



Welcome!

**Sunday Hunting on Game Lands
Public Input Meetings**



Wildlife Resources Commission

Created by the NC General Assembly in 1947 to **conserve and sustain the state's fish and wildlife resources** through research, scientific management, wise use, and public input.

Mission: To conserve North Carolina's wildlife resources and their habitats and **provide programs and opportunities that allow hunters, anglers, boaters; other outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy wildlife-associated recreation.**



Sunday Hunting on Game Lands

Outdoor Heritage Act of 2015

- Removed prohibition on hunting with firearms on Sunday
- In place since 1868

Outdoor Heritage Enhanced Act of 2017

- Granted authority to WRC to implement rules for hunting on Sundays on game lands



Sunday Hunting on Game Lands

Outdoor Heritage Enhanced Act of 2017

- Prohibits hunting:
 - with a firearm between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.;
 - deer with the use of dogs; and
 - within 500 yards of a place of worship.

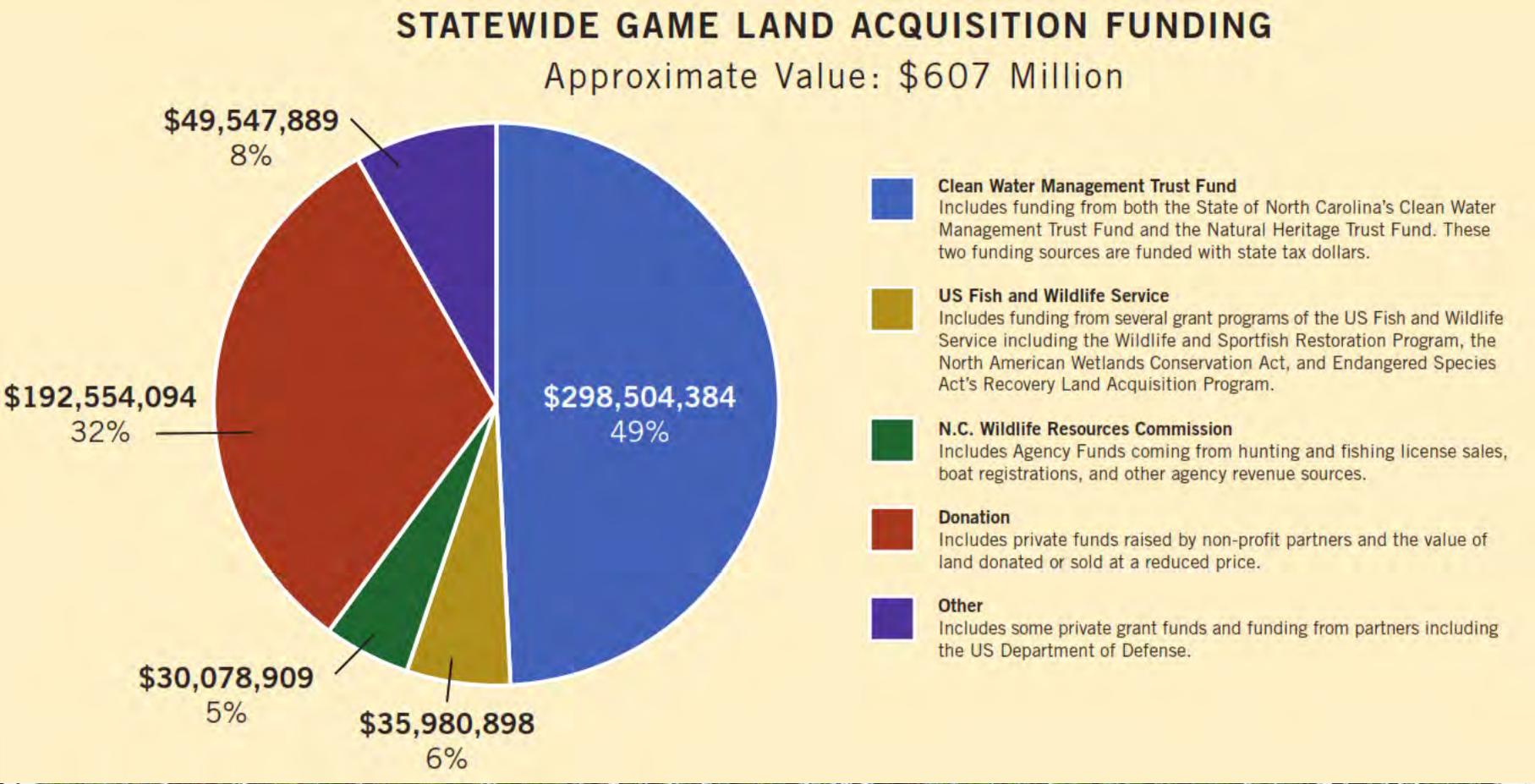
Not Discussing Migratory Bird Hunting on Sundays



Game Lands Program



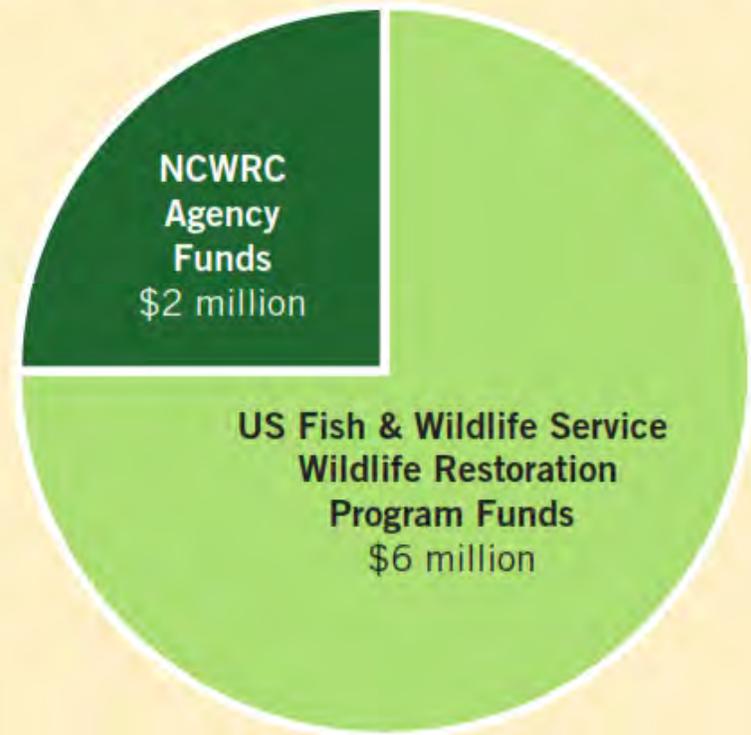
Game Lands Program



Game Lands Program



APPROXIMATE ANNUAL STATEWIDE GAME LAND MANAGEMENT FUNDING



Meeting Objectives



- Obtain opinions and concerns about Sunday hunting on game lands;
- Identify values that make a quality experience;
- Gather ideas for hunting on game lands on Sunday;
- Share the results of the 2020 survey;
- Have a productive and respectful discussion

Process Timeline



- 6 Public Meetings/2 Virtual Meetings
- Focus Group Meetings
- Final Report to Commission
- Commission Decision
- *Potential* Rule Changes
 - Public Hearings, Comment Period
 - Effective August 2021



Who is Group Solutions?

- Neutral facilitators to lead and document discussions
- Helping hands to assist the Commission collect the necessary data and input to inform their decision
- Our role is to gather the information about the various game land use activities of participants
- Ensure that all interested individuals are given an opportunity to voice opinions and concerns



6 Public Meetings & 2 Online Meetings

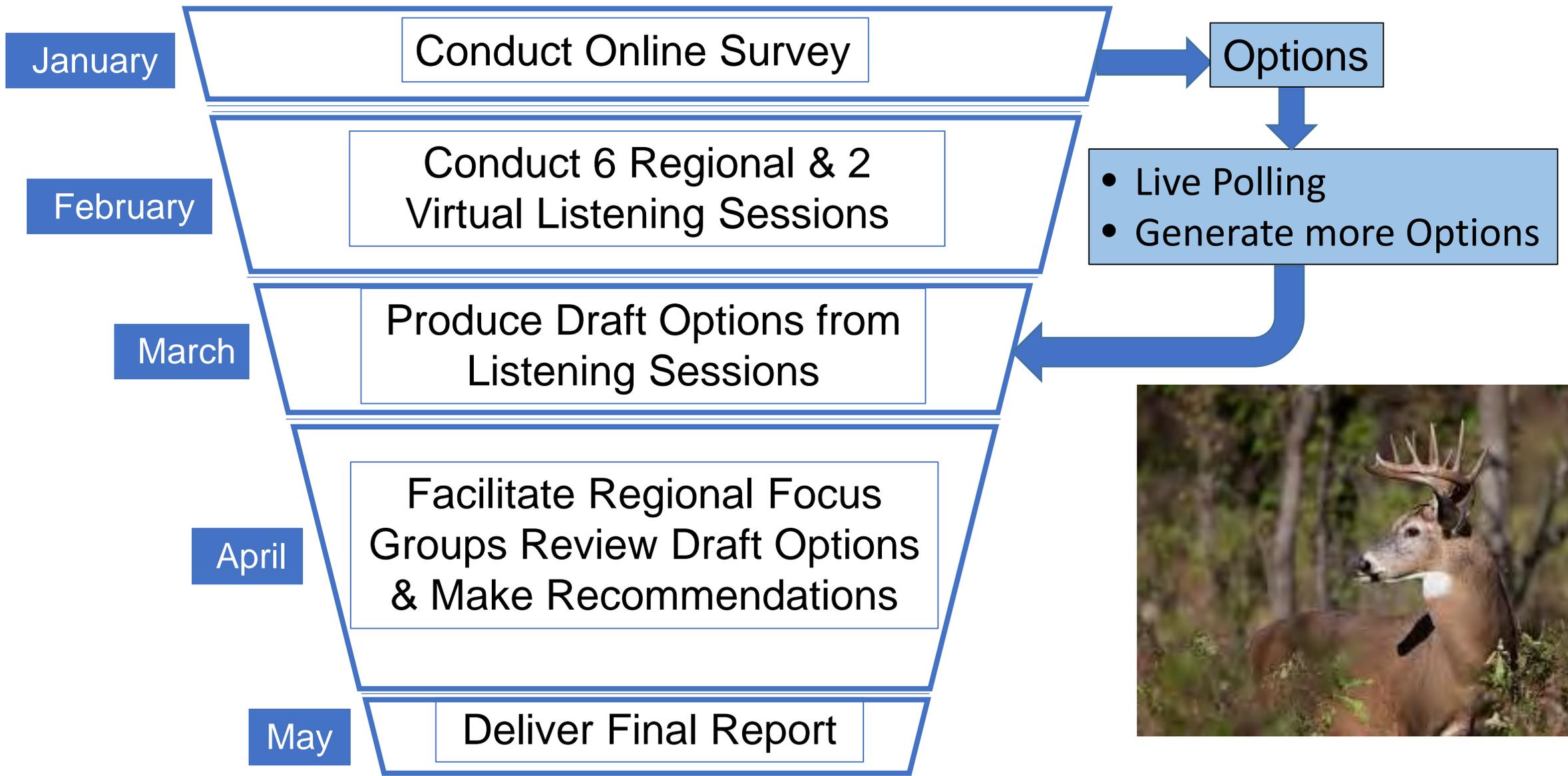
- February 10 Martin Community College ✓
- February 11 Bladen Community College ✓
- February 12 Foothills Higher Education Center ✓
- February 13 Haywood Community College ✓
- **February 17 Alamance Community College ✓**
- February 19 James Garner Center
- Online Session 1 February 17 at 7 PM
- Online Session 2 February 20 at 7 PM



2020 N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Sunday Hunting on Game Lands Survey

Brett Boston & Vern Herr
Group Solutions, Inc.

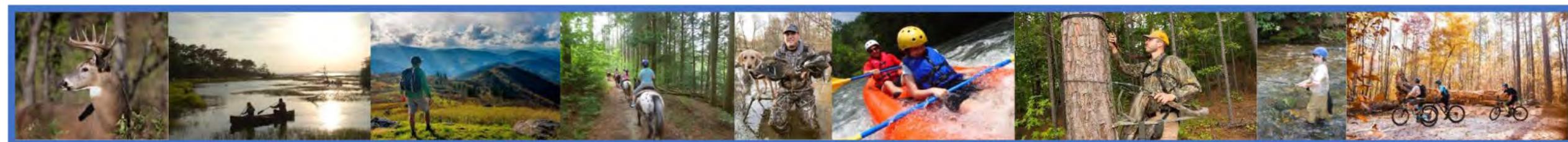
Preliminary Options



About the Survey Data

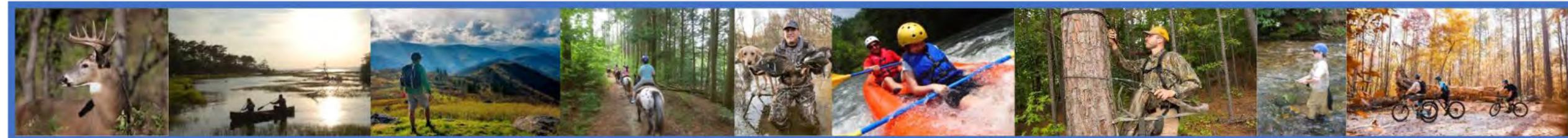
- This is a huge and statistically awesome sample size!
- The numbers are raw numbers and not fully analyzed
- The final numbers may be slightly different (+/- 2%) but will not significantly alter the big picture.
- We JUST downloaded the data and started processing, so there is more detailed info on the way.
- We are happy to answer your questions about the survey findings

Thank you for your input!



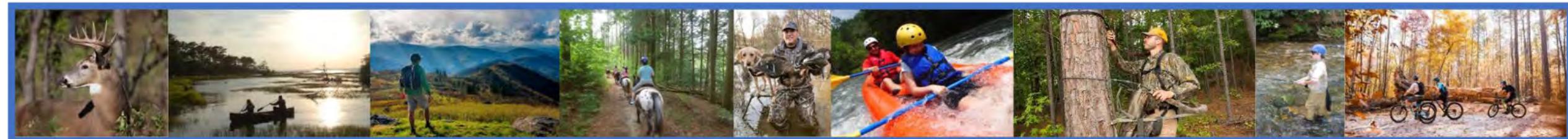
Overview

- **30,868 Responses**
- **25,021 Use game lands** – 81% of survey takers
- **17K+ hunt in NC**
- **15,455 Hunt on game lands**
- 14K+ told us...
 - What game lands they hunt on,
 - What days they hunt on each, and
 - How many days they hunt on each
- 17K+ Participate in some activity on game lands, other than hunting
- And they told us...
 - What game lands they use to recreate,
 - What days they recreate on each, and
 - How many days they recreate on each



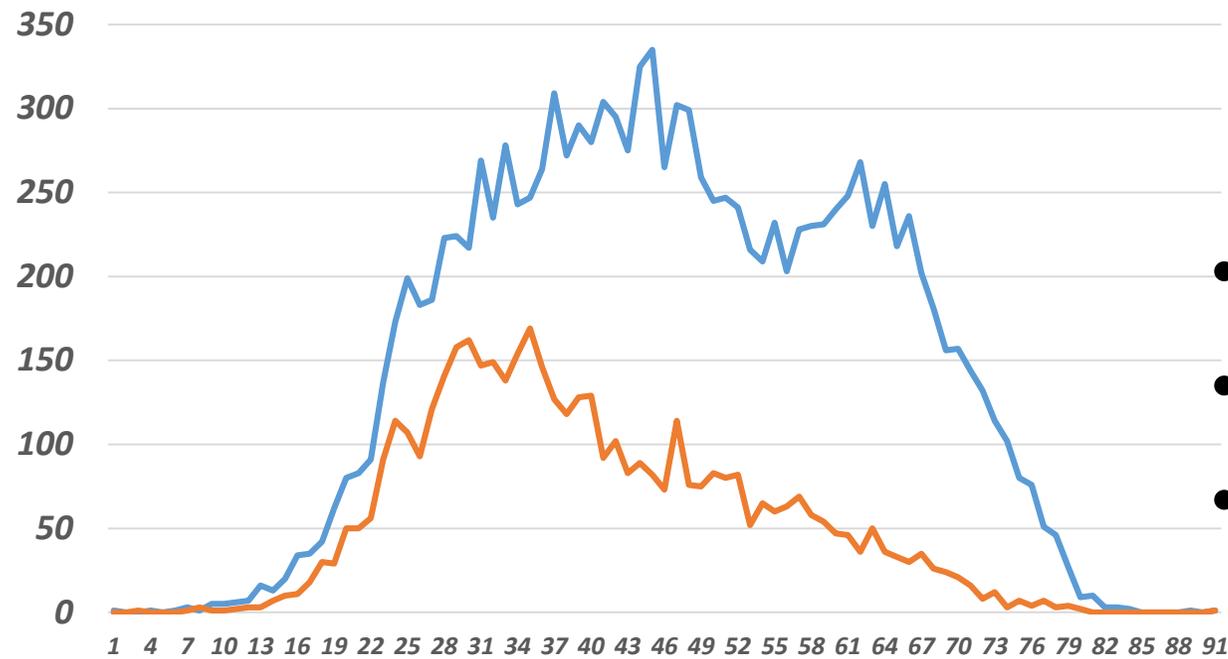
Overview

- 27K+ told us their degree of support or opposition to Sunday hunting
- 25K+ told us their views about Sunday hunting
- 25K+ told us if they felt their concerns about Sunday hunting could be addressed with by exploring options
- 22K+ told us the about game land features that are important to them
- Almost 22K shared ideas for addressing concerns about Sunday hunting
- 21K+ people gave us thoughts about their vision for NC game lands
- 86% male and 13% female
- *And 8 people of over 120 years of age took the survey*



Who were the survey takers?

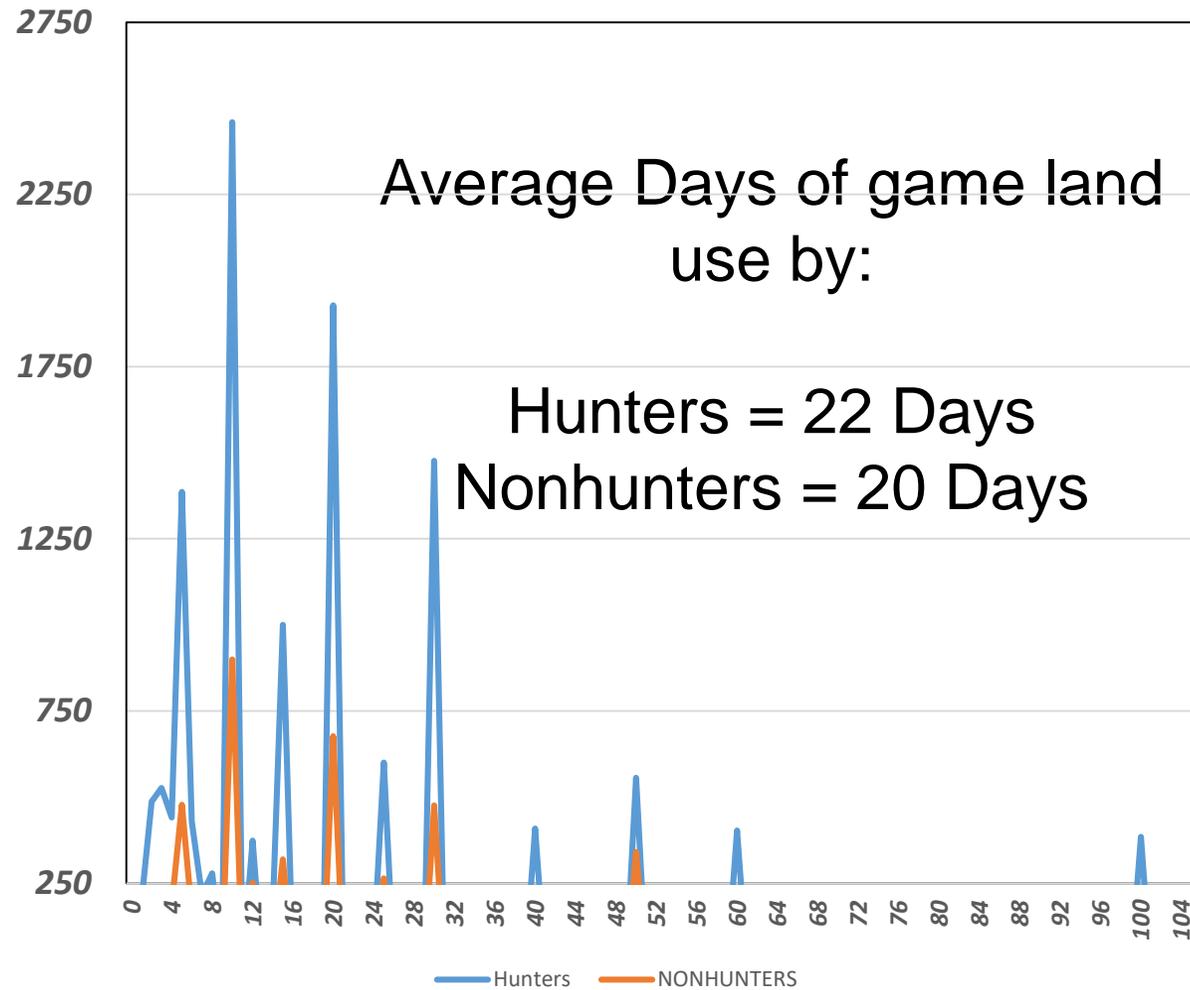
Hunters	Number	%	%	Number	Non-Hunters
Male	12,496	95.5%	56.5%	2,809	Male
Female	463	3.6%	40.2%	1,999	Female
Prefer not to Share	117	0.9%	3.2%	161	Prefer not to Share



- Average Age of Survey Takers = 53.7 years
- Of Hunters (taking survey) = 50.1 years
- Of Non-Hunters (taking survey) 57.7 years

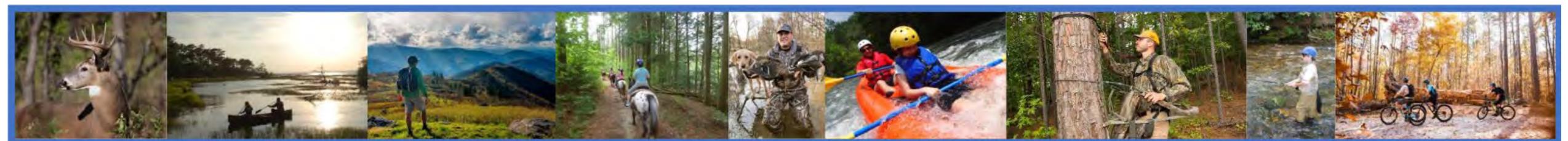


They were regular users of game lands



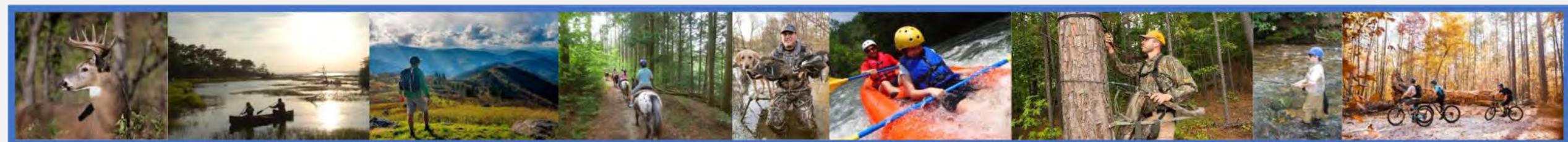
Identical reported use patterns for Hunters and Non-Hunters

	Hunters	Non-Hunters
Occasional User	48.6%	49.2%
Regular User	46.2%	46.0%
Rarely Use	4.9%	4.4%
Never Use	0.3%	0.4%



Rank order of most popular non-hunting game land activities by hunter and non-hunters

Game Land Activities	Hunters Ranking of Activity	Non-Hunters Ranking of Activity
Fishing	1st	4th
Hiking	2nd	1st
Camping	3rd	6th
Boating (Motorized)	4th	7th
Bird/Wildlife Watching	5th	2nd
Canoeing/Kayaking	6th	5th
Biking	7th	3rd
Target Shooting	8th	10th
Dog Training	9th	9th
Horseback Riding	10th	8th
Trapping	11th	12th
Geocaching	12th	11th
Other	13th	13th



The average number of days hunters and non-hunters participate in non-hunting activities on game lands

Game Land Activities	Average number of days reported participating	Average number of days reported participating
Fishing	21	13
Hiking	15	26
Camping	8	7
Boating (Motorized)	14	8
Bird/Wildlife Watching	12	20
Canoeing/Kayaking	8	7
Biking	8	13
Target Shooting	6	3
Dog Training	9	9
Horseback Riding	3	11
Trapping	2	0
Geocaching	1	2
Other	8	10



Which of these 93 game lands do you use for the outdoor activities you selected?

For Hunting

Hunter's Top 5

Pisgah NF
21.7%
Uwharrie NF
17.9%
Jordan
13.4%
Butner-Falls of Neuse
12.3%
Nantahala NF
11.3%

For Non-Hunting

Hunter's Top 5

Pisgah NF
31.7%
Uwharrie NF
20.7%
Nantahala NF
18.1%
Pisgah
14.9%
Jordan
13.8%

Non-Hunter's Top 5

Pisgah NF
47.7%
Nantahala NF
30.8%
Uwharrie NF
27.2%
Dupont SF
24.4%
Pisgah
21.0%



Which days of the week do you typically participate on game lands in the outdoor activities selected?

For Hunting

Saturday
88.3%
Friday
55.4%
Monday
39.9%
Wednesday
37.9%
Thursday
36.0%
Tuesday
32.9%

For Non-Hunting

Hunters

Saturday
89.6%
Sunday
72.9%
Friday
56.0%
Monday
35.0%
Thursday
33.0%
Wednesday
32.8%
Tuesday
30.2%

Non-Hunters

Sunday
90.2%
Saturday
86.9%
Friday
46.7%
Wednesday
31.2%
Thursday
30.5%
Monday
30.4%
Tuesday
28.0%



To what extent do you support or oppose Sunday hunting on game lands?

Hunters

74% of Hunters Support or Somewhat Support Sunday Hunting

Totally Support 67.0%
Somewhat Support 6.8%

Undecided 2.6%

Somewhat Oppose 5.2%
Totally Oppose 18.4%

24% of Hunters Oppose or Somewhat Oppose Sunday Hunting

Non-Hunters

Totally Support 17.0%
Somewhat Support 4.7%

Undecided 3.5%

Somewhat Oppose 11.8%
Totally Oppose 62.9%

22% of Non-Hunters Support or Somewhat Support Sunday Hunting

75% of Non-Hunters Oppose or Somewhat Oppose Sunday Hunting



Why do you believe the WRC should allow Sunday hunting on game lands? (Hunters in Support)

- It works on private lands in NC with minimal conflict
- Boost hunting interest (R3: keep the sport alive)
- Hunters pay for maintenance via licenses and fees
- No legal reason to restrict it
- It works in 40+ other states
- Remove barriers to working class hunters (weekends/cost)
- Reduce Saturday overcrowding
- Boost revenue for local economies
- Improve management of animal populations
- Increase opportunities for subsistence hunting



Why do you believe the WRC should allow Sunday hunting on game lands?

(Non-Hunters in Support)

- Why not? Why is Sunday treated any different from any other day?
- I believe it allows more opportunity to those that work on Saturdays
- No scientific evidence suggests negative or adverse effects to game from Sunday hunting - decisions for a resource should be made based on biology...period.
- I believe hunting seasons do not need to be limited in the absence of demonstrated human risk or risk to stability of game populations.
- Hunting on other days doesn't create an untenable safety risk, so why would Sunday hunting be uniquely dangerous?
- I would hate to have a day of the week where hiking wasn't allowed, so I somewhat support all days being open to hunting
- I don't like hunting. Just because I don't hunt, I wouldn't want to take hunting away from the ones who enjoy hunting.
- Deer population needs more control as impacts of white-tailed deer are evident through NC
- No hunting on Sunday is a super outdated blue law.
- If you can't hunt on Sunday why should you be able to fish, or ride bikes, or hike on Sunday?



Do you believe there are options that can address concerns about allowing Sunday hunting on game lands?

Opposed to Sunday Hunting

Non-Hunters

No options	32.6%
Skeptical	32.3%
Not sure	14.7%
Many	12.3%
Some	8.3%

Hunters

No options	40.6%
Skeptical	21.2%
Many	15.0%
Not sure	13.0%
Some	10.3%

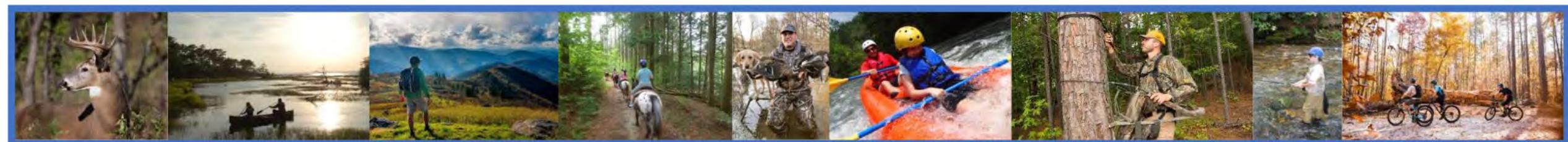
For Sunday Hunting

Hunters

Many	69.0%
Some	17.8%
Skeptical	2.1%
No	3.0%
Prefer not to answer	8.0%

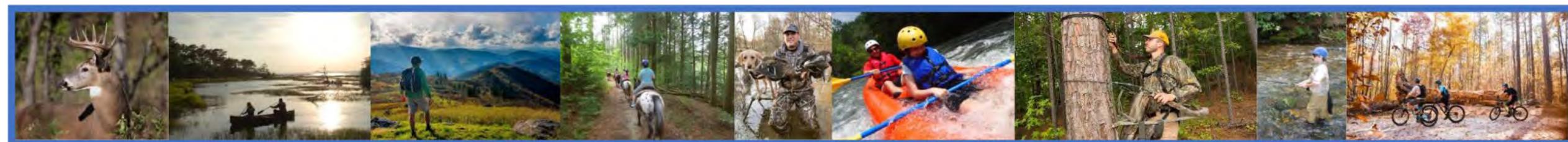
Non-Hunters

Many	66.6%
Some	19.2%
Prefer not to answer	7.5%
Skeptical	3.8%
No	2.9%



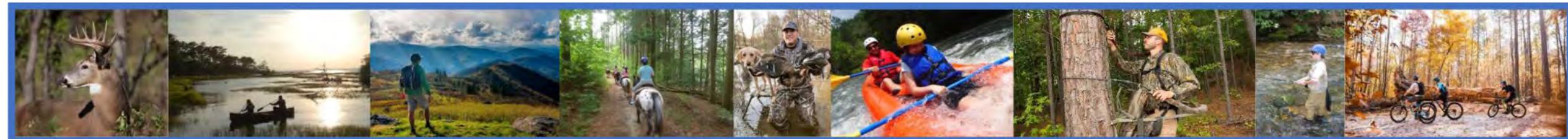
Why do you believe the WRC should NOT allow Sunday hunting on game lands? (Hunters Opposed)

- Religious beliefs
- Safety for non-hunting Sunday users
- Saturday and Sundays are the only days ALL working people can enjoy the outdoors - It's not just hunters that work weekdays
- 6 days of hunting should be enough – give people and animals a break
- Tradition in NC – It has worked for 150 years
- Fairness issue: if I rest or observe a Sunday sabbath and others don't
- Firearm and dog noise impacts on other users, neighbors, churches
- Too much pressure on the resource already
- Inadequate enforcement now, what will an extra day cost?



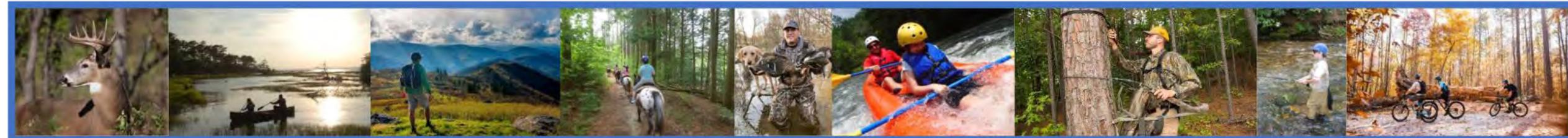
Why do you believe the WRC should NOT allow Sunday hunting on game lands? (Non-Hunters)

- Safety! Game lands are crowded with bikers and hikers who BTW should pay a user fee!
- One weekend day not to worry about my dogs being shot by deer or turkey hunter
- My opposition is based on religious beliefs, although I believe the time restrictions and set-back rules around houses of worship are good accommodations.
- A day to enjoy nature without dogs, guns shots, trucks speeding up and down the road.
- One day reserved for non-hunting activities and the ability of non-hunters to observe wildlife without interfering with hunting or causing a conflict between user groups.
- Landowners with properties bordering game lands need a day of rest.
- Sunday is usually the day most people can ride their horses.
- Safety - Most families, vacationer's and tourist enjoy the Pisgah National Forest on the weekend. Children are playing in the rivers, on the hiking trails and biking trails.
- I am hesitant to support Sunday hunting because it would create temptation to skip church to hunt in the morning.



Please list the most important **FEATURES** of a game land for enjoying your favorite outdoor activities

- Wild, unspoiled places with remarkable scenery (beautiful, clean)
- Large tracks of uninhabited land (being in nature, solitude)
- Managed and preserved for future enjoyment
- Accessible to all – children, seniors, handicapped
- A place for relaxation, quiet and restoration/renewal
- Quality hunting and fishing opportunities
- Safety – safe parking, activities, trails, safe hunting
- Diverse, quality habitat that is appropriately managed (fire, food plots, healthy game, clean water, undisturbed, natural, hardwoods)
- Great Trails – for hiking, walking, biking, ATVs, horses, handicapped access
- Infrastructure parking lots, signage marked trails, designated use areas



What is your vision for the future of game lands?

Future-focused and sustainably managed

- Meets the needs of all North Carolinians
- To be used for hunting as well as other outdoor activities

Generous access and accessibility

- Better roads, parking etc.
- Senior and handicapped access (ATV trails)

Valued by all NC citizens, even if they don't actively use them

An acceptable mix of hunting opportunities and outdoor recreation.

Abundant game and non-game species

Quality habitat managed for the benefit of humans and wildlife

Designated places for various uses

Serene, remote wilderness places

They remain safe for all users - well patrolled

A place for current & future generations to enjoy!



What is your vision for the future of game lands?

All users pay their fair share

- Create a sustainable funding model
- Without careful management and proper funding they shrink and deteriorate

Keep them as-is

- Preserve/protect/conserve what we have

They expand and improve in quality

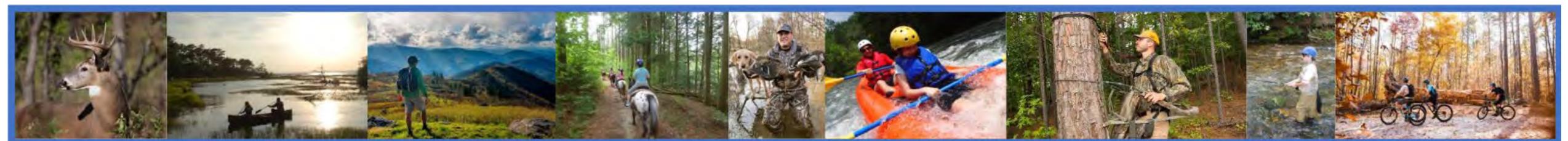
- More game lands and acreage
- Better/stricter management
- Cleaner
- Better road maintenance

They **MAY** shrink, deteriorate, and disappear

- Become overcrowded
- Development encroaches

Ethical hunting and fair chase - remove the bad eggs

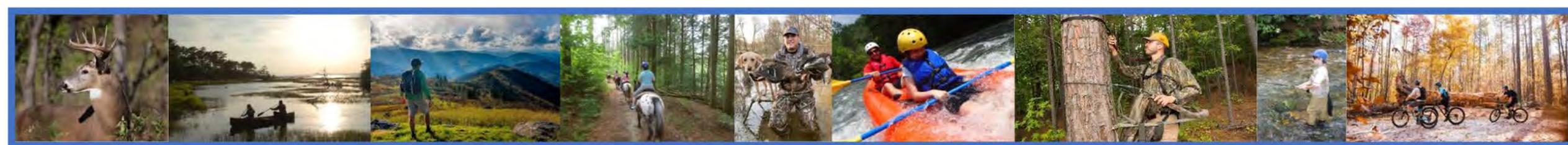
A place for current & future generations to enjoy!



Let's take a quick poll

- We are going to move fast
- Pick the choice that feels right to you
- We will stop and discuss key points along the way
- There will be another poll on specific options we took from the survey that follows this.
- Ready?





Thanks for your participation!

- Your input is important to us
- Follow progress and updates on the website WRC project webpage at:
<https://www.ncwildlife.org/SundayHuntingGL>
- Put any additional ideas you have on the comment card and drop it off in the box on the table.
- Have a safe journey home.

