

Mountain Hunt Unit

South Carolina Wildlife Management Area | 154,249 acres | Greenville, Oconee, Pickens County | Zone 1

Confirmed from eRegulations WMA list (154,249 acres). Carolina Sportsman article referenced 152,575 acres (likely a slightly older figure). Official SCDNR/eRegulations source of 154,249 used. The task description listed 'variable acreage' which is accurate — it encompasses scattered parcels.

Managing Agency

SCDNR (coordinates multiple landowners including Sumter National Forest/USFS, SC Forestry Commission, Duke Energy, Clemson University, private easements)

Phone: (864) 654-1671

Address: SCDNR Upstate Wildlife Office, 311 Natural Resources Drive, Clemson, SC 29631

Game Species

whitetail deer; black bear; wild turkey; squirrel; ruffed grouse; woodcock; small game; feral hog

Seasons (2025-2026)

Species / Season	Dates
deer_archery	Oct. 1–10 (primitive weapons concurrent); Oct. 17–30 (archery only); Oct. 1–Jan. 1 overall archery season
deer_primitive_weapons	Oct. 1 – Oct. 10
deer_gun	Oct. 11 – Oct. 16 (first still gun period); Oct. 31 – Jan. 1 (second still gun period)
deer_either_sex_days	Last three Saturdays in November (Game Zone 1 WMA)
deer_youth_hunt_day	January 3 (2 deer total)
turkey	April 1 – May 5 (statewide WMA season)
dove	General WMA open; individual fields listed in annual Dove Field List (see Greenville County -
bear	Oct. 11–16: still hunt (no dogs), 1 bear limit, no sow with cubs, no bears under 100 lbs; Oct. 17–30: bow hunt
hog	Jan. 2 – Jan. 10 and Mar. 20 – 27 (hog hunts with dogs, refer to reg. 2.16); still hunting for hogs
small_game	Sept. 1 – Mar. 1 (Game Zone 1 WMA seasons and limits apply)

Bag Limits

deer daily: 2 per day; **deer seasonal:** 5 total (no more than 2 antlered); **antlerless tags:** Only 3 individual antlerless deer tags valid for all Game Zone 1 WMAs combined (starting Oct. 1); **bear:** 1 bear per hunter (still hunt); 5 bears per party (dog hunt); **turkey:** 3 gobblers per season, no more than 2 per day

Access Points

The Mountain Hunt Unit is a 154,000+ acre aggregate of multiple tracts in Oconee, Pickens, and Greenville counties. Key access points include: (1) US 178 and Cleo Chapman Road into Jocassee Gorges sub-area; (2) SC 11 (Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway) corridor — multiple pull-offs and road access; (3) SC 107 via Walhalla (Oconee County) into Andrew Pickens Ranger District/Sumter NF; (4) SC 130 to Whitewater Falls/NC 281; (5) F. Van Clayton Hwy to Sassafras Mountain (3,553 ft) in Pickens County; (6) Caesars Head State Park road off US 276 (Greenville County); (7) Jones Gap State Park (Greenville County) via River Falls Road; (8) US 276/SC 8 in Pickens County for eastern access. Approximately 138 miles of dirt/gravel roads within Jocassee sub-area (seasonally open). Sumter National Forest (Andrew Pickens Ranger District) roads open year-round for access.

Special Regulations

WMA permit required. No Sunday hunting. Game Zone 1 regulations apply in full. Bear regulations (Game Zone 1 specific): no sow with cubs, no bears 100 lbs or less. Party dog bear hunts Oct. 17–30: only handguns permitted during dog hunts, no still hunting during dog hunts (5 dogs minimum for party hunt). Deer hunting with dogs prohibited in Game Zone 1. Individual antlerless deer tags: only 3 tags valid for all Game Zone 1 WMAs combined. For US Forest Service sub-areas (Sumter National Forest, Oconee County): same GZ1 seasons apply with additional Sumter NF regulations — check Andrew Pickens Ranger District (864-638-9568). International orange required during gun/muzzleloader seasons.

Field Tips

The Mountain Hunt Unit is the largest public hunting unit in SC's upstate and one of the most challenging. Best deer hunting is widely acknowledged to be in the Jocassee Gorges area (Oconee County) and Watson-Cooper Heritage Preserve above Caesars Head (Pickens/Greenville County). Key terrain feature: mountain saddles on oak ridges concentrate deer movement — find saddles between peaks with good acorn production, especially white oak. Deer in mountainous terrain always travel through saddles. Set up on south-facing slopes on cold mornings for early activity. Deer density is lower than piedmont areas but bucks are larger. Best squirrel hunting in cove hardwoods. Grouse hunting available in laurel thickets and brushy drainages. Black bear density is among the highest in the Southeast — mast crops drive bear movement. Rut in Game Zone 1 mountains typically late October–early November (slightly earlier than piedmont). Prepare for rugged terrain, weather changes, and limited cell service. GPS and topo maps essential. Roads in Jocassee sub-area closed in summer and late winter — primary hunting access window is September 15–January 15.

Landmarks & Terrain

Sassafras Mountain (3,553 ft — SC's highest point), Lake Jocassee, Caesars Head State Park, Jones Gap State Park, Table Rock State Park, Keowee-Toxaway State Park, Sumter National Forest (Andrew Pickens Ranger District), Foothills Trail (77 miles), Jocassee Gorges, Watson-Cooper Heritage Preserve, Blue Ridge Escarpment, Lake Keowee

Camping & Lodging

On-unit: Jocassee Gorges designated road-side campsites (first-come); Foothills Trail primitive camping (77 miles, no permit required). Adjacent state parks: Devils Fork SP, Table Rock SP, Oconee SP, Keowee-Toxaway SP, Caesars Head SP, Jones Gap SP (all offer developed or primitive camping, some with cabins). Sumter National Forest (Andrew Pickens District): developed campgrounds including Cherry Hill Campground and several primitive sites. Contact Andrew Pickens Ranger District at (864) 638-9568 for NF camping details.

Nearest Cities

Walhalla (Oconee County seat, ~20 mi from western access via SC 107); Pickens (county seat, ~20 mi from eastern Pickens County access); Salem (~15 mi from SC 11 corridor); Greenville (~50 mi from Caesars Head area); Clemson (~35 mi from Oconee access); Spartanburg (~70 mi)

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Sources & References

- eRegulations SC WMA List – Mountain Hunt Unit: 154,249 acres, Map #1, Greenville/Oconee/Pickens counties, phone 864-654-1671 — <https://www.eregulations.com/southcarolina/hunting/wildlife-management-areas>
- eRegulations SC Game Zone 1 WMAs Only – Mountain Hunt Unit seasons, counties, GZ1 regulations — <https://www.eregulations.com/southcarolina/hunting/game-zone-1-wm-as-only>
- SCDNR 2023-24 Rules & Regulations – Mountain Hunt Unit GZ1 season dates (deer, bear, hog), confirmed specific dates — https://www.dnr.sc.gov/regs/assets/2023-24_SCRulesandRegs.pdf
- SCDNR Game Zone 1 – Mountain Hunt Unit listed; zone boundary definition — <https://www.dnr.sc.gov/hunting/zones/zone1.html>
- Carolina Sportsman – Mountain Hunt Unit 152,575 acres, GZ1, hunting tips, saddle/oak ridge strategy, Jocassee/Watson-Cooper best areas — <https://www.carolinaspportsman.com/content/hit-south-carolinas-mountains-for-big-bucks/>
- SCDNR Jocassee Gorges Map – access points, road system, camping within Mountain Hunt Unit sub-area —

https://www.dnr.sc.gov/ml_images/docs/jocasseemap.pdf

• [Carolina Sportsman – Best SC Upstate WMAs; GZ1 hunting context for Mountain Hunt Unit](#) —

<https://www.carolinasportsman.com/hunting/the-best-of-scs-upstate-wmas/>

Compiled by HERE City Network. Always verify current regulations with SCDNR before hunting — seasons, bag limits, and area-specific rules can change year-to-year. SCDNR: 1-803-734-3886 • dnr.sc.gov