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Protecting land and encouraging land stewardship in North Central and Western Massachusetts

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
Hunting Policy
Adopted March 26, 2010

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust (Mount Grace) serves 23 towns in Franklin and Worcester counties. It protects significant natural, agricultural, and scenic areas and encourages land stewardship for the benefit of the environment, the economy, and future generations. Since 1986, through collaborations and partnerships, Mount Grace has protected more than 23,500 acres of forests, farmland, wildlife habitat, and water resources.

Mount Grace recognizes that hunting is a traditional part of the rural heritage of our region and supports and partners with the hunting/sporting community, especially regarding efforts on land protection projects and habitat management. Mount Grace recognizes that the sporting community has a longstanding and effective tradition of advocacy for land conservation.

The majority of lands Mount Grace has protected (17,000+ acres) were collaborative projects in which the ultimate owner of the land was either the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation or the MA Department of Fish and Game. Hunting is typically allowed on these properties. These projects include thousands of acres of land that, in part, became the Tully Mountain and Facing Rock Wildlife Management Areas, and added land to the Muddy Brook and Orange Wildlife Management Areas.

Other project partners, including private landowners, determine their own policies in regard to hunting.

Hunting on Mount Grace Owned Land (Conservation Areas):

- Hunting/trapping is allowed on Mount Grace owned land unless: (1) the donor of the land did not want hunting allowed or wanted a sanctuary for wildlife; (2) the property is too close to residences according to public guidelines; (3) it would violate the policy of a project partner or donor; or (4) there is potential for damage to specific sensitive ecological resources.
- Our hunting/trapping policies are based on MA state policy and on the latest scientific research.
- All applicable state and federal laws apply on our conservation areas concerning hunting/trapping.
- Target shooting is not allowed on our conservation areas.
- It is expected that hunters will respect private property rights, strictly adhere to residential safety zone distances, and exercise courtesy with Mount Grace as the landowner and with our abutters.
- Particularly in rural areas, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts must familiarize themselves with hunting season schedules as issued by MassWildlife, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife.
- Mount Grace conservation areas, many of which have maintained trail systems, are also open to the general public for nonmotorized uses. Information on our conservation areas can be found in our publication, *Twenty Years, Twenty Hikes*, available through our website www.mountgrace.org.