



FORT GEORGE G. MEADE NEWS RELEASE

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

4409 Llewellyn Ave.
FORT MEADE, MD 20755
www.ftmeade.army.mil

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fort, USDA set to begin deer cull

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE – In a continued effort to reduce Fort Meade's deer population to acceptable levels, The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services has scheduled an additional deer cull on the installation beginning Jan. 30.

"We need to reduce the number of deer enough to sustain a healthy population," said Colonel Tom Rickard, Fort Meade garrison commander. "We have safely and humanely conducted these closely supervised culls for several years. We are grateful for our partnership with the professionals from the USDA Wildlife Services and proud to donate the venison to the Maryland Food Bank."

The target goal for a herd is approximately 12 to 18 deer per square mile. Fort Meade's population is currently measured at 32 deer per square mile.

Overpopulation is detrimental to the deer and the installation. According to the Fort Meade Environmental Division, damage to forest regeneration and impacts to landscaping caused by the deer are evident throughout Fort Meade. In addition, despite slow speeds on post, deer related vehicle accidents are still an issue on the installation causing safety concerns. There were 13 deer related traffic collisions reported to the Directorate of Emergency Services on Fort Meade in 2014, 14 in 2015 and 14 in 2016.

Fort Meade's deer population flourished in the enclosed area over several years. Hunting has not been allowed on Fort Meade for more than two decades.

Two USDA marksmen teamed with an Emergency Services representative will conduct the cull between Jan.30 and March, 31, 2017. The hours of the deer cull will be Monday through Thursday, after dark until approximately 1 a.m. These times will help ensure the cull will not impact rush hour traffic.

Shooting zones will be directed away from structures, vehicles, equipment and bodies of water and focused on areas defined as having more than one deer.

The USDA Wildlife Services has a record of zero accidents and a 100 percent drop rate.

Like last year, a deer processor will prepare the meat for donation to the Maryland Food Bank. More than 5,000 pounds of venison was donated to the Maryland Food Bank last year. Most of the meat was distributed to veteran-oriented charitable organizations.

The objective for this year's cull is 100 deer.

BACKGROUND

Fort George G. Meade, established in 1917, is the largest employer in the state of Maryland and with more than 55,000 employees, is the third largest Army installation in the continental United States in terms of personnel. We are the home to all branches of military service; Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard and serve as the home for 119 partner organizations including U. S. Cyber Command, the National Security Agency, the Defense Information Systems Agency, the Defense Information School as well as federal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Science Center.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact: Mary Doyle in the Fort Meade Public Affairs Office at 301-677-5592 or mary.l.doyle14.civ@mail.mil or

For more about Fort Meade, visit the Fort Meade website at www.ftmeade.army.mil. You can also check out Fort George G. Meade on Facebook and Twitter.