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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Natural Tunnel State Park
Archery Permit Hunt, 2026-2027

Dear Hunter,

Thank you for participating in the Archery Permit Hunt and congratulations on the opportunity to hunt in designated areas of Natural Tunnel State Park. By accepting and using this permit, you agree that you have copies of the terms and conditions, map, and agree to follow all park and state laws governing this permit hunt.

There is a mandatory in person safety briefing that is required of all hunters. There are no exceptions to this rule. Permits will be issued at the end of the safety briefing; hunters must submit their payment of \$50 at the briefing and must be on time and present for the entire briefing to be issued a hunt permit.

The safety briefing will be held on September 24th, 2026 at 6pm at the Cover Ridge Center at Natural Tunnel State Park on Natural Tunnel Parkway and will be approximately an hour long. Bring your hunter's education certificate or card and a valid hunting license for the 2026-2027 hunting season to the briefing.

The designated permit hunting areas will not be closed to the general public. Non-hunting park users will have access to the permitted hunting zones, including but not limited to hikers, bikers, and anglers. It is also possible that park staff will be in these hunt areas working and using equipment. Please be aware of other park users in the permitted hunt areas for recreational purposes and use caution and due care while hunting. Always know your backdrop, shooting lanes and target placement. You are responsible for your shot!

Hunting at Natural Tunnel has important management purposes. Offering hunters a public land recreational opportunity is one reason that hunting is offered, maintaining a healthy herd population is an important resource management objective for the park. If presented the opportunity to harvest a mature doe, we strongly encourage hunters to do so.

If you have any questions prior to the hunt, please feel free to call the park office at (276)-940-2674.

Sincerely,
Robert Chapman
Park Manager

600 East Main Street, 24th Floor | Richmond, Virginia 23219 | 804-786-6124

A century of protecting Virginia's natural and cultural treasures.

**State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Planning and Recreation Resources
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation • Public Safety and Law Enforcement**

Natural Tunnel State Park - Archery Permit

2026-2027 Terms and Conditions

The following information, rules and regulations govern the Permit Hunting in designated areas in Natural Tunnel State Park, Virginia. Any violation may result in the revocation of permit and loss of eligibility in any hunting programs sponsored by the Division of State Parks. Violations of law or State Park regulations may also result in criminal charges.

1. The permitted hunting days are;
 - a. Monday through Saturday only; no hunting is allowed on Sundays.
 - b. 2026 permit hunt dates are October 3, 2026, through January 2, 2027 (no hunting on Sundays).
 - c. Archery permit hunting is not permitted on November 9 and 10, 2026 due to the park's managed muzzleloader hunt.
 - d. Archery permit hunting is not permitted on Thanksgiving Day November 26, Christmas Day December 25, and New Years Day January 1.
 - e. Hunting times are 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.
2. Archery is the only legal weapon for the archery permit hunt. All DWR laws governing definitions of archery tackle and use, and broadhead widths shall apply to this hunt. All archery gear shall meet the requirements set forth in the current Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations.
3. Whitetail deer are the only legal game during this hunt.
4. Permit applications will be submitted to the park via email or dropping off a completed hard copy to the park office before September 15, 2026. Permits will be randomly selected via a lottery system. Only the successful applicants will pay a \$50 permit fee.
 - a. All hunters must show valid state hunting license, deer/turkey license, and archery license.
 - b. All hunters must show proof of having taken a Hunter Education course, no exceptions will be granted.
 - c. All hunters must sign the application, indicating that they have been provided with the rules and regulations and agree to abide by all rules and regulations governing this hunt.
 - d. Registered hunters will receive a hunting permit and vehicle parking pass valid for available permit hunt days during the 2026 season after participating in the mandatory hunt briefing.
5. Participants must be at least 16 years of age, or if 12-15, accompanied by a responsible adult who has a hunter education certificate. The adult will not be allowed to hunt.
6. Only the permit holder is allowed to hunt. No other person or animal shall accompany the permit holder while hunting.
7. Hunters are encouraged to scout the designated hunting areas prior to October 1st, unarmed, and during normal park hours only (8am to dusk).
8. During the Permit Hunt, all appropriate Virginia hunting license(s) will be required. All Federal and State game laws and regulations, and Division of State Parks regulations are applicable. In some instances, State Parks regulations may be above and beyond other state regulations and will be considered the standard for compliance.
9. Hunters are reminded to adhere to all safety practices. Know your backdrop, know your shooting lane, know your distance, take only ethical shots. Hunters are responsible for every arrow or bolt that they release.
 - a. Hunters are expected to make every reasonable effort to recover deer.
 - b. Recovering or dragging deer out across railroad rights-of-ways is prohibited.
10. Every hunter or person accompanying a hunter shall wear either blaze orange or blaze pink hat and upper body clothing visible from 360 degrees. If using a ground blind, blaze orange or blaze pink is required to be visible on the blind from 360 degrees, in addition to the blaze orange or blaze pink worn by the hunter.
11. Hunters will be allowed to use portable tree stands at approved locations. We highly encourage hunters to follow manufacturer's guidelines regarding the use of safety harnesses. Screw peg steps will not be allowed. Trimming of trees for shooting lanes or to secure stands is prohibited.
12. The park has designated 8 hunting zones allowing only one hunter per zone to hunt at a time. Each hunter will be given a parking pass that is specified for hunting parking only. If you arrive at the parking area for the zone you are planning to hunt and a vehicle is parked there with the hunting tag hanging on the mirror, then you must find another parking area that does not have a "hunting" vehicle parked there. It is mandatory that the parking hangtag is hung on the mirror for this reason and only park in the designated parking areas indicated on the Archery Permit Hunting Map.
13. Hunting is prohibited within 100 yards of any park boundary or facility. Hunting must be a minimum of 50 yards from any park road, trail or path intended for use by park guests, staff and volunteers. Hunters must be hunting facing away from the trails. If traveling through a non-hunting zone, archery gear shall be 'safe' during travel, no arrow nocked or bolt in charged position. Each hunter is responsible for knowing the permitted zone boundaries and where they are in relation to the boundaries.

- a. Use of Field Maps mobile application and Permit Archery Zone map is highly recommended. Instructions for downloading the Field Maps app are included in this package. Park staff can also provide information for download, the map and download are free. Zones are not physically marked in the field.
14. Hunters may track deer within the permitted hunt zones. If leaving a hunt zone to track, contact park staff first. All weapons shall be made 'safe,' no arrow nocked or bolt charged. Do not track off of park property. If a deer leaves the park onto private property, call 276-940-0450 for permission from the neighboring landowner for assistance for permission of retrieval.
15. There will be no shooting from or across roads, across trails, across water, or across park boundaries.
16. Hunting with dogs is prohibited.
17. No drugs or alcoholic beverages.
18. Baiting is prohibited. Artificial deer lure is permissible.
19. Use of reflective tacks or anything with the intent of marking a trail is prohibited.
 - a. Marking tape may be used while tracking a deer but shall be removed after the track.
20. Park in designated areas only, do not block access to gates or service roads.
 - a. Always clearly display your Archery Permit parking pass in your vehicle so it is readable. Always carry your Archery Permit on your person.

This hunt is conducted under the Department of Wildlife Resources Deer Population Reduction Program (DPOP). Each hunter will be provided with 3 DPOP tags that can be used to take an antlerless deer only (doe or button buck) during the Natural Tunnel archery permit hunt. The DPOP tag is not valid on any hunting lands other than Natural Tunnel State Park. Taking one antlered deer is permitted given a doe is harvested first, however the hunter will have to use their own big game tag. As a resource management hunt with the intent to keep the park's herd stable, targeting and taking mature does is encouraged. All deer taken in the park, both antlerless and antlered, shall be brought to the park's check station at the Stock Creek Interpretive Center where a data gathering station will be set up for hunters to record metrics and remove a jawbone for aging. All unused tags must be returned to the park by Saturday, January 9 either in person or by mail.

1. All deer taken shall have either the DPOP tag for an antler-less deer or the hunter's Big Game Tag for a buck notched immediately. Antler-less deer shall be checked in either by phone or internet before leaving the park. The confirmation number, date, sex of harvest, and hunter's name shall be written on the DPOP data sheet at the Stock Creek Interpretive Center check station prior to leaving the park for all deer harvested. The check-in confirmation number for antlered bucks shall be recorded on the data sheet before leaving the park.
2. One antler-less deer, preferably a doe shall be taken before an antlered buck may be harvested. Only one antlered buck is allowed to be harvested in the hunting season for the archery hunt. No antler-point restrictions apply.
3. All deer taken during the archery permit hunt shall be immediately brought to the park check station on the same day of harvest. Field dress deer a minimum of 35 yards from roads, trails, paths, park boundaries or structures.
4. Any wounded deer or unsuccessful tracks shall be reported to park staff immediately, on the same day.
 - o Failure to report any harvest, failure to report unsuccessful track or wounded deer or failure to bring harvested deer to the check station shall result in immediate revocation of hunting permit and possible criminal charges.
5. Park staff can be reached at the park office between the hours of 8am and 4:30pm (276)-940-2674 or the Ranger on duty at 276-940-0450 after 4:30pm. Staff may be available to assist in tracking or removal if close to a UTV accessible area if needed.

All permit hunt zones will remain open to the general public during the permit hunt. Non-hunting park users will have access, which may include hikers, bikers, and anglers. Be aware of other users within the hunt zone and exercise extreme caution.

The Division of State Parks, Natural Tunnel State Park, reserves the right to close the permitted hunt or to close any/all zones in the event that the number of deer taken exceeds what is needed for herd control, or for other reasons as deemed necessary by park management.

All Virginia hunting laws and regulations are applicable during the permit hunt unless otherwise exempted above or to a higher standard required by the Division of State Parks. Hunters in violation of any hunt regulation, State Park regulation or State law are subject to revocation of permit and possible criminal charges.

By signing the Archery Permit Hunt application, you are acknowledging that you have received a copy of these regulations and understand all regulations. Any hunter under the age of 18 must have a parent/guardian also sign the application.

For any questions regarding this hunt or the above regulations, contact Robert Chapman, Park Manager, at (276) 594-2391 or Robert.Chapman@dcr.virginia.gov.

For any questions or assistance needs while hunting, contact park staff at (276) 940-0450.

Field Maps Instructions



To fully utilize the benefits of the digital copy of the map, hunters should download the free app named **'Field Maps'**. This app is available for both Android and iOS. This app will allow you to use the hunt map in a similar manner to Google Maps or other mapping software. You will be able to geo-locate yourself on the hunt map, as well as drop point markers. This will allow you to better locate your stand as well as mark any areas of interest you may want to revisit if you are attending a zone hunt. One of the benefits of this app is you do not need phone service. The map is saved onto your phone and all you need to navigate is a GPS signal.

- 1. Visit your app store (Google Play or Apple's App Store) and search for 'Field Maps'.**
- 2. Download and install the app.**
- 3. Press "Skip sign in".**
- 4. In the search bar, search for the park in which you are hunting. For example, typing in "Lake Anna State Park" in the Field Maps search bar, will bring up the Lake Anna State Park map (the park map) AND the Lake Anna State Park Hunt map. You can then download the map for free within Field Maps.**
 - You may also press the link on our hunt website (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/hunting>), which will directly link you to the download of that park within Field Maps.
- 5. When you're in the park, open the Field Maps app, and choose the appropriate map. Your location will show up as a small blue dot within the map.**

NOTE: You may need to turn on "allow downloads with cellular data" in your phone's settings if you are not connected to wifi when downloading a map.

NATURAL TUNNEL STATE PARK ARCHERY PERMIT HUNTING

