



FACT SHEET



Natural Resources Conservation Service's Hunting on Wetlands and Easements

All NRCS Easement Programs

Hunting remains one of the more popular activities on Wetlands Reserve Program and Floodplain Easement properties. Through the Warranty Easement Deed for these programs, the landowner retains the right to undeveloped recreational use of the easement, including activities such as hiking, bird watching, and hunting. All hunting on the easement is subject to Indiana and federal game and fish regulations and seasons.

Hunting Blinds and Structures

Undeveloped recreational use may include the use of hunting equipment such as tree stands and hunting blinds that are rustic and customary for the locale. In Indiana, hunting blinds permissible on Wetlands Reserve Program and Floodplain Easements easements will be rustic and customary, and therefore be temporary in nature and result in minimal surface disturbance.

Permissible tree stands and hunting blinds:

1. Will not require the use of heavy machinery, including earth moving equipment, telephone pole drivers, etc. to install.
2. Can be removed immediately from the site upon request. No special equipment or power tools should be required for removal. Nothing larger than a pick-up truck or tractor should be necessary to pull a moveable blind on skids.
3. Will not use concrete or asphalt to construct footings, foundations, or other supporting structures.
4. Will not disturb the surface of the ground through excavation or vegetation removal.
5. Will be braced with T-posts or other similar support that can be both installed and removed by hand, when necessary for safety purposes.
6. Do not include houses, trailers, mobile homes, hunting and fishing lodges, cabins, fishing huts, or other similar structures.

The requirements listed above apply to all easements enrolled in from October 1, 2012 and thereafter. For all easements enrolled prior to Fiscal Year 2012, blinds currently existing on the easement may be utilized "as is." Any additional blinds must meet the above criteria. Once the existing blinds degrade and are no longer useable, they may not be replaced, except with a blind that meets the above specifications.

Access

The Warranty Easement Deed grants the landowners of the easement property the right to control access to the land. This means the easement is not open to the public without landowner permission. NRCS retains the right to access the site to ensure easement terms and conditions are being met, but it is up to the landowner's discretion what type of access is granted to others. It is the right and responsibility of the landowner to control access and limit trespassing.

Captive Raised Game and Hunting Dog Training

The Warranty Easement specifically prohibits the use of the easement to raise, stock, and/or release captive bred game. Also prohibited is the disturbance of nesting and brood-rearing of wildlife, including migratory birds. Dogs should not be trained on site during the nesting season (April 1- August 15). Dogs can disturb or destroy nests of many ground-nesting birds and other wildlife.

Food Plots and Trails

Food plots and trails require approval through a Compatible Use Authorization. The **total** area of trails and food plots combined will not exceed 5% of the easement acreage. Food plots may be annual or perennial in nature, but may not be harvested. Only 1/3 of the total acreage allotted to annual food plots may be planted in any given year, and rotated through the designated area. Trails may only be mowed once per year, at designated times, and not exceed 10-foot in width. For more detailed information on how to submit a Compatible Use Authorization request, or more detailed specifics on food plots and trails, please the *Compatible Use Authorization Guidelines Fact Sheet*.



Photo taken by Bob Steiner