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Antietam National Battlefield Monocacy National Battlefield

News Release

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National Park Service Announces Public Meetings for Development of a Chronic Wasting Disease Plan

The National Park Service (NPS) is developing a plan and environmental assessment to respond to the potential threat of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) to white-tailed deer. The purpose of the plan is to develop a range of strategies for the detection of and initial response to chronic wasting disease in white-tailed deer at Antietam and Monocacy National Battlefields, since the disease has been detected near the park units and may threaten park resources. CWD has not been detected in Maryland; however, it has been detected in West Virginia within a 60-mile radius of several national parks. The plan will also serve as a template environmental planning document for other National Park Service units in the eastern United States.

CWD is in the family of diseases known as the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) or prion diseases. It is a self-propagating neurological disease that affects captive and free-ranging deer, causing brain lesions that result in progressive weight loss, behavioral changes, and eventually death in affected animals. There is currently no evidence that the disease is transmissible to humans or domestic livestock.

Presenting at the meeting will be the Superintendent of the hosting park and personnel from the NPS Environmental Quality and Biological Resource Management Divisions. After the presentations, the open house format will include a series of stations and posters for the public to view and read more about the planning process and chronic wasting disease and provide the opportunity to submit a comment or ask questions. In addition to National Park Service personnel, a biologist from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Heritage Service, Deer Project will be participating in the open house to provide information on the State of Maryland's Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan.

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Scoping is the first step to involve the public in the environmental impact analysis process. Scoping includes holding meetings and providing opportunities for the public to comment, so that concerns are identified early and the analysis focuses on important issues. Two public meetings, identical in format, will be held to introduce the public to this planning process and provide a forum for receiving public input. The first meeting will be held on Monday, February 12, 2007 in the Visitor's Center at Antietam National Battlefield, Sharpsburg, Maryland off MD Route 65, 10 miles south of I-70 (Exit 29) and 1 mile north of Sharpsburg. The second meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2007 in the Gambrill House at Monocacy National Battlefield, Frederick, Maryland off MD Route 355, three miles south of the City of Frederick. The Gambrill House is located near the Monocacy Visitor Center at 4801 Urbana Pike. Both meetings will begin at 6:30 pm and end at 9:00 pm. The format will include an initial sign-in and open house, followed by a welcome and presentations, and conclude with an additional open house format.

Public comment will be accepted at either of the public scoping meetings or electronically at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/anti>. Comments will be accepted until March 16, 2007. Additional information about the battlefields can be found at www.nps.gov/anti and www.nps.gov/mono.

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