

From the Office of the Sheriff: “The Hunt is Upon Us”

Very soon, hunters will invade the rural areas of the state in hopes of slaying the great whitetail deer. Most hunters hunt land they own or rented for just this event. There will also be 1% who own no land chose not to lease, and refuse to take advantage of the thousands of acres of public hunting land accessible to them. This 1% will generate a significant number of calls for law enforcement service during the hunting season.

The level of disregard for another’s property and sheer willingness to illegally access it for the pure pleasure of killing an animal baffles me. Recent incidents have shown trespassing may seem like a minor incident, yet, it has cost several people their lives when land owner and trespasser confront one other. Land owners take trespassing very serious and do not tolerate those who blatantly fail to respect the rights of property owners.

Often the perpetrator states he didn’t see the any trespassing signs or may have wondered off their path. If you are hunting unfamiliar land it is up to you to know the property lines. I encourage hunters new to the area to make a point of meeting adjacent property owners and introduce themselves. The act of trespassing is expensive and evidence of the violation is easily proven. When we receive a complaint of trespassers we advise the land owner to maintain a visual of the actor(s), record back tag numbers and license plate numbers. The Dodge County Sheriffs’ Department is the agency who responds and investigates trespassing complaints; we take them seriously and pursue these investigations.

On the safety side I would offer a few simple tips. First a foremost is be safe, have a positive ID on your target and what dangers may lurk beyond your sight picture. Know where others in your hunting group are at all times and the ability to communicate with them enhances safety, specifically when conducting deer drives. Be careful climbing up the tree stand and be aware of the hunting start and stop times each day. Should you shot a deer and it runs off the property you own or lease, ensure the proper permissions are obtained from adjacent property owners prior to tracking your deer. Land owner scan deny permission to track wounded deer. Lastly, with age it becomes more difficult to drag the trophy whitetail from the point of kill which is never close to a road or ATV trail. Be aware of your of your physical limitations and seek younger assistants to aid the retrieval of your kill.

When you legally park you car, lock it and secure all your valuables in the trunk. Ensure someone else knows where you will be hunting and what time you anticipate return to camp or home. The overdue hunter is a common call we get and we do not want to spend valuable resources looking for you only to find you at the local watering hole celebrating your trophy kill. I want to wish all hunters well and may you be successful in your efforts. Hunting relating questions can be answered by reading the hunting regulation manual provided at businesses who sell licenses. For those with trespass questions go to State Statute 943.13. I also encourage you to refresh yourselves on other rules and regulations by visiting <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/deer/> , also go to the Sheriffs’ Dept website, under the Sheriff Columns link is my October 18, 1005 column on trespassing rules and regulations. Thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us.

