

# MOUNTAIN HUNT UNIT

Cherokee / Greenville Counties, SC · Mountain Zone

Black Bear · Whitetail Deer · Ruffed Grouse · Turkey · Wild Boar

**HERE**  
**Spartanburg**  
**Field Guide**  
**Series**

**ZONE 1 BOUNDARY ALERT:** This unit lies north of the Norfolk Southern Railroad main line — confirmed Game Zone 1. Zone boundaries determine your legal season dates and bear hunting eligibility. Always carry a printed SCDNR zone boundary map.

## OVERVIEW

The Mountain Hunt Unit encompasses Cherokee and northern Greenville County lands that border Spartanburg County, making it the nearest access point to SC Game Zone 1 regulations from Spartanburg. This zone features earlier deer season openings, a distinct black bear hunting season structure, and some of the best ruffed grouse habitat in the state along its rugged ridge lines. The terrain is significantly more demanding than Piedmont WMAs — expect steep elevation changes and dense mountain laurel and rhododendron thickets.

<b>Counties</b>	Cherokee & northern Greenville Counties, SC
<b>Game Zone</b>	Zone 1 (Mountain Zone)
<b>Acreage</b>	Variable — multiple public and private tracts
<b>Terrain</b>	Rugged ridgelines with significant elevation change; mountain laurel, rhododendron thickets
<b>Distance</b>	Adjacent to Spartanburg County — nearest Zone 1 access from Spartanburg (~15–40 min)
<b>Access</b>	Multiple public access points along I-85 corridor into Cherokee County
<b>Agency</b>	SCDNR — check current hunting guide for specific WMA tract details
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.dnr.sc.gov/hunting.html">https://www.dnr.sc.gov/hunting.html</a>

## SPECIES & SEASONS (2025–2026)

Verify all dates with official SCDNR regulations before hunting. WMA dates may differ from private land dates. Sources: SCDNR, eRegulations, SC State House Bill 4066.

Species	Season Type	Dates (2025–26)	Bag Limit
■ <b>Black Bear</b>	Still Gun — WMA	Oct 11 – Oct 16, 2025	1 / season
	Still Gun — Private	Oct 11 – Oct 23, 2025	
	Party Dog Hunts	Oct 17 – Oct 30, 2025 (private & WMA)	
	Bear Tag Required	\$25 resident / \$100 non-resident	
■ <b>Whitetail Deer</b>	Primitive Weapons	Oct 1 – Oct 10, 2025	5 / season
	WMA Archery Only	Oct 17 – Oct 30, 2025	
	Still Gun — WMA	Oct 11–16 & Oct 31 – Jan 1, 2026	
	Private Gun Season	Oct 11, 2025 – Jan 15, 2026	
	Youth Deer Day	Sep 27, 2025 & Jan 3, 2026	
	Daily Bag (WMA)	2/day · 5/season · max 2 antlered	
■ <b>Wild Turkey</b>	Spring Gobbler	Apr 3 – May 3, 2025	2 / season
	Youth Weekend	Mar 29–30 & May 10–11, 2025	
	Daily Limit	1 gobbler/day · max 1 before Apr 10	
■ <b>Ruffed Grouse</b>	Private Lands	Nov 27, 2025 – Mar 1, 2026	3 / day
	WMA Lands	Nov 27, 2025 – Feb 28, 2026	
	Zone Note	Game Zone 1 ONLY — not available in other SC zones	
■ <b>Wild Boar/Feral Hog</b>	On WMA	During any open hunting season	No limit
	Private Land	Year-round, no closed season	
	Dogs on WMA	Special hog hunts & dog bear hunts only	

■ **BEAR:** Statewide limit 1 bear/season. Illegal to take sows with cubs or any bear ≤100 lbs. Report via SC Game Check by midnight day of harvest. Party dog hunt registration no longer required (Act 46).

■ **DEER:** Antlerless tags valid on WMA starting Oct 1. Max 3 individual antlerless tags across all Zone 1 WMAs combined. All deer must be tagged at point of kill before moving.

■ **TURKEY:** No Jake harvest (immature males with <6-inch beard, uneven tail fan) — now illegal statewide.

■ **GROUSE:** Zone 1 only. Ridge lines between Cherokee and Greenville counties hold excellent habitat. Close-working dog strongly recommended — shots typically under 15 yards.

## ACCESS & DIRECTIONS

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Step 1</b> | From Spartanburg, take <b>I-85 N</b> toward Gaffney / Cherokee County.  |
| <b>Step 2</b> | Exit at <b>SC-105 / Gaffney</b> or continue on I-85 into Cherokee County for northern access points.                      |
| <b>Step 3</b> | For Greenville County portions: take <b>I-85 S</b> and exit at <b>SC-11 (Cherokee Foothills Scenic Hwy)</b> heading west. |

<b>Step 4</b>	Multiple public access points exist along the I-85 corridor. <b>Check the current SCDNR hunting guide</b> for specific WMA tract access roads and parking areas.
<b>Drive Time</b>	15–40 min from Spartanburg (adjacent county)
<b>Zone Boundary</b>	North of Norfolk Southern RR main line to Spartanburg County line
<b>WMA Permit</b>	SC hunting license + WMA permit required on public tracts
<b>Road Conditions</b>	Mountain terrain — forest roads may be rough; 4WD recommended in wet conditions
<b>GPS / Maps</b>	Download offline topo maps before trip — cell coverage unreliable on ridgetops

## FIELD TIPS

<b>Zone Boundaries</b>	Zone 1 deer season opens earlier and has different bear hunting dates than Zone 2. Always carry a printed SCDNR zone boundary map — you may be hunting near the boundary.
<b>Terrain</b>	Rugged with significant elevation change. Ridge hunting requires physical fitness. Plan your pack-out strategy before shooting, especially for bear. Budget extra time for elevation gain/loss.
<b>Ruffed Grouse</b>	Focus on alder and hawthorn thickets on north-facing slopes. A close-working dog is essential — shots are fast and typically within 15 yards.
<b>Black Bear</b>	Most active early morning and late evening along creek drainages and mast-producing hardwood ridges. Soft mast (berries, wild grapes) concentrates bears in September — scout before the October season.
<b>Safety</b>	Wear solid international orange vest and hat during all gun seasons — especially important in dense mountain laurel where visibility is severely limited.
<b>Cell Coverage</b>	Unreliable on ridgetops and in hollows throughout this unit. Download topo maps offline (onX Hunt, Gaia GPS) and share your planned location with someone before entering the field.
<b>Tagging</b>	All harvested deer and bear must be tagged at the point of kill before being moved. Report via SC Game Check by midnight on the day of harvest.
<b>No Baiting</b>	No baiting on any WMA lands. No target practice on WMA lands. Pack in, pack out.

## GEAR RECOMMENDATIONS

### LICENSES & PERMITS

- SC Hunting License
- Big Game Permit
- WMA Permit (if hunting public land)
- Species tags (deer, turkey, bear)
- Bear tag — \$25 resident (if bear hunting)
- Printed SCDNR zone boundary map

### NAVIGATION & SAFETY

- International orange vest + hat
- Offline topo map (onX Hunt / Gaia GPS)

- Compass / handheld GPS
- First aid kit
- Headlamp + extra batteries
- Emergency whistle

### MOUNTAIN TERRAIN GEAR

- Ankle-support hiking boots (rugged terrain)
- Trekking poles (steep slopes)
- Layered clothing (temperature swings)
- Rain gear
- Water (2+ liters) + filtration
- Frame pack for pack-out (bear/deer)

### HARVEST & HUNTING

- Game bags
- Knife + bone saw
- Turkey calls (spring season)
- Shotgun + upland loads (grouse/turkey)

## EMERGENCY INFO

<b>Emergency</b>	Call 911
<b>Cherokee Sheriff</b>	(864) 839-4242
<b>Greenville Sheriff</b>	(864) 271-3400
<b>SC DNR Dispatch</b>	1-800-922-5431
<b>SC Game Check</b>	1-855-922-5431 or online at <a href="http://dnr.sc.gov">dnr.sc.gov</a>
<b>Nearest Hospital</b>	Cherokee Medical Center — 1530 N. Limestone St, Gaffney, SC 29340

■ Cell service is unreliable on mountain ridgelines and in hollows. Download this guide and topo maps before your trip.