



Metro Bowhunters Resource Base

Use of Deer Tracking Dog Policy

Whether participating as a hunter in an MBRB hunt or hunting on your own, the last thing an ethical hunter wants to have happen is a situation that results in an unrecovered deer incident. Exhausting all available resources when tracking and recovering game is the cornerstone of hunting for ethical hunters. It has been clearly documented that the use of a dog can play a key role in successfully recovering a deer that potentially would have otherwise resulted in an unrecovered deer.

How deer tracking dogs recover deer:

- It is all about scent. Dogs have been trained to distinguish each deer has their own unique scent. This is due to an interdigital gland found between their hooves that gives off a slightly different scent for each deer.
- Stress. When a deer is stressed, it gives off a stress hormone that creates scent. When a deer is shot a stress hormone is secreted. When there is a scenario in which there is a group of deer, and one of them is shot. All the deer secrete this scented stress hormone. However, the one deer that is shot, continues to be stressed while the other deer stress hormone output decreases as they run off. Therefore, the dog tracks the deer that continues to be stressed from being shot.
- Gut shot deer are the easiest deer for a dog to find. This is because of the strong odor from the stomach contents. These deer may bleed extraordinarily little, and the stomach content leaking out may be clear, but very pungent to the dog. However as stated in the deer tracking guideline, it reduces the chances of even the dog successfully recovering a deer that is bumped up from its bed and pushed. So, it is important to not even begin a recovery effort for a gut shot deer for 12-24 hours after the shot.

Myths about deer tracking dogs:

- Rain will lose any trace of the blood trail. Not true, in fact, the dogs smell better in damp, moist conditions than on a dry windy day. Scent molecules are more concentrated due to moisture.
- A dog will leave their scent all over the woods and spook any deer out of the hunting area. Using a dog leaves less scent in the woods than a grid search performed by hunters searching for a deer. Using a dog, it will go down the same trail the deer did and not linger exceedingly long in any one spot in the woods and less humans are needed to conduct an effective search while using a dog. This type of search results in less odor-related contamination in the hunt area.
- A dog must have a blood trail to recover a deer. The dog obviously does not need any blood to trail a deer, though blood helps, because that releases another trackable odor. The dog always smells a combination of scents to always be on the track of the deer that has been shot.
- Trackers have no idea if the deer they are trying to recover is dead or alive. A well-trained, experienced dog will send signs or indications to its handler if the deer is still alive or has died. They can smell the difference!

The MBRB requires **All dogs considered for tracking must be certified to a minimum of level II (UBT2) or higher.**

State of Minnesota DNR Regulations will be strictly followed when using a dog to retrieve a deer.

From the Minnesota DNR Hunting & Trapping Regulations Guidebook:

"A person may use a dog to locate and retrieve a wounded deer as follows:

- The person who attempted to locate the animal must have in possession a valid license to take the deer.*
- Dog handlers who do not have a valid hunting license must be accompanied by a licensed hunter with a license in possession.*
- The licensed hunter and dog handler must be on foot and must wear blaze orange/pink. (Firearms Season)*
- Any light used must be an artificial light carried in the hand or attached to the person.*
- The dog must be on a leash no longer than 30 feet. The hunter or dog handler must physically control the leash at all times. *(Check with Landowner policy regarding dog leash length) **
- The dog owner's name and telephone number must be on the dog while it is used to locate a wounded deer."*

Any **compensation** for the dog's use must be prearranged and paid for by the MBRB Hunter.
The MBRB will not pay for or reimburse any hunter for using a dog to recover a deer.

The use of a deer tracking dog is not just to be used for any potential "Trophy" deer recovery. Hunters are encouraged to consider the use of a deer tracking dog for any difficult deer recovery effort, regardless of if the deer is a buck, doe, or fawn.

A deer tracking dog, its handler and the hunter are all the people needed to conduct the search/recovery effort. It is at the discretion of the hunt coordinator to decide how many humans are involved in the search/recovery effort.

The time of day of the deer tracking dog searches will be conducted after dark or during typically slow times for overall natural deer movement activity. This will be less intrusive to other hunters. The search effort's timing is solely at the discretion of the Hunt Coordinator.

For **conducting searches, the day after a MBRB hunt session** has concluded: The landowner must be consulted and grant permission for such a dog involved search effort. It is mandatory for all who take part in the search to wear a High-Vis type reflective vest. It is also advisable to notify the local Police Dispatch center of the ongoing search in case any concerned bystanders call 911 to report a possible unauthorized hunt activity (especially when archery equipment is involved). Making a phone call to the Dispatch Center can be done by the Landowner representative or the Hunt Coordinator. Let the dispatcher know about the search location and give an estimation of how long the search may entail. When the search is over, notify the landowner of the outcome, and again, call the local Police Dispatcher Center to inform them the search has concluded, and all members involved in the recovery effort are off the property.

The MBRB recognizes 2 Handlers to be contacted for dog tracking operations:

Dog Handler Name:	Primary MBRB Location:	Business Name:
David Little	East metro hunts	Little Bailey Big Game Recovery
Korey Friebl	West metro hunts	Ugly Dog Deer Tracking

If a hunter would like to contact a deer tracking dog, they **MUST** consult with their hunt coordinator(s) to facilitate those efforts. **DO NOT Encourage the hunter to contact a dog handler on their own or use their own contact method!** The coordinator must approve the use of a dog to recover a deer, and they must also be a coordinate the tracking effort. When a tracker is contacted, be prepared, because they will ask you many questions about the shot, shot angle, shot placement, deer reaction after the shot. They will ask about any search effort that has already taken place and your findings. With that information they will provide advice on when to conduct the search. **Important** *Tell the handler you are part of an MBRB deer removal effort. Make certain you either are the Lead Hunt Coordinator or as an Assistant Coordinator you work closely together to plan the recovery effort. Do not forget to talk about compensation expectations for the dog handlers time, milage and efforts. Again, the fee for using a deer tracking dog is incurred by the hunter, **not** the MBRB.

A deer tracker and his handler are typically involved in hundreds of deer recovery efforts per season. Know that they are busy, and it may take time for them to call you back. Therefore, a hunter thinking about using a dog for a recovery effort should consult with their hunt coordinator as soon as possible.

Data Collection Requirement for MBRB HUNT COORDINATORS:

A "MBRB Dog Tracker Incident Report" must be filled out for every incident that a tracking dog is used. This form will be found and completed via a weblink on the internet.

<https://forms.office.com/r/XubxS57eQ9>

Or QR Code:

