

ACCESS TO LAND FOR HUNTING USING YOUR PLATBOOK

Introduction

Many hunters have trouble finding land to hunt on.

Platbooks are a tool to help you find land to hunt on. Platbooks are not designed to be a direct guide to hunting land.

Platbooks provide maps of rural areas along with the names of owners of land. Actual ownership of land may have changed since the platbook you own was published.

Use platbooks to find owners of land. Then contact those owners to make sure you can hunt on their land.

Trespassing

Wisconsin's trespassing law (WI Statutes 943.13) has become more restrictive. "Under the new law, people need prior permission to enter all private agricultural land, fenced land, and undeveloped land whether or not the land is posted. Basically, people need to have permission before entering any private lands. This includes forest lands, grass lands and wetlands as well as farmland." DNR Outdoors and Conservation News, September 25, 1996 An exception to the requirement for prior permission is undeveloped, unposted land next to public land.

The maximum penalty for violating the trespass law is \$1,000.

Private Land

Platbooks will help you find the owners of land to request permission to hunt on that land. It is a good idea to get the permission in writing, if possible. Remember, permission to hunt on someone's land, does not mean you can ask additional people to hunt or that you can keep hunting there in future years.

Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law Lands Your platbook may indicate some privately owned wooded land is in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program or the Forest Crop Program. This land may or may not be open to access for hunting. (Landowners can close a certain number of MFL acres to public access.) Hunters don't have to obtain permission to use "open" lands but should consider the landowner and be courteous. Keep in mind that land may have come out of the Managed Forest Land or Forest Crop Land program since your platbook was published. Keep in mind that the right to hunt on these lands does not give you permission to drive a vehicle on the land. The local DNR Forester can assist you with questions about private land open for hunting. For more information on the Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop programs go to: www.dnr.state.wi.us/orgland/forestry/ftax/. The form to obtain an annual listing of private land open to public hunting is also at this site.

County Land

County Parks Your platbook may show county owned land for parks. This land is almost never available for hunting access.

County Forests Your platbook may show large tracts of land for county forests. County forests are generally open to hunting with the exception of designated areas which are developed for high public use. Contact the County Forest Administrator for areas open to hunting and regulations.

State Land

State Parks State Parks and Trails allow deer and/or turkey hunting in designated areas only. Contact the park for open areas and regulations.

State Wildlife Areas State Wildlife Areas allow hunting in designated areas. Contact the Area for open areas and regulations.

State Fishery Areas Fishery Areas often consist of fee-title ownership as well as easements. In some cases, easement areas may include fishing, hunting, trapping, or some combination thereof. Boundary signs posted near parking lots and along borders explain the uses.

State Natural Areas State Natural Areas have highly significant natural, geological or archaeological features. Some Natural Areas allow limited hunting. Contact the local DNR office for areas open to hunting and regulations.

State Forests Hunting is generally permitted on State Forests. Hunters are reminded to check their regulations for open seasons and to contact Forest headquarters to confirm open areas.

Note: for a list of State Parks, Trails, Recreations Areas and Forests with hunting opportunities go to www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/reclands/Hunt.htm.

Federal Land

National Forests Hunting is permitted on National Forest lands unless otherwise posted. Hunting is not allowed in campgrounds or other developed recreation sites such as boat landings, picnic areas, etc.