

Asking permission to hunt

The need for accessible land was found to be one of the biggest issues facing hunters at the 2014 North American, according to the QDMA Whitetail Report.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

In many states, the vast majority of hunting occurs on private property. Those numbers can get extremely high in states like Alabama, Texas, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska, where more than 95 percent of property is privately owned. The most obvious solution? Ask landowners for permission to use their land, to hunt. Here are some tips for those discussions to go smoothly and successfully.

BEST SHOT AT ACCESS

• Ask permission early and politely. Reach out to the landowner well in advance of

hunting season, and be sure to make a good impression. Be extremely polite and professional in making the request. If you'll be hunting with your child, bring him along so the landowner can get to know you and your family.

• Offer to help manage the land. If you're looking for access to hunt on a prime piece of property, your request might carry more weight if you offer to lend a hand in taking care of the property. Let them know you'd be willing to invest some time in the property yourself, by doing tasks such as cutting wood, planting trees, picking up trash, mending fences or marking boundary lines. If nothing else, make a note that you'll keep an eye out on the property to ensure no one else is

using it without permission. Making yourself useful can go a long way toward gaining permission.

• Offer to get insurance, and leave them your information. Have your contact information ready before you arrive (i.e. business card) so the landowner can reach you if any questions arise. Also, make a point to let the owner know you'd be willing to purchase hunting land liability insurance, so he can rest assured there will be no liability if an accident does happen on the property. For just a few cents an acre, it could make all the difference in opening up a prime hunting spot.



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ist, primarily on grasslands including those enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program as well as fields of cereal crops such as winter wheat. We continue to work in cooperation with the Governor's Habitat Work Group, landowners, partner organizations and agencies to provide an improved future for wildlife habitat in our state."

Public hunting opportunities are abundant in South Dakota. Over 1 million acres of publicly owned and private land leased through GFP's Walk-In Area Program and the James River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is available in the primary pheasant range of South Dakota. The 2015 public hunting atlas and a web-based interactive map of public lands and private lands leased for public hunting can be found online at <http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/areas>.

"Each year, the results of this survey are highly anticipated by those with a strong interest in South Dakota's hunting heritage. The availability of pheasants and pheasant hunting opportunities across the state this fall should serve to enhance that tradition," concluded Hepler. Å

South Dakota's traditional statewide pheasant hunting season opens on Saturday, Oct. 17, 2015, and runs through Jan. 3, 2016.

- See more at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/news/news/august/27.aspx#sthash.pxxJWpHk.dpuf>

Firearm Safety

Watch the Muzzle: Keep it pointed in a safe direction at all times.

Respect: Treat every fire-

arm with the respect. Keep the safety on until ready to shoot.

Awareness: Be sure of your target and what is in front of it and beyond it.

Know Your Target: Learn the identifying features of the game you hunt.

Backstop: Make sure you have an adequate backstop - don't shoot at a flat hard surface or water.

Prevent accidental discharge: Keep the finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot.

Check your barrel: Make sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions.

Ammunition: Carry only the proper ammunition for your firearm.

Unload firearms when not in use: Leave actions open and carry firearms (unloaded) in cases to and from the shooting area. Point a firearm only at something you intend to shoot. Avoid all horseplay with a gun.

Don't run, jump, or climb with a loaded firearm: Unload your firearm before you climb a fence or tree, or jump a ditch. Pull a firearm toward you by the butt, not the muzzle.

Storage: Store firearms and ammunition separately and safely. Store each in secured locations beyond the reach of children and careless adults.

Be Alert: Avoid alcoholic beverages before and during shooting. Also avoid mind or behavior altering medicines or drugs. - See more at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/outdoor-learning/hunter-education/#sthash.3Lc50Rbw.dpuf>

Ice Fishing Access

Ice fishing is a popular

winter activity and anglers need access to the popular ice fishing waters across the state. Throughout the winter, weekly snow removal will be conducted at the sites listed below. When snow conditions persist, GFP will attempt to clear snow prior to noon each Friday. Because South Dakota's weather and winds are unpredictable, access cannot be guaranteed throughout the week. Vehicle travel on the lake will be dictated by snow and ice conditions. Practice Safety! Ice anglers should be cognizant of ice depths before venturing onto any frozen body of water. Water movement, vegetation and snow cover will cause ice thicknesses to be extremely variable, especially during the early part of the winter. Like all outdoor activities, however, ice anglers must assume personal responsibility for their own safety. Ice-Thickness Guidelines for Anglers Less than four inches of ice - Stay off! Four to six inches - Ice fishing via foot travel in single-file lines should be safe, assuming the ice is clear and clean of snow. Six to 12 inches - Snowmobiles and ATVs can travel safely on good ice that is at least six inches thick. Twelve to 16 inches - Small cars and pickups can venture onto the ice once it is a foot or more thick. However, anglers are generally encouraged to avoid driving on ice that is less than 16 inches thick. More than 16 inches - Generally, a medium-sized car or mid-sized pickup can travel safely on good, clear, solid ice - See more at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/fishing-boating/tacklebox/ice-fishing-access.aspx#sthash.zdgr3iUG.dpuf>

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Hunts may be booked from October 1st through December 31st, 2015. Other packages are available upon request.

Contact Tom Allen: (402) 388-4366
or go to www.triplethunt.com

