

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025
4

As Engrossed: S4/7/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1827

5 By: Representative Wardlaw
6 By: Senator Irvin
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS HUNTING HERITAGE
10 PROTECTION ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
11

Subtitle

12
13 TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS HUNTING HERITAGE
14 PROTECTION ACT.
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17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
18

19 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 15-41-303 is amended to read as follows:
20 15-41-303. Definitions.

21 As used in this subchapter:

22 (1) "Commission" means the Arkansas State Game and Fish
23 Commission;

24 (2) "Commission-leased lands" means those lands over which the
25 commission holds a possessory interest under lease or other written agreement
26 that has a term of at least one (1) year and includes public recreational
27 hunting rights;

28 (3) "Commission-managed lands" means those lands that are either
29 commission-owned lands or commission-leased lands+

30 ~~(A) That the commission owns; and~~

31 ~~(B) Over which the commission holds management authority;~~

32 and

33 (4) "Commission-owned lands" means those lands to which the
34 commission holds title in fee simple; and

35 ~~(3)(5)~~ (5) "Hunting" means the lawful pursuit, trapping, shooting,
36 capture, collection, or killing of wildlife or the attempt to pursue, trap,



1 shoot, capture, collect, or kill wildlife.

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3 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 15-41-304 is amended to read as follows:

4 15-41-304. Recreational hunting.

5 (a) Subject to valid existing rights, commission-managed lands shall
6 be open to access and use for recreational hunting except as limited by the
7 Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission for reasons of ~~public safety or~~
8 ~~homeland security or as otherwise limited by law~~ fish or wildlife management
9 or as otherwise limited by statutory authority of the commission.

10 (b)(1) The commission shall exercise its authority consistent with
11 subsection (a) of this section in a manner to support, promote, and enhance
12 recreational hunting opportunities to the extent authorized by law.

13 (2) The commission is not required to give preference to hunting
14 over other uses of commission-managed lands or over land or water management
15 priorities established by state law.

16 (c)(1) To the greatest practicable extent, commission land management
17 decisions and actions, including decisions made by private owners to close
18 commission-managed lands, may shall not result in any net loss of habitat
19 land acreage available for hunting opportunities on commission-managed lands
20 that exists on ~~August 12, 2005~~ January 1, 2025.

21 (2) This subchapter does not apply to commission-owned lands
22 under contract to private persons or entities.

23 (3) Acreage lost from commission-leased lands due to the
24 expiration or termination of the lease or agreement on the commission-leased
25 lands shall not be counted in the net loss calculation.

26 (d)(1) The commission shall expeditiously find replacement acreage for
27 hunting to compensate for the closures of any existing hunting land.

28 (2) To the greatest extent possible, the replacement land
29 required under subdivision (d)(1) of this section shall be:

30 (A) Located within a reasonable distance from the closed
31 land; and

32 (B) Consistent with the hunting discipline that the
33 commission allowed on the closed land.

34 ~~(d)(e)~~ (e) On or before ~~October 1~~ July 1 of each year, the commission
35 shall submit to the ~~House and Senate cochairs of the Legislative Council~~
36 House Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs and the Senate

1 Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs a written report
2 describing:

3 (1) ~~The acreage administered by the commission~~ number of acres
4 of commission-managed lands that ~~has been~~ were closed during the previous
5 fiscal year to recreational hunting and the reasons for the closures; and

6 (2) ~~The acreage administered by the commission~~ number of acres
7 of commission-managed lands that ~~was opened~~ were open to recreational hunting
8 ~~to compensate for the acreage that was closed~~ during the previous fiscal
9 year.

10 ~~(e)~~(f) This subchapter does not compel the opening to recreational
11 hunting of national parks or national monuments administered by the National
12 Park Service.

13 (g) This subchapter does not prohibit a private landowner from making
14 otherwise legal decisions regarding access to his or her privately owned
15 commission-managed lands.

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17 SECTION 3. DO NOT CODIFY. Report.

18 The initial report required under Section 2 of this act shall be
19 submitted by July 1, 2025.

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21 /s/Wardlaw

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