

# Hunting in the NFGT

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Licenses:

#### **What kind of licenses do I need to hunt on Forest Service land?**

Texas Hunting License on General Forest land and Texas Hunting License and Annual Public Hunting Permit (also referred to as 'Type II' permit) on WMAs, with the appropriate endorsements; archery, migratory bird, etc.

#### **What kind of licenses or permits do I need to hunt on a WMA on Forest Service land?**

Texas Hunting License and Annual Public Hunting Permit (also referred to as 'Type II' permit) on WMAs with the appropriate endorsements...archery, migratory bird, etc.

#### **Where can I buy the Annual Hunting Permit and how much does it cost?**

Where Texas Hunting Licenses are sold.

#### **Are youth required to have the Public Hunting Lands Permit to hunt in a WMA?**

No, as long as the youth (under the age of 17) is hunting with someone who is in possession of one and is within normal voice range of that person.

#### **Antlerless Permits for WMAs (with the exception of the Caddo WMA)**

Antlerless Deer Permits are no longer administered by the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (U.S. Forest Service). Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will conduct Antlerless Deer permit applications and selections. For information on Antlerless Deer Permits, contact Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at (936) 569-8547.

#### **Why do we not issue antlerless permits for the General Forest areas?**

TPWD determines if and when antlerless permits can be issued on National Forests and Grasslands in Texas. Due to challenges with collecting accurate harvest records and deer population data, TPWD does not issue antlerless permits for the General Forest.

#### **Can a Youth harvest an antlerless deer without a Permit on U.S. Forest Service Lands?**

Yes, during youth-only seasons.

#### **Is a Limited Use Permit required to hunt on National Forest?**

No, the U.S. Forest Service is exempt from the Limited Use Permit

### Means and Methods:

#### **What kind of guns and ammo can I use to kill a deer?**

(Outdoor Annual/Public Hunting Lands booklet – Means and Methods)

No rim-fire during Deer gun season.

#### **Can you use buckshot for deer?**

Yes, in the General Forest

No, in the WMA

(Public Hunting Lands Booklet under Means and Methods). Slugs only in WMA

\*Possession of buckshot in WMA is illegal\*

#### **Can you spear a deer from a tree?**

No, a spear is not identified under the legal Means and Methods (Outdoor Annual) as a legal method to harvest deer, hogs or any game.

#### **What is the rule on loaded firearms?**

It is prohibited to possess a loaded firearm within the following locations or sites: (a) a designated campsite; (b) a designated vehicle parking area; (c) a designated boat launching facility or area; (d) a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department or U.S. Forest Service Check Station; (e) a designated archery-only area. This prohibition will not apply to a handgun in the possession of a person who holds a valid Texas License to Carry Handgun permit for that handgun. 36 C.F.R. 261.53(e)

It is also prohibited to possess a loaded firearm within or on a motor vehicle. This prohibition will not apply to a handgun in the possession of a person who holds a valid Texas License to Carry Handgun permit for that handgun. 36 C.F.R. 261.53(e)

#### **What does it mean to have a loaded gun?**

According to the Public Hunting Lands book...a firearm containing a live round of ammunition within the chamber and/or magazine or, if muzzle loading, one which has a cap on the nipple or a priming charge in the pan.

### **Can I use suppressors?**

It is legal to harvest game animals with suppressors in Texas.

### **Can I carry a handgun while bow hunting?**

Yes, but cannot be used for hunting purposes.

### **Can I carry a loaded handgun while just walking out in the woods scouting for personal protection?**

Yes, as long as it is not concealed. If you have a Texas License to Carry Permit, it can be carried openly or concealed on your person in accordance with the Texas License to Carry Program, Texas Government Code 411, Sub Chapter H.

### **Can I have a loaded gun in the camp, in my tent, for personal protection?**

Only if you possess a Texas License to Carry Permit and adhere to The Texas License to Carry Program handgun laws. (Public Hunting Lands Booklet – Means and Methods)

### **Where can I sight in my gun?**

It is legal to target shoot in the General Forest, with the exception of the Caddo-LBJ National Grasslands, as long as you do not shoot from, down, across a road, have a sufficient back stop (not a live tree), and pick up your trash (targets, empty shells, etc.) when you leave. This is an example of referring to the Code of Federal Regulations. Target shooting is prohibited in the WMA on all units of the NFGT:

Angelina NF, Davy Crockett NF, Sabine NF, Sam Houston NF, Caddo NG.

CFR 261.58(m) states PROHIBITED: DISCHARGING A FIREARM, AIR RIFLE, OR GAS GUN FROM, INTO, OR ACROSS ANY PARKING AREA, TRAIL, BOAT RAMP OR FOREST DEVELOPMENT ROAD.

### Hunting:

**What age is considered to be a “Youth?”** Under 17 years of age, for deer, turkey and squirrel hunting. Duck hunting, it is 15 years of age or younger (Outdoor Annual).

### **Does the Youth have to sit in the same stand as the adult?**

No, youth under 12 years of age must remain within normal voice distance of an adult supervisor. For youth ages 12 to 16 who have received hunter education certification, the requirement for immediate

supervision is relaxed to the extent that the supervising adult is required only to be present on the public hunting unit (Public Hunting Lands Booklet).

### **Can I hunt coons with dogs at night in the general forest during deer season?**

Yes

### **Is hunting allowed in the Wilderness Areas?**

Yes.

### **Can you field dress a deer on National Forest?**

Yes

### **Is it legal to harvest an antlerless deer during muzzleloader season?**

Yes. If the outdoor annual doesn't require an antlerless permit for National Forest under the county listings during muzzleloader season then you may harvest whatever you have left from your county bag limit, not to exceed the state bag limit of five does. Note: the Caddo-LBJ National Grassland does not have this season.

### **Is it legal to harvest an antlerless in the national forest during archery season?**

Yes. You can harvest two antlerless deer per county (not to exceed the statewide maximum of 5 deer total for the hunting year) during the archery season (WMA or General Forest). You must use the tags off of your hunting license.

### **Is it legal to harvest an antlerless deer in the national forest during the general season?**

This depends on whether you are hunting WMA or General Forest and whether you are on one of the forests or one of the grasslands. For WMAs on the Forests (not the Grasslands), the harvest of an antlerless deer is by permit only (found under county listings “no antlerless permit required except on National Forest). The NFGT does not issue permits for the General Forest, therefore it is illegal to harvest an antlerless deer during the general gun season in the General Forest (Forests, not Grasslands).

If you possess an antlerless deer permit for a WMA (Moore Plantation, Bannister, Alabama Creek, Sam Houston) then you are permitted to harvest an antlerless deer in the WMA with that permit, not one off of your hunting license. If you have already harvested two antlerless deer during archery season and have a WMA antlerless deer permit, then you are permitted to harvest a third antlerless deer during the general gun season in the designated WMA. You need

to possess the Annual Public Hunting Permit to hunt in the WMA.

As for the Grasslands, the harvesting of antlerless deer, whether on the Caddo WMA or the LBJ General "Forest", is permitted only during the specified antlerless days that are listed in the Outdoor Annual and the Public Hunting Lands booklet. There are no Antlerless Permits issued for the Caddo WMA or the LBJ.

### **How many deer can you harvest?**

You can harvest 5 deer statewide. No more than 3 bucks (Be sure to stay within the bag limit of the county you are in. For example, if the limit in County A is 2 bucks and the limit in County B is 2 bucks, then you can take 2 bucks in either County A or B and then only one more buck in the other county).

In the WMAs, the bag limit is one buck. This is included in your total county limit. For example:

Sabine County bag limit is two bucks. If you harvest a buck on the Moore Plantation WMA, you can now only harvest one more buck in the whole of Sabine County, not two more. However, a deer harvested and tagged using your antlerless deer permit will not count toward your county or statewide limits.

### **Where do I measure on a deer for the 13 inch antler restriction?**

The inside spread of the antlers.

### **Can I use corn or other bait to hunt deer?**

No. Baiting wildlife and hunting over baited areas is prohibited. However, this prohibition does not apply to the use of traps or snares for the taking of furbearing and predatory animals (see the Outdoor Annual for a list of specific species) in accordance with applicable state and federal law. 36 CFR 261.58(v)

### **Can I hunt deer in Archery Season with a deer decoy?**

Yes (Outdoor Annual, Legal Methods-Decoys).

### **Are game cameras legal and are they considered baiting?**

Yes, they are legal and No, they are not considered baiting...not a food substance. (Outdoor Annual). However, game cameras cannot be nailed to a tree and the Forest Service is not responsible for lost or stolen game cameras.

### **Is doe urine considered baiting?**

No, it is not considered baiting, not a food substance (Outdoor Annual).

### **Am I required to register on-site and/or to bring my harvest to a check station?**

For the General Forests, No. For the Caddo WMA, No. For the other NFGT WMAs, No to onsite registration, but Yes to check station (please refer to the Public Hunting Lands booklet for more info.)

### **Can I deer hunt from a boat?**

No, you cannot hunt deer from a boat. You can hunt migratory birds (waterfowl) from a boat if the sail and/or motor are not in use. (Outdoor Annual)

### **How far off the lakeshore do I have to be to hunt?**

There's no designation of distance; however, it is illegal to discharge a firearm across a public body of water unless engaged in lawful waterfowl hunting.

### **How far off the road do you have to be to hunt?**

Outside the maintained right-of-way; however, in the WMA it is illegal to construct or place a hunting blind, stand, tower or platform within 50 yards of any designated road, marked unit boundary, or designated campsite.

### **What about hiking trails?**

Hiking trails are identified as occupied areas, because they can potentially be occupied at any time; therefore, there is a 150 yard buffer on hiking trails.

The designated Hiking Trails on the NFGT are:

Sawmill Hiking Trail (Angelina NF), Four C Hiking Trail (Davy Crockett NF), Piney Creek Horse Trail (Davy Crockett NF), Trail Between the Lakes (Sabine NF) Lone Star Hiking Trail (Sam Houston NF), Multi-Us Trail (Sam Houston NF), Double Lake Bike Trail (Sam Houston NF), LBJ Multi-Use Trail (LBJ NG) and Bois d'Arc Multi-Use Trail (Caddo NG)

### **While hunting, can I park in the woods or logging roads?**

No, the road has to be an open road on the MVUM (Forest Service Motor Vehicle Use Map) to be traveled legally.

### **Can I leave my box/tree/ground/climbing stand on the Forest for the entire deer season?**

No, placing or leaving a hunting stand on the Forests or Grasslands for more than 72 hours is prohibited. For the purpose of this Order, a 'hunting stand' includes any structure or device used to elevate, camouflage or hide a person so that wildlife may be hunted or observed. 36 CFR 261.58(v)

### **Can I have alcohol in the camp sites or Hunter Camps?**

It is illegal to publically consume or display an alcoholic beverage, however it is considered legal if you are within your camp and not causing a disturbance. (Forest Supervisor's Orders) (Public Hunting Lands Booklet)

### **Can I camp anywhere in the forest during Hunting Season?**

No, Camping is only allowed in designated campgrounds, designated hunt camps or designated camp sites from September 26<sup>th</sup> – January 8<sup>th</sup>; except for the Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) National Grasslands in Wise and Montague Counties. (Forest Supervisor Order)

### **How long can I camp in the Hunter Camps?**

14 consecutive days during a 30-day time period CFR 261.58(a). However, visitors can now camp up to 28 days at selected recreation areas in the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas. Campers should alert camp hosts, if there is one, when planning to stay longer than 14 days. Camping equipment cannot be left unattended for more than 24 hrs. No matter the location hunter camps or rec areas.

Extended camping is offered at:

#### **Davy Crockett – Ratcliff Lake Recreation**

Area, Sites: 7, 9, 16, 20, 26, 32, 43 and 45

#### **Sabine National Forest:**

Indian Mounds Recreation Area, Sites: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17 – 26, 2, 30, 33, 35, 36 and 37

Lakeview Recreation Area, Sites: 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10

Ragtown Recreation Area, Sites: 3 thru 24

Willow Oak Recreation Area, Sites: RV-1 thru RV-7

#### **Sam Houston National Forest:**

Stubblefield Recreation Area, Sites: 20 thru 29

### Hogs:

Under the rules and regulations, feral hogs are not furbearing animals but are considered Exotic animals (Outdoor Annual)

### **What kind of weapon can I use to kill a hog?**

During general hunting seasons, all legal firearms, archery, and crossbows may be used to take feral hogs. (Public Hunting Lands Booklet)

### **Is it legal to hunt hogs with dogs on the General Forest at night?**

Yes. A courtesy call to the local sheriff would be appreciated.

Not on Caddo unless specified.

Dogs may be used to aid in the hunting of any game bird other than turkey on the General Forest.

### **Can you hunt feral hogs at night in the WMA?**

No, Hunting of feral hogs is restricted to daylight hours only. (Public Hunting Lands Booklet)

### **Can you hunt feral hogs with a firearm in the WMA during archery season?**

Yes, hog season is open year round - and you can use all legal means and methods within all the NFGT WMAs except for the Sam Houston WMA and Caddo WMA. Sam Houston WMA has the archery only area - no firearms period. The Caddo WMA has a season for feral hogs and you can only use a bow during archery season for feral hogs (please refer to the Public Hunting Lands booklet on the Caddo WMA for more information).

### **What other restrictions are there on hunting with dogs within the WMA?**

It is illegal to hunt deer, turkey, and feral hogs with dogs (Public Hunting Lands Booklet). It is illegal to hunt furbearers or predatory animals during daylight hours within an open general season for deer (Public Hunting Lands Booklet).

Dogs may be used to hunt squirrel, rabbits, hares, furbearing animals, predatory animals, and game birds (other than turkey) during the open seasons for those species (Public Hunting Lands Booklet).

### Pack it in/Pack it out:

Upon leaving after stay limit ALL LITTER needs to be removed by camper/hunters. There is no trash pickup/ service for many of the NFGT Hunter Camps.

Please be courteous and take your trash with you.

IT IS PROHIBITED TO DUMP TRASH ON THE FOREST!

### Campfires:

Camp fires should be OUT COLD before leaving camp. Campfires are not to be left unattended in a burning state while out in the field or after pulling camp.

### Hunter Orange:

CFR261.58(v) PROHIBITED: Hunting or accompanying a hunter during any permitted hunting season without wearing 400 Sq. inches of daylight fluorescent orange, with a minimum of 144 Sq. inches visible on both chest and back, and daylight fluorescent headwear, except when hunting turkey, migratory birds, furbearing animals or predatory animals at night.

### **Do I have to wear hunter orange during Archery Season?**

Yes, except for fur-bearing or predatory animals at night or when hunting turkey or migratory birds (USFS Hunting Guide).

### **Can I use hunter orange camouflage (the mingled orange with black in a camouflage pattern) as my 144 sq. in. of hunter orange?**

No. The vest must be solid hunter orange. The hat can be a camouflage orange pattern.

### **Can I remove my hunter orange when I get to where I am hunting or to my hunting stand?**

No.

#### ATVs, UTVs, Four Wheelers:

### **Can I ride a four wheeler on the National forest?**

No, except on designated ATV/UTV trails. However, you cannot hunt within 150 yards of designated trails.

### **Can I ride a four wheeler because I am disabled?**

No, except on designated ATV/UTV trails. However, you cannot hunt within 150 yards of designated trails.

### **Can I ride a four wheeler only to get a deer out of the woods?**

No.

### **Can I ride a bicycle on a closed FS road?** Yes, bicycles are permitted on a closed road

**Can I ride an electric bicycle on FS roads?** No, an electric bicycle has an electrically driven motor, so it is prohibited. It is no different than a gas driven motorcycle.

#### Horseback Riding:

### **Do I need a LPU (Limited Public Use) Permit to ride horseback on the WMA?**

No, you do not need a LPU permit for horseback riding on the Caddo WMA.

#### Trapping:

### **Can I trap in the National Forest?**

Furbearing Trapping is allowed by state standards and guidelines. If selling commercially, then you need to abide by state and federal law. Conducted commercial sales from NF property, in Accordance with CFR traps must be checked daily. (Within a 24 hour period).

Hog traps are not allowed. Either cage type or corral type could be considered an improvement or structure

on the forest. Improvements or structures are not permitted to be erected on the forest.

#### Forest Service Terms:

### **Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)**

The *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) presents the official and complete text of agency regulations in an organized fashion in a single publication. The Forest Service and Department of Agriculture are covered in Chapter II of the CFR. When a rule/regulation is not stated in the Outdoor Annual or Public Hunting Lands booklet, federal Law Enforcement Officers refer to the CFRs for guidance/ruling on an issue (an example of this is target shooting).

### **Forest Supervisor Order (FSO)**

These orders describe the prohibitions, closures, and regulations for the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas and are subject to updates and changes. FSOs can be for an entire forest or can also be specific to an area. FSO is normally effective for one to five years and can be renewed.

The current list of FSOs and termination orders can be found at:

[www.fs.usda.gov/goto/texas/super-orders](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/texas/super-orders)

### **District Office**

The local office for each forest and grassland. Addresses and contact information located in the NFGT Hunting Guide.

### **General Forest**

The National Forest land that is *not* part of the WMAs is referred to as General Forest. You are not required to buy the \$48 Annual Public Hunting Lands Permit (also referred to as the Type II Permit) to hunt within General Forest. Rules and regulations are different on General Forest than on WMAs.

### **Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM)**

This map shows all roads that can be legally used by vehicles (not ATVs/UTVs, as suggested in the Public Hunting Lands Booklet, but DOT approved vehicles – cars, trucks, etc.). Basically, if a road is *not* on this map, you (the public) *cannot* legally drive on that road. This is regardless of whether or not that road is gated/not gated or unlocked/locked. CFR 261.54(d) these maps are free at the District Offices.

## **Outdoor Annual (OA)**

The rules and regulations handbook published every year by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This rulebook covers the entire state of Texas. The General Forest basically uses this rulebook, with the exception of a few Forest Supervisor's Orders (for Example: Baiting (of any kind) is not allowed on U.S. Forest Service lands but is legal on private lands.) The Outdoor Annual is available, for free, wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold and at U.S. Forest Service District Offices.

## **Public Hunting Lands**

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department uses this term to refer to the Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). This can also be a general term referring to any public lands, either General Forest or WMA. General Forest areas and Forest Service WMAs are both National Forests lands, but have slightly different hunting regulations.

## **Prohibited**

Legal term for not legal. If something is Prohibited – you cannot do it! Example: Baiting wildlife and hunting over baited areas is prohibited. This means you cannot use bait to hunt deer, turkey, etc.

## **Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)**

Areas of the NFGT that are managed in partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) with emphasis on game species management. You are required to purchase the \$48 Annual Public Hunting Permit (Also referred to as the 'Type II' permit) Rules and regulations are different on WMAs than on General Forest.

## **WMAs on NFGT:**

- Moore Plantation (Sabine)
- Bannister (Angelina)
- Alabama Creek (Davy Crockett)
- Caddo (Caddo National Grassland)
- Sam Houston (the entire Sam Houston

National Forest is a WMA)

## **Notes on the differences between General Forest and WMA land**

Think of the WMA portion on NF land as state WMA Property. Hunting regulations are found in the Public Hunting Lands and Forest Supervisor's Orders.

The rest of the NF land is considered as "General Forest" or "US Forest Service", which you will find in the "Outdoor Annual" and it basically goes by County Regulations and, a few Forest Supervisor's Orders.