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Natural Resources Manager
Monday Friday 8:00am 5:00pm ONLY

Macon County Conservation District
3939 Nearing Lane, Decatur, IL 62521
(217) 423-7708
Office hours for permit sales : 9:00am-4:00pm, or by appointment.
No sales on Wednesday between 12:30pm-1:30pm

Archery Deer Herd Management 2026 RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Deer hunting is by archery method only, November 1 to January 3, 2027. Hunting is not allowed during the Illinois shotgun deer seasons and firearms are prohibited. Hunters are allowed to harvest coyotes, 1 bearded turkey, and 4 deer while participating in the Deer Herd Management Program. Turkeys can be harvested at Fort Daniel, Sand Creek, and Rock Springs. Friends Creek will not be open to turkey hunting in 2026. Hunting outside of the designated dates, using firearms, or pursuing wildlife other than deer, coyotes, and turkeys may result in a lifetime ban from hunting on District properties.

2. All hunters must sign in and out daily at designated sign in locations at area to be hunted. Sign in box locations are as follows:

Rock Springs: Mailbox at entrance to maintenance facility, 3740 Banton Lane.

Sand Creek: Mailbox at maintenance facility, 946 E. Elwin Rd.

Fort Daniel: Mailbox at site entrance, 4975 Fort Daniel Rd.

Friends Creek: Mailbox at maintenance facility, 13723 Friends Creek Park Rd.

3. All hunters must complete the information indicated on the sign in/out form. Harvested deer and turkey must be reported on the form along with an IDNR confirmation number. Harvested deer and turkey must also be documented on district trail cameras mounted near each mailbox. Further instructions are located on back of parking permit.

4. Scouting will be allowed through the 25th of October. After this date, hunters may scout from 11:00am-2:00pm the day before their hunting period begins.

5. Tree stands and ground blinds may be placed in the field from 11:00am-2:00pm the day before your hunting period begins. Only portable tree stands or ground blinds may be used. No screws, nails or any other device which pierces the bark of the tree are allowed. Hunters are limited to one tree stand or ground blind in the field at a time. They may be left in the field throughout your hunting period and must be removed by the end of your hunting period. Any stand found after the hunter's period is over will result in a 1-week ban on District properties. The original stand tag issued by the District must be attached to the tree stand or ground blind. Stand tags must be easily located and visible when you are not occupying your stand/blind. It is recommended that the owner's name and contact information be permanently etched or written on the tree stand or ground blind. Any untagged stand/blind will be removed immediately by District staff. Tree stands removed by District staff due to rule violations will be held for a period of 30 days, after which the stand will be considered abandoned property and disposed of. Any stand found before or after the District's season will be disposed of immediately. It is not the District's responsibility to notify owners of pulled stands. A fee of \$50 will be charged to recover pulled stands. Any person found tampering with stands will receive a lifetime ban from hunting on District properties.

6. The use of trail cameras is prohibited on District properties. Any trail cameras found will be disposed of immediately.

7. Hunters are required to use fall-arrest systems (FAS) when using tree stands. Failure to use a fall-arrest system will result in the revocation of hunting privileges on District property.
8. An antlerless deer must be harvested on District lands before pursuing a buck. Each hunter is limited to one antlered deer (antlers 3 inches in length or greater) on District lands per year. Failure to harvest an antlerless deer before taking an antlered deer may result in a lifetime ban from hunting on District properties.
9. All hunters must comply with the Illinois and Federal Game Codes and must carry the permit issued by the Conservation District at all times while hunting.
10. No hunting is allowed within 75 yards of any building or official hiking trail. No shooting is allowed toward any building or across any official hiking trail or road. Target shooting is prohibited.
11. Hunting may only take place within designated hunting areas. Harvesting a deer in a non-designated hunting area may result in a lifetime ban from hunting on District properties. Hunters may only nock an arrow once they reach their hunting site. Crossbows may be cocked while walking to your stand, but must be unloaded. Crossbows must be loaded and de-cocked from your stand. Walking with a loaded crossbow may result in revocation of hunting for the remainder of the season.
12. Vehicles must be parked in designated parking spots located on hunting maps. A Deer Management Program Parking Only sign will be located at each parking location. A parking permit issued by the District must be placed in the windshield. Prior arrangements can be made with district staff if a hunter does not have a vehicle. Failure to park in designated location will result in a 1-week ban from hunting on District properties. The second violation will result in revocation of hunting for the remainder of the season. Hunters must access hunting sites from designated hunter parking areas. The same penalty for parking will apply.
13. Any person who wishes to track a wounded deer outside District property must first obtain permission from the private landowner. Tracking dogs are permitted with permission from MCCD.
14. Driving or stalking of deer by any person is prohibited.
15. No vegetation may be cut, broken, or removed for any reason. Trail markers may be used but must be removed at the end of the hunter's period.
16. Field dressing of deer is not allowed on hiking trails, next to roads or in parking lots. Please cover entrails with leaves, grass, etc.
17. The District reserves the right to suspend hunting at any time in any area for any reason.
18. Disabled hunters must possess a valid Illinois Person with a Disability Identification Card (Class P2O (previously a P2) or a Class P2A card) to be eligible for special hunting blinds.
19. Any child under the age of 18 will be allowed to hunt in the program during their parent's/guardian's hunting period. The child and parent/guardian must remain within eyesight of each other while hunting. The child will be required to purchase a MCCD Hunting Permit. All other rules apply except to the youth hunting in the YOUTH ONLY HUNTING PROGRAM. They only hunt at Bois Du Sangamon or Willow Branch II, please see youth only hunt rules.

** Violations **

Violation of any of the above rules may result in the suspension or revocation of hunting privileges on District property. The Executive Director reserves the right not to issue a permit to any person. A ban from the Deer Herd Management Program consists of no participation in hunting on District properties. This includes participation in drawings, assisting a minor, retrieval of deer, etc.