

Hunting on the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (NFGT)

FAQ's

Licenses:

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

Texas Hunting License on General Forest land, Texas Hunting License and Annual Public Hunting Permit (also referred to as 'Type II' permit) on WMAs, with the required endorsements; and/or stamps.

What kind of licenses or permits do I need to hunt on a Wildlife Management Area (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; and/or stamps.

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

Any retail hunting and fishing license dealer (such as sporting goods stores).

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

When hunting on public lands, youth under 17 are required to be under the immediate supervision of a duly permitted, authorized supervising adult, age 18 or older, who is licensed to hunt in Texas:

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.

Antlerless Permits for WMAs (except for the Caddo WMA)

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will conduct Antlerless Deer permit applications and selections through their online Texas Public Hunt System. If selected, deer tags will be mailed in mid October for the selected WMA area only.

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

TPWD determines if 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 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 with magazine in the firearm or, if muzzle loading, one which has a cap on the nipple or a priming charge in the pan.

*A removable magazine can be loaded if it is not in the firearm.

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, if it is legal for you to be in possession of a firearm.

Where can I sight in my gun?

It is legal to target shoot in the General Forest, except for the Caddo-LBJ National Grasslands, if 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 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 I use corn or other bait to hunt deer?

No. Baiting wildlife and hunting over baited areas is prohibited.

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

Yes (Outdoor Annual, Legal Methods-Decoys)

Can you field dress a deer on National Forest?

Yes, please refrain from cleaning and processing deer at the campsites of developed recreation areas.

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

Yes, no antlerless permit required.

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 must use the tags from your hunting license.

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

No Antlerless deer cannot be harvested on General Forest during General Season.

If you possess a valid 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 the permit was issued for ONLY. 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?

Bag limits are established by county (TPWD County Listings table, pgs. 30–45). No person may exceed the annual bag

limit of five white-tailed deer, no more than three of which may be bucks.

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

an inside spread of 13 inches or greater (unbranched antlered bucks may be of any width and do not count against the limit of ONE buck 13" or greater

Can I deer hunt from a boat?

No, you cannot hunt deer from a boat.

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

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

Am I required to register (eOSR) on-site and/or to bring my harvest to a check station?

General Forests, No.

Caddo WMA, No.

NFGT WMAs, no to onsite registration, but yes to deer check stations; The first two Saturdays mandatory deer check stations will be available. Please note if you fail to check in your harvested deer this will be deemed an illegal harvest. (Please refer to the Public Hunting Lands booklet for more info.) All WMAs on National Forest require E-On Site Registration (EOSR) with the My Hunt Harvest App through TPWD.

How long can I camp in the Hunter Camps?

14 consecutive days during a 30-day time 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

Are game cameras legal and are they considered baiting? Is doe urine considered baiting?

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

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. The 72-hour rule does not apply to game cameras.

Can I camp anywhere in the forest during Hunting Season?

No, Camping is prohibited except in designated camping areas as listed on the attached maps, from one week prior to start of Archery Season till one week after the end of Muzzleloader Season. 36 C.F.R. 261.58(e) See Exhibit A, B, C, D, E (maps) which are attached hereto and made a part hereof.

What about hiking trails?

Hiking trails are identified as developed sites 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)

Hogs:

Under the rules and regulations, feral hogs are not fur-bearing animals but are considered Exotic animals (Outdoor Annual). Hunting licenses, and WMA permit in WMAs, are required to hunt hogs on public land.

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

(Public Hunting Lands Booklet)

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

Yes.

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 hunting allowed in the Archery Only Area. 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:

Campfires 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. *County burn bans are in effect on the NFGT when designated by county officials.

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

Can I use hunter orange camouflage (the mingled orange with black in a camouflage pattern) as my 400 sq. in. of hunter orange?

No. The vest must be at minimum 144 sq. in. solid hunter orange. The hat can be a camouflage orange pattern. Hunting or accompanying a hunter within a hunt area during daylight hours at a time when hunting with firearms is permitted and failing to visibly wear: (1) a minimum of 400 inches of daylight fluorescent orange material, of which 144 square inches must appear on both the chest and back; and (2) orange headwear.

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

No.

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

ATVs, UTVs, Four Wheelers:

Can I ride a four-wheeler on the National Forest?

No, except on designated ATV/UTV trails.

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

No, except on designated ATV/UTV 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 closed roads, unless they are closed due to safety issues.

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. Non-hunting related recreation in a WMA on National Forest does not require the person to have a LPU permit.

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

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 that road is gated/not gated or unlocked/locked. CFR 261.54(d) these maps are free at the District Office Outdoor Annual (OA)

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, except for 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.

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.

***Hunting on Federal Lands • It is the responsibility of the hunter to be aware of applicable federal and state regulations on federal lands (Forest Service, National Recreation Areas, Corps of Engineers, etc.). • On the LBJ National Grasslands in Montague and Wise counties antlerless may only be taken during archery, youth-only, and during the 4-day season (known as doe days). • On all other US Forest Service (USFS) lands, antlerless deer may only be taken during archery, muzzleloader, and the youth-only season