WITHLACOOCHEE STATE FOREST
CROOM
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
20,595 acres
Hernando and Sumter Counties

Legend

Management Area
Designated Entrance
Check Station
Motorcycle Area - Archery Only
Private Property
Closed to Hunting
Designated Hunter Crossing
Hunt Camp/Primitive Camping
Campground
Withlacoochee State Trail
Florida Trail
Fire Tower
Paved Road
Improved Road
Unimproved Road

Campgrounds

A. Silver Lake
B. Twin Pond Hunt Camp
C. Hog Island
D. River Junction
E. East Croom Hunt Camp

This brochure is designed to provide the public with information and a summary of regulations pertaining to hunting and other recreational use on the Croom Wildlife Management Area. Regulations that are new or differ substantially from last year are shown in bold print. Area users should familiarize themselves with all regulations. For exact wording of the wildlife laws and regulations, see the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s wildlife code, on file with the Secretary of State and state libraries. This brochure, the Florida Hunting Regulations handbook, and quota permit worksheets should provide the information necessary for you to plan your hunting activities. These publications are available from any Commission office, county tax collector and at MyFWC.com.

Persons using wildlife management areas are required to have appropriate licenses, permits and stamps. The following persons are exempt from all license and permit requirements (except for quota permits when listed as “no exemptions,” recreational use permits, antlerless deer permits and the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp [federal duck stamp]): Florida residents who are 65 years of age or older; residents who possess a Florida Resident Disabled Person Hunting and Fishing Certificate; residents in the Self-Help Armed Forces, not stationed in Florida, while home on leave for 30 days or less, upon submission of orders; and children under 16 years of age. Children under 16 years of age are exempt from the federal duck stamp. Any person born on or after June 1, 1975 and 16 years of age or older must have passed a Commission-approved hunter-safety course prior to being issued a hunting license, except the Hunter Safety Mentoring exemption allows anyone to purchase a hunting license and hunt under the supervision of a licensed hunter, 21 years of age or older.

Licenses and permits may be purchased from county tax collectors, license agents, at MyFWC.com/license or by telephone at 888-486-8356. A no-cost Migratory Bird Permit is available when purchasing a hunting license. Any waterfowl hunter 16 years of age or older must possess a federal duck stamp.

Quota Permit Information:
Minimum quota: 300, no-cost, quota permits. General Grouse (first 9 days) - 300, no-cost, quota permits. Spring Turkey - 15, no-cost, quota permits (no exemptions) for each of 3 hunts.

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Permit applications: Hunters must submit electronic applications for quota and special-opportunity permits through the Commission’s Recreational License Issuance Services (RLIS). Workshops listing hunting application periods, deadlines and instructions are available at county tax collector’s offices, FWC offices or MyFWC.com. Quota application periods occur throughout the year beginning April 1; please refer to the hunting handbook or MyFWC.com for specific dates. Worksheets will be available about 2 weeks prior to each application period.

Guest hunters: For each non-transferable archery, muzzleloading gun, general gun, wild hog, spring turkey and mobility-impaired quota permit issued through the Commission’s RLIS, a quota permit holder (host) may take a guest hunter by obtaining a guest permit. A guest hunter must possess a completed guest permit while hunting except the following persons may be a guest hunter without a guest permit: a youth under 16 years of age, a youth supervisor, a mentor license holder or a mentor license supervisor. A host may only bring 1 guest hunter at a time and may only use 1 guest permit per day. The following persons are not considered to be guest hunters: other quota permit holders, non-hunters and exempt hunters (on areas and during seasons that allow exemptions). The host must share the bag limit with the guest hunter and the host is responsible for violations that exceed the bag limit. The guest hunter and host must enter and exit the area together and must share a street-legal vehicle while hunting on the area. The guest hunter may hunt only while the host is on the area. Refer to the quota hunt worksheets for additional information.

Youth and mentor license holders: A youth hunter (less than 16 years of age) must be supervised by a person at least 18 years of age. A mentor license holder must be supervised by a licensed hunter at least 21 years of age. Unless exempt, only those supervisors with proper licenses and permits may hunt. If the supervisor is hunting during any hunt for which quota permits are issued, at least 1 person in the party must be in possession of a quota permit. During a hunt that allows exemptions, a non-exempt supervisor of a youth must have a quota permit to hunt. A non-supervising hunter is allowed to accompany a youth or mentor license holder during any hunt.

Transfer of permits: Quota and guest permits are not transferable. A positive form of identification is required when using a non-transferable permit, except for a youth under 16 years of age. The sale or purchase of any quota permit or guest permit is prohibited.

General Area Regulations:
All general laws and regulations relating to wildlife and fish shall apply unless specifically exempted for this area. Hunting or the taking of wildlife or fish on this area shall be allowed only during the open seasons and in accordance with the following regulations:

1. Any person hunting deer or accompanying another person hunting deer shall wear at least 500 square inches of daylight fluorescent-orange material as an outer garment, above the waistline. These provisions are not required when hunting with a bow and arrow during archery season.
2. Taking of spotted fawn, swimming deer or roosted turkey is prohibited.
3. It is illegal to hunt over bait or place any bait or other food for wildlife on this area.
4. Driving a metal object into any tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven, is prohibited.
Hunters and Check Stations:

1. No person shall discharge a firearm or have a loaded firearm in hand while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
2. For hunting non-migratory game, only shotguns, rifles, pistols, bowens, crossbows or falconery may be used. Shotgun shells shall not be larger than 10 gauge and shall be constructed in such a manner as to hold no more than 3 shells in the magazine and chamber when combined.
3. Hunting with full automatic firearms, centerfire semi-automatic rifles and hunting with dogs as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: The Florida Forest Service Rules and Information:

Florida Forest Service at 352-797-4140. Survival of available reserved hunt campsites begins the first Thursday after Labor Day.

2. Hunting with dogs is prohibited.

Camping:

The Florida Forest Service regulates camping and a fee is required. Hunt camps also require a permit for reserved camping. For more information and dates hunts are open to the public, contact the Withlacoochee State Forest Recreation Visitation Center and be posted north of Croom Road.

Bag and Possessions Limit:

1. No person shall discharge a firearm or have a loaded firearm in hand while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
2. For hunting non-migratory game, only shotguns, rifles, pistols, bowens, crossbows or falconery may be used. Shotgun shells shall not be larger than 10 gauge and shall be constructed in such a manner as to hold no more than 3 shells in the magazine and chamber when combined.
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Florida Forest Service Rules and Information:

1. The Florida Forest Service requires a fee at some day-use areas and all campgrounds. Hunters are exempt from paying day-use fees 2 weeks prior to and during the fall hunting season. All campgrounds and other fees apply.

Public Access and Vehicles:

1. Open to public access year round.
2. Vehicles may be operated on named or numbered roads shown on the map provided that all vehicles are driven in a low-speed manner, have four-wheel drive and do not exceed 20 mph of speed. A guest hunter must share the host's bag limit, 3. Motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles may be operated off the road in the Croom Motorcycle Area by permit from the Florida Forest Service.

Domesticated animals shall be operated in areas designated as closed to vehicular traffic.

Motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles may be operated off the road in the Croom Motorcycle Area by permit from the Florida Forest Service.

All vehicles operated outside the Croom Motorcycle Area must be licensed and registered for operation on public roads.

Hunting is prohibited on the Withlacoochee State Trail.

Guns:

1. Hunting with firearms is prohibited within the Croom Motorcycle Area. In the Croom Motorcycle Area hunting with bows, crossbows or air guns is allowed during general gun and small game seasons and hunting with bows or crossbows is allowed during crossbow season hunting.

2. Hunting with a bow or crossbow is prohibited during crossbow season hunting.

3. Muzzleloading guns used for taking deer must be 40 caliber or larger, if fired in a single shot, or larger if firing in 2 or more shots.

4. Hunting deer with rimfire or non-expanding, full metal jacket (military ball) ammunition is prohibited.

5. Hunting wild hogs, turkey, quail, or migratory birds with a air gun is allowed. Hunting with air guns is prohibited during muzzleloading season hunting.

6. Children under the age of 16 hunting with a firearm or air gun must be in the presence of a supervising adult.

Wildlife Alert Reward Program

Report fishing, boating or hunting law violations, you may qualify for a cash reward.

888-404-FWCC (3922) *FWC or #FWC on cellular phones
Hunters and Check Stations:

1. No person shall discharge a firearm or have a loaded firearm in hand when in a vehicle or near a stop or area where alcohol or drugs are being consumed.
2. For hunting non-migratory game, only shotguns, rifles, pistols, bows, crossbows or falconry may be used. Shotguns shall not be less than 12 gauge and shall be of such capacity of holding more than 3 shells in the magazine and chamber combined.
3. Hunting with full automatic firearms, centerfire semi-automatic rifles, shotguns, or crossbows is prohibited.
4. It is unlawful to set fire to any forest, grass or woodlands.
5. Littering is prohibited.
6. There shall be no shooting in the Croom Motorcycle Area.
7. Dogs on leashes may be used for trailing wounded game.
8. In the Croom Motorcycle Area, dogs are allowed, but must be kept under physical restraint at all times.
9. Deer may be hunted during the statewide deer season and only with the legal methods of take during each open hunting season and only with the legal methods of take during each open hunting season.

Dogs:

1. Hunting deer or wild hog with dogs is prohibited.
2. Dogs may be used to trail wounded game only in accordance with law.
3. Dogs on leashes may be used for trailing wounded game.
4. Hunting deer with rimfire or non-expanding, full metal jacket (military ball) ammunition is prohibited.

Deer - Daily limit 2, possession limit 4.
Wild hog - No size or bag limit.

Spring Turkey Season:

March 21-23, April 1-12, May 18-20.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Quota permit, hunting license, management area permit and wild turkey permit.

Swimming Pools:

A hunting license is not required to hunt wild hog.

Spring turkey season regulations:

1. Hunting with firearms is prohibited.
2. Only bows, crossbows and shotguns using a #2 or smaller shot size may be used.
3. Legal shooting hours are ½ hour before sunrise until 1 p.m.

Small Game Season:

December 5 through March 5.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license, management area permit and wild turkey permit.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Fishing license (not required when fishing for 18-20). Wild hog, gray squirrel, quail, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, armadillo, beaver, coyote, skunk, nutria and migratory birds in season.

Bobcat and otter through March 1.

Regulations Unique to General Game Season:

1. Fishing is allowed during the Croom Motorcycle Area.

Regulations Unique to General Game Season:

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Quota permit (if hunting during first 9 days), hunting license, management area permit, deer permit (if hunting deer), bobcat permit, management area permit and wild turkey permit, state waterfowl permit and federal duck stamp (if hunting waterfowl).

Legal shooting hours are ½ hour before sunrise until 1 p.m.

Regulations Unique to General Game Season:

1. Hunting courts and check stations are allowed only during the dates of open hunting seasons and only with the legal methods of take during each particular season.

General Information:

1. Information on persons with disabilities can be found on MyFWC.com/ADA.
2. You may develop questions about this material, please call the Fish and Wildlife Center at 863-648-3200 (TDD 800-955-8771).
3. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is not responsible for protection of personal property, and will not be liable for theft or damage to personal property.

Florida Forest Service Rules and Information:

1. The Florida Forest Service requires a fee at some day-use areas and all campgrounds. derp hunters are exempt from paying day-use fees 2 weeks prior to and during scheduled hunts. All camping fees apply. For information on general recreation and fees, please contact the Palm Beach County Forestry at 561-334-1600.
2. The maximum speed limit on all forest roads is 30 MPH unless otherwise posted.
3. Construction of permanent or semi-permanent structures on State Forests is prohibited.
4. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is not responsible for theft of or damage to personal property.

Wildlife Alert Reward Program

Report fishing, boating or hunting law violations, you may qualify for a cash reward.

1. Federal - See Florida Freshwater Fishing Regulations Summary.
2. General - See General Fishing Regulations.
4. Shooting limits are allowed only during the dates of open hunting seasons and only with the legal methods of take during each particular season.
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Licenses and permits may be purchased from county tax collectors, license agents, at MyFWC.com/license or by telephone at 888-466-8576. A no-cost Migratory Bird Permit is available when purchasing a hunting license. Any waterfowl hunter 16 years of age or older must possess a federal duck stamp.

Quota Permit Information:
- Mule Deer - January 1 - June 30, no-cost, quota permits.
- General Gun (first 9 days) - 300, no-cost, quota permits.
- Spring Turkey - 15, no-cost, quota permits (no exemptions) for each of 3 hunts.

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