

BLM Wyoming

Hunting and Fishing on Public Lands

Wyoming State Office

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What are the public lands?

“Public lands” are those lands owned by the public and administered by the Bureau of Land Management. There are about 18 million acres of public land in Wyoming (excluding mineral ownership). Other major federal land administrators in the state include the U.S. Forest Service (national forests) and the National Park Service.

Can I hunt and fish on the public land?

Yes, on most of it, consistent with game management regulations and hunting area boundaries by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. There is an exception. A few special use areas have been reserved from public recreational use. Such areas are posted to make their status clear.

May I cross private lands to get to the public lands?

Only on a public roadway or with the landowner’s permission. The BLM has an easement acquisition program to resolve access problems resulting from isolated public land by surrounding private land. However, funds are limited and isolated tracts do remain. Private landowner permission is necessary to gain access to them.

May I hunt and fish on private lands intermingled with the public land?

Only with the landowner’s permission, except where posted to allow free public access. Some private landowners, generally in the south-central part of the state, participate in the Bureau’s S-60 program, opening their intermingled lands to public access in common with the public lands. These lands are posted with “S-60” signs. This is a voluntary program and thoughtful sportsmen have been careful not to abuse the privilege.

Can a private individual order me off the public lands?

Not legally. Restrictions on recreational use of the public land are noted above. Adjacent landowners, even though they have grazing licenses or leases on the public land, have no control over use of the land by other members of the public. To put it in another light, although we speak of grazing “leases,” the public land is not leased to private grazing interests in the normal, full sense of the term.



Must I have a guide to hunt on the public lands?

No. All citizens have an equal right to enjoyment of the public lands.

What about gates?

The rule in this country is - open or closed - leave 'em as you find 'em.

Don't be a stranger.

Perhaps the best advice to a hunter in Wyoming, with its truly vast expanses of intermingled public and private lands, is: Don't be a stranger.

Most of Wyoming's private landowners are outdoorsmen themselves and are well disposed toward the visiting sportsman. However, they are also concerned about their livestock. And so it is in the interest of both the sportsman and the landowner to get acquainted.

Stop by and tell the nearby landowner where you intend to hunt. Show an interest in the location of his livestock and whether your passing will disturb it. Size him up and let him size you up. A variety of benefits may result.

For one thing, this could prevent one of those hard-boiled, eyeball to eyeball misunderstandings which no one enjoys. Too, the landowner may have some good advice. Why not? He probably knows the area and the game better than anyone else. Assured by your interest that you care, he may even invite you to hunt on his land.

All of these benefits could result, and one thing more. An adjacent landowner, informed of your intentions, can give directions to a rescue party or an emergency messenger. In this big country, that's a precaution even the most experienced hunters take.

Also, contact or write any BLM office in Wyoming to obtain maps showing ownership status. A small fee is required for these maps.

"Don't be a stranger" is neither a rule nor a regulation - it's just good public relations for the sportsman.

More information.

For detailed information on land status, access and hunting conditions, write the local BLM or the Wyoming Game and Fish Department district offices where you intend to hunt. Or, better yet, drop in and get acquainted.

While BLM is primarily concerned with maintaining habitat for fish and wildlife on public lands, Wyoming's Game and Fish Department is responsible for management of all game animals. For information on seasons, limits, hunting areas and fees, write to:

Wyoming Game and Fish Department
5400 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82006-0001