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## **FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI: A FERAL HOG ERADICATION SUCCESS STORY**

**KENTON LOHRAFF**, DPW Natural Resources, Fort Leonard Wood, MO 65473

**ABSTRACT:** The proliferation of invasive exotic species presents one of the most important challenges that natural resource managers face today. The feral hog (*Sus scrofa*) has been a problem in the southern US in recent decades and is now a growing concern in North America with an expanding distribution northward. The spread of this prolific and adaptable species seems to be aided by intentional releases of animals on remote public properties. Feral hogs were successfully eradicated on Fort Leonard Wood (FLW), Missouri by the combined efforts of hunting by the general public and trapping by natural resource managers. Hogs were likely introduced on FLW in order to establish huntable populations on this 61,411 acre military reservation that is open to hunting by the general public with restrictions. Hogs were first observed on FLW in 1997 and a control program subsequently established that included informing hunters about the destructive nature of feral hogs, encouraging hunting/killing whenever possible, and intensive trapping and monitoring by natural resource managers with the goal of total eradication. Hunters went after their new quarry with much enthusiasm and an unknown number was removed by hunters from 1997 – 2004 but likely included several hundred hogs. A total of 93 hogs was trapped and removed by natural resource managers from 2001 – 2004. No hogs have been documented on FLW since 2004. A probable key factor in the success of hog removal from FLW was intensive trapping efforts in restricted areas that hunters could not access and subsequently became hog refuges. Hunter-pressured hogs were eliminated in this way. Also certain Hunting Areas on FLW are only open periodically so hogs were allowed temporary refuge conditions until the areas were opened to hunting and then pursued diligently by hunters. We also tracked three feral hogs on FLW with the use of radio telemetry equipment and were able to obtain additional information about their movements and groupings. Telemetry equipment can be utilized as an additional tool to track hunter-pressured feral hogs. An effective and complete feral hog removal program requires a comprehensive approach. FLW utilized a holistic approach including disseminating information, encouraging hunting/killing whenever possible, and intensive trapping in refuge areas to accomplish feral hog eradication.

**KEY WORDS:** feral hogs, feral hog control, Fort Leonard Wood

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### **THE SITUATION**

Fort Leonard Wood (FLW) is located in Pulaski County, Missouri.

- Site encompasses 61,411 acres
- Site characterized by remote locations and inconvenient access points.
- Status

- Feral hogs first appeared on FLW in spring of 1997.
- Pigs came in a variety of forms.
- Biologists estimated that 40 plus individuals constituted the initial core group.
- Control efforts began in 1997 and continued through 2004.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF DAMAGE



Area where feral hogs have rooted in the snow in search of acorns on Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri in March, 2002. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff





Feral hog wallow at the edge of a pond in summer 1999. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff



Feral hog nest shelter area during a light snowfall in February, 2000. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff

## CONTROL METHODS

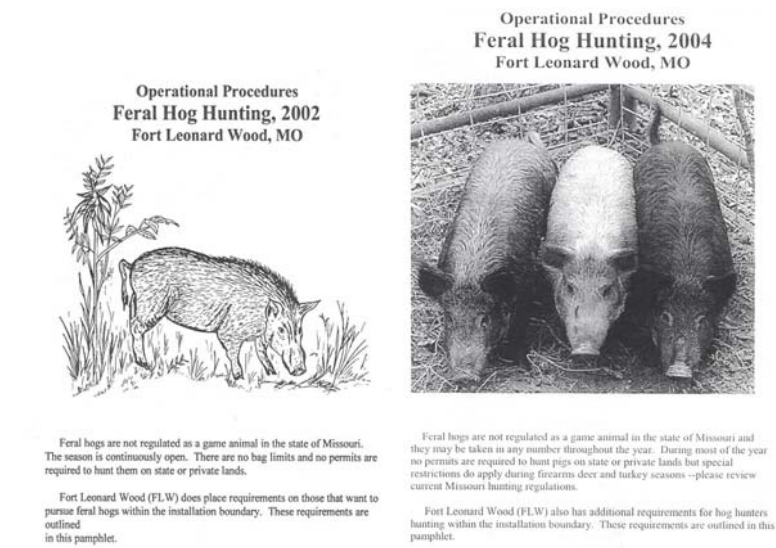
We adopted a multi-faceted approach to feral hog control.

### Education

2008 National Conference on Feral Hogs. April 13-15, 2008; St. Louis, MO  
Hosted by the Missouri Department of Conservation

We educated the public about “hunting” and encouraged the shooting of hogs. Educational materials were disseminated through a variety of mediums. We regularly posted articles in newspapers, at community centers, and online at the FLW Natural Resources page but the feral hog information has now been removed because feral hogs are no longer a problem here.

Brochures and free hand-outs at the FLW license shop



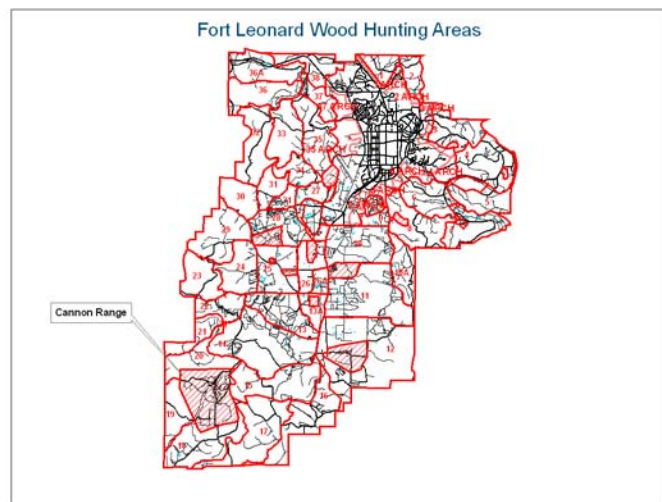
## Hunting

We encouraged hunters to pursue feral hogs as one form of control.

It has limitations

FLW

- Weapons
- Access
- FLW license/safety
- Daily check in and check out.



Map of Fort Leonard Wood showing feral hog refuge areas where trapping was key.





Fort Leonard Wood feral hog hunters Kevin and Kenton Lohraff with a harvested animal in 2001. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff

We set traps and attached telemetry to “Judas pigs” in order to help us identify where the hogs were primarily located.

We were able to locate additional pigs with the assistance of Telemetry and a Judas pig.

- Three successful attempts with telemetry collars
  - 78 days
  - 99 days
  - 27 days



Kenton Lohraff keeps track of a collared pig in winter 2002 with telemetry equipment.  
Photograph by Kenton Lohraff

A radio collared pig traveled up to 1 mile/day

Tracking

Monitored for direct management – to locate additional pigs to trap

Only recaptured lone pig (Pig 19)

Pig 19 recaptured in a trap at Fort Leonard Wood in April, 2002. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff

Pig 19

- Male
- 150 lbs
- Loner
- Collared February 20, 2002
- 78 days on air (Slipped collar May 13, 2002)
- Repeated sightings/trappings
- Only recaptured lone pig
- Recaptured and removed August 30, 2002



Pig 40

- Female
- 87 lbs
- July 8, 2002
- 99 days on air (Slipped collar October 15, 2002)
- Observed with piglets 09/04/02

Pig 55

- Male



- 95 lbs
- Collared July 24, 2002
- 27 days on air ( Hunter harvested pig and returned collar August 22, 2002)

### Opportunistic pig removal

We also encouraged opportunistic removal of pigs by any means available.

Thomas Glueck chases down a feral pig with a hand tool.  
Photograph by Kenton Lohraff



### Trapping



### Techniques



Kerrville Hog Rooter-style Gate employed to capture hogs on Fort Leonard Wood in July, 2001.  
Photograph by Kenton Lohraff

#### Kerrville Hog Rooter Gate

- Design from UDSA APHIS (July '01)
- Implemented in '02 – results!
- Up to three traps deployed

Various trap designs

Pens

Gates

Triggers

Super-trap



Large early trap design with gates and pannels and gravity door utilized at Fort Leonard Wood in 2001. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff.



### Three-gate panel trap



Three gate and pannel trap design utilized as second generation syle at Fort Leonard Wood in 2001 and 2002. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff

### Panel-fencepost trap





Panel-fencepost trap design utilized at Fort Leonard Wood in 2003. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff



Small mobile trap

Kenton Lohraff stands by a small mobile trap utilized at Fort Leonard Wood in 2004.  
Photograph by Kenton Lohraff

#### Trapping and removal results

Trapping and Removal Results	
2001	1
2002	62
2003	19
2004	11

Removal of trapped animals carried out by Fort Leonard Wood Law Enforcement personnel



## Tips for trap-shy hogs



Propped open gate to entice trap-wary pigs in July, 2003 at Fort Leonard Wood. Photograph by Kenton Lohraff

- Place bait trail outside
- Prop door/use trigger
- Try bait supplements/alternatives
  - Strawberry gelatin mix
  - Any other food item
  - Fermented corn
- Trigger in back of pen area
- Patience: we often tweaked trap set-ups for multiple days in a row if we had evidence of pigs just outside the trap but not captured until pigs eventually succumbed to the trap

## RESULTS OF CONTROL EFFORTS

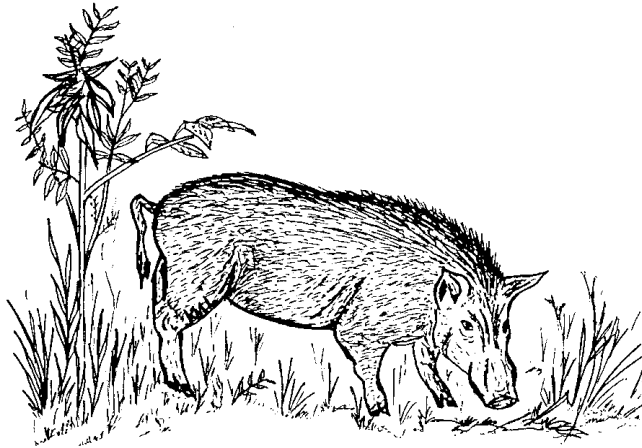
Pig-free since 2004.

### Why Eradication Worked at Fort Leonard Wood

- We were able to trap at areas on FLW where hunting is not allowed and had become pig refuges
- Some Hunting Areas at FLW closed for public access for extended periods (allowing baiting/trapping to continue undisturbed)
- Continued monitoring
- Quick response-control (ongoing)

## APPENDICES

# Help Control Feral Hogs on Fort Leonard Wood



Feral hogs are destructive to natural communities and compete with deer and turkeys. Fort Leonard Wood is trapping these animals to control their numbers. We also seek the help of hunters to reduce feral hogs. Please do not disturb traps that may be encountered while hunting on Fort Leonard Wood.

Deer hunters are encouraged to kill hogs if they encounter them while deer hunting on Fort Leonard Wood. There is no closed season or limit to numbers that may be taken provided the area is open and hunters are using legal weapons for deer hunting on Fort Leonard Wood.

**All hogs are safe to eat if cooked thoroughly. It is recommended that you use plastic or rubber gloves while dressing and processing wild hogs. No diseases have been found to date on hogs harvested on Fort Leonard Wood.**

**The US Department of Agriculture is currently testing Missouri's wild hogs for various diseases and you can help. If you harvest a hog, collect blood in a small jar and deliver it to the Fort Leonard Wood Natural Resources Branch personnel at the FLW deer check station, or you may send the sample to the Missouri Department of Agriculture Animal Health Laboratory, 216 El Mercado Plaza, P.O. Box 630, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0630, for disease testing. Also please provide your name, address, and telephone number along with the date and location of the kill.**

**Thank you for your cooperation. For more information about feral hogs on Post contact the DPW Natural Resources Branch 573-596-0131, ext. 67605.**



7. At the end of the hunt, the user must either physically visit or call Range Control (596-2525) to check out of the area.
8. At the end of the day, Range Control will provide the Law Enforcement Command with a list of hunters that fail to check out of Hunting Areas.

### **Firearms Registration Requirements**

1. All persons must register their firearms on FLW prior to bringing them on the installation for hunting or other designated purpose (FLW Reg 210-25, 6.a. (1)-(8)).
2. By definition provided in the above-cited regulation, the term "firearm" includes crossbows, long bows, recurve bows, and compound bows.
3. Firearms may be registered by completing FLW Form 1835, Personal Weapons Registration Form, and delivering it to the Military Police Station, Bldg 1000 (FLW Reg 210-25, 5.c.). In addition to personal information, the following information about the firearm is required on the form: make, type, serial number, caliber/gauge, and model #. **DO NOT BRING THE FIREARM** to the MP Station for registration. The completed form will be validated and the original returned to the individual after a background check is completed. FLW Form 1835, Personal Weapons Registration Form, is available at the Military Police Station or the Sportsmen's Center.
4. The individual is required to carry this Personal Weapons Registration Form when transporting firearms on or through the installation.
5. Upon entering the installation to hunt, access control personnel will verify the firearm(s) against the registration form and document the hunter and firearm information for tracking.

As hunters, you play an important role in helping to control feral hogs on the installation. Please report hog sightings to the DPW Natural Resources Branch (NRB) 573-596-2814. If you kill a hog collect a blood sample in a small clean container and deliver to the NRB for disease testing. Samples may be refrigerated for several days but do not freeze.

The Natural Resources Branch is also attempting to trap feral hogs to control population numbers. If you locate a trap on FLW, please do not disturb it. For more information on hog hunting on FLW try the following web address <http://www.wood.army.mil/dpwenv/> or contact the NRB or the SC.

**DPW-EE, Natural Resources Branch, 6 February 2004**

## **Operational Procedures Feral Hog Hunting, 2004 Fort Leonard Wood, MO**



Feral hogs are not regulated as a game animal in the state of Missouri and they may be taken in any number throughout the year. During most of the year no permits are required to hunt pigs on state or private lands but special restrictions do apply during firearms deer and turkey seasons --please review current Missouri hunting regulations.

Fort Leonard Wood (FLW) also has additional requirements for hog hunters hunting within the installation boundary. These requirements are outlined in this pamphlet.

### Fort Leonard Wood Requirements

Applicable Permits:	FLW Sportsman's Permit (\$10)  (Hunters must have some form of valid state hunting permit prior to being issued an FLW Sportsman's Permit (FLW Reg. 210-21). A Small Game Hunting Permit, Combination Hunting and Fishing Permit or Firearms/Archery Deer/Turkey Permit (during applicable season) meets this requirement. FLW and Missouri permits and regulations are available at the Sportsmen's Center (SC), Bldg 2282.
Methods:	Shotgun (slugs/buckshot), Longbow/Compound bow, Crossbow, Muzzleloader, Rimfire rifles (.22 caliber). <b>Centerfire (high power) rifles, centerfire pistols, and rimfire pistols are prohibited for use in hunting. (FLW Reg 210-21, Paragraphs 7a-d.)</b>  The use of artificial lights to pursue feral hogs is prohibited.  Baying/trailing hounds may be used (see exception below).  Baiting is allowed (see exception below).  <b>During firearms deer and turkey seasons:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use of dogs to pursue hogs is prohibited</li><li>• baiting it prohibited 10 days prior to or during all firearms deer and turkey seasons.</li><li>• if you have a deer permit you may only use methods allowed for deer.</li><li>• If you have a small game permit you may only use a shotgun with shot not larger than No. 4.</li></ul>
Special Requirements:	<b>All feral hogs must be dead prior to being transported within or removed from the installation.</b>

## Installation Access Requirements

1. Access to the installation is based upon current force protection levels. Procedures may change pending a change in the force protection level.



2. Entry into the installation by non-Department of Defense (DoD) affiliated personnel will require a daily visitors pass. To obtain this pass, individuals will be required to provide proof of vehicle registration, insurance, and valid operators license. Daily visitor passes are only available at the North and South gates. Normal vehicle search procedures will be in place.
3. Authorized FLW personnel (those persons who currently have a vehicle registration sticker) will be required to show picture ID card.
4. To enter FLW for the purpose of hunting, all personnel must have proof of FLW firearms registration along with the appropriate FLW hunting permit. Firearms registration requirements are discussed on page 4.
5. Persons desiring to hunt on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands by accessing them through FLW are required to possess appropriate Missouri Hunting permits, FLW firearms registration form, and are subject to the procedures outlined in #1-#3 above. Persons will be allowed to access through Remote Access Control Points, if open, or park at those Control Points and enter adjacent USFS lands.
6. All vehicles will be subject to random inspections.

#### **Hunting Area Access Requirements**

1. Hunters are required to check Hunting Area availability at Range Control (Bldg 5282). A daily recording is available at 596-4224.
2. Hunters are required to physically check in at Range Control to be issued the FLW Hunting Area Access Pass.
3. Hunters may register for two adjacent open Hunting Areas.
4. Registration must be completed on the same day access is desired. One copy of the registration must be placed in the vehicle windshield and one copy must be carried by the user.
5. Hunters who have already obtained the Hunting Area Access Pass for that day may park at a Remote Access Control Point to enter/exit the installation on foot and must provide appropriate identification and permits upon request of the Post Game Warden.