

Land and Water Access Proposals for 2026-2027

General Regulations Regarding Use of Game Lands

G1. General Description of Proposed Change:

Adjust the allowable camping days on game lands with designated camping areas to align with the newly adopted wild turkey season framework.

Justification:

Camping areas are traditionally open for use until May 14, which is through the end of the spring wild turkey season. With the wild turkey season framework change, it is possible for the wild turkey season to end after May 14. This proposal would move the closure of designated camping areas to May 31 on all applicable game lands with a spring camping period.

*15A NCAC 10D .0102 GENERAL REGULATIONS REGARDING USE
15A NCAC 10D .0205 BLADEN LAKES STATE FOREST GAME LAND IN BLADEN COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0211 BUTNER-FALLS OF NEUSE GAME LAND IN DURHAM,
GRANVILLE, AND WAKE COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0215 R. WAYNE BAILEY-CASWELL GAME LAND IN CASWELL COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0218 CHOWAN SWAMP GAME LAND IN BERTIE, GATES, AND HERTFORD COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0229 GOOSE CREEK GAME LAND IN BEAUFORT AND PAMLICO COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0232 GULL ROCK GAME LAND IN HYDE COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0236 HOLLY SHELTER GAME LAND IN PENDER COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0239 JOHNS RIVER GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0240 JORDAN GAME LAND IN CHATHAM, DURHAM, ORANGE, AND WAKE COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0241 JUNIPER CREEK GAME LAND IN BRUNSWICK AND COLUMBUS COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0265 ROANOKE RIVER WETLANDS IN BERTIE, HALIFAX, MARTIN, AND
NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0271 SANDHILLS GAME LAND IN HOKE, MOORE, RICHMOND, AND
SCOTLAND COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0275 SHOCCO CREEK GAME LAND IN FRANKLIN, HALIFAX, NASH,
AND WARREN COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0276 SOUTH MOUNTAINS GAME LAND IN BURKE, CLEVELAND,
MCDOWELL, AND RUTHERFORD COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0278 SUGGS MILL POND GAME LAND IN BLADEN AND CUMBERLAND COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0283 THURMOND CHATHAM GAME LAND IN ALLEGHANY AND WILKES COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0291 WHITEHALL PLANTATION GAME LAND IN BLADEN AND PENDER COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0294 NORTH BEND GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY*

G2. General Description of Proposed Change:

Modify the current use of weapons rule on game lands that restricts the use of a weapon within 150 yards of a residence located on or adjacent to game lands. This rule would allow the use of archery equipment within those 150 yards.

Justification:

Increased residential development is occurring near and even against game land boundaries, and depending on the number, adjacency, and boundary shape, these residences can ultimately remove large areas of useable public lands for hunters. This rule change would increase available hunting opportunities for a portion of our hunting constituency and still maintain a safe and reasonable buffer from potentially sensitive areas.

Mountain Biking

G3. General Description of Proposed Change:

Adjust recreational bicycle riding dates on Butner-Falls Game Land for the designated New Light Mountain Bike Trail to align with the newly adopted wild turkey season framework.

Justification:

The use of bicycles on the Butner-Falls of Neuse Game Land is prohibited, except by hunters engaged in the act of hunting during the open days of the applicable seasons, and by cyclists using the designated New Light Mountain Bike Trail. The current rule allows bicycle riding on the designated New Light Mountain Bike Trail from May 15th through August 31st, and on Sundays only from September 1st through May 14th. This proposal adjusts the dates to May 16th through August 31, and on Sundays only from September 1st through May 15th. This change will align with the recently adopted turkey season framework preventing potential conflicts between turkey hunters and cyclists.

15A NCAC 10D .0211 BUTNER-FALLS OF NEUSE GAME LAND IN DURHAM, GRANVILLE, AND WAKE COUNTIES

Horseback Riding

G4. General Description of Proposed Change:

Prohibit horseback riding on Buxton Woods Game Land except on Piney Ridge Trail.

Justification:

Buxton Woods is managed by the NC Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve and allows horseback riding on Piney Ridge Trail, but horseback riders have been accessing other parts of Buxton Woods, including creating their own trails to connect with neighboring properties. This activity is not consistent with the management plans of the NC Coastal Reserve and is also disruptive to other users including hunters and hikers.

15A NCAC 10D .0212 BUXTON WOODS GAME LAND IN DARE COUNTY

Chowan Swamp Game Land

G5. General Description of Proposed Change:

Remove Chowan Game Land from the game land program and add the parcel to Chowan Swamp Game Land.

Justification:

Chowan Game Land is a 32-acre parcel in Chowan County located 2 miles east of Edenton along Pembroke Creek. The closest tract of Chowan Swamp Game Land is 11 miles north. Big game harvest reporting errors routinely occur

because hunters confuse Chowan Game Land with Chowan Swamp Game Land.

15A NCAC 10D .0217 CHOWAN GAME LAND IN CHOWAN COUNTY

Mayo Game Land

G6. General Description of Proposed Change:

Prohibit private construction of piers, docks, moorings, or similar facilities or structures at Mayo Game Land.

Justification:

Duke Energy Progress (DEP) has observed an increase in the number of major encroachments over the past several years, including unauthorized alteration of land, construction of piers/docks, and placement of personal property on DEP property. One of the most common encroachments found at Mayo Lake is the mooring of pontoon boat hulls with the intention of using the facility as a dock or pier, either for boating or non-boating uses.

15A NCAC 10D .0249 MAYO GAME LAND IN PERSON COUNTY

Pisgah Game Land

G7. General Description of Proposed Change:

Prohibit activities other than hunting, fishing, trapping, and authorized use of posted trails and parking areas on the Lutz Tract of the Pisgah Game Land.

Justification:

The Lutz Tract is heavily used and overcrowded in the summer months with people camping and gathering. This results in litter and human waste that creates environmental hazards and habitat degradation. The overcrowding also creates safety issues along the narrow roadway where cars block the thoroughfare, hindering access for emergency vehicles if needed. The Caldwell County Sheriff's Office has expressed concern and asked for allowed activities on the property to be restricted. The portion of Wilson Creek on the Lutz Tract is designated as Delayed Harvest Trout Waters, and additional use of the Lutz Tract impacts angler access and experience. The proposed amendment should help reduce overcrowding.

15A NCAC 10D .0260 PISGAH GAME LAND IN AVERY, BUNCOMBE, BURKE, CALDWELL, HAYWOOD, HENDERSON, MADISON, MCDOWELL, MITCHELL, TRANSYLVANIA, WATAUGA, AND YANCEY COUNTIES

Sandhills Game Land

G8. General Description of Proposed Change:

Restrict fox squirrel hunting by permit only on Sandhills Game Land.

Justification:

Requiring a permit for fox squirrel hunting will allow the agency to better

estimate hunting pressure on Sandhills Game Land and determine the need for changes to management.

15A NCAC 10D .0271 SANDHILLS GAME LAND IN HOKE, MOORE, RICHMOND, AND SCOTLAND COUNTIES

Dog Deer Hunting

G9. General Description of Proposed Change:

Restrict dog deer and bear hunting to the portion east of Pee Dee River and north of US-74 by permit only. Prohibit pursuing or chasing deer or bear with dogs for the purposes of training.

Justification:

Complaints about deer hunting with dogs have increased dramatically in recent years on the Pee Dee River Game Land. These complaints largely come from neighboring private landowners adjacent to smaller blocks of Game Land regarding hunters trespassing to release or retrieve dogs. Numerous citations have been written for trespassing. The largest block of Pee Dee River GL south of US 74 already prohibits dog deer and bear hunting.

15A NCAC 10D .0258 PEE DEE RIVER GAME LAND IN ANSON, MONTGOMERY, RICHMOND, AND STANLY COUNTIES

G10. General Description of Proposed Change:

Restrict dog deer hunting by permit only on Sandhills Game Land. Prohibit pursuing or chasing deer with dogs for the purposes of training. Prohibit individuals convicted of a wildlife or trespass violation while hunting deer with dogs from receiving a permit for hunting deer with dogs the season following conviction.

Justification:

Deer hunting with dogs complaints have increased dramatically in recent years on the Sandhills Game Land. These complaints largely come from neighboring private landowners adjacent to smaller blocks of Game Land regarding hunters trespassing to release or retrieve dogs. Numerous citations have been written for trespassing.

15A NCAC 10D .0102 GENERAL REGULATIONS REGARDING USE

15A NCAC 10D .0271 SANDHILLS GAME LAND IN HOKE, MOORE, RICHMOND, AND SCOTLAND COUNTIES

Wildlife Conservation Area

G11. General Description of Proposed Change:

Remove Robeson Game Land from the game land program and convert it into a Wildlife Conservation Area.

Justification:

Robeson Game Land is a 42-acre parcel in Robeson County located in Ashpole Swamp within the Gabby Township of Robeson County. Currently the only

legal ways to access the Game Land are to be dropped off at the end of Irene Drive and walk a wooded easement or to obtain written permission from one of two adjacent landowners to park a vehicle on their property to gain access. Habitat includes two ecologically significant habitat types: Bottomland Hardwoods transitioning to a Cypress-Gum Swamp, both of which provide important habitat for a variety of species including 20 species of greatest conservation need.

15A NCAC 10D .0267 ROBESON GAME LAND IN ROBESON COUNTY