

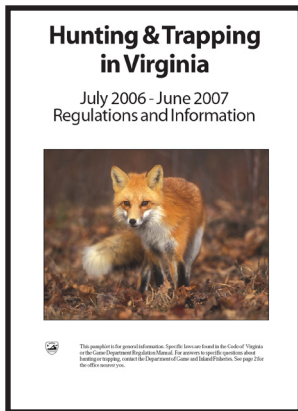
# Virginia Forest Landowner Update

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### ***NEW HUNTING REGULATIONS BENEFIT HUNTERS AND LANDOWNERS***

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If you haven't read the new *Virginia Hunting & Trapping Regulations Digest for 2006-2007* you are missing information on some new programs that benefit hunters and landowners alike. The '*Hunting Digest*' is published each July by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) to cover all the new and current hunting regulations. This edition also includes *The Hunting & Trapping Annual*, that provides 32 pages of detailed information on DGIF programs, wildlife management and research projects, harvest data, habitat improvement and related facts about Virginia's wildlife. For landowners, the new hunting regulations, in consideration with the wildlife management information, can be an effective combination to help them achieve management goals and reduce or eliminate wildlife related problems.



Studying a copy of the new *Hunting Digest* is a good first step in resolving many of your wildlife management and or hunting related concerns. The new hunting regulations for 2006-07, could help you better manage your wildlife resources-especially deer, and control hunter problems by permitting responsible sportsmen to hunt your property.

Many landowners, especially absentee, if they do not hunt themselves, are aware of the benefits of having responsible hunters be an important part of wildlife management on their property. Information on locating responsible hunters can be found in several ways. On page 3 of the *Hunting Digest* is a list of 19 sportsman conservation organizations that are dedicated and reputable partners with DGIF in promoting scientific management, ethics, safety and opportunities for youth, women and other non-traditional participants in outdoor sports. Visit their listed web sites and contact statewide officers or local Chapters and representatives for leads on members who would welcome the opportunity to hunt.

There are many in-kind benefits of such relationships including road maintenance, habitat

improvement, security and safety. Reputable hunt clubs are also helpful and lease fees can offset property taxes. Local civic groups like Ruritans, or 4-H Clubs, sporting goods shops and other landowners such as participants in Tree Farm or Stewardship can be sources for contacts.

In Virginia there is a law which exempts landowners who provide recreation opportunities to the public, from liability for injury or damages providing they do not charge a fee or there is no gross negligence (Virginia Code Section 29-130.2 amended 1982). In lease or fee situations, several organizations, including FLA provide affordable insurance for hunt clubs.



Trespass violations, posting property and access issues are all concerns affecting landowners considerations for allowing hunting. Detailed information on leasing, liability and posting can be found in Extension Publication # 420-035 entitled “A Landowner’s Guide to Working With Sportsmen in Virginia. Also available on the web at: [www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/forestry/420-035.html](http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/forestry/420-035.html). Wildlife violations can be reported on the DGIF crime line by calling: 1-800-237-5712.



A partner that deserves special mention is Hunters for the Hungry. Since 1991 this volunteer organization has provided 2.6 million pounds or 10.5 million servings of protein- rich venison donated by hunters statewide to needy families. Consider a donation of the excess venison harvested from your property to combat hunger and demonstrate how sportsmen can benefit the less fortunate in their communities.

You may obtain a free copy of the Hunting Digest at any of the 600 Hunting & Fishing License agents, or by contacting DGIF Regional offices, or the Richmond office. Telephone 804-367-1000 or visit our web site at [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov).

As your wildlife agency partners, we encourage you to get to know your area Wildlife Biologist, or Game Warden. We are dedicated to helping you manage, protect and enjoy your natural resources. We encourage you to consider sharing the experience of hunting with

young people, family and friends. Hunter Education Courses and numerous skill- building workshops are offered for youth and novice sportsmen and sportswomen statewide. There are a variety of affordable license options for youth under the age of 16, depending on their skill and interest level. Family activities are being promoted in cooperation with a number of sportsmen's organizations. Someone you know is hungry for an outdoor experience. A good way to introduce others to the rich traditions of hunting and fishing is to take them, or provide a place for character building outdoor adventures. We encourage you to consider responsible hunting as an effective wildlife management tool that benefits the landowner, enhances wildlife resources and provides safe and rewarding wild land experiences for current and future generations.

We hope you will get a copy of the new Digest and read it whether you hunt or not. The information provides landowners and hunters with practical information for each to work together to wisely manage our wildlife and other natural resources that add to our quality of life here in the Old Dominion. Have a safe and rewarding hunting season.

FOR INFORMATION ON VDGIF PROGRAMS VISIT OUR WEBSITE [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov)

Call the **WILDLIFE CRIMELINE** to report wildlife violations: 1-800-237-5712

*David Coffman* is the Sportsman's Education Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries based in Richmond with responsibilities for developing and implementing hunter enhancement programs and materials in cooperation with numerous partner organizations. He has over 30 years experience and recognition for distinguished service in natural resource management with private industry, VA Department of Forestry Stewardship Program Manager and teaching Forestry and Wildlife Management courses for landowners statewide. He is a 1974 Graduate BS Forestry from VA Tech where he has served on numerous advisory and program committees since graduation.