



## QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 3 June 2019  
To: U.S. Forest Service  
From: Jacob Pries, Policy Intern  
Re: Comment on Feral Hog Hunting

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On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), we would like to state our support for the closing of Mark Twain National Forest to feral hog hunting. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals. Feral hogs are an extensive problem in the state of Missouri, threatening the vast ecosystem, and Missourians way of life. Feral hogs are known to carry diseases such as swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, trichinosis and leptospirosis. Some of these diseases can be transmitted to humans, pets, and livestock. Feral hogs spend a considerable amount of time rooting and wallowing which contributes to soil erosion, reduced water quality and damage to agricultural crops and hay fields. Feral hogs contribute to approximately \$1.5 billion in crop damages each year costing taxpayer dollars towards crop insurance, and a loss of revenue for farmers. Feral hogs within Missouri have been steadily increasing and the problems that they bring must be addressed with sound, reasonable solutions.

The problem cannot be addressed by allowing the hunting of feral hogs in the state of Missouri. This only contributes to the ever-growing problem within the state. Encouragement of this type of hunting establishes a business interest and encourages the illegal release of feral hogs on private and public lands. Tennessee and Kansas serve as great examples of the success that can be brought by eliminating feral hog hunting. The state of Tennessee saw an extensive decline in feral hog populations with a ban on feral hog hunting and subsequent action by government agents.

As part of the feral hog partnership elimination plan, the Missouri Department of Conservation provided an extra two million dollars to put towards feral hog eradication in 2017-18 and hired 27 new trappers in partnership with the United States Animal Plant Health Inspection Service. Elimination totals for feral hogs from the last several years are 3,649 (2015), 5,360 (2016), 6,567 (2017), and 9,365 (2018). It is vitally important to continue this momentum moving forward. This large-scale eradication by government agents is exactly what the state of Missouri needs to solve the problem of feral hogs within the state. By closing off the Mark Twain National Forest, this allows for the continued success of feral hog eradication. On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association, we would like to thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,

Jacob D. Pries

Policy Intern (QDMA)