

TOURISM, ARTS AND HERITAGE CABINET
Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
(Amended at ARRS Committee)

301 KAR 3:010. Public use of Wildlife Management Areas.

RELATES TO: KRS 13B, 150.025, 150.620, 150.640

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 150.025, 150.620

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, pursuant to statutory authority to promulgate administrative regulations to carry out the provisions of KRS Chapter 150 as established in KRS 150.025 and as an independent department of state government within the meaning of KRS Chapter 12 as established in KRS 150.021(1), promulgated by the Commissioner with approval of the Commission in accordance with KRS 150.010(1), does hereby certify this administrative regulation is promulgated in compliance with Section 8 of 2025 RS HB6.

NECESSITY, FUNCTION, AND CONFORMITY: KRS 150.025(1) authorizes the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to promulgate administrative regulations necessary to carry out the purposes of KRS Chapter 150. KRS 150.620 authorizes the department to impose and enforce special administrative regulations on lands acquired for public hunting, fishing, and related recreational uses. This administrative regulation prohibits certain actions inconsistent with the intended purpose of Wildlife Management Areas, establishes requirements for other uses, and stipulates the procedure for obtaining group use permits on these areas.

Section 1. While upon a WMA:

(1) A person shall observe the hunting dates, limits, and other requirements that apply to the county in which the WMA is located, unless otherwise specified in:

- (a) This administrative regulation;
- (b) 301 KAR 2:049;
- (c) 301 KAR 2:132;
- (d) 301 KAR 2:140;
- (e) 301 KAR 2:142;
- (f) 301 KAR 2:144;
- (g) 301 KAR 2:178;
- (h) 301 KAR 2:222;
- (i) 301 KAR 2:225; or
- (j) 301 KAR 2:300.

(2) Except for waterfowl or dove hunting, or legal hunting at night, a person who is hunting any species, or a person who is accompanying a hunter, shall wear hunter orange clothing pursuant to 301 KAR 2:172 while:

- (a) On a WMA that is open for modern gun or muzzleloader deer seasons, pursuant to 301 KAR 2:178;
- (b) Hunting within the sixteen (16) county elk zone when a firearms elk season is open, pursuant to 301 KAR 2:132; or
- (c) Hunting within the bear zone during a bear firearms season, pursuant to 301 KAR 2:300.

(3) A person may hunt small game, furbearers, or turkey by archery during the modern gun deer season, including the first two (2) days, if the statewide modern gun deer season is closed on that area.

(4) Unless specified otherwise in 301 KAR 2:049, a person shall not allow an unleashed dog from March 1 until the third Saturday in August, except when participating in:

- (a) A department-authorized field trial;

- (b) The spring squirrel season; or
- (c) Training a retriever or other water dog, if:
 1. The activity is authorized by a sign at the body of water; and
 2. The dog remains leashed except while actively training in or within 100 feet of the body of water.
- (5) A person shall not:
 - (a) Hunt:
 1. On a WMA or portion of a WMA designated by a sign as closed to hunting; or
 2. At an established access point, launching ramp, or recreation area.
 - (b) Enter a portion of a Wildlife Management Area designated by a sign as closed to public access.
 - (c) Discharge a firearm within 100 yards of a residence or occupied building, whether or not the building is on a WMA.
 - (d) Camp, except in a designated area.
 - (e) Place or distribute bait or otherwise participate in baiting wildlife on a Wildlife Management Area. Bait shall not include the establishment and maintenance of plantings for wildlife, foods found scattered solely as the result of normal agricultural planting or harvesting practices, foods available to wildlife through normal agricultural practices of livestock feeding if the area is occupied by livestock actively consuming the feed on a daily basis, or standing farm crops under normal agricultural practices.
 - (f) Hunt over bait.
 - (g) Place trail cameras on WMAs or public hunting areas unless the trail camera is externally labeled with the owner's Fish and Wildlife customer identification number.

Section 2. Horseback Riding. A person shall not:

- (1) Ride a horse on a WMA except:
 - (a) On a trail or area specifically marked for horseback riding;
 - (b) On a maintained public road open to public vehicular traffic;
 - (c) During an event where a horse is allowed under a permit issued under the provisions of Section 5 of this administrative regulation; or
 - (d) While engaged in a legal hunting activity.
- (2) Allow a horse to roam or graze on department property.
- (3) Tether a horse in a way that would cause damage to a tree or shrub.
- (4) Participate in horseback riding during firearms seasons for turkey, deer, and elk unless participating or assisting in a legal elk hunt. Any persons legally riding horses during an elk hunt shall abide by the hunter orange requirements found in 301 KAR 2:132, Section 5(5).

Section 3. Prohibited Activities. Except as authorized by the department, on a WMA a person shall not:

- (1) Damage a tree or shrub;
- (2) Dump trash or litter;
- (3) Set fires, except for an attended campfire;
- (4) Leave a campfire unattended;
- (5) Cut or damage a fence or gate;
- (6) Deface or destroy a sign;
- (7) Destroy, harvest, or glean a crop;
- (8) Allow livestock to roam freely;
- (9) Dump the contents of a holding tank, portable toilet, or other container holding human waste;
- (10) Deface or collect artifacts from historical or archeological sites;
- (11) Ignite fireworks or rockets;
- (12) Collect or remove plants;

- (13) Place or cause to be placed an injurious substance on land or water;
- (14) Engage in an activity which:
 - (a) Is commercial in nature and intent unless specified in Section 5(3) of this administrative regulation; or
 - (b) Could:
 - 1. Unreasonably interfere with other uses or users of the area;
 - 2. Pose a risk to persons or property; or
 - 3. Damage facilities, roads, trails, or ecosystems of the area.

Section 4. Use of Mechanized Vehicles. Except as specifically authorized by the department in this administrative regulation, on a WMA, a person shall not:

- (1) Use a mechanized vehicle except:
 - (a) On a maintained road open to public use; or
 - (b) In a designated parking area;
- (2) Park in a way that would:
 - (a) Block a road or gate; or
 - (b) Prevent access to a portion of the area.

Section 5. Group Permits.

- (1) A group shall not conduct an event upon department property without obtaining a permit at least thirty (30) days before the date of the event.
- (2) An applicant shall use the "Wildlife Management Area Use Permit Application".
- (3) The department shall deny a permit for an event that involves:
 - (a) The use of mechanized vehicles, except for travel to and from the area; or
 - (b) An activity prohibited in Section 3 of this administrative regulation except that a commercial activity may be permitted if it is:
 - 1. An informational booth;
 - 2. A food vendor;
 - 3. For collecting registration or entrance fees;
 - 4. A similar ancillary activity authorized by the event permit; or
 - 5. An ecotourism event approved by the department.
- (4) The department may:
 - (a) Require the group to reschedule an event to avoid user conflicts;
 - (b) Restrict an event to a specified location within the WMA;
 - (c) Cancel a scheduled event if flooding, fire danger, or other unforeseen circumstances render the WMA unsafe or unsuitable for the event; or
 - (d) Require the group to provide portable sanitary toilet facilities if existing facilities on the WMA are inadequate for the expected size of the group.
- (5) A group that holds a valid WMA use permit for an event on a shooting range shall:
 - (a) Maintain a sign-in sheet with participants required to sign-in prior to participating in the event; and
 - (b) Submit the sign-in sheet to the department within thirty (30) days of the event by any method indicated on the application incorporated by reference in 301 KAR 3:015.
- (6) The department shall revoke the permit and cancel an event if the group's behavior:
 - (a) Is rude, obnoxious, disruptive, or disorderly;
 - (b) Creates a danger to the health or safety of other users;
 - (c) Results in damage to the area; or
 - (d) Violates a state or federal law.
- (7) The department may deny a permit to a group which has had a previous event canceled under subsection (5) of this section.

Section 6. Appeal of Permit Denial.

- (1) A person who wishes to appeal the denial of a permit shall request a hearing in writing, postmarked or delivered in person to the department no later than ten (10) days after notification of denial.
- (2) Upon receipt of the request for a hearing, the department shall:
 - (a) Appoint a hearing officer qualified to conduct hearings under the provisions of KRS Chapter 13B; and
 - (b) Schedule a hearing to be held:
 1. Prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the commission, if the request for a hearing is received more than thirty (30) days before the scheduled commission meeting; or
 2. Within thirty (30) days, if the request for a hearing is received within thirty (30) days of the next scheduled commission meeting.
- (3) The hearing officer shall conduct the hearing and present his recommendation at the commission meeting immediately following the hearing date.
- (4) The department may present evidence and call witnesses to support the suspension or revocation.
- (5) The commission shall make its decision by majority vote.
- (6) A person may appeal a decision of the commission in accordance with the provisions of KRS Chapter 13B.

Section 7. On Wildlife Management Areas not owned by the department, provisions of this administrative regulation shall not apply if:

- (1) An activity prohibited by this administrative regulation is allowed by the entity owning the property; or
- (2) An activity allowed by this administrative regulation is prohibited by the entity owning the property.

Section NaN. Section 8. Special Use Wildlife Management Areas.

- (1) Special Use Wildlife Management Areas shall be established by the Department when safety concerns arising from the size of the property or the area surrounding the property are prevalent or due to recorded deed restrictions on the subject property.
- (2) When safety concerns necessitate an area be designated a Special Use Wildlife Management Area, the area shall be subject to the following restrictions:
 - (a) The use of rimfire rifles, centerfire rifles, pistols, or single-projectile shotgun ammunition for hunting or target shooting shall be prohibited; and
 - (b) The use of air rifles shall be prohibited except .177-.25 caliber air rifles shall be allowed for small game hunting.
- (3) Special Use Wildlife Management Areas established due to deed restrictions shall have restrictions consistent with those established in the recorded deeds for the area.

Section NaN. Section 9. Incorporation by Reference.

- (1) "Wildlife Management Area Use Permit Application", 2025 Edition, is incorporated by reference.
- (2) It may be inspected, copied, or obtained, subject to applicable copyright law, at the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday or online at:<https://fw.ky.gov/Licenses/Documents/WMAUserPermitApp.pdf>.

(301 KAR 003:010. KFWR-H&F-5; 1 Ky.R. 34; eff. 10-2-1974; Am. 3 Ky.R. 153; eff. 9-1-1976; 12 Ky.R. 1746; eff. 6-10-1986; 24 Ky.R. 2422; 25 Ky.R. 62; eff. 7-7-1998; 27 Ky.R. 3152; 28 Ky.R. 78; eff. 7-16-2001; 29 Ky.R. 1321; 1766; 30 Ky.R. 2568; 31 Ky.R. 349; eff. 8-26-2004; 33 Ky.R. 1115; eff. 12-7-2006; 48 Ky.R. 48 889, 2203; eff. 5-3-2022; 51 Ky.R. 1957; 52 Ky.R. 385; eff. 9-18-2025.)

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