

Tom's Creek Hunting Club
2023 Bylaws

Adopted: 2023

Web edition updated October 28, 2026: food-plot sponsorship is required.

Not-for-Profit Organization • Open Book Policy

Article I – Membership

Section 1. Number of Members

The maximum number of members, as determined by the Board of Directors, will be 30 for this season. This number may be raised or lowered by the acting President. If objections exist, a majority vote by the Board of Directors shall decide.

Section 2. Grandfathered Members

Grandfathered Members are identified as current active members who are up to date on all duties and renew their membership from the previous year.

Section 3. Dues

1. Annual Dues

- The annual dues shall be fixed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- Members in good standing with consecutive membership are grandfathered at their current rate.

2. Payment

- Dues for renewing members are due in full on or before March 1 each year, unless prior arrangements are made with the President.
- New members may be accepted starting March 1.

3. Purpose of Dues

- Dues are used to pay the property lease, utilities, and maintenance.
- Tom's Creek Hunting Club is a Not-for-Profit organization with an Open Book Policy regarding finances.

4. Reimbursements

- Members seeking reimbursement for purchases (e.g., propane refills) must obtain prior approval from a Board member.
- The approving Board member assumes responsibility if reimbursement is later declined.

5. Payment Method

- Membership dues must be paid by check mailed to the Treasurer.
- Cash payments at camp will not be accepted.
- Receipts are not valid for dues payments.

6. Children of Members

- At age 18, children must purchase their own membership unless they are full-time students.
- The student exception extends until age 21.
- At 21, children must purchase their own membership at their parent's grandfathered rate (no waiting list).

7. Camper Fee

- Due to increased electrical and water usage, a camper fee will be assessed annually by the Board.
- The camper fee is due August 31.

Section 4. Admission to Membership

- Membership cards shall be issued as proof of membership.
- Membership and guest cards must be produced upon request by members or law enforcement.
- Admission or readmission may be refused by a majority Board vote for any reason deemed sufficient.

Section 5. Privileges of Members

1. Property Use

- Members may use club property year-round for legal activities.
- Land restrictions are listed in Article III, Section 2(a).

2. Family Privileges

- Spouses and children under 18 may use the property at no extra cost.
- Children over 18 must be members or guests, unless full-time students (up to age 21).

3. Guests

- Guests must complete a liability waiver.
- Non-hunting guests are free.
- Members may bring one Hunting Guest per day, with no seasonal maximum.
- Guests must be accompanied by their sponsoring member.

4. Guest Hunting Rules

- Each Hunting Guest may hunt a maximum of four days per season at \$25/day.
- Guests may harvest does only. Bucks are members only.
- Guests must hold a valid TWRA Type 94 or Sportsman's license.
- A guest harvesting a buck incurs a \$500 penalty, payable by the sponsor if unpaid by the guest.

5. Guest Fee Responsibility

- The sponsoring member must ensure Guest Fees are paid before hunting.
- Failure to do so may result in fines, suspension, or termination.

6. Definition of Hunting Season

- The hunting season runs from the opening day of archery season in September through the closing day of gun season in January.

Section 6. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated for:

- 1) Failure to pay dues or complete required workdays.
- 2) Voluntary resignation (no refund guaranteed).
- 3) Misconduct endangering members, families, or guests.

Upon termination, all keys, cards, and club property must be surrendered.

Section 7. Duties of Members

- Maintain respectful conduct (family atmosphere).
- Attend four mandatory workdays per year (failure results in suspension).
- Food plot sponsors must plant and maintain plots, including stands.
- Powered equipment used during workdays may count as double credit when applicable (tractors, wood splitters, mini-excavators; small tools excluded).
- Promote safety and follow TWRA and all applicable laws.

Section 8. Special Provision (Rabbit & Coyote Hunting)

- Hunting allowed starting the Monday after the last juvenile deer hunt until July 31.
- Rabbit-only membership dues: \$100.
- Coyote-only hunters: free membership (no dues).
- Rabbit/coyote-only members are not required to attend workdays. All other bylaws apply.

Article II – Board of Directors

Section 1. Identification of Responsibilities

The Board of Directors consists of five elected persons:

President

- Final authority when a tie vote exists between Board Members.
- Monitors established budgets.

Vice President

- General Manager of the Club; maintains Internet presence and coordinates acquisition of new membership.
- Ensures web presence is current; maintains roster and guest fee records; issues and holds all keys.
- Provides documentation of workday completion to the Secretary.

Treasurer

- Maintains finances; pays invoices; ensures monies owed are received.
- Maintains checkbook; reimburses approved expenses; receives dues, guest fees, and fines.
- Provides documentation of workday completion to the Secretary.
- Starting in 2023, elected on a three-year basis.

Secretary

- Maintains agendas and minutes for all Board meetings.
- Receives member suggestions/requests and presents them to the Board.
- Maintains records, documentation, backup membership list, and an ongoing workday tally.

Board Member Position

- Coordinates workday planning; assigns team tasks and leaders; provides documentation of workday completion to the Secretary.

Non-Voting Volunteer Positions

- Road Maintenance: Maintains roads, gates, signage; organizes bush-hogging; assists tractor maintenance.
- Stand Locations & Identifications: Documents stand locations; approves new stand requests; updates map; registers feeders and inspects 20 days before season.
- Clubhouse & Property Maintenance: Maintains utilities and coordinates repairs.
- Food Plots: Manages plot lists, soil samples, documentation, and tractor maintenance records; coordinates lime/fertilizer deployment.

Section 2. Resolution of Conflicts

It is up to the Board of Directors to resolve conflicts arising from interpretation of the Bylaws by majority consensus. A majority Board decision is binding.

Article III – Other Items

Section 1. Hunting Areas

1. Sign-In Requirement

Members must sign in on the hunting area log before each hunt to inform others of locations and to aid emergency response.

2. Stand Ownership

A stand owner is a member who purchased the stand/materials and invested in associated food plot costs. Stand owners have first rights to their stands; stands overlooking club-sponsored plots are not personal.

3. 501 Rule (First Rights by Time)

Morning: first rights until 5:01 AM. Evening: first rights until 2:01 PM. After these times, stands are available to all members.

4. Stand Deployment

Portable climbing stands are excluded. Members must communicate with a Board member before deploying permanent stands. Unidentified stands found after July 1, 2023, will be removed and returned to the clubhouse.

5. Deer Feeders

Feeders must be registered with the Stand Locations & Identifications volunteer and emptied/disabled 20 days before archery season. Violation results in a \$100 fine.

6. Member Communication

Members should communicate with a stand owner prior to selecting a sponsored stand when the owner is present, to reduce confusion and show respect.

Section 2. Antler/Harvest Parameters, Property & Hunting Restrictions

A. Restrictions

There are no land closure dates in 2023.

B. Membership Deer and Buck Limits

- Limit: one buck and four does (five total) per membership per season.
- Guests can harvest does only.
- All deer harvested by the member, family, or guests count toward the member's total.
- Knowingly leaving a deer due to legality will result in immediate and permanent termination and report to TWRA.

C. Appealing Suspension

Members whose membership is revoked or suspended may not appeal until the tenth day after issuance. Reinstatement requires a unanimous Board vote. Incidents involving knowingly leaving a deer due to legality are not appealable.

D. Deer Harvested Elsewhere

Deer brought onto TCHC property for processing must meet club standards, unless already processed.

E. Deer Harvest Guidelines

Antlered bucks must be at least 3.5 years old, have an inside spread outside the ears, and a minimum of 8 points. Non-compliant bucks must have the lower jaw removed for professional aging; results must be provided to the Board. Penalty for non-compliance: \$250 fine and suspension.

F. Minimum Weight Requirement

Any harvested deer (male or female) must weigh a minimum of 80 pounds prior to field dressing. Penalty: \$100 fine.

G. Button Bucks

Button bucks are not a legal harvest and are considered non-compliant. Penalty: \$250 fine.

H. Consequences for Non-Compliant Bucks

A non-compliant antlered buck results in a fine and suspension for the remainder of the current season. Two such events in two years result in automatic termination. Members may appeal after 10 days; the Board's decision is final.

I. Juvenile Exception

Children of a member (age 16 or under) participating in the statewide TWRA Juvenile hunt who have never harvested a deer may take one deer of any sex. After a first harvest, all regular parameters apply.

J. Adult First-Time Hunters

Adult first-time hunters must follow all regular club rules.

Section 3. Drugs, Alcohol, Irresponsible Behavior, Lights Out & Quiet

- No drugs on club property.
- Alcohol permitted only for members 21 and older; absolutely no alcohol when handling firearms.
- Drunken or irresponsible behavior will not be tolerated.
- Quiet hours in the bunkhouse are 9:00 PM (2100 hrs). One member may enforce this rule; quiet activities may continue in the lounge if they do not disturb others.

Section 4. Littering

Members must properly dispose of their trash and clean hunting areas before leaving.

Section 5. Harvest of Game

- Field-dress harvested animals at the cleaning rack station; remove remains to the designated area on Rd 0.
- Record all harvests with TWRA under the appropriate license.

- Log all harvests in the Clubhouse Harvest Log (details determined by the Board).
- Youth harvest: the youth must be in control of the weapon used.

Section 6. Locking of Gates

All gates providing access to the leased property must remain locked at all times; lock the gate after entering and exiting.

Section 7. Enforcement

Members are expected to self-police and treat others with respect. If enforcement is required, the Board will convene (in person or electronically) and allow the charged member to defend themselves when appropriate. A majority Board vote is binding.

Section 8. Waiver & Release of Liability

All members and guests must sign and submit the Tom's Creek Hunting Club Waiver and Release of Liability form. For minors under 18, the form must be signed by the appropriate parties. Forms must be completed to the satisfaction of a Board member before activities on the property. The club will retain forms as needed, and they remain in force as needed.

Section 9. Rifle Range Rules

- Sight in rifles before the season; do not plan to sight them in on opening day.
- The range will be closed the weekend of the velvet hunt, opening weekend of Archery, opening weekend of Muzzleloader, and opening weekend of Rifle (Friday–Sunday).
- Outside hunting season, the range may be used from sunrise to sunset.
- As a courtesy, inform members when the range is hot.
- During hunting season: use the sign-out sheet for the range; when others are at camp to hunt, the range is open 11:00 AM–1:00 PM for light shooting only (e.g., checking zero). Exceptions require consent of all present hunters.

Section 10. Food Plot Policy

Tom's Creek Hunting Club is a food plot club. To improve the quality of hunting:

- Each member is required to sponsor, plant, and maintain at least one food plot (some members may need to give up plots so each member has access to one).
- Soil samples are required in 2023 and at least every three years thereafter; email reports to toms creekHC@gmail.com. The club will take samples in 2023 and charge sponsors accordingly.
- Apply lime as needed to achieve proper pH.
- At minimum, plant plots in the fall; maintain perennials (e.g., clover) with weed control and mowing.
- Plots must be cultivated and planted in their entirety every year.
- Failure to follow these rules results in automatic reassignment of the plot at the next club meeting.

- Food plot weekends count as workdays; team efforts are encouraged given the workload and available tractors.

Section 11. TCHC 501 Rule (Hunting Coordination)

To ensure safe, productive, and enjoyable hunts:

- Members spending the night at camp may choose a hunting location prior to the next morning.
- All morning hunters must be ready to leave camp by 5:00 AM and be at their location no later than 30 minutes before sunrise.
- If a member is not ready by 5:00 AM, their reserved location becomes available at 5:01 AM to any member ready to leave.
- Upon arrival at locations, departure is restricted until 10:00 AM unless leaving will not disturb other hunters.
- Members arriving after 5:00 AM must choose from remaining locations and avoid disturbing others.
- Successful harvests are granted leeway for retrieval and transport at any time to preserve the integrity of the harvest.
- This rule consolidates movement to reduce disturbance and improve safety.
- Midday hunting begins at 2:30 PM; members are expected to remain on stand until legal shooting ends (typically 30 minutes after sunset).