

DNR: Nearly 40,000 acres of private land will open to turkey hunters

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 31, 2021

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

MADISON, Wis. – The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced that nearly 38,000 acres of private land will be open for public access to hunters this turkey season thanks to a partnership between the department and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS).

With USDA-NRCS support, the DNR could partner with private landowners who lease their land for public access through the [Turkey Hunter Access Program \(THAP\)](#) and the [Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program \(VPA-HIP\)](#).

In 2020, THAP added 5,200 acres that hunters can be used only during spring turkey hunting seasons. Another 2,300 acres were added to VPA-HIP for hunters to use throughout the year for hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife observation.

Spring turkey hunters interested in scouting and hunting THAP and VPA-HIP private properties available for use can find additional details and interactive maps following the links above. The success and future of these programs depends on ensuring landowners' continued interest. Hunters using THAP and VPA-HIP lands should travel on foot only and respect the landowner's property.

The programs provide financial incentives such as annual leases to private landowners who open their property to public hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife observation. Eligible land types include grassland, wetland, forestland and in some cases, agricultural land. Landowners also enrolled in conservation programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), Managed Forest Law (MFL) in closed status and Wetland Reserve Easements (WRP/WRE) are eligible for enrollment.

Landowners enrolled in VPA-HIP who complete recommended practices may be eligible for habitat-based financial incentive payments, in addition to the lease payments. Regional Public Access Liaisons stationed in Baldwin, Janesville, Hartford and Wisconsin Rapids along with Wisconsin's Farm Bill Biologists will coordinate a habitat plan for interested landowners.

More Information is available on the DNR website here:

Turkey Hunting Access Program (THAP)

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Lands/THAP>

Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Lands/VPA>