

Tree Stand Policy for Lake Shelbyville

The policy allows licensed hunters to leave one stand up for the season (“Seasonal Tree stand”) and/or utilize a “roving” stand(s) that can be left up for a period of 72 hours – the length of a 3 day weekend. Lake Shelbyville staff feels this provides the flexibility many hunters have requested while maintaining the integrity of the resource and addressing abuses that have led to the appearance of private exclusive use.

The Policy is as follows:

- 1) All deer hunters utilizing deer stands or ground blinds, regardless of weapon, will be required to obtain a site permit in order to hunt white-tailed deer on the US Army Corps of Engineers managed portion of Lake Shelbyville.
- 2) Each permit will come with either:
 - i) A numbered tamper proof sticker for one (1) Seasonal Tree stand that can be left in the woods from September 15 – February 1. Only one (1) seasonal permit per LICENSED hunter/year will be permitted.
 - ii) Up to two (2) numbered tamper proof stickers for a roving tree stand(s) that can be left in the woods for up to 72 hours (a climbing stand and a loc-on for example).
 - iii) Both.
 - iv) Note: A valid hunting license must be presented in order to obtain a seasonal tree stand permit.
- 3) If there is a break in use of the roving tree stand of more than 72 hours the stand must be removed from the woods.
- 4) An administrative/service fee of \$30.00 will be charged for seasonal tree stands. Stickers for roving stands will be issued at no cost.
- 5) The numbered sticker assigned to each hunter must be attached to the tree stand in such a way that it will be readily visible from the ground.
- 6) The numbers must remain legible throughout the entire season. Any tree stands not marked or with illegible numbers will be impounded upon discovery.
- 7) Absolutely no hardware such as screw-in steps, nails, bolts, railroad spikes, bow hangers, or anything else that pierces the bark of the tree may be used. Such objects impact the value of timber products and/or kill or weaken the tree. There are many products on the market today that will not inflict damage. The citation forfeiture for this infraction is \$225.00.

- 8) Excessive Pruning – While minor pruning of shooting lanes is acceptable, many instances of excessive pruning are noted each year. Common sense will dictate the definition of excessive pruning and will be up to the discretion of the Park Ranger.
- 9) The penalty for violating the policy will be any of the following as deemed appropriate:
 - i) Citation
 - ii) Loss of stand
 - iii) Impoundment fee
 - iv) Loss of privileges for the current season
 - v) Loss of privileges for current season and following year
- 10) If it is readily apparent that a tree stand was placed with the help of an off road vehicle (ORV) on government property, the owner of that stand will receive a citation for ORV use (\$150.00). In the past many of the large ladder stands were impermissibly being placed with ORV assistance.
- 11) All hunters utilizing a tree stand on Lake Shelbyville Corps of Engineers managed lands must wear a Fall-Arrest System/full body harness approved by the Tree Stand Manufacturer's Association.

This policy is in effect for the 2013 season.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Why is this policy in effect?

A: Prior to this policy there was an excessive number of tree stands being left in the woods year around creating a public safety hazard and negatively impacting the resource. The appearance of private exclusive use of public property was also readily apparent to many users of the resource.

Q: Why are screw-in steps, bow hangers, etc. banned?

A: They have always been prohibited from use – unfortunately many have chosen to ignore this. Our timber resources on Lake Shelbyville are valuable and screw in devices may kill or weaken the health of the tree, damage the value of the tree along with creating safety hazards if hit by a chainsaw.

Q: What do you mean by “excessive” pruning?

A: Trimming a few limbs here and there for shooting lanes is not a problem. However, one frequent example of excessive pruning is when large trees are cut.

Q: How much will my permit cost and will I have to renew it each year?

A: There will be an administrative/service cost of \$30.00 to obtain a permit to leave a single stand up for the season (a seasonal tree stand). All checks must be made payable to FAO USACE, St. Louis District. The user will have to renew it each year. A permit for a roving stand(s) will be issued at no cost and must be renewed each year.

Q: I hear Corps rangers are going to be scouring the woods for illegal stands during deer season, checking me in my tree stand, and ruining my hunt. Is this true?

A: Lake Shelbyville has a staff of Rangers dedicated to Natural Resource Management. These Rangers are typically in the field in the outlying lands (outside the campgrounds) on a daily basis working on things such as invasive species control, timber stand improvements, food plots, succession mowing, etc. and their work does NOT cease during deer season. Expect to see these Rangers in the woods at the levels you have seen in past years. As long as compliance is good their will not be increased enforcement, however, if compliance is poor, efforts will be increased.

Q: Once 72 hours is up for my roving stand do I have to remove my stand?

A: Title 36 has a 24 hour time limit, meaning if a stand is not occupied sometime within a 24 hour period it must be removed. The Tree Stand Policy eases this restriction and allows a hunter up to 72 hours between hunts before the stand must be removed. Every time the hunter hunts the stand, it resets the 72 hour time limit. For example, if the hunter hunts their stand every 3 days it can potentially be left for the season. However, if there is a break in use of more than 72 hours, the stand must be removed from the woods.

Q: The 72 hours rule sounds like a loophole, how will you know if I hunted it within the last 72 hours?

A: Our intent is to ensure that stands on Corps property are being utilized by hunters and not just left in the woods as place holders to discourage other potential users from hunting an area. Corps Rangers will have tags with them and when stands are found during their daily duties (their work does NOT stop during deer season) they will tag the stand with the date and time marked on it and the sticker number noted. If the hunter does not contact the office number on the tag sometime within a 72 hour time frame it will be apparent they were not hunting the stand and in violation of the policy. A citation will be issued for failure to comply.

Q: What happens to my stand if I do not call within 72 hours of a Ranger tagging my stand?

A: The person will be contacted by the Ranger, issued a citation for failure to comply with posted restrictions, and given 72 hours to remove the stand. If the stand is not removed within that timeframe it will be impounded.

Q: If I plan on removing my stand after each hunt do I still need a permit?

A: Yes, otherwise there would be no way to identify the stand and we might inadvertently impound it if you were taking a lunch break, etc. Stands found without stickers are immediately impounded because there is no way of knowing whose stand it is.

Q: What will happen to my stand if it is impounded?

A: To get it back there is a \$50.00 impoundment fee and possibly citation forfeiture (depending upon the circumstances). If 120 days has passed from the impoundment date the tree stand becomes government property and will be disposed of according to regulations.

Q: What if someone tampers with my stand number causing it to be impounded?

A: It is the owner's responsibility to clearly mark the stand with the tamper resistant sticker provided. It is possible this might happen and the Ranger staff will not be unreasonable if it is obvious someone scraped off the number.

Q: What if someone steals my stand, will my number be replaced?

A: The Corps of Engineers will not be responsible for stolen stands. Leaving stands in the field when not in use is at the owner's risk. A replacement seasonal stand permit can be obtained through the project office by submitting a police report and paying the \$30 administrative/service fee.

Q: Will I have to provide a general location of where I will place my stand?

A: No.

Q: Have you impounded any treestands?

A: Yes, we have removed and/or impounded over 100 portable and ladder stands since February 1, 2009 and have torn down many permanent stands.

Q: How would I lose my privileges and for how long?

A: Hunters in violation of the policy may lose their privileges depending upon the circumstance. Examples of items that would cause loss of privileges to utilize stands or blinds on Corps managed portions of Lake Shelbyville for the first offense include ORV use, screw-in steps, and excessive pruning. Hunters caught violating the 72 hour rule for roving stands will lose the privilege for the issued number for that stand or blind for the rest of the season. Second offenses or serious offenses may cause loss of privileges for the rest of the season and the following year.

Q: Where can I obtain a permit?

A: Permits for a Seasonal stand or roving stands are available from the US Army Corps of Engineers main office in Shelbyville Monday – Friday from 0800 – 4:30 P.M. Roving permits may be obtained from Kidd’s Archery and Buckstop Archery in Shelbyville. If additional locations are secured, a list of available locations will be posted on our website