Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge and Mason Neck State Park 2015 – 2016 Deer Hunt Program

PURPOSE: To maintain the deer herd at a healthy level compatible with planned habitat goals and objectives while minimizing impacts to wildlife and visitors.

HUNT DATES: Monday-November 16, Friday-November 20, and Monday-December 7, 2015.
Bonus Antlerless Hunt: Friday-January 22, 2016

BONUS HUNT: Hunters who have harvested two or more antlerless deer during the November and December hunts, may return to hunt antlerless deer ONLY on Friday, January 22, 2016.

NEW in 2015:

- Deer Check Station Hours: 10:00 am - Close
- Report aide names to staff two weeks prior to your hunt date. Aides must be 16 years or older.
- Hunters must inform staff during orientation on October 24 if help is needed to find an aide.
- Hunters may harvest more than one deer at a time.
- Bonus antlerless deer hunt for qualified individuals on Friday, January 22, 2016

PERMITS: Hunt permits are assigned by lottery and valid for one assigned hunting day. Selected hunters have until the end of the <u>last orientation session</u> on October 24, 2015 to purchase permits, after which the permits will be offered to qualified standbys. Permits remaining after the standby session will be available to hunters who wish to purchase additional permits to guarantee additional hunt days. Permits are $20.00 for the general public and $10.00 for federal Senior and Access Pass holders. Federal passes must be presented at purchase for discount. Permit fees are nonrefundable.

FIREARM QUALIFICATION: Selected hunters are required to qualify their firearm BEFORE the scheduled hunt dates. All applicants must qualify on an approved range. Firearms and ammunition may be added to the qualification card any time prior to the hunt. Only firearms and ammunition listed on qualification cards may be used or possessed for the hunt. Qualification cards are valid for three years. C*ards from 2013 & 2014 remain valid this year.* Persons without a qualification card from an approved range will not hunt.

<u>Buckshot:</u> Applicants are limited to shotgun(s) 20 gauge or larger and #1 or larger buckshot (20 gauge may use #2 or #3 buck). Qualification consists of firing from an off-hand position, one shot at a 14" square target at 25 yards, with a passing scores of at least 3 pellets for 000, 4 for 00 or 0, 5 for #1, 6 for #2, and 7 for #3. Each hunter will be allowed 2 attempts per firearm.

<u>Slug:</u> There is no shotgun gauge limitation. Qualification consists of firing from an off-hand position to a 14" circle target at 50 yards. Each hunter is allowed 2 attempts per firearm.

ORIENTATION: Selected hunters must attend an orientation session. Staff provides two options to complete the hunt orientation requirement. (1) Attend an orientation session in person on October 24, 2015 or (2) View the Mason Neck Hunt Orientation on-line, complete a 25 question test, and have the answers verified by staff. **If selected to hunt, time and location for in-person orientations and on-line orientation test checks will be provided on the hunt lottery notice.** Attending orientation sessions from a previous year, for another hunt, or at another agency's session cannot be counted

towards this orientation requirement.

ALTERNATES: Permitted hunters have the option to hunt on other non-assigned hunt days as an alternate. Alternates may fill hunt spaces if assigned hunters do not show or leave the field early.

SWAPS: Hunters may trade amongst themselves or for unclaimed permits. Swaps may occur during the standby and extra permit sale session following the last orientation session on October 24, 2015. All permit trades must be approved and registered with hunt staff by the end of the standby and extra permit sale session. To swap, each hunter must have already purchased a permit. No one may hold a permit for a person who has not completed all requirements and purchased their own permit.

STANDBYS: Occasionally selected hunters fail to complete the requirements and cannot claim a permit. Unclaimed permits are made available to lottery selected, standby hunters. Standby hunters will have the letters "SB" and numbers on their notification letter indicating their lottery status. Standbys may claim a permit only if they have completed orientation before the swap and extra permit sales. Standby sales will occur following the last orientation session on Saturday, October 24, 2015.

SCOUTING: Scouting will occur on Sunday, November 1 from 9:00am until 5:00 pm. State Park entrance fees are waived on scout day if a valid hunt permit is displayed. Firearms are not permitted during scouting. Reflectors, ribbons, or any other material used to mark paths are prohibited during scout day. GPS units are recommended to mark desired locations. State Park staff will be available to answer questions at the Mason Neck State Park Visitor Contact Station.

HUNT AREA: Hunting is allowed ONLY within designated boundaries illustrated on the map handout. Orange Carsonite posts with orange reflective tape mark external boundaries and closed areas. Hunters are not to cross a hunt boundary unless accompanied by refuge or park staff.

Each hunter's permit corresponds with a designated parking lot. Hunters must begin the hunt from their designated parking lot but may WALK anywhere within hunt area. During the hunt, hunters may not use vehicles to access additional areas or drive other hunters to or from unassigned hunting areas.

Exceptions: Tree Stand Area (green reflective tape/orange post) and Mobility Impaired sites (MI#) are limited to hunters who request assignment when they check in. Hunters may not enter the tree stand area unless assigned or trailing a wounded deer. Hunters must request a refuge or park staff escort to trail a deer into the Tree Stand Area. Vehicles are permitted to travel on asphalt or gravel roads marked on hunt maps. Deer may be brought to nearest road for pick up, except Gunston Road.

TREE STAND AREA: This area provides additional safety to the Gunston Road corridor by elevating the hunters to shoot downward. Hunters may request the Tree Stand Area during check-in. Only hunters with tree stands are allowed in the area. Hunters must set up and remain in their stand during hunting hours before 10:00am and after 1:00pm. From 10:00am until 1:00pm, hunters may be on the ground relocating. Firearms must be unloaded while on the ground unless trailing wounded deer. Orange carsonite posts with green reflective tape mark the boundaries of tree stand area. Stands are not provided by refuge or park staff.

MOBILITY IMPAIRED (MI) AREA: Mobility Impaired hunters must meet state requirements and obtain a state certificate to shoot from a vehicle. MI hunters may choose one of three sites assigned for limited mobility (one hunter per site). All MI hunters are required to have an aide as staff is unable to track, dress, or drag deer.

HUNTER AIDES: Aides assist hunters with the inability to track, drag or dress a deer and must be a minimum of 16 years old. Aides may set up, retrieve deer, and remain in a vehicle or with the hunter. Aides who have completed orientation and possess a valid hunting permit for the day may hunt, but must assist the hunter as needed. Aides may not drive deer to the hunter.

Aides' names must be reported to staff two weeks prior to hunt date for administrative purposes. Please inform staff if you will need assistance finding a hunter aide by the close of the hunter orientation on Saturday October 24. Staff will work to secure a volunteer aide for your hunt date.

YOUTH HUNTERS: Hunters under 18 must be accompanied by a licensed adult in visual and verbal contact at all times. The adult may not be armed to hunt unless in possession of a hunt permit for the same day. Adults may only supervise one youth at a time. Youths may not be left alone in a vehicle while the adult hunts.

HUNTER CHECK IN-OUT: All hunters must check in with the check station at the entrance on High Point Road when beginning a hunt or returning to the field. Selected hunters will be admitted and checked in at 5:45 am. Selected hunters not present by 6:15 am will lose their spot and must join the alternate line to hunt. Spaces not filled by 6:15 am will be offered to alternates. No hunters admitted after 3:30 pm.

Hunters must check out when leaving the hunt area for any reason. Shooting ends at 5:00 pm. If a deer is harvested after 4:30 pm, call the check station with hunter name, assigned parking lot number, estimated time of arrival, and contact number. Official check-out time is 6:00pm unless prior arrangements have been made with check station staff. Failure to check-out on time may result in a citation and possible loss of hunt privileges.

2015 SEASON HARVEST LIMITS:

1. White-tailed deer are the only legal species to be hunted.
2. Antlered and antlerless deer may be harvested in any order. Antlerless deer do not need to be harvested prior to antlered deer.
3. Hunters may harvest more than one deer at a time.
4. No antler restrictions
5. Limit of one antlered per permit purchased.
6. Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) tags are for antlerless deer only and do not count against daily or annual bag. Hunters will have access to as many DMAP tags as needed.
7. Hunters must make reasonable effort to retrieve wounded deer and report unrecovered deer to staff.
8. All deer must be field dressed and presented at the check station.
9. Deer may not be processed (cut up) in the field. Entrails (guts) must be buried or removed if near a public trail or road.
10. January 22, 2016 special rule: Hunting on this date is antlerless only, in accordance with Commonwealth of Virginia late-season hunt policy.

TAGGING and DEER CHECK STATION: The deer check station will operate from 10:00 am until close. All harvested, dressed deer must be checked as soon as possible during check station operation hours. Notch tags in the field for harvested antlered deer. Hunters will receive DMAP tags for harvested antlerless deer at the check station. Virginia check cards are issued by staff for all harvested deer. Once deer are checked, hunters may return to their assigned area and continue hunting for the remainder of the day.

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS:

1. Commonwealth of Virginia hunting regulations and refuge and park special regulations apply.
2. Hunters must possess a valid Virginia hunting license, big game tags, refuge permit, and qualification card. Refuge permits must be visible in the windshield or driver's window on hunt and scout days. Licenses and qualification cards must be carried in the field.
3. Hunters must wear at least 400 square inches of solid blaze orange visible 360° on head, chest and back in a conspicuous manner at all times, including when in a stand or blind. Camouflage orange is not acceptable.
4. It is illegal to construct permanent stands or install a nail, spike, or other metal object into trees. Portable stands and blinds must be removed daily. No trees or branches may be cut. Screw-in footsteps and spiked tree stands are prohibited.
5. Road hunting and shooting across roads is prohibited. No hunting within 100 yards of certain roadways. Refer to your hunt map for specific roads and corresponding hunting buffer zones.
6. Hunters may only use or possess firearms and ammunition listed on their qualification card. Firearms must be unloaded and cased or broken down, except when in the assigned hunt area.
7. No unauthorized persons will be permitted in the hunt area or at the deer check station. All persons on refuge or park lands during hunts must possess a valid hunt permit or be a pre-authorized aide.
8. Hunter aides must be at least 16 years of age and reported to staff two weeks prior to hunt date for administrative and safety purposes. Aides may set up, retrieve deer, and remain in a vehicle or with the hunter. Aides who have completed orientation and possess a valid hunting permit for the day may hunt, but must assist the hunter as needed.
9. Hunters under 18 must be accompanied by a licensed adult in visual and verbal contact at all times. The adult may not be armed to hunt unless in possession of a hunt permit for the same day.
10. Possession or use of alcoholic beverages and illegal substances during the hunt is prohibited.
11. Fires are prohibited.
12. Any violation of the permit will result in administrative cancellation and/or criminal charges.