

**McHenry County Conservation District
2021 Waterfowl and Youth Spring Turkey Hunting Program**

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Introduction/General Information

Philosophy

The McHenry County Conservation (District) supports hunting practiced in a legal, responsible, safe, and ethical manner. Regulated hunting is the utilization of a renewable resource and fits within the definition and framework of conservation.

The District's hunting program operates on the basis of three philosophies. These philosophies serve as the foundation of the program and are as follows:

Safety is the top priority of the hunting program. The highest standards of safety are demanded from all participants and staff involved in the program. Safety shall not be compromised.

Only *ecologically self-sustaining wildlife populations* are included in the scope of the program. The definition of "ecologically self-sustaining" is those populations naturally found in viable numbers on District sites. These are wildlife species able to sustain their population through natural reproductive rates.

The District strives to integrate hunting into the list of *recreational opportunities* available on various sites it owns and manages. The activities of the hunting program will be tailored to prevent significant changes to the District-established pattern of public use on its sites.

Types of Hunting Permitted

The District has five types of waterfowl and turkey hunting programs:

- Marsh Only - Waterfowl Hunting
- Combo (Marsh and Field) –Waterfowl Hunting
- Field Only - Waterfowl Hunting
- Youth Marsh Waterfowl Hunting
- Youth Spring Turkey Hunting

Eligibility/ Requirements to Participate

Web-based Sign-in/out: Participants will need a smartphone, or other mobile internet device to access web-based programs for checking in and out of hunting areas. Participants requiring special accommodation assistance, need to contact the District **at the time of application** so we can best meet each individual's needs. Notification of accommodation requirements after zone selection limits the District's ability to accommodate. For accommodation assistance, please contact Gabriel Powers at 815-678-4532 x 8146 or gpowers@mccdistrict.org.

Hunter safety education course: To be eligible, all participants must show proof that they have successfully completed a state- or federally-approved hunter safety education course. First time applicants must submit a photocopy of the applicant's Hunter Safety Education card with the application. For more information about Hunter Safety Education, contact the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at 800-832-2599 or www.dnr.state.il.us.

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Orientation meetings: Each participant must attend an orientation meeting for the type of hunting they are participating.

The waterfowl hunting program meeting is on Thursday, **September 23, 2021**; all participants are encouraged to review all the program information and rules prior to the orientation meeting and ask questions at that time. The meetings will be held at McHenry County College Conference Center and start at 7:00 p.m. CST. The Youth Spring Turkey meeting will take place in March 2022 with location, date and time to be determined. If public meetings are unable to be held due to public health and safety rules, a virtual orientation will be provided.

Necessary licenses: To be eligible for a District-issued hunting permit, every applicant must show proof of possession of all valid licenses, stamps, and permits as required by Federal and Illinois State law. These will be checked at the orientation meeting.

Age requirements: Participants must have reached their ninth birthday by October 1 of the current year to be eligible to hunt. For the purpose of this program, **youth hunters** are those participants who are seventeen (17) years old by Oct 1, 2021 or younger. However, applicants interested in the special youth hunts must be fifteen (15) years old on Oct 1, 2021, or younger.

Any participant **under the age of eighteen** (18) years of age must be accompanied by a person twenty-one (21) years of age or older, who will be in the immediate area (10 feet).

Disabled hunters: Persons with disabilities may be allowed unique accommodations for participation in the hunting program. Each case will be handled on an individual basis. The definition of a person with disabilities is as per federal and state laws. Applicants with disabilities needing accommodations should contact the District via telephone, email or any other means to arrange accommodations. If you need accommodation assistance please do so at the time of application, so we can best meet each individual's needs. Contact Gabriel Powers at 815-678-4532 x 8146 or gpowers@mccdDistrict.org.

Resident vs. non-resident: The program is open to both residents and non-residents of McHenry County. There is a **fee reduction for McHenry County residents**. For the purpose of this program, "resident" means a person who in good faith makes application for any hunting program and verifies by statement that he or she maintains his or her permanent abode in McHenry County. A person's permanent abode is his or her fixed and permanent dwelling place, as distinguished from a temporary or transient place of residence. Domiciliary intent is required to establish that the person is maintaining his or her permanent abode in McHenry County. Evidence of domiciliary intent includes, but is not limited to, proof of the location where the person is legally registered to vote or pays property tax, or a copy of a recent utility bill or driver's license.

Signed waiver: All participants must sign a waiver of liability at the mandatory orientation meeting.

Compliance with Rules/Consequences

All participants must **comply with all Federal and Illinois State rules and regulations**, unless the District regulations are more restrictive. All participants must agree to expeditiously report any violations or non-compliance of rules and regulations to Conservation District Police Officers.

Violation of any rule or exhibition of unethical or unsafe conduct by a participant may result in **revocation** of that person's District-issued hunting permit, a **fine**, or both.

Applications

A hunter may only participate in one waterfowl program; marsh, field or combo (marsh and field) program. An applicant's name must appear on **only one application**. All applicants must use the District's on-line application system, linked at www.mccdistrict.org. If an applicant does not own a computer, the District provides public computers at Prairieview Education Center, 2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake, or the Lost Valley Visitor Center at 6316 Harts Road, Ringwood, IL 60072. Incomplete applications, late, mailed, or faxed, and duplicate applications will not be accepted. The application deadline is **August 4, 2021 at 3:30pm CST**.

Participant Selection

Marsh only participants will be selected by a **lottery**. The lottery will be based on a point system. The 2021 lottery is a straight lottery based on zero points awarded from 2020. If applications exceed opportunities in 2021, those not selected in the lottery will have preference in 2022 over others within their residency status. McHenry County residents will receive preference over non-residents.

Program Overview

Waterfowl Program

In order to best accommodate the variety of hunter's interests, to meet hunter demand, and to provide the highest quality program for most, applicants must select one opportunity which best meets their interests; field, marsh, or combo. The District Waterfowl Program opportunities include either **marsh only, field only, or combo** (field and marsh). The **marsh only** program includes the use of reserved and open (first come first served) zones, but only on the water (marsh) opportunities. The **field only** is an open, first-come first-served program, but only in the field opportunities. There are no reserved fields. The **combo** (field and marsh) program allows participants to use both the marsh and field first come, first served opportunities. Participants in the **combo (field and marsh)** program are not allowed to use the reserved marsh blinds. An applicant can only participate in **one** waterfowl program, either the **marsh only, field only, or combo** (marsh and field) programs. Qualifying-aged youth may select two programs, the youth waterfowl program and another program. Applicants drawn in the **marsh**

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only lottery will be assigned a marsh hunting opportunity from a designated blind and may also use the first come first served marsh zones. If an applicant is not successful in the **marsh only** lottery and desires to participate in the **field only**, or **combo (marsh and field)** open program, they may do so. The first come first served marsh or field opportunities allow participants to hunt throughout the season at various open hunting sites on a first-come first-served basis. There are no reserved field hunting sites. If you have questions about the 2021 waterfowl hunting program contact Gabriel Powers at 815-678-4532 x 8146 or gpowers@mccdDistrict.org prior to applying.

Length of opportunity:

Each marsh - reserved opportunity is four days (Friday-Monday), except for opening weekend, where a group will only receive three days (Saturday-Monday). The final number of marsh - reserved opportunities will be determined by the number of applicants and lottery results.

The first come, first served, open program coincides with the Illinois State seasons, tentatively set to begin on Saturday, October 23, 2021 and run through the end of the duck/goose specified waterfowl seasons (December 21/January 20) 7-days a week, except for Thanksgiving (Nov. 25), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (Dec. 24 and 25) or site specific closures. Field sites with crops will be opened by District staff after crops have been harvested and it has been determined to be safe to enter the zone/site. The zone openings will be listed on the District's website at https://www.mccdDistrict.org/visit_explore/things_to_do/hunt/waterfowl.php.

Special youth mentored hunt's (waterfowl and turkey) length of opportunity are determined by lottery draw and are based upon the number of applicants in the lottery, and the number of sites and days available.

Applications:

Marsh Only - reserved waterfowl hunting: The marsh - reserved sites are only available to the District's marsh only waterfowl program participants during their designated hunting period. Applicants may apply for any or all of the weeks offered at any of the designated marsh hunting sites. Applicants must apply as individuals, and identify a group leader. The group leader must have **two partners** in order for the application to be complete and be considered for the lottery. All applicants must apply individually to be part of the group on the District's on-line application system at www.mccdDistrict.org. After the lottery has been finalized, successful marsh only program participants are allowed to hunt with other reserved groups if an opening is available, and has been invited by the group leader. However, at no time shall there be more than 3 hunters in a blind at one time. Participants are encouraged to communicate with each other in order to maximize opportunities and provide as much flexibility as possible, while maintaining the reserved aspect of the blinds. First come, first served marsh blinds and zones may be used by participants in the marsh only or combo (marsh and field) programs on a first come, first served basis.

An applicant's name may only appear on one application. The exception to this is a youth hunter who may apply for both a youth hunt and a regular season hunt.

Duplicate applications will not be accepted.

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Field Only waterfowl hunting: All waterfowl field zones will be available to the District's field only or combo (field and marsh) program participants on a first come, first served basis. The field only program is permitted **by individual**; there are no group leader requirements. If a person is hunting a field site, he/she is not required to let other hunters into the zone, although it is strongly encouraged. **However**, at no time shall there be more than 4 hunters in a zone at one time.

Combo (Marsh and Field) waterfowl hunting: participants who would like to participate in both field and marsh hunting should apply to the combo (marsh and field) program. These participants may use any first-come, first served site, either field or marsh. Participants in this program may not utilize marsh blinds in the reserved program.

Field hunting sites are set up with one or a combination of the following options:

1. Pit blinds -- provided by the District.
2. Parcel --no blind, participants must hunt within zone boundaries.

Even though we have done our best to make sure that the zone and blind locations are safe, it remains the responsibility of the hunter(s) to make sure that their shots are safe.

Youth Programs

The youth waterfowl hunt takes place one weekend (Saturday and Sunday) in early October. This year the tentative State of Illinois dates are October 16th and 17th.

The mentored youth spring turkey takes place two weekends (Saturday and Sunday). The upcoming Illinois Spring Youth Turkey Seasons, are scheduled for the last weekend in March and first weekend in April; March 26th and 27th and April 2nd and 3rd, 2022.

Length of opportunity: Participation in a youth hunt does not include access to any other opportunity, only youth weekends at selected locations.

Youth will be selected by a lottery. If demand exceeds available opportunities, each youth hunter will be limited to hunting one day (Saturday or Sunday). Waterfowl Youth applicants are encouraged to pair up with another youth applicant. A blind can accommodate 2 youth hunters and 2 guides. Spring Turkey hunts are one adult/mentor to one youth hunter.

Requirements: Youth Hunting applicants must be fifteen (15) years of age or younger by October 1st, and must have a hunting license, HIP registration number (waterfowl only), and hunter safety education card prior to applying for a District-issued hunting permit. Youth must be accompanied by a parent or guardian age 21 or older. The parent or guardian cannot hunt.

Fees

Fees will be collected for each hunting opportunity if the applicant is selected to participate in the program. Participants must pay online with a credit card **prior to the orientation meeting.**

No refunds will be given unless the District suspends hunting in a given area.

Fees are per Individual.

Program	McHenry Co. Resident*	Out of County
Marsh Only-Reserved	\$50 per Individual	\$100 per Individual
Field Only (Open)	\$50 per Individual	\$100 per Individual
Combo (Open Marsh and Field)	\$80 per Individual	\$160 per Individual
*Waterfowl Youth	Free	Free
*Spring Turkey Youth	Free	Free

* Youth applicants see bottom of page 6

Important Dates

Waterfowl

Applications due	August 4, 2021, 3:30pm CST
Lottery	August 20, 2021
Notification	September 8, 2021
Orientation	September 23, 2021, 7:00pm CST

Spring Turkey

Applications due	February 9, 2022, 3:30pm CST
Lottery	February 16, 2022
Notification	February 23, 2022
Orientation	March 2022, TBD

Hunting Sites and Dates

Please note: These dates are subject to change based on IDNR dates

Waterfowl Hunt

Marsh Only: Reserve Hunt Participants

Reserve Hunting is allowed weekly from opening weekend through December 20. (Fri., Sat., Sun. and Mon. of each week.)

Week 1: October 23-25

Week 2: October 29-November 1

Week 3: November 5-8

Week 4: November 12-15

Week 5: November 19-22

Week 6: November 26-29

Week 7: December 3-6 (No Hunting at Glacial Park-Pickerel Creek)

Week 8: December 10-13

Week 9: December 17-20

Glacial Park - Pickerel Creek-Marsh: One (1) blind allowing one group per week.

Hebron Peatlands: Two (2) blinds allowing two (2) groups per week.

Marsh Open: Marsh Only Reserved or Combo Hunt Participants

Marsh hunting is allowed weekly from opening day through the end of the IDNR established waterfowl seasons.

Kishwaukee Corridor Quarry-Route 20: One (1) blind

Pleasant Valley-Hemmingsen Road: One (1) zone; no blind

Queen Anne Pond-Queen Anne Road: One (1) blind

Field Hunting: Field Only or Combo Hunt Participants

Field Hunting will begin after crops are removed from the field at each site. Check the website to make sure the crops are out at a certain site before going afield. A field hunting site is not legally accessible until it is **officially designated as “open” on the District website**. Below are the potential locations for open hunts, final determinations on which sites will be open for the season will be made prior to the orientation meeting.

Field Hunting will extend to the goose season end date in January set by IDNR. At the time of this directive, the tentative season end date is January 20, 2022.

Brookdale – Dunham Road

-number of zones not to exceed three (3)

Kishwaukee Corridor Field - Ballard Road (formerly Lussky Parcel)

-number of zones not to exceed two (2)

Kishwaukee Corridor –Burma Road

-number of zones not to exceed three (3)

Kishwaukee Corridor - River Road

-number of zones not to exceed one (1)

Kishwaukee Corridor - County Line Road

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-number of zones not to exceed one (1)

Pleasant Valley - Hemmingsen Road

-number of zones not to exceed two (2)

Queen Anne Field - Queen Anne Road

-number of zones not to exceed four (4)

Waterfowl Youth Hunt

The youth hunt is scheduled for October 16th and 17th (Sat. and Sun.)

Glacial Park / Pickerel Creek Marsh: one (1) blind allowing up to two youth hunters.

Hebron Peatlands: two (2) blinds allowing up to four youth hunters.

Kishwaukee Corridor Quarry - Route 20: one (1) blind allowing up to two youth hunters.

Pleasant Valley - Hemmingsen Road: one zone allowing up to two youth hunters.

Queen Anne – Queen Anne Road: one (1) blind allowing up to two youth hunters.

Spring Turkey Youth Hunt

The youth hunt is scheduled for the IL Youth Spring Turkey seasons March 26th and 27th and April 2nd and 3rd, 2022 (dates are tentative, final dates dependent on final established Illinois DNR youth seasons).

Brookdale Conservation Area–

-number of zones not to exceed three (3)

Rules, Regulations, Provisions, and Directives

District hunting and parking permits:

All participants must clearly display a District-issued parking permit on the dashboard or rearview mirror of their vehicle.

No participants shall enter District property without a District-issued hunting permit on their person at all times. Hunting permits should be stored in an easily accessible location where they can be presented to an enforcement officer upon request.

Parking:

All participants must use established or designated parking lots. No parking is allowed along county or township roads. See site/zone maps for designated parking areas.

Access/Getting to your zone:

All participants and permit holders must travel to and from their hunting zone using a District-designated route. Driving on field border access lanes or agricultural fields is allowed to deliver and pick up decoys and equipment. Driving anywhere other than entering the site through the designated entrance and driving to and from a designated parking area is not allowed during periods of saturated soil conditions when impact to the field border or agricultural fields is likely.** Participants should reference zone maps for authorized driving areas.

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Driving on a field border or agricultural field (for purposes of delivering and picking up decoys and equipment) is allowed only under the following conditions:

- 1.) Driving on a field border or agricultural field is allowed only during periods of dry or frozen ground conditions. Dry or frozen ground is a soil condition when driven on will not create a rut after the vehicle has passed. A rut for the purposes of this directive is a depression, created by the pressure of a vehicle tire, in the soil greater than or equal to one inch. Depression depth is measured from the deepest portion of the tire track to the natural surface elevation of the soil adjacent to the track.
- 2.) Participants must use good discretion as ground and weather conditions may change from the start of their hunting opportunity throughout the day. If the ground conditions soften as the day goes on and it would cause damage as stated above, **do not drive** onto the field.

****NOTICE:** Anyone found creating damage to the land as described may be issued a citation and/or have their District hunting permit revoked. The driver of the vehicle and/or participant(s) found in violation of the above regulation is responsible for any damage to the land and any costs to repair damage incurred. The District is not responsible for any costs associated with damage to personal vehicles, cost to remove stuck vehicles, or costs to restore impacted lands to former condition.

Check-in/Sign in and out: <https://www.huntmccd.org/login>

All hunters must sign in and out on the web-based system when entering and leaving District property. They must record times, birds taken and other required information.

First come first served hunters will use the web-based system for check-in and sign in box for communicating with fellow hunters. Write legibly and comment courteously when signing in and out.

Shooting hours:

Shooting hours for **marsh - reserved** hunting is one half hour before sunrise until noon, and participants must exit the site by 1:00pm.

Shooting hours for **open (first come, first served)** hunting are from one half hour before sunrise until sunset. Hunters must exit site within one hour after legal shooting time.

Shooting hours for Youth Waterfowl Hunting are from one half hour before sunrise until sunset, Youth Spring Turkey are one half hour before sunrise until 1:00pm.

No participants may enter District property prior to one hundred twenty (120) minutes or two (2) hours before legal shooting time.

Scouting and decoy delivery – waterfowl:

Marsh - reserved hunting participants may scout their designated blinds after 2:00pm on the Monday-Thursday of the week they are scheduled to hunt.

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All **marsh - reserved** participants may deliver their decoys to the blind the week they are scheduled to hunt, after 2:00pm on Monday.

Participants in the **youth hunt** may scout and deliver decoys beginning the day after their attendance at the mandatory orientation meeting. (Coordination with other youth hunters may be necessary.)

Decoys may not be left “set up” in field or on water overnight except for the youth hunt.

If you’re using a **first-come, first-served** blind, you must remove your equipment from the blind/field each day.

Post - harvest requirements:

Report harvest on the web-based sign-out.

Days when scouting and hunting is prohibited:

All sites: November 25 (Thanksgiving), December 24 &25 (Christmas Eve and Day)
Kishwaukee Corridor (County Line): December 10-12, December 30-January 2, and January 14-16)

Blinds, stakes, and fields:

Blinds provided by the District **cannot be moved**.

The District will **brush the marsh blinds** at the beginning of the season. Participants may rebrush the blinds after receiving written permission and using District approved materials only. **At no time may hunters move or possess invasive vegetation on District sites.**

Waterfowl marsh hunters must hunt only from designated District blinds when provided; marsh sites without a blind, hunters must hunt within the designated zone.

When waterfowl marsh hunting, a maximum of **three (3) hunters** may occupy the **marsh blind or zone** at one time.

Waterfowl field hunters can hunt from either a blind or within the designated zone.

All waterfowl hunters must hunt from a set location within the specified zone or within the blind, **no jump shooting is allowed**.

Waterfowl Open hunters cannot hunt from **both blind and the zone** at the same time.
When field hunting, a maximum of **four (4) hunters** may occupy the pit **blind or** within the **designated zone** at one time.

Waterfowl field hunters may bring their own blind to use as cover in the open field within the designated hunting area (zone). The blind and hunter’s equipment shall be removed once finished hunting for the day. **At no time may hunters move or possess invasive vegetation on District sites.**

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Waterfowl boats and dogs (does not apply to Spring youth turkey):

Non-motorized boats are permitted.

In areas where a boat is available, participants must **relock the boat** after each use.

Retriever **dogs** may be off leash but must remain under the control of the owner at all times.

There is a limit of **two (2) dogs** per blind.

No training of dogs is allowed.

Waterfowl Voluntary Restraint:

The District encourages participants to follow the practice of Voluntary Restraint as set forth by the Delta Waterfowl Foundation. The components of this practice are as follows:

- 1) Focus harvest to drakes of all species;
- 2) Practice and emphasize field identification;
- 3) Don't flock shoot - "Look for the Drakes";
- 4) Hunt with a dog to minimize bird loss; and
- 5) Report game violations. For more information about the Delta Waterfowl Foundation's Voluntary Restraint program, visit <http://www.deltawaterfowl.org>.

Youth Spring Turkey:

Youth Spring Turkey hunters must hunt from a hunter provided, manufactured blind in a pre-disclosed location within their zone boundary and may not move the blind from the designated position during their permitted hunt period.

Only one youth may hunt with one adult within their designated zone at a time.

No archery equipment is allowed for turkey, shotgun only equipped with turkey choke tube.

Other:

No participants shall be **under the influence** of or be in the possession of alcohol or illegal drugs while hunting.

Participants may harvest only those game **animals designated** on their permit.

No participants may take or cause to be taken any still or motion pictures or make sketches or paintings for commercial purposes without prior Written Permission of the Executive Director and then only in accordance with the rules and restrictions duly set forth as part of such Permit or engage in any photography or video recording in restricted areas.

Participants must pick up and take with them all spent **firearms shells and garbage**.

If you are **unable to use** your assigned hunting opportunity, you must call the Lost Valley Visitors Center office at (815)678-4532 Extension 8146 as soon as you know you are unable to hunt.

Permit holders shall **not lease out** their hunting opportunity.