

Winter 2012

HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS' NEWSLETTER



The men and women who volunteer as hunter education instructors serve as teachers, mentors and coaches. The service they deliver is, quite literally, lifesaving.

How to Start a Youth Hunter Skills Team

By *Tim Lemon*

District 7 Hunter Education Specialist

The Youth Hunter Skills Tournament is on the minds of many and for good reason. The past 10 years have witnessed a tremendous growth in the overall program. For example, in 2001 there were 12 teams competing in my district, D-7, and there were 42 teams last year. In 2011, there were 218 teams total in the nine district tournaments.

I recently met with a couple of schools that had inquired on how to start a team. This has become a rather common inquiry this time of year. Here are a few of the more common questions asked by school administrators, potential coaches and community leaders.

How do we get started? Generally, I send the administrator a copy of the rules and schedule a meeting to discuss eligibility requirements, general safety rules, and the basic competition structure. I also meet again with the team coaches, parents, participants, and community support. So, getting in touch with a Hunter Education Specialist is the first step.

What kind of training do our coaches need? Each team must have at least one person certified as a Hunter Education Instructor and at least one person certified as a Range Safety Officer. The school and team administration can require all coaches to be certified. This is all up to the staff.

What will the cost be? The registration for a district tournament is \$50 per team. If your team is fortunate enough to qualify for the state tournament, the registration fee is \$100 per team. These are the registration costs. Team operation costs are as varied as the number of teams. Most teams conduct fundraisers to defray practice expenses. There are also a number of grants and assistance from private businesses and organizations. Travel, supplies, uniforms - you set your own budget.

What are the events? There are four events: rifle, shotgun and archery marksmanship, as well as an orienteering challenge and a hunting knowledge test. All four events are worth up to 1,000 team points and up to 200 individual points.

How many people can I have on the team? Each team is required to have five participants at each event. However, participants are not required to compete in all events. Coaches determine which participants compete in the particular events. Teams can have a maximum of 20 competitors and as many alternates as they want. The average team size is from seven to 10. Schools can have up to three teams.

When and where do we compete? There are district tournaments, usually in March and typically on a Saturday. These tournaments take place at local wildlife clubs, shooting preserves, 4-H camps, and Boy Scout reservations. The State Youth Hunter Skills Tournament, the North Carolina championship, is held on the fourth Saturday of April at Millstone 4-H Center near Ellerbe. All participants are eligible to compete in the NRA's International Youth Hunter Education Challenge.

What benefits could be expected for students? This is an opportunity for young people, male and female, to be involved in a team and learn the value of teamwork, sportsmanship and achieving team goals. Several coaches and school administrators have commented to us that many participants have made better grades, improved behavior and increased class attendance once involved in a team. The tournaments also provide an opportunity for participants to be a part of a competitive event. Students who might not typically be involved in athletics can participate in an intense, serious event and be competitive.



Spectators at the 2011 state tournament

Todd Kennedy Promoted to Major, to Supervise Field Operations

Todd Kennedy has been promoted to the rank of major, with responsibilities for field operations within the Division of Law Enforcement. He will supervise a statewide hierarchy of some 200 wildlife officers, who enforce fish and game regulations and boating laws. He was previously the captain and a lieutenant in District 5, a jurisdiction that includes Alamance, Rockingham, Orange, Granville, Durham, Person, Caswell, Randolph, Chatham, Lee and Guilford counties. He had been stationed in District 5 for the past 16 years.

“I look forward to this service and the challenge of the job,” said Maj. Kennedy. “The men and women wearing the uniform are important for conservation and public safety, through education and enforcement. I value being a part of the tradition of being a wildlife officer in North Carolina.”

A 22-year veteran with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Kennedy is a law enforcement firearms and tactical instructor. A Burlington, N.C. native, he began his career in Moore County in 1990.

His predecessor, Jack Staley, retired Nov. 1, after 30 years of service.

“Wildlife officers are most often ‘the face’ of this agency to the public, and they do a tremendous job in a variety of situations, sometimes tough,” Staley said. “I am proud of them. And I can say I enjoyed my time in the field, and got to be a part of some important moments at headquarters. I can reflect back on a great career.”



Maj. Todd Kennedy



Maj. Jack Staley, ret.

Information on Landowner Protection Act Available Online

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has posted information on its website, www.ncwildlife.org, about the new Landowner Protection Act, including a frequently asked questions list, a fact sheet and a sample permission forms (full size and wallet size) about this law.

The law, which went into effect Oct. 1, requires hunters, anglers and trappers to obtain written permission from a landowner or leaseholder before hunting, fishing or trapping on privately owned, posted property — including land, waters, ponds or legally established waterfowl blinds.

The Landowner Protection Act provides two ways for landowners to post their lands to allow only hunters, trappers and anglers with written permission to enter their property legally. Landowners can now post their land by using vertical purple paint marks on posts or trees, or, as in the past, by placing signs or posters.

The Landowner Protection Act specifically relates only to hunting, fishing or trapping on posted lands. It clarifies the existing N.C.G.S. 14-159.6 requirement for written consent to hunt, fish or trap on posted lands by specifying that written permission, dated within the past 12 months and signed by the landowner, leaseholder or agent of that land, be carried and displayed upon request of any law enforcement officer. If a hunting club has leased the land, a person shall have a copy of hunting club membership and a copy of the landowner permission granted to that hunting club.

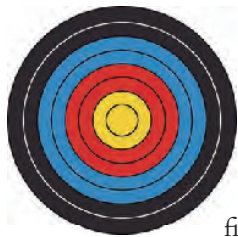
The Landowner Protection Act does not change general trespass laws or affect lands that are not posted. It does not repeal any local acts currently in effect that require written permission to hunt, fish or trap. Under existing landowner liability law, landowners providing permission for hunting or fishing on their property, without charge, assume no more liability than currently is afforded a trespasser, in accordance with N.C.G.S. 38A-4.

New Wildlife Website Features a New Design, is Easier to Use

Visit the new www.ncwildlife.org for a fresh look, simpler navigation and features that make access to information and answers about North Carolina’s wildlife resources easier than ever. For Hunter Education Instructors, the newly redesigned website will let you quickly access licensing information, game lands maps, boating access areas, public fishing areas and other tools, information and services. We reorganized the content, streamlined navigation and improved menus so you can find what you need, when you need it.

The special, dedicated webpage for the Hunter Education Program remains at <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting/Learn-Resources/HunterEdInstructor.aspx>. It features policies and procedures, lesson plans, teaching aids and supplies, information and rules for the 2012 Youth Hunter Skills Tournaments, and other useful information. Call your Hunter Education Specialist for the password.

The new site is being redesigned specifically with your needs in mind, reinforcing our commitment to better communications, information sharing and customer service.



On Target with the Hunter Education Program

This is the first newsletter for 2012 and it is hard to believe we have put another year astern. This year is the 75th anniversary of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act or commonly called the Pittman-Robertson Act. This act levied a 10 percent tax on ammunition and later was extended to encompass firearms and archery, designating the revenue for wildlife restorations.

The North American Wildlife Management Model is greatly dependent on hunting and the shooting sports for a funding source because of the Pittman-Robertson Act and overall support of agency and conservation policies. The North American Wildlife Management Model follows seven key concepts that include: wildlife as a public trust resource, elimination of markets (financial) for wildlife, allocation of wildlife by law, wildlife can only be killed for a legitimate purpose, wildlife are considered an international resource, science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy, and the democracy of hunting.

Hunter Education offers many opportunities to get involved with the hunting traditions. The North Carolina Hunter Education Skills Tournament will be taking place later in the spring. If you have not assisted with one of these events, you should.

This tournament is Pittman-Robertson monies at work creating an opportunity for the next generation involved with the future of the hunting tradition. As one of the articles in this publication states “Hunt Like the Future Depends On It” because the future of our beloved traditions are dependent on the future of hunting. Until next time, keep your muzzles high and powder dry.

Travis Casper, acting Hunter Education Coordinator

Hunter Education Program Says You Should “Hunt Like The Future Depends On It”

It isn't exactly a new initiative to urge sportsmen to encourage others to hunt, but we've put the slogan “Hunt Like The Future Depends On It” on our latest efforts and hope to capitalize on it.

“For the future of conservation, the next generation needs to hunt. It's that important,” said Travis Casper, state acting hunter education coordinator. “We need to mentor youth and present a positive image of hunting to everyone.”

The Hunter Education Program teaches – and sportsmen practice – stewardship of natural resources. Sportsmen also provide the economic backbone for habitat conservation, wildlife research and resource protection.

“Call it nature or the environment, but hunters are an invaluable part of it,” Casper said. “If it weren't for hunters, endangered species and nongame species wouldn't fare as well. Hunters get the credit for the resurging populations of numerous species of game animals in North America, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation.”



Mentoring makes the difference

There needs to be a domino effect for hunting that continues after all the hard work and dedication you provide, as Hunter Education Instructors. Hunters need to be taking new and novice hunters along with them whenever possible, keeping the mentoring tradition strong. “Hunt Like the Future Depends On It” as a slogan is meant to serve as a reminder to hunters, to be a conversation starter, and to provoke constructive thought among non-hunters. You are a dependable resource for hunters and others, able to give tips on mentoring and youth involvement in the outdoors. We need to stress the many conservation programs that foster learning, such as Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, youth hunts, disabled sportsmen and mobility-impaired hunting and fishing opportunities, and fishing tackle loaner programs, not to mention our very popular Youth Hunter Safety Skills Tournaments and the National Archery in the Schools Program.

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North Carolina Hunter Education Program – Communication and Outreach

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Comments and submissions are welcome.

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North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Hunter Education Program

Be Courteous, Be Careful, Be Seen, Be Safe

Division of Law Enforcement

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