

TUCKAHOE EQUESTRIAN CENTER
FOUNDATION, INC.

P.O. BOX 251
DENTON, MARYLAND 21629

February 2, 2026

HB 186 - BOW HUNTING ON SUNDAYS

OPPOSED

On behalf of Tuckahoe Equestrian Center's 250-350 members, I implore you not to pass HB 186. From early September to the end of January – and again in March-April for turkey season, there are distressingly few days left when the non-hunting public can enjoy a walk in the woods – or even his own backyard – without the fear of interrupting a hunter. This bill would reduce hunting-free days even further, astronomically in some affected counties.

Tuckahoe Equestrian Center is located centrally on the Eastern Shore between Caroline and Queen Anne's Counties. Our members come from across Maryland as well as from Delaware and Pennsylvania to ride and camp in Tuckahoe State Park. Many members come because they have no place to ride where their horses are boarded. I come to Tuckahoe not because we don't own property of our own, but because three properties that surround ours are rented to hunters. But what about the horse owners who don't have trailers? Where can they ride?

Public property such as Tuckahoe State Park is also bordered by private land, and property lines in the woods can be very often difficult to determine. Excerpts from DNR's Annual Hunting Accident Reports detail numerous incidents of bullets that "shattered a window", "struck a chandler", "blew out drywall", "lodged in a recliner", etc. There is also a report in 2019 of a hunter who shot a cross-bow through a Honda SUV while it was parked in the victims driveway. Cross bows are powerful weapons.

Turkey season is often considered more dangerous than deer season. The combination of deceptive camouflage, alluring calls, and close-range encounters increases the risk of being shot by another hunter who mistakes you for prey. Perhaps this is why the biker in Tuckahoe State Park got shot in the legs in 2021 (another accident NOT reported by DNR).



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The lack of park staffing on Sunday is also an issue. Brenda Kibler, a retired DNR officer, was quoted in the 2021 issue of the Star Democrat: DNR was often short-staffed, and hunting accidents were common – there were constant hunting complaints...it was ridiculous...and Sunday is a hard day to enforce because officers need days off, too.” Ms. Kibler predicts DNR will be even more stretched if hunting is allowed on more Sundays (please see attached).

Because non-hunters are a diverse group with varied interests, there is no single focus umbrella organization to lobby on their behalf. According to the 2016 US Fish and Wildlife Census 83% of Marylanders consider themselves Wildlife Watchers (birdwatchers, hikers, photographers, etc).

Does money talk? Comparing expenditures, in the 2016 census Wildlife Watchers spent 75.9 billion compared to hunters who spent 26.2 billion, nearly 3 times as much as hunters.

Our population is growing and hunting confrontations are bound to increase due to pressure on access to finite public and private outdoor spaces.

How many more accidents would there be if the perception of danger didn't keep many Marylanders inside, rather than enjoying a walk in the woods?

We need to encourage our children to get outside and explore nature rather than create obstacles to the outdoors.

Legislators should represent non-hunters as well as the 3% who hunt.

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