



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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National Park Service News Release

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Rock Creek Park to Begin Deer Reduction Operations

WASHINGTON – Rock Creek Park Superintendent Tara Morrison announced today that several temporary night-time road closures will be in effect from March 27-30, 2013 to provide for visitor safety during white-tailed deer reduction efforts in the park. The Rock Creek Park White-tailed Deer Management Plan calls for reducing the density of deer to support long-term protection, preservation and restoration of native vegetation and to allow for forest regeneration.

“Implementing the White-tailed Deer Management Plan is a critical step toward ensuring the forest is able to support native plants and animals found in Rock Creek Park in a sustainable manner for this and future generations,” said Superintendent Morrison. “Safety is our top priority and we will conduct management actions in the safest manner possible.”

Numerous safety measures will be in place to protect park visitors and neighbors. Highly trained sharpshooters from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, working under the direction of National Park Service resource management specialists and in coordination with the U.S. Park Police and local law enforcement, will conduct reduction actions at night when the park is normally closed. The management plan calls for using active herd reduction efforts during the next three years to reduce the deer density from over 70 per square mile today to 15-20 per square mile. Once the herd size is at a healthy level, management efforts will work to maintain a sustainable deer population.

Over the last 20 years, an overabundant white-tailed deer population has negatively impacted Rock Creek Park. Their numbers have grown so large that they are eating nearly all the tree seedlings and preventing Rock Creek Park’s forest from growing. Reducing the size of the population will reduce pressure from deer browsing, allowing for a healthy diverse forest that supports native vegetation and other wildlife.

The following road closures will be in effect from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., March 27-30 when sharpshooting is underway: Beach Drive north of Broad Branch Road, Ross Drive, Wise Road, Grant Road, Sherrill Drive, Joyce Road, Morrow Drive, and Bingham Road, NW.

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