

Mississippi Voter Opinions of Dog-Deer Hunting on National Forests and Private Land

In December of 2017, the Rural Property Rights Association of Mississippi⁽¹⁾ commissioned Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy, Inc., of Jacksonville, Florida⁽²⁾ to add two additional questions to a state-wide poll which was conducted in Mississippi December 13-15, 2017. Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy is an independent polling and consulting firm that conducts opinion polls around the nation. They maintain offices in Jacksonville, Florida, and Washington D.C. During this Mississippi poll, a total of 625 Mississippi voters statewide were interviewed by telephone. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

The two dog-deer hunting questions asked of Mississippi voters were:

1. In Mississippi, the US Forest Service allows hunters on the National Forests to use unleashed dogs to chase deer so that the deer may be shot by hunters. Do you think that the Forest Service should or should not allow the use of dogs in deer hunting on land the public owns?

Should allow Should not allow Not sure

2. Currently on private land in Mississippi it is legal to allow unleashed dogs to chase deer so that the deer may be shot by hunters. Do you think there should be regulatory consequences to the deer-dog owner when their deer dogs run onto land where they do not have the permission of the owner?

Should be consequences Should not be consequences Not sure

Results and Discussion

Over half of Mississippi voters surveyed (53%) said that dog-deer hunting should not be allowed on National Forests of Mississippi (Table 1). Seventeen percent had no opinion, but of the 83% who did express an opinion, the split was 64% saying that dog-deer hunting should not be allowed in Mississippi National Forests to 36% that said that it should be allowed.

A higher percentage of women than men were opposed to dog-deer hunting in Mississippi National Forests. A clear majority of women (58%) thought dog-deer hunting should not be allowed on National Forests in Mississippi. Although not a majority, more men thought dog-deer hunting should not be allowed (48%) than thought it should be allowed (37%).

A clear majority of voters under the age of 50 (63%) stated that dog-deer hunting should not be allowed on National Forests. Older voters (50+) were less opposed than younger voters (<50) towards allowing the sport on National Forests but still opposed the practice at 45% against to 34% in favor of. The lower support for dog-deer hunting in Mississippi National Forests among younger voters indicates that over time, voters are likely to be even less supportive of the practice than they are now.

A majority of both black and white Mississippi voters said deer dogs should not be allowed on National Forests. Majorities of both Democrat and Independent voters said that deer dogs should not be permitted on Mississippi National Forests but Republican voters were evenly split.

Table 1. Voters were asked if the use of deer dogs should be allowed on National Forests in Mississippi

Voters	Should	Should not	Not sure
Statewide	30	53	17
<i>Gender</i>			
Men	37	48	15
Women	23	58	19
<i>Age</i>			
<50	25	63	12
50+	34	45	21
<i>Race</i>			
White	33	52	15
Black	23	56	21
<i>Party Affiliation</i>			
Democrat	16	65	19
Republican	42	41	17
Independent	31	57	12

For the second question asked of Mississippi voters, dealing with regulatory consequences for deer dogs straying onto private land where they aren't supposed to be, there was overwhelming support for regulatory consequences for deer-dog trespass onto private land where the land-owner did not give permission to the dog owner allowing deer dogs on the land (Table 2). Sixty-two percent of surveyed voters (62%) said there should be consequences. A majority of both men (54%) and women (69%) said there should be consequences. There was little difference in age groups, with a clear majority of both age groups supporting consequences for deer-dog trespass on private land. Both black and white Mississippians said there should be consequences and a clear majority of voters in all three political party affiliations said there should be consequences for deer-dog trespass onto private land. This opinion poll leaves no doubt that there is wide voter support to regulate the sport of dog-deer hunting in Mississippi to minimize deer-dog trespass, thereby protecting private property rights.

Table 2. Voters were asked if there should be regulatory consequences for deer-dog trespass.

Voters	Should	Should not	Not sure
Statewide	62	28	10
<i>Gender</i>			
Men	54	32	14
Women	69	25	6
<i>Age</i>			
<50	65	24	11
50+	60	31	9
<i>Race</i>			
White	65	28	7
Black	57	28	15

<i>Party Affiliation</i>			
Democrat	69	22	9
Republican	58	31	11
Independent	57	32	11

These two questions asked of Mississippi voters when taken together show strong voter support for restricting or even ending dog-deer hunting on National Forests in Mississippi and creating additional regulations for dog-deer hunting on private lands to minimize deer-dog trespass on land where they don't have permission to be. Only nine states currently allow dog-deer hunting on any lands, public or private, and not all public land in those states is open to dog-deer hunting.

Readers wanting more detail on the survey demographics and regions of the state and the data by regions of the state can view the original survey report: [Mason-Dixon Poll December 2017](#).

References

1. Rural Property Rights Association of Mississippi. PO Box 544, Picayune, MS 39466
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2. Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy Incorporated, Jacksonville, Florida, Washington D.C.
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