Help preserve grassland in Minnesota. Support Walk-In Access.

A $3 Walk-In Access Hunter Validation is required. ELS Code 190

For current information and additional map resources go to mndnr.gov/walkin
See YOUR photo on the cover of the 2016 WIA Atlas!

Yes! Your hunting photo, taken on a Walk-In Access parcel, could make the cover of the next Walk-In Access Atlas! We are looking for high quality photos that show hunters using WIA parcels during hunting season. One photo will be selected for the cover of the WIA Atlas, while others may be used for WIA-related publicity.

Guidelines and rules:

- Photo must be taken on a Minnesota WIA site.
- Photo entry must be received no later than March 1, 2016.
- Photographs must be in digital format, JPEG or .jpg format and 5 megabytes or more in size.
- No print or film submissions will be accepted for entry into this contest. The photograph need not be taken with a digital camera. Scans of negatives, transparencies or photographic prints are acceptable.
- Name the file you are submitting with your first and last name. Example: JaneDoe.jpg
- Only online entries will be eligible. Entries should be emailed to scott.roemhildt@state.mn.us.
- Photos will not be returned.
- DNR reserves the right not to publish any photos received.
- Photographers will receive credit for their photos and will retain ownership of their original work and any intellectual property rights.
- The photograph must be of original material taken by the entrant and must not infringe on the copyrights, trademarks, moral rights, rights of privacy/publicity or intellectual property rights of any person or entity. Any person appearing in the photo must have consented to their image being used for these purposes.
- By submitting your photo you are agreeing to the terms and conditions of the guidelines and rules and granting the DNR permission to copy, reproduce, and distribute your photo for educational, promotional, or information purposes at any time and in any media.
- If any person appearing in any photograph is a minor, the entrant must have the consent of the person’s parent or legal guardian. Consent forms will be provided upon request. Any questions should be directed to Scott W. Roemhildt at Minnesota DNR, scott.roemhildt@state.mn.us.

Cover photo:

Peyton Cole proudly displays his 1st pheasant, harvested on October 18, 2014 at a WIA near Marshall, MN. The photo was taken by Peyton’s father, Forrest Cole.
Minnesota’s Walk-In Access Program Regulations
The 2012 Minnesota Legislature established a Walk-In Access (WIA) Program (Minnesota Statutes 97A.126) to provide public access to wildlife habitat on private land for hunting, excluding trapping*. These policies apply to the use of WIA enrolled lands:

Walk-In Access Program 2015-2016
Walk-in Access (WIA) provides public hunting on private land and compensates landowners for providing that access through an agreement with DNR Wildlife. Through WIA, 22,800 acres of private land at 200 sites in western and west/south-central Minnesota will be open for public hunting from Sept. 1 to May 31 where boundary signs are present. Most WIA land is also enrolled in a conservation program (e.g., CRP, RIM Reserve, and CREP) or has natural cover. Small inclusions of cropland or hay land may be present.

Hunters must have a Walk-in Access Validation (ELS Privilege Code 190; $3.00) to legally access WIA land. WIA Access Validations are available at ELS license vendors. The purpose of this validation is to provide legal authorization for the holder to access WIA lands, while also allowing DNR to create a database of hunters who use the WIA areas to help us further develop a long-term program. Currently, modest revenue to support the program comes from a surcharge on nonresident hunting licenses and any hunter can donate $1, $3 or $5.

Visit the WIA website at www.mndnr.gov/walkin for a printable atlas of the sites by county, aerial photos of each site and interactive maps such as Google Earth, Google Maps and DNR Recreational Compass. GPS and GIS downloads are also available. Printed copies of the 2015 WIA Atlas is available at area DNR Wildlife offices, SWCD offices, license vendors, and local commerce and tourism information outlets in the 35-county WIA area.

WIA sites provide for public hunting only. Individuals with a WIA Access Validation can hunt during legal hunting hours, during any open hunting season (including spring turkey), with no landowner contacts necessary. No target practice, trapping, dog training, camping, horseback riding or fires are allowed by the public. The landowner retains the right to engage in, or give permission to engage in, hiking/dog walking on leash, trapping, camping, horseback riding, or campfires, and other limited activities that do not impede public hunting. No vehicles or OHVs are allowed. Parking is along roads or in designated parking areas – check twice to make sure vehicles don’t block field entrances. DNR conservation officers will address trespass and hunting violations. Scan this code with your smart phone for more on WIA. The ongoing success of this program depends on landowners’ interest in opening up their property to public hunting. Please be respectful and follow the Code of Conduct while using WIA land (the Code can be found on the WIA website. www.mndnr.gov/walkin)

Scan this code with your smart phone for more on WIA.

Obey the Walk-In Access Code of Conduct, which can be found on page 36 and under “WIA tools” at www.mndnr.gov/walkin. (English, Hmong and Spanish)

*Landowners retain the right to give written permission to individuals to trap on their property.
Data contained in this atlas is subject to change. Walk-In Access sites (WIA) are only open to hunting where WIA boundaries are posted with WIA signs. Landowners may opt out of the program, so fields shown in this Atlas may be closed. For the most current data and more WIA mapping resources, visit the WIA website: www.mndnr.gov/walkin

Motorized vehicles are NOT allowed on WIAs.

Hunters must purchase a validation to hunt WIAs.

The fee for this validation is $3.00. This small fee does not cover costs associated with purchasing access, installing boundary signs or providing online or printed maps of the enrolled properties. The purpose of this validation is to quantify how many hunters are using WIA land. Hunters may be contacted to help DNR learn more about their hunting experience and what they would be willing to pay to have access to these properties in the future.

All hunting rules and regulations apply on WIAs and will be enforced by DNR conservation officers.

All map data representing Walk-In Access sites, Wildlife Management Areas, State Aquatic Management Areas and USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas are general and DO NOT accurately represent the actual legal or established boundary of these areas. They should be used for reference only. Please respect private property and verify public hunting areas by observing boundary signs. State Aquatic Management Areas (AMA) listed as Restricted Use are NOT open to hunting. General Use AMAs are open to hunting unless posted otherwise.

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About the Walk-In Access (WIA) Atlas
This atlas provides general geographic locations of parcels enrolled in the WIA program as of July 30, 2015. As of this date there are approximately 200 WIA sites covering 22,800 acres of private land in 31 western Minnesota counties. All data contained in this atlas is subject to change. For the most current data and additional WIA mapping resources, including detailed site maps, Google Earthtm, Google Mapstm, GPS and GIS downloads, visit the WIA website: www.mndnr.gov/walkin

Minnesota Walk-In Access (WIA) Program
Minnesota Walk-In Access (WIA) began in 2011 when the state received a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture Voluntary Public Access Program. WIA sites are currently available in 31 counties in western Minnesota. The goal is to provide public hunting opportunities on private lands.

Enrolling Land
Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) enroll landowners into WIA. WIA agreements are entirely voluntary for landowners and include an opt out clause.

Habitat on WIA Sites
Most WIA land is also enrolled in a conservation program (e.g., CRP, RIM Reserve, and CREP) or has natural cover. Small inclusions of cropland or hay land may be present. The program permits landowners to carry out land cover management or upgrade activities according to an approved conservation plan, so these sites may not have high-quality habitat. To check on any habitat or status changes visit the WIA website and check the WIA Site Status Changes tab: www.mndnr.gov/walkin

If you are a landowner interested in enrolling acres, please contact your local SWCD for more information.

The 2015 Walk-In Access Program is funded by:
• A one-time appropriation from the State Legislature in 2012
• A surcharge ($5.00) on nonresident hunting license
• Donations made by hunters purchasing deer and small game license ( $1, $3 or $5)
Minnesota is fortunate to have a vast network of public land managed for wildlife and available for the public to hunt. The state also has over a half million acres of private land in conservation easements, meaning that owners are compensated for establishing and maintaining grass and wetland habitat forever. Much of the land enrolled in the Walk-In Access program is protected by a conservation easement.

But protecting the land from cropping or development is only one piece of the puzzle. Prairie and other grassland habitat requires management. If it isn’t managed it will likely transition to undesirable trees and shrubs, such as ash, boxelder, cedar and sumac. Once trees have taken hold, restoring the area back to grass and forbs requires mechanically cutting and removing the large trees and mowing the brush. This is costly and visually dramatic.

Minnesota once had 18 million acres of tallgrass prairie. These grasslands existed because they were periodically disturbed by fire and grazing. Over the past couple of decades, resource managers have used fire to keep grasslands healthy when conditions allow and resources are available. Recently, more and more conservation lands across the country are also being managed with grazing and haying. Working with local livestock producers to graze or hay these protected lands, according to a conservation plan to achieve habitat goals, can be a very cost-effective management tool. It also provides other benefits, like improved habitat on rested pastures or hayland, and good relationships between conservationists and agricultural producers.

The “do nothing” approach on conservation lands compromises habitat quality. Removing trees, burning with prescribed fire or haying periodically pays dividends by increasing the diversity and health of plants. Conservation grazing also increases plant diversity while improving soil health and creating variety in the height of the vegetation. Healthy, diverse grasslands support a variety of wildlife species for all to enjoy.

As hunters and outdoor enthusiasts you can support grassland conservation and management. For more information about grassland conservation efforts in Minnesota, visit www.mndnr.gov/prairieplan.
Walk-In Access Sites are NOT open to hunting until their boundaries have been posted with WIA signs.
Clay County WIA # 55 is within the Clay County Game Refuge and is closed to waterfowl hunting during the regular season. Open to all other hunting.
Walk-In Access Sites are NOT open to hunting until their boundaries have been posted with WIA signs.
Walk-In Access Sites are NOT open to hunting until their boundaries have been posted with WIA signs.
Walk-In Access Sites (1) Wildlife Management Areas USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas Aquatic Management Area - General Use Aquatic Management Area - Restricted

National Wildlife Refuges Wildlife Refuge Inventory State Forest Boundaries County Boundaries Forestry Lands

County Forest Lands Lakes Streams and Rivers Ditches U.S. & State Highways County Highway

Walk-In Access Sites are NOT open to hunting until their boundaries have been posted with WIA signs.

Tile # 82

1 in = 5 miles

© 2015 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Date: 2015-07-15
Walk-In Access Sites (10)  National Wildlife Refuges  Lakes
Wildlife Management Areas  Wildlife Refuge Inventory  Streams and Rivers
USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas  State Forest Boundaries  Ditches
Aquatic Management Area - General Use  County Boundaries  U.S. & State Highways
Aquatic Management Area - Restricted  Forestry Lands  County Highway

Walk-In Access Sites are NOT open to hunting until their boundaries have been posted with WIA signs

© 2015 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  Date: 2015-07-15
Walk-In Access Sites are NOT open to hunting until their boundaries have been posted with WIA signs.

Tile # 88

1 in = 5 miles
Conservation Officer Patrol Areas Covering the WIA Counties

This map displays the Conservation Officer patrol areas covering the WIA counties. CO contact information listed here is subject to change. For the most current CO contact information, visit www.mndnr.gov/officerpatrolareas or contact the DNR Information Center at 651-296-6157 or toll-free 888-646-6367.

Legend
- DNR Enforcement Patrol Areas
- Walk-In Access Counties

Conservation Officer Locator

Date: 2015-06-04
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<tr>
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<td>Detroit Lakes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Albert Lea</td>
<td>507-225-3572</td>
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<td>56007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For corrections contact: Jules Hines at (218) 999-7943
WIA sites are only open to the public for hunting. Other activities such as trapping, target shooting, camping, horseback riding, fishing, dog training, etc. are not allowed by the public. The ongoing success of this program depends on ensuring landowners’ continued interest.

**WIA Code of Conduct**

Please follow this Code of Conduct while hunting these privately owned lands:

1) Only hunt areas posted with WIA signs. Know the field boundaries and do not trespass on the surrounding private land.

2) Only hunt WIA parcels on foot.

3) Park wisely on the shoulder of a public road or in a designated parking area. Do not block access to farm fields or pastures.

4) Maintain a safe buffer—do not shoot near farmsteads or buildings.

5) Do not contact landowners of WIA parcels asking for permission to hunt.

6) Leave gates and fences as you found them.

7) Report unlawful activities.

8) Be ethical, courteous and safe. Abuse it—lose it.

9) Constructing or erecting blinds, stands or other structures is not allowed. Portable structures are ok but don’t damage trees and take them with you when you go.

10) Do not litter. Pack out spent shotgun or rifle casings.

**Turn in Poachers:**

1-800-652-9093
24-hour hotline
651-259-5223
Pheasant numbers in Minnesota have been declining at an alarming rate.

Gov. Mark Dayton convened the state’s first-ever Minnesota Pheasant Summit last December in Marshall to focus on increasing the state’s pheasant population, improving pheasant habitat and helping ensure future generations of Minnesota hunters can enjoy this popular and important species. Input from hunters, farmers, conservationists, key members of the Governor’s Cabinet and others is being used to develop a four-year action plan to increase and enhance grassland habitat on public and private lands in Minnesota’s pheasant range.

For more information and updates, visit www.mndnr.gov/pheasantsummit/index.html.