

# 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, the Annual Public Hunting permit costs \$48 per year (2012 cost).

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

Yes.

### Means and Methods

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

(Outdoor Annual, page 59 and Public Hunting Lands, page xi, 2nd column – Means and Methods)

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

Yes in the General Forest

No in the WMA (Public Hunting Lands Booklet pg. xi under Means and Methods)

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

You must be 150 yards off of roads, designated trails and boundaries.

#### **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-Use 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 on the MVUM to be traveled legally

#### **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.

#### **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 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 hunting or observed. 36 CFR 261.58(v)

#### **Can I carry a loaded gun in a vehicle on Federal lands?**

No (WMA Public Hunting Lands book, page xi, 2nd column – Means and Methods).

Supervisors Order ORDER NUMBER 08-13-00-09-06; 36 CFR 261.23(e): This applies to all NFGT general forest and WMA. Loaded is defined as one in the chamber, magazine loaded in weapon/ including box magazine, tubular, removable magazine still in weapon and any type of muzzleloader/ in-line muzzleloader loaded with powder, bullet/ball and cap on nipple.

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

It is prohibited (illegal) to possess a loaded rifle or shotgun in all developed recreation areas, hunter camps, boat ramps and parking areas. This applies year round, not just during hunting season. This means that you cannot have a loaded rifle or shotgun while in the hunter camp. You can have a loaded, concealed handgun with permit in accordance with the concealed handgun law. 36 CFR 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?**

No. Concealed weapons, in accordance with Concealed Handgun laws of Texas, are used for personal protection, not hunting. If you are archery hunting – you are still hunting. You may carry concealed if so permitted but the handgun is not to be used for hunting purposes no matter the species killed.

#### **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 CHL, then you can carry a concealed weapon.

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

No (Forest Supervisor's Orders) (WMA Public Hunting Lands book, page xi, 1st column)

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

No (WMA Public Hunting Lands book, page xi, 2nd column – Means and Methods)

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

14 consecutive days during a 30-day time period CFR 261.58(a). Camping equipment cannot be left unattended for more than 24 hrs. No matter the location hunter camps or rec areas.

#### **Pack it in/Pack it out**

Upon leaving after stay limit ALL LITTER needs to be removed by camper/hunters. There is no trash pick-up/service for many of the NFGT Hunter Camps. Please be courteous and take your trash with you. DO NOT 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 SQUARE INCHES OF DAYLIGHT FLUORESCENT ORANGE, WITH A MINIMUM OF 144 SQUARE INCHES VISIBLE ON BOTH CHEAST 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, page 8, 1st column).

**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.

**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 buck and the limit in County B is 2 buck, then you can take 2 buck 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.

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

Yes (Outdoor Annual, page 63, 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, page 58).

**Is doe urine considered baiting?**

No, it is not considered baiting, not a food substance (Outdoor Annual, page 58).

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

The inside spread of the antlers.

**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, yes to both (please refer to the Public Hunting Lands booklet p. 42 and pgs. 145-147 for more

information). For the other NFGT WMAs, no to on-site registration, but yes to check station (please refer to the Public Hunting Lands booklet for more info.)

**Is it legal to harvest a doe in the national forest during archery season?**

Yes. You can harvest two doe 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 doe 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 doe 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 a doe deer during the general gun season in the General Forest (Forests, not Grasslands).

If a you possess an antlerless deer permit for a WMA (Moore Plantation, Bannister, Alabama Creek, Sam Houston) then you are permitted to harvest a doe deer in the WMA with that permit, not one off of your hunting license. If you have already harvested two doe deer during archery season and have a WMA antlerless deer permit, then you are permitted to harvest a third doe 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 does, whether on the Caddo WMA or the LBJ General "Forest", is permitted only during the specified doe days that are listed in the Outdoor Annual and the Public Hunting Guide booklet. There are no Antlerless Permits issued for the Caddo WMA or the LBJ.

**Is it legal to harvest a doe 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.

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

Permits are specific to the WMA. Hunters may only apply for one Antlerless Permit. This is total. In other words, hunters may not apply for an Antlerless Permit for more than one WMA.

It is also important that hunters submit the application with the correct address. The Forest Service will send the Antlerless Permit to the address that was submitted with the application. If you will not be at your home address when the permits are mailed, submit the application with the address of somewhere you will be able to receive mail.

The Forest Service is also not responsible for permits that are lost in the mail. It is cost prohibitive to mail permits to hunters by a traceable mailing system.

Once permits are mailed from the Lufkin Supervisor's Office, the Forest Service is not responsible for delivery. The Forest Service will not issue 'replacement' Antlerless Permits for those that were lost or stolen.

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

Those areas are not co-managed with TPWD, so there are no animal counts to justify issuing doe permits.

### **Hogs**

Under the rules and regulations, feral hogs are not fur-bearing animals but are considered Exotic animals (Outdoor Annual pg. 76-77.)

### **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 book, page xiii, 2nd column.

### **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.

During deer season, you may not possess (have on you) a shotgun and buckshot or slugs while in the field with dogs for the counties that make up the Angelina, Sabine, Davy Crockett, and Sam Houston National Forests (as well as a few more East Texas counties). (Outdoor Annual pg. 63)

Dogs may be used to aid in the hunting of any game bird on the General Forest (Outdoor Annual pg. 63)

### **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. A crossbow may be used if they have a documented upper arm disability (please refer to the Public Hunting Lands booklet on the Caddo WMA (pg. 42) for more information).

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

No. Hunting of feral hogs is restricted to daylight hours only. (p. 143 of the Public Hunting Lands booklet)

### **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 pg. xii). It is illegal to hunt furbearers or predatory animals during daylight hours within an open general season for deer (Public Hunting Lands Booklet pg. xii). 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 pg. 144). WITH THE EXCEPTION OF GENERAL SEASON FOR DEER (see above).

### **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-LBJ 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.

ATVs, UTVs, Four Wheelers

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

No.

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

No.

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

No.

Youth

**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, page 59).

**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 book, page xv).

**Are youth required to have the Public Hunting Lands Permit (\$48) to hunt in a WMA?**

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

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?**

No. Hog traps (either cage type or corral type) could be considered an improvement or structure on forest. Improvements or structures are not permitted to be erected on the 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 hr period)

**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 p. 73)

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

You must be 150 yards off of roads, designated trails and boundaries. Similar to designated trails because the lake can potentially be occupied at any time, you must be 150 yds. from the lakeshore.

## 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).

**District Office**

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

### **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. FSOs can be permanent (until terminated by the Forest Supervisor) or temporary. The current list of FSOs and termination orders can be found at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/texas/home/?cid=STELPRDB5292305>

### **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 that can refer to any public lands (either General Forest or WMA). When

asking Forest Service personnel a hunting question, it is helpful if you tell us where you are hunting – General Forest or WMAs

### **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 General Forest than on WMAs.

### **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 (regulations in the Public Hunting Lands book), that is how it is regulated, with the exception of a few 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, with the exception of a few Forest Supervisor's Orders.