

Atkinson Hunting Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is hunting restricted on town lands in Atkinson?

A: In 2000, after hunting incidents where rounds were fired into some homes, town meeting banned hunting on most large parcels of town land. In 2012, concerns were raised over lyme disease and the increasing deer herd. Town meeting voted to allow bow hunting by permit from the selectmen's office on most of the parcels where hunting was banned in 2000.

Q: How do I know where I can and can't hunt?

A: Hunting is banned on all town land with recreational fields. Full hunting for waterfowl is generally allowed on town lands near waterbodies. Bow hunting is allowed on most other town lands. An up to date map of the major town lands and the hunting rules for each parcel is available from the selectmen's office and the town web page.

Q: Who is in charge of the town lands?

A: The selectmen are in charge of recreational land and undesignated town land. The conservation commission is in charge of town forests and other conservation parcels. Either one may close hunting access to any town parcel under its jurisdiction in case of hunting abuse. If we verify complaints about hunters discharging firearms within 300' of a resident's house, we will close that area to hunting.

Q: Is hunting on Atkinson town land restricted to Atkinson residents?

A: No. Many of our town lands were acquired with federal grants which do not allow restricting access to residents.

Q: Is there any charge for an Atkinson bow hunting permit?

A: No. New Hampshire law exempts landowners who allow recreational use of their land from liability, providing they do not charge a fee to use the land. This applies to towns as well as individuals.

Q: What are the requirements for an Atkinson bow hunting permit?

A: You will need to show your driver's license or other ID and a current year NH Fish and Game archery or crossbow license.

Q: Why do I need to have a fish and game license?

A: The NH fish and game archery and crossbow licenses require you to have completed a hunter archery safety course, which certifies to the town that you are a safe archer who knows the rules.

Q: Is there an age requirement for the permit?

A: No. The only requirement is to have a valid NH state archery or crossbow license.

Q: Where do I get the Atkinson bow hunting permit?

A: At the Atkinson selectmen's office during normal business hours.

Q: How long is the permit good for?

A: From the date of issue until the end of the calendar year.

Q: What can I hunt with an Atkinson bow hunting permit?

A: You must still follow all NH Fish and Game hunting rules and seasons. The permit does not restrict you to deer only. You may hunt anything Fish and Game says you can legally hunt with a NH archery or crossbow license.

Q: I have a bow permit and want to hunt on a town parcel but it is posted no hunting. Can I still hunt there?

A: Yes. NH law allows a landowner to post their land against hunting but still allow access by permission. You should carry your Atkinson bow hunting permit, NH hunting license, and ID with you while hunting and be prepared to show them on demand to fish and game or police officials. The permit is your written permission from the town to hunt regardless of whether the land is posted.

Q: Will these parcels always be available for hunting?

A: We may close parcels temporarily due to trail maintenance or forestry, in which case we will post "closed, no bow hunting" signs at the entrances. We try not to schedule such work during hunting season, but some game (coyotes) are always in season.

Q: I am not sure of the exact boundaries of a town forest. Where can I get more information?

A: Consult the town tax maps at the selectmen's or planning office. As the hunter, it is your responsibility to know the terrain and not hunt on neighboring land where you do not have permission.