

## **AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY**

### **TREE STANDS AND GROUND BLINDS ON AGENCY LANDS**

#### **Philosophy:**

Hunters make wide use of tree stands and ground blinds. While the use of tree stands and ground blinds is an important part of certain hunting experiences, these structures can be unsightly and can cause considerable damage to trees. Permanent tree stands are usually built of scrap lumber nailed to the tree. Nail wounds can be a source of entry for tree disease and insects and lead to lower tree value. Nails also constitute a danger to loggers, sawmill employees, or Agency lands staff who may strike a nail while sawing. Also, sometimes hunters cut other trees and brush near their stand in order to have unobstructed shooting lanes. This can result in a loss of potential timber values and may damage wildlife habitat.

Under Vermont law (T.10, V.S.A. § 4713), hunters must obtain landowner permission to build, maintain, or use a permanent or portable tree stand or ground blind on private land. Further, the tree stand or ground blind must clearly indicate the hunter's name and address. The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board has passed a separate regulation prohibiting permanent tree stands on state wildlife management areas. This regulation provides for temporary tree stands and ground blinds on wildlife management areas during hunting season provided they adhere to certain requirements to ensure no damage is done to any living tree. Tree stands that do not conform to this regulation may be confiscated and destroyed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

#### **Policy:**

Permanent tree stands and ground blinds are prohibited on all state lands under the jurisdiction and control of the Agency of Natural Resources and its associated departments. Temporary tree stands and ground blinds are permitted on state land under the following conditions:

- A.) Tree stands and ground blinds may be erected and used without written permission from the managing Agency department from the third Saturday in August through the third Saturday in December, both dates inclusive.
- B.) Tree stands and ground blinds may be erected and used at other times of the year with advance notice to, and written permission from, the Department District Office staff responsible for managing and administering state land in the District in which the property is located.
- C.) Tree stands and ground blinds used on state lands must be constructed and erected in such a way that no damage is done to any living tree in erecting, maintaining, using or accessing the stand or blind except that:

1. dead limbs, trees or shrubs may be removed as needed to erect and use the stand or blind and,
2. no live limbs, trees or shrubs may be cut for any purpose except those one inch or less in diameter at either ground level or from the main stem or branch of the tree where the stand or blind is located as appropriate (for guidance, a U.S. quarter is .9 inches in diameter) and,
3. no nails, bolts, screws (including access steps), wire, chain or other material that penetrates through a living tree's bark into the wood below shall be used in erecting, attaching, maintaining, or using any stand or blind and,
4. all tree stands or ground blinds used on state lands must be clearly, permanently, and legibly marked with the owner's name and address. Such marking shall be visible and readable from the ground.

Tree stands and ground blinds that do not conform to this policy are prohibited and may be confiscated and/or destroyed by the managing department. Building, erecting, maintaining, using, or occupying a non-conforming tree stand or ground blind is prohibited.

**Procedure for Implementation:**

For activities on state-owned wildlife management areas, this Policy mirrors the Fish and Wildlife Board's regulation regarding the use of tree stands and ground blinds. While the Fish and Wildlife regulation is not applicable (and thus not enforceable) for other types of state lands, this Policy adopts the same restrictions for all state lands. For non-WMA lands, these restrictions will be enforced by the Agency in its capacity as a landowner. Implementation of this Policy will be through the managing department's district staff and legal staff.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_ 12/16/02  
 Conrad Motyka Date  
 Commissioner, FPR

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_ 12/16/02  
 Ronald Regan Date  
 Commissioner, FW

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_ 12/16/02  
 Chris Recchia Date  
 Commissioner, DEC

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_ 12/16/02  
 Scott Johnstone Date  
 Secretary, ANR