



## Discussion Regarding Ordinance Limiting Firearms Used to Harvest Deer



### MN Stat. 97B.031 Subd. 7

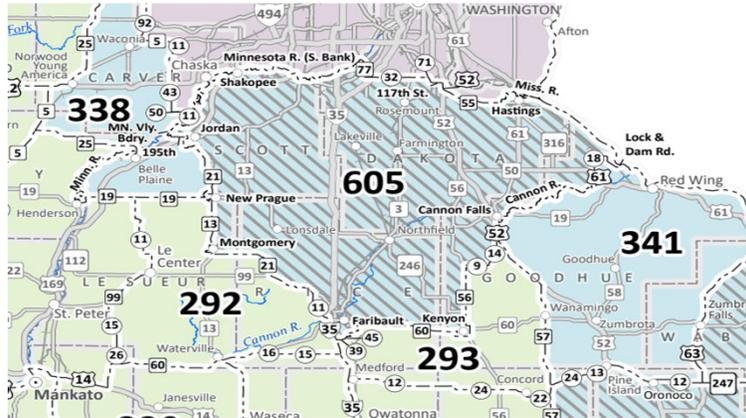


- New law became effective on January 1, 2026, and allows any legal firearm to be used to take deer unless an ordinance is passed pursuant to Minn. Stat 97B.031 Subd. 7 that limits firearms types.
- The county has the authority to limit the type(s) of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county pursuant to Minn. Stat. 97B.031, Subd. 7.
- If no action is taken by May 5, 2026, Dakota County will default to the new rifle zone statute.

## MN Stat. 97B.031



- Hunting Zone of discussion is classified as Zone 605; it encompasses Dakota County and includes portions of Goodhue, Rice, Le Sueur, and Scott County.



## Additional Discussion



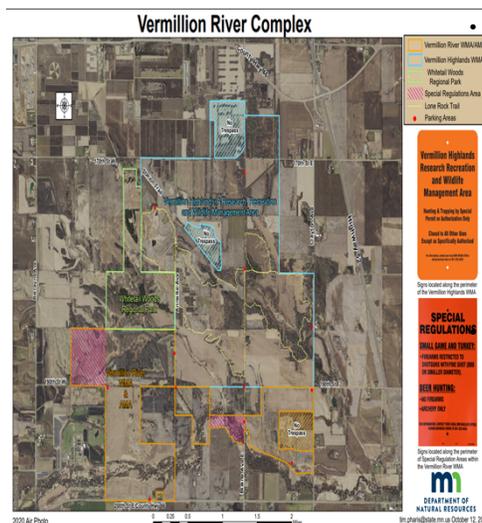
- Neither the Minnesota DNR Enforcement Division or the Dakota County Sheriff's Office is taking a particular stance on this issue.
- If an ordinance is adopted to limit firearms deer hunting in Dakota County to shotguns only, ordinance enforcement becomes the responsibility of both the Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota DNR.
- If a decision is made to establish a new ordinance, the Minnesota DNR must be notified prior to May 5, 2026, in order for the change to be included in the 2026 Minnesota Annual Hunting Regulations Handbook.

## Additional Discussion



- There are wildlife management areas, such as Vermillion Highlands adjacent to Whitetail Woods, that are managed by the state and will remain shotgun/muzzleloader-only for deer hunting.
- To date, the Sheriff's Office has received one public comment supporting the new law allowing rifles during the firearms season.
- Most counties are evaluating the recent law change and their response. Todd County, however, communicated their decision to follow the new state law rather than adopt a local ordinance, citing concerns that doing so could create additional unfunded enforcement mandates for the Sheriff's Office.

## Vermillion Highlands/River WMA



### Vermillion Highlands

- One of the only WMAs in the state that has a board.
- Board will vote on keeping the WMA shotgun/muzzleloader only.
- Special permit only hunts. In 2025, 20 permits for shotguns and 20 permits for muzzleloader were issued for deer hunting.
- Only big game hunting is allowed on the southern 2/3rds of the WMA.

### Vermillion River

- Open to all public hunting. No special permits for big game.
- Will follow the county's gun laws.
- The county can petition to have special regulations.

# Questions

*Dakota*  
COUNTY

