTRACEPTION for animals has been used successfully for 25 years. Jay Kirkpatrick, PhD and Allen Rutberg, PhD (Tufts) developed porcine zona pelluide (PZP) which has reduced white-tailed deer populations and those of other species. (Go to: www.youtubeonline.com, search for Immunocontraception to see the video, or go to www.pzpinfo.org for more information.) The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is conducting research into a very promising derivative of PZP which provides long term effectiveness with 1 dose. HSUS has encouraged NPS to temporarily postpone a decision until their field trials are concluded in the near future. In 2009 the Pennsylvania Game Commission approved GonaCon (a fertility control agent for deer) for use in areas where hunting is dangerous.

NPS' plan to endanger public safety by hiring sharpshooters for Valley Forge National Historical Park is reckless. If you agree, please ask your Congressman and Senators to stop this expensive and dangerous plan before it is too late.

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Congressman Joe Sestak, 600 N. Jackson St., Media, PA 19063. Phone: 610-892-8623

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