



## HUNTING AND FISHING IN NORTH AMERICA FACT SHEET

### Hunting and Fishing on Lands Owned and/or Managed by The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy owns and/or manages conservation lands that cover nearly seven million acres in the United States alone. Depending on our conservation goals at a specific conservation site, The Nature Conservancy may allow legal hunting and fishing or both at that site.

### Conditions Under Which Hunting and Fishing Is Allowed on Lands Owned and/or Managed by The Nature Conservancy

In 1998, the Conservancy's Board of Directors adopted a standard operating procedure (SOP) regarding "compatible human uses"—such as hunting and fishing—at conservation sites we own or manage. The SOP states that such uses may be permitted if there is a documented hypothesis establishing a link between the use and the desired outcome and the use will be applied for one of the following purposes:

- as a **strategy to reduce or eliminate threats**
- to **mimic or restore** essential ecological processes
- other **programmatic reasons**, such as respect for cultural traditions, as part of an overarching conservation strategy

In all cases, the use must be compatible with the site's written conservation goals, must be consistent with the Conservancy's values and must not generate collateral threats.

### Reasons The Nature Conservancy Allows Hunting on Some of Our Conservation Sites

**1. To protect the ecological integrity of native ecosystems or sensitive native species.** The most common reason for allowing hunting and/or fishing on Conservancy preserves is to maintain or restore the integrity of sensitive species and biological communities. At many of our sites, populations of non-native animals like feral pigs and of native animals like deer can grow well beyond the ability of the natural communities to withstand their effects. In those situations, we may employ carefully [managed hunting](#) as a tool to reduce populations in order to reduce the damage that they cause, allowing natural communities to recover their full vigor and diversity.

**2. Respect for the practices of human communities.** The Nature Conservancy is increasingly aware that we cannot carry out our work in a vacuum—we must be sensitive to the human communities located in and around the sites where we work. In many cultures, subsistence hunting and fishing are both an historical fact and a practical necessity. In others, they have been integral to the fabric of family and community life for generations. In these places, we sometimes allow the continuation of traditional hunting and fishing practices after we have acquired new properties in order to avoid disrupting the local economy or stimulating unnecessary resentment among our new neighbors. In these situations,

we allow hunting or fishing only after we are confident that they will not threaten the conservation targets that we are trying to protect. We continue to monitor these sites so that we can be certain that the long-term effects on the local biota are benign.

**3. To facilitate land transfers that will benefit long-term conservation.** Occasionally, those who give or sell property or conservation rights to The Nature Conservancy make the transaction contingent on the continued availability of the property to them for hunting or fishing. Again, we allow hunting or fishing only after we are confident that they will not threaten the conservation targets that we are trying to protect and we continue to monitor these sites so that we can be certain that the long-term effects on the local biota are benign. Also, the Conservancy has acquired millions of acres of conservation land for subsequent transfer to state, federal, and local governments. In many cases, these transfers help to create or extend wildlife and game management areas that are required by statute to provide recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing. Similarly, in some instances lands purchased by the Conservancy using public funds are required to allow legal hunting, fishing and other recreational uses.

In all cases, Conservancy programs that allow hunting or fishing do so only after carefully evaluating the biological and sociological effects of that choice. We do so in the context of our strategic framework, *Conservation by Design*, which helps us develop evidence-based strategies for the protection of the lands and waters on which all life depends.

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