

# DEER HUNTING

2026–2027

## *Archery & Slug/Muzzleloader Hunting Rules*

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Only Full members in good standing will be allowed to qualify or hunt using Archery and/or Slug/Muzzleloader equipment.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification day for deer hunting will be **the last Saturday of April**. Archery qualifications run from **11:00 am – 11:30 am**; Slug/Muzzleloader qualifications run from **11:30 am – 12:00 pm**. Everyone must qualify on the same day. You must qualify on this date to be eligible to hunt. Practice time will be allowed beforehand for Archery only on the date of qualification, or at your leisure (this is highly advised). For Slug/Muzzleloader, you must be ready to shoot — one practice round is allowed.

**Practice on Deer Creek property with Slug/Muzzleloader equipment at any other time requires board approval**, for safety reasons.

After qualifications, the **first deer hunters' meeting will be held at 12:00 pm**.

**Archery:** Shoot from an elevated stand at least 10 feet high; must hit 3 out of 5 broadhead arrows in the vitals from 20 yards.

**Slug/Muzzleloader:** Must hit 3 out of 3 shots in the vitals from 50 yards with your firearm.

Qualifications must be witnessed by a qualified member appointed by the Shooting Sports Director. At the time of qualification you will be required to:

- Pay a non-refundable fee (set by the hunters the previous year, not to exceed \$50.00 per method).
- Sign an agreement and waiver form.

**All forms must be signed and all fees paid BEFORE anyone is allowed to qualify or hunt.** All fees will be earmarked for Archery/Slug and used for related items. If fees and/or waivers are not signed/paid by opening date, you will be removed from the hunting list. To hunt the following season you must go through the qualification process again.

Effective April 1, 2012, a cap of **25 full memberships** was set for deer hunting. Spouses and children are grandfathered in; children of members must become full members at age 18 to retain hunting rights, but will not need to requalify.

**If you show up and do not qualify, there is no requalification process until the following season (last Saturday of April).** There is only **one qualification date**. Missing it means waiting until next

season. When an opening becomes available, the next qualified hunter on the waiting list will be notified. Contact the Shooting Sports Director to check for immediate openings.

## SEASON

Archery and Slug/Muzzleloader seasons vary from year to year. Refer to the *Illinois Digest of Hunting Regulations* for the current season. Archery hunters may hunt on slug dates and during Muzzleloader season on private property (**blaze orange must be worn**) in **Zones 6 and 7 only**. Only qualified and eligible hunters may hunt in designated areas.

Deer limit: **two deer per season (only one may be a buck)**. This limit may change per DNR Herd Management and board approval. A valid hunting license, habitat stamp, and deer tags (Archery and Slug/Muzzleloader) are required for each deer taken.

**All hunters must sign in and out before and after every hunt.** Failure to do so will result in loss of hunting privileges for that season. All deer killed or wounded must be signed out.

## DESIGNATED AREA

During deer hunting season, **no other club members** are allowed on the east side of the creek, south of the trap range and south of the back road, with the exception of waterfowl and deer hunters. The area past the stop sign near the back campground is also closed to non-hunters. Please observe all posted signs.

**Archery:** 7 zones available. Only one hunter per zone. Exception: if two hunters agree, sign in, and walk in together, two hunters may bow hunt in the same zone. During Slug/Muzzleloader season, bow hunting is permitted in **Zones 6 and 7 only**.

**Slug/Muzzleloader:** 5 zones available (Zones 1–5 only). **One hunter per zone during any slug season — NO EXCEPTIONS.** See the posted map for zone locations. All state laws apply.

## DEER HUNTER MEETINGS

**First Meeting:** Held at 12:00 pm on qualification day (last Saturday of April). Topics include: rule review and amendments (subject to board approval), and the hunters' budget.

**Second Meeting:** Held at 12:00 pm on the **last Saturday in July**. Topics include: tree stand placement, Slug/Muzzleloader hunting date selection, and CWD/Late Season Antlerless date consideration.

### Attendance matters:

- If you do not attend the second meeting, your name will NOT be included in the tree stand placement drawing.
- Your name will NOT be added to the first Slug/Muzzleloader date drawing unless you attended at least one of the two meetings.
- Your name WILL be added to the second drawing along with other absent and present hunters.

Hunters may exchange Slug dates with fellow hunters **during the second meeting only**, and must notify the Shooting Sports Director so the change is recorded. Old and new rule amendments will be reviewed at this meeting. Attendance is strongly encouraged for stand placement, date selection, and to stay current on all rules.

## RULES 2026/2027

1. **All local, state, and federal laws apply.**
2. Ground hunting with a blind is allowed during Archery season **in Zones 1–6 only**. Ground blinds must be taken down and carried out at the end of each day's hunt.
3. Hunters are required to work at least one **Woods Maintenance Work Party** to help maintain hunting grounds. **These work parties count as club work parties. Attendance is MANDATORY to be eligible to hunt.** No person is exempt. Dates will be available at the Deer Creek sign-ups. Every effort will be made to accommodate hunters with disabilities.
4. All tree stands are shared throughout the season. Stands are used by hunters of all sizes and ages. Safety is the priority — **a safety harness is required at all times in an elevated stand.**
5. **All hunters must participate in putting up at least one tree stand** to be eligible to hunt.
6. Deer may be retrieved with four-wheelers or golf carts **after shooting time ends** (one half hour after sunset).
7. **All tree stands must be removed by March 31st.** (Refer to Coyote rules for exemptions.) Notify the Shooting Sports Director if you are unable to remove your stand. Stands remaining after March 31st without notification will result in loss of hunting privileges and requirement to requalify the following year.
8. If you shoot a deer and cannot locate it, it **counts as one of your two deer**. You must sign it out.
9. **A hunter may take only one buck per season** from Deer Creek property, regardless of method (Archery or Slug/Muzzleloader).
10. Morning hunters must be at the front gate **one hour before shooting time** to sign in, and in their stands 30 minutes before shooting time. If two hunters arrive simultaneously and want the same zone and cannot agree, a coin flip will decide. Afternoon hunters must be in their stands **one hour after signing in**.
11. Slug/Muzzleloader hunters may sign in and out of their zone for lunch on their designated day and must record this in the sign-in book. **This does not apply to CWD or Late Season Antlerless seasons**, which are treated the same as Archery — you sign in and out and cannot hold your spot for lunch.
12. Stands may go up immediately after the July meeting. **All stands must be up by Labor Day.** If you cannot meet this deadline, contact the Shooting Sports Director to make arrangements.
13. New “hunting” members who join after qualifications must wait until the following year to qualify.
14. Everything you bring into the woods must be packed out: bottles, cans, food wrappers, cigarette packs, and all other garbage. **Leave no trace.**
15. Hunters must be **18 years of age or older** to hunt alone at Deer Creek with Slug/Muzzleloader or Archery equipment; all fees apply. (Fees are waived for hunters 15 and under.) Hunters 18 and under must be accompanied by an adult. All other state laws apply.
16. Each zone will have **3 tree stands, one of which must be a double stand**, so that youth hunters may enjoy the experience with their parents/guardians. No stands may be moved or added once they are in place, or after the September 1st deadline.

- 17. Portable tree stands are allowed** but must be set up and taken down the same day. A safety harness is required.
- 18. Slug/Muzzleloader hunting dates are non-transferable after the second meeting.** If you do not appear at the gate one hour before shooting time, the next hunter in drawn order takes your place. Standby hunters must coordinate among themselves (coin toss, draw from hat, etc.) for any remaining open zones.
- 19.** Any hunter may submit a signed written complaint to the Shooting Sports Director or any other Deer Creek Director at any time. Complaint forms are available at the clubhouse. Complaints will be brought before the board.
- 20.** During youth gun season, **Zones 4 and 5 are dedicated to youth hunters**; all other zones remain open to bow hunters. If no youth hunter has signed in one hour before shooting time, all zones open for bow hunters. All state and federal laws apply.
- 21.** Any equipment placed in the woods for hunting purposes that does not belong to you **must not be removed or disturbed.**

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*All rules are subject to Deer Creek Board approval and may be changed at any time.*