



HOUSE BILL 640: Outdoor Heritage Act

2015-2016 General Assembly

Committee:

Introduced by:

Analysis of: S.L. 2015-144

Date:

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Staff Attorney

SUMMARY: *S.L. 2015-144 makes the following changes to the wildlife laws of the State:*

- *Directs the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) and the Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council to study the establishment of the North Carolina Outdoor Heritage Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is to be used to provide for the expansion of outdoor opportunities for persons 16 years of age or younger, is to be funded through voluntary check-off donations of not more than \$2.00 on transactions processed through WRC, and is to be administered by the Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council established in this act.*
- *Establishes the Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council to advise State agencies and the General Assembly on the promotion of outdoor activities. This section became effective July 1, 2015.*
- *Directs the Legislative Research Commission to study the need for expanded access to public lands.*
- *Requires a two-year suspension of a hunting license for a person who receives a third or subsequent conviction for hunting on posted property.*
- *Allows hunting with firearms seven days a week on private property, subject to the following limitations:*
 - *Hunting with firearms between the hours of 9:30 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. on Sunday is prohibited.*
 - *Hunting migratory birds with firearms on Sunday is prohibited.*
 - *The use of a firearm to take deer that are run or chased by dogs on Sunday is prohibited.*
 - *Hunting on Sunday with a firearm within 500 yards of a place of worship or a residence not owned by the landowner is prohibited.*
 - *Hunting on Sunday with a firearm in a county having a population greater than 700,000 people is prohibited.*

Beginning October 1, 2017, counties may prohibit hunting with firearms on Sunday by ordinance.

- *Requires WRC to amend its rules to provide that cub bears are bears that weigh less than 75 pounds.*
- *Requires WRC to prohibit the use of dogs for fox hunting between April 1 and August 1, in Bladen Lakes State Forest Game Land. This section became effective June 1, 2015.*

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- *Codifies a policy statement recognizing the importance of hunting with dogs to North Carolina's outdoor heritage and encouraging cooperative and neighborly agreements between landowners and hunters for the retrieval of hunting dogs, and provides that any landowner or lessee who grants a hunter permission to enter the land to retrieve hunting dogs owes that hunter the same duty of care that the landowner or lessee would owe a trespasser.*

Except as otherwise provided, this act became effective October 1, 2015.