

# Program allows diversity

The Walk-In Hunting Area program, like any other, has rules for users to follow.

This program promises every hunter who purchases a Kansas hunting license the opportunity to enjoy the state's diverse wildlife resources, state officials say. Common sense and ethical behavior will ensure the program's continuance, says the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

Here are the rules:

1) Obey the safety zone concept. Allow a buffer around livestock and buildings. Be sure of your target, as other hunters may be using the area and will likely be in camouflage.

2) If the Walk-in Hunting Area property is bordered by a hedgerow or creek, hunt only on the side which is on the leased tract. Do not walk, hunt or park on adjacent property. Hunting on the wrong side of the Walk-in Hunting Area property boundary may be a trespass violation and jeopardizes the future of the program.

3) Do no damage to standing crops.

4) Obey all Kansas hunting rules and regulations and respect the rights of the landowners and others using the area. Treat the land as if it were your own and act responsibly.

5) Take all your trash with you when you leave. If someone using the area before you left

trash, remove it also.

6) Walk-in Hunting Area tracts are for walk-in traffic only. Do not open gates or enter with vehicles. Park along the road or in areas designated for parking. Do not block access to fields, or along county roads. Landowners are working fields with big equipment, so please allow them to pass. Avoid stretching fences when crossing them.

7) The leases for Walk-in Hunting Areas are for hunting only. Other activities are prohibited, unless specifically allowed by the property owner. Do not enter buildings, abandoned or maintained.

8) Do not attempt to contact cooperating landowners for the purpose of hunting on other part of their land. Enrollment of land in the Walk-in Hunting Area program may have been done to reduce the landowner's direct contact with hunters.

9) Spring Turkey Walk-in Hunting Areas are accessible April 1 through May 31, but the actual start of the season is later than April 1. Check before embarking.

10) The following public land regulations are enforced on Walk-in Hunting Area properties: no target practice, no trapping (unless specifically allowed by property owner), no

commercial or noncommercial hunting dog training, no discharge of fully automatic rifles or fully automatic handguns, no camping, no horseback riding, no stocking or releasing of wildlife, no operation of vehicles, no fireworks, no fires, no littering, no alcohol, no destructive acts, including digging, destruction or removal of signs or vegetation.

11) Do not leave game remains in parking areas, roads or roadside ditches.

12) Report violations to a wildlife officer. Contact information is listed for the county in which you are hunting.

Sometimes sites enrolled in the program are removed. Make sure the land you are entering is posted with Walk-in Hunting Area signs. Areas that don't have the signs are not open.

If you arrive at a Walk-in Hunting Area and find that it has been cultivated or is planted to a crop such as winter wheat, don't be overly concerned. Most likely these areas have been donated to the program for the purpose of rounding out an area to make it easier to place the signs or gain access.

Money for the Walk-in Hunting Area program comes from a combination of hunting license fees and Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration.



These signs show hunters where the walk-in hunting area is at Sappa Park, east of Oberlin, in Decatur County. —Photo by Kimberly Davis/The Oberlin Herald

# Walk-In hunting assists landowners

There are several reasons for landowners to take part in the Walk-in Hunting Area program, says the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks in addition to the lease payment.

Many owners have land far from their home or don't have time to worry about who's hunting on their land. It may be more convenient for them to enroll in the state program.

Wildlife and Parks publishes a detailed map

of each county outlining each tract enrolled in the program, and hunters are asked not to contact landowners, but instead contact the department with any questions. One of the benefits of enrolling land in the program is not having to deal with hunters.

Conservation officers periodically patrol Walk-in Hunting Areas much like other public hunting areas. Violators can be ticketed

or arrested for offenses such as vandalism, littering, or failing to comply with wildlife regulations.

The program provides hunters with a place to hunt while leaving the land in private ownership. Landowners have the option to withdraw from the program at any time. They will be paid a prorated portion of the arranged lease payment and provided with signs denoting that the land

has been removed from the program.

Another primary reason landowners enroll their property in the Walk-in Hunting Area program is release of liability concerns. State law provides immunity from damages or injuries resulting from ordinary negligence when private land is leased to the state for recreational purposes, the department said.

## See Pullout Maps

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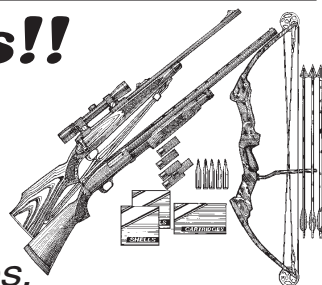
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