

Hunting on Town of Atkinson Lands

Frequently Asked Questions

General FAQs

Q: Is hunting restricted on Town lands in Atkinson?

A: In-season hunting which follows all NH Fish and Game regulations is allowed on most undeveloped Town lands and Town Forests, with some restrictions. In 2000, after hunting incidents where rifle rounds were fired into some homes, Town Meeting banned all hunting on most parcels of Town land which abut residential areas. In 2013, concerns were raised over Lyme Disease and the increasing deer herd, and so Town Meeting voted to allow bow hunting by permit from the Selectmen's Office in all of the Town Forests, including several for which hunting was previously banned.

Q: How do I know where I can and cannot hunt?

A: Hunting is banned on all Town land with recreational fields or inhabited buildings. The use of rifles for deer hunting is banned in all of Rockingham County, and the Atkinson Conservation Commission has voted to ban rifle hunting for all species. Hunting using bow, shotgun, or muzzleloader is permitted on five specific Town Forest parcels which are large enough to safely discharge firearms. Bow hunting is allowed on most other Town Forest lands. An up-to-date map of the Town Forest lands and the hunting rules for each parcel is available in the Selectmen's Office and on the Town web site.

Q: What are the hunting restrictions I must follow?

A: All hunters must follow and abide by all NH Fish and Game Hunting rules, seasons and regulations, summaries of which may be found at these locations:

- <https://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/hunting/>
- <http://www.eregulations.com/newhampshire/hunting/general-hunting-regulations/>
- <http://www.eregulations.com/newhampshire/hunting/deer-hunting-regulations/>

Specific rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hunting is allowed only by shotgun, muzzleloading rifle, handguns in certain specific calibers, or bow and arrow or crossbow. No cartridge rifle hunting is allowed anywhere in Atkinson.
- It is illegal to discharge a firearm or shoot with a bow and arrow or crossbow and bolt or a .22 caliber or larger air rifle when used for hunting purposes within 300 feet of a permanently occupied dwelling without permission of the owner or occupant, or from the owner of the land on which the hunter is situated. A firearm may not be discharged within 300 feet of any commercial, educational or medical building, or outdoor public gathering place.
- It is unlawful to discharge a firearm, air rifle, bow and arrow, or crossbow and bolt within 15 feet of the traveled portion of, or across any class I through V highway (basically any paved road).
- All tree stands must be temporary and their construction and use must conform to rules specified by the Conservation Commission, which may be found on the Town web site.
- Bow hunters must obtain a special Bow Hunting permit from the Atkinson Board of Selectmen before hunting on any Town land or Town Forest.

39 Q: Who is in charge of setting Hunting Regulations on the Town lands?

40 A: The Selectmen are in charge of recreational land and undesignated Town land. The Conservation
41 Commission is in charge of Town Forests and other Conservation parcels. Either one may close hunting
42 access to any Town parcel under its jurisdiction in case of hunting abuse. For instance, if we verify
43 complaints about hunters discharging firearms within 300' of a resident's house, we will close that area
44 to hunting.

45 Q: Will these Town-owned parcels always be available for hunting?

46 A: We may close parcels temporarily due to trail maintenance or forestry, in which case we will post
47 official "CLOSED, NO HUNTING" signs at the entrances. We try not to schedule such work during hunting
48 season, but some game (eg. coyotes) are always in season.

49 Q: I am not sure of the exact boundaries of a Town Forest. Where can I get more
50 information?

51 A: Consult the Town Tax Maps at the Selectmen's or Planning Office. As the hunter, it is your
52 responsibility to know the terrain and not hunt on neighboring land where you do not have permission.
53 These maps are also on the Town's website www.town-atkinsonnh.com under Tax/Assessor.

54 Q: Is hunting on Atkinson Town land restricted to Atkinson residents?

55 A: No. Many of our Town lands were acquired with federal grants which do not allow restricting access
56 to residents only.

58 Bow Hunting FAQs

59 Q: Is there any charge for an Atkinson Bow Hunting Permit?

60 A: No. New Hampshire law exempts landowners who allow recreational use of their land from liability,
61 providing they do not charge a fee to use the land. This applies to towns as well as individuals.

62 Q: What are the requirements for an Atkinson Bow Hunting Permit?

63 A: You will need to show your Driver's License or other ID and a current year NH Fish and Game Archery
64 or Crossbow License.

65 Q: Why do I need to have a Fish and Game License?

66 A: The NH Fish and Game Archery and Crossbow Licenses require that you have completed a Hunter
67 Archery Safety Course, which certifies to the Town that you are a safe archer who knows the rules.

68 Q: Is there an age requirement for the Bow Hunting Permit?

69 A: No. The only requirement is to have a valid NH State Archery or Crossbow License.

70 Q: Where do I get the Atkinson Bow Hunting Permit?

71 A: At the Atkinson Selectmen's Office, during normal business hours.

72 Q: How long is the Bow Hunting Permit good for?

73 A: From the date of issue until the end of the calendar year.

74 Q: What can I hunt with an Atkinson Bow Hunting Permit?

75 A: You must still follow all NH Fish and Game hunting rules and seasons. The permit does not restrict you
76 to deer only. You may hunt anything Fish and Game says you can legally hunt with a NH Archery or
77 Crossbow License.

78 Q: I have a Bow Permit and want to hunt on a Town parcel but it is posted "No Hunting".
79 May I still hunt there?

80 A: Yes. NH law allows a landowner to post their land against hunting but still allow access by permission.
81 You should carry your Atkinson Bow Hunting Permit, NH Hunting License, and ID with you while hunting
82 and be prepared to show them on demand to Fish and Game or Police officials. The permit is your
83 written permission from the town to hunt regardless of whether the land is posted.