



Greetings from the Black River State Forest! Hunting season officially arrived in mid September and with it comes many returning and new visitors to the property. This time of the year also brings many questions about hunting rules and regulations that pertain directly to the state forest. These typically fall into one of three categories that are each addressed below.

Where can I hunt is one of the most common questions. In the state forest you can hunt anywhere with the exception of within public use areas such as campground and picnic areas. The wildlife refuge within Dike 17 is also off limits except during the nine day gun deer season. Areas where hunting is not allowed are always signed as no hunting. It is important to remember that there are privately held parcels within the state forest's boundary where landowner permission would be required if you wanted to hunt on their land.

Another common question is can I set up camp anywhere in the state forest if I am hunting. The answer to this is no. Except for during the nine day gun deer season all camping must take place within a designated campground. Backpack camping is available year round but because of the restrictions placed upon this type of camping it is not usually desirable for hunters.

During the nine day gun deer season off site camping is allowed throughout most of the property. This arose during the heyday of deer hunting in Black River Falls. The three campgrounds would completely fill up creating the need for additional camping for these nine days. The solution was to allow off site camping. Over the years this has become a tradition that has passed through generations of hunters.

In order to camp off site during the nine day gun deer season you must fill out a permit through the Black River Falls DNR Service Center. Permits can also be obtained by writing to: Black River State Forest, 910 Hwy 54 East, Black River Falls, WI 54615. Hunters are given an additional information sheet at this time spelling out off site camping rules.

The last common type of question deals with where hunters can and can not drive. All roads in the state forest are open unless posted closed, or are gated, or bermed. It is illegal to travel on a closed road. All recreation trails are also closed to vehicle traffic. ATV use is only permitted for hunters who have a disability and have a permit specifically for the Black River State Forest.

One area where we do not receive many questions but do often come across violations is in the use of tree stands. Only portable tree stands are allowed on the state forest. No stand may be attached through the use of nails or screws. Tree stands must be taken down each day and must contain an identification for the owner.

For additional information on hunting regulations please visit <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/regs/>. For questions on this article or the Black River State Forest please call us at (715) 284-4103.