



North Carolina

Summer 2012 Newsletter

Hunter Education Program



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



Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Celebrates 75th

This year, North Carolina's Hunter Education Program celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, one of the most significant and successful partnerships to benefit conservation in American history.

"Sportsmen need to reflect on the 1937 passage of Pittman-Robertson Act, and its culmination in the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, and its importance to us all," said Travis Casper, the state hunting education coordinator. "The concept of user-pay, user-benefit is at its best here, since hunters, through their equipment purchases, create more and better hunting experiences through habitat management and hunter education."

Thanks to the taxes raised by sporting arms, archery equipment, handguns and ammo, millions of acres of habitat have been saved and populations have increased in deer, turkey, waterfowl and other game. Some interesting statistics:

- More than 10 percent of every firearm and ammunition purchases directly funds wildlife and habitat restoration.
- Through license fees and excise taxes, sportsmen contribute \$4.7 million per day that goes to conservation efforts.
- Conservation efforts funded by hunters' purchases have helped save more than 38 million acres of America's habitat.
- Since 1937, 3.7 million acres have been purchased and turned into wildlife management areas,



The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, helping today and for tomorrow.

Special recognition efforts, titled "WSFR 75 - It's Your Nature," brings together federal and state fish and wildlife agencies, such as the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission; the hunting, shooting, angling and boating industries and conservation groups to mark this milestone: three-quarters of a century of quality hunting, fishing, shooting, boating and wildlife-related recreation.

It also marks the beginning of a new era in conservation, during which the conservation community will establish new goals for fostering and maintaining partnerships to continue habitat protection and outdoor recreation into the future.

Study Indicates "Post Grad" Hunter Education Could Boost Hunting Numbers

Findings from a 2011-2012 hunter education study conducted by Responsive Management suggest that fine-tuning hunter education programs could bolster the number of licensed hunters.

Responsive Management, a public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, conducted the study on behalf of the National Shooting Sports Foundation with the cooperation of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

"To capitalize on peak interest, state natural resource agencies should provide information on mentored hunting opportunities as well as maps of public hunting lands during hunter education courses or immediately following them," said Mark Duda, executive director of Responsive Management. "Agencies that consolidate post-course information such as season dates, hunting regulations,

special hunt opportunities and other information could make it easier for graduates to take that next step."

The study assessed the best ways to encourage hunter education graduates to become regular hunters and license buyers. The study included focus groups and pre- and post-hunter education course telephone surveys of students in Alabama, Georgia and Kentucky.

The study revealed that between 85 percent and 94 percent of hunter education students across the three states said they were very likely to obtain a hunting license after their course. However, post-course results indicated between 53 percent and 70 percent of hunter education students who had never hunted or possessed a license before bought a license after the course.

One recommendation is to provide potential new hunters with more information on topics such as scouting, hunting strategies or field dressing game. The conclusion is hunter education graduates should face fewer barriers to active hunting participation.

A Hunting Trip, a Bird Dog, Women's Intuition and a Game Warden

By Bill Stancil, Rocky Mount

The season for quail hunting ended Wednesday, so before the rains came, Frank and I took my bird dog, "Ginger," to the Tillery Game Lands *last* Wednesday.

Since Ginger has a penchant for wanting to hunt on her own, without the benefit of my company (a trait blamed on her owner and trainer by someone else in this household), I bought a new battery for her training collar.

The weather was just right for the morning hunt and the three of us could hardly wait to get started. We hunted a small woods and a straw field first, without finding quail, and moved to a milo field to try our luck. We followed the dog as she worked the field and the adjoining woods, stopping to anticipate a shot whenever she looked like she might strike a "point." No quail were flushed.

By this time, we were thirsty, so we loaded the dog back into Frank's pickup and moved to another milo field. We took a few minutes to contemplate our bird hunt thus far, agreeing that watching the dog work is really the best part of the hunt, saying things such as "I'm just out here to work the dog and get some fresh air." And, "I just love being in the Great Outdoors. That's what it's all about." I called my wife to let her know that we were going to hunt one more place for about 30 minutes and then come home.

"Is Ginger all right?" she asked. "Of course," I answered," wondering why she asked.

We began to hunt a milo field toward a pond where there were quail last year. The wind picked up and Ginger suddenly picked up her pace. I whistled her back to me to keep her from getting out of reach. As I started to slip the leash over her head she pulled away and started running toward the pond and woods on the other side. Then she was out of sight. Blowing my whistle and toggling the remote control for the collar had no effect. We began a search but could not find her. We figured that she was on quail and would not break the point.

Frank telephoned his wife to tell her we might be a little late, because we had to find the dog. "You had better not come home without that dog," she said.

We searched for Ginger for more than an hour without finding



Frank Lancaster in his truck with Bill Stancil's errant bird dog, Ginger.

her, and decided to return home for help, or even to wait until morning when I would come back. But as we started to leave the game lands, a Wildlife Commission vehicle came in. Wildlife Officer Dustin Ethridge got out of the vehicle and we introduced ourselves, and told him about losing the bird dog. He asked for her name, my telephone number and gave me his card. "I'll be here for quite a while," he told us. "I'll keep an eye out for your dog and give you a call if I find her."

We were relieved because we now had help with our search, but mostly we didn't want to face our wives without the dog. So, we headed for Rocky Mount. We stopped for a drink and a sandwich in Enfield, and when we got back into the truck, my cell phone rang. "Mr. Stancil, I have your dog," the voice said.

Game Wardens — you just gotta love 'em!

The Real Story Of Hunting the Game Lands, as told by Ginger the Bird Dog

I'm Bill's bird dog, an English setter with a better pedigree than Bill. If I was human, I wouldn't associate with him, but somebody needed to take over his training.

Now I'm spending my better days teaching him how to enjoy the outdoor experience. Lord knows, somebody needs to!

Bill had promise when I undertook his training and in no time at all I taught him to fetch a stick. He would throw it, yell "FETCH" and I would just sit there. After awhile he would fetch it and bring it back... "Good Boy." I could see possibilities, so I decided to train him to hunt.

Recently, Bill and I and a hunting partner, Frank, went to Tillery Game Lands. They were excited, even bringing nabs and Mountain Dew — to keep their blood circulating, I guess. Me? I was so underwhelmed that I tried to hide when Frank's pickup pulled into our driveway. I finally yielded to Bill's leash, just to save him from

a hernia while dragging me to the truck. Then we were on our way... yippee?

We hunted places they swore had quail, but there were no quail. We hunted for more than 30 minutes in the places they chose. They forgot who has the nose for the job.

Another 30 or 40 minutes passed while I led them through milo fields and woods. They are both slow and can't keep up. On the other hand, I love to feel the wind in my hair and can really move on when I feel good. Bill kept blowing that whistle and pushing the button on the remote collar control that he thinks helps. I was afraid they would get lost so I kept them in sight. They soon tired and needed refreshments. We got into the truck and they talked about the morning. Bill said, "I'm here just to get some fresh air

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On Target with the State Hunter Education Coordinator

Hunters enjoy solitude; there is no doubt about it. Whether it is standing on a swamp's edge before sunrise, intently listening for a turkey to gobble to welcome the dawn and reveal his location to his harem of hens and the patiently waiting hunter, or the hunter sitting for hours on a crisp fall afternoon waiting for a glimpse of a buck, the solitude of the hunt is welcomed distraction from the daily rigors of life.

There is a social side of hunting also. One of the motivating factors of hunters is to spend time with friends and family. Responsive Management recognized this fact in its recent evaluation entitled "Increasing the Number of Hunter Education Graduates Who Purchase Hunting Licenses." The authors state, "Classroom hunter education courses reinforce social support dimension of hunting participation simply through opportunities for hunters to converse with one another and for friendships to develop among students."

Hunter education is vital to the future of our heritage. We typically hunt with people we like and sometimes admire. This is another reason why our jobs as hunting educators are so important.

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will be offering many opportunities for instructors to connect and socialize in the next few months. Each district will be hosting its instructor in-service trainings and incentive banquets. These banquets are a chance to meet instructors from your area and to get caught up with new information from the hunter education program. You should be receiving further information on these workshops from your local hunter education specialist in the coming weeks.

Also, Oct. 5-7, we will be hosting the Advanced Instructor Workshop in Columbia, N.C. at the Eastern 4-H Environmental Education Conference Center. This will be a change of venue this year and this did cause a change of dates than what is listed in your pocket calendar.

This workshop is an excellent chance to learn a new skill, reunite with old friends and meet a few new ones. Who knows, you may even meet a new hunting buddy to share a hunt with. Until next time, keep your muzzles high and powder dry.

Travis Casper

House Testimony Advocates Target Ranges on Public Lands

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Executive Director Gordon Myers testified in May before the U.S. House of Representatives' Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs to share the perspectives of state fish and wildlife agencies on the importance of providing safe places for recreational shooting, and marksmanship training for our military and law enforcement officers.

Myers testified in support of HR 3065 on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, which represents the collective voice of all 50 state fish and wildlife agencies.

H.R. 3065, named "Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act," promotes construction and maintenance of public shooting ranges. The bill was introduced in the House by Reps. Heath Shuler (D-N.C.) and Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) as a companion bill to a similar piece of legislation introduced in the Senate. HR 3065 provides incentives for states to develop much-needed shooting ranges on federal and nonfederal lands by increasing the amount each state could spend of its Pittman-Robertson grant funds on shooting ranges.

Because these funds are allocated to states on a formula basis, changing the reimbursement rate would not result in increased federal spending. Further, this bill does not require a state to use the money on ranges. Instead, it provides incentives. All of these incentives would enhance the ability of states to build and maintain shooting ranges. Based on Fiscal Year 2011 apportionments, North Carolina would be eligible to allocate an additional \$700K of its apportioned funds to build or upgrade shooting ranges in our state.

"It seems fitting that this legislation is being considered as wildlife agencies, industries, and conservation groups have come together this year to mark a hallmark partnership that has led to 75 years of quality hunting, shooting, and wildlife-related recreation," Myers said. "The Pittman-Robertson Act is the cornerstone and the life blood of one of the most significant and successful partnership approaches to fish and wildlife conservation in our nation's history.

"More and more governmental lands are being closed, and fewer and fewer outdoor ranges are being built. The effects of this pattern are amplified by increased urbanization. It is simply harder and harder to find a place to shoot."

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Senior division winners Gray Stone Day School.



Junior division winners Park Ridge Christian School.



Rorrer Trophy winners Piedmont High School.

Youth Hunter Education Skills Tournament Crowns Champs

Gray Stone Day School and Park Ridge Christian School, both from Stanly County, won team championship honors at the 2012 Youth Hunter Skills Tournament State Championship, a pre-collegiate shooting sports competition annually held by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

The championship was held April 28 at Millstone 4-H Center near Ellerbe. There were 600 students from 54 schools who participated in this year's tournament, which determined state champions in team and individual categories for rifle, shotgun and archery marksmanship. Competition is conducted on senior (high school) and junior (middle and elementary schools) divisional levels, with overall team and individual awards based on aggregate scores in all events.

2012 tournament photos by Carolyn Rickard, Geoff Cantrell and Melissa McGaw.



Gray Stone Day School, in Misenheimer, won the senior division with a score of 3,798. Park Ridge Christian School, in Albemarle, won the junior division with a score of 3,597. Individuals who posted high scores to lead their teams included Hunter Efrid, of Gray Stone in the senior division, with a score of 779, and Shannon Efrid of Park Ridge in the junior division, with 759.

First place finishers in senior division individual events were Nicolas Forbes with a score of 199 in rifle; Tyler Webb with 200 and 7 x's at 25 yards in archery; Shannon Inman after a tie-breaker elimination round in shotgun; and Hunter Efrid with 187 in hunter skills. First place finishers in junior division individual events were Shannon Efrid with a score of 192 in rifle; Cole Allen with 200 and 6 x's at 25 yards in archery; Reid Marshall after tie-breaker elimination round in shotgun; and Shannon Efrid with 189 in hunter skills.

The Fred Rorrer Trophy, recognizing sportsmanship among competitors, was presented to Piedmont High School, in Monroe. The annual award is named in memory of a longtime hunting education instructor, mentor and sportsman.

Overall attendance, including spectators, staff and competitors was estimated to be nearly 3,100. Live reports from the Commission were posted via Facebook, the "Conserve and Protect" blog and Twitter. Media attention also continues to grow, with several hometown newspapers covering teams.

The Commission's Hunter Education Program holds the tournaments as an opportunity to showcase outdoor skills and demonstrate safety. Teams are organized within public and private schools, while home-schooled students and teams representing organizations such as 4-H or FFA also can compete, provided they meet eligibility requirements. Teams and individuals qualified for the championship by competing in nine district-level tournaments held across the state in March. Of the 311 schools offering hunting education in North Carolina, 227 field a Hunter Education Program youth team.

"Everyone attending the 34th annual tournament should feel a sense of achievement," said Travis Casper, the state hunting education coordinator and tournament director. "These youth are a good reflection of conservation, hunting and the outdoors community. As a single-day event that takes weeks, months and even years of preparation, the tournament could not have gone any better."

The lion's share of credit should go to the volunteers, Casper said. Their dedication and keen eye on both competition and safety kept the event a positive, rewarding experience for those involved.

"The Hunter Education Program truly appreciates your involvement," he said. "We couldn't do it without you."

Wildlife in North Carolina Begins its Popular Photography Competition

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will hold the eighth annual *Wildlife in North Carolina* photo competition, with entries accepted from June 1 until Sept. 1, 2012. This year, rules require entrants to be a current magazine subscriber or younger than 18.

“Last year, nearly 1,000 photographers entered more than 4,000 outdoor images,” said Jim Wilson, editor of *Wildlife in North Carolina*. “To have the budget to hold such a large-scale photo competition necessitated implementing the new entry policy. Considering a one-year subscription is only \$12, entering the competition is still quite reasonable.”

Photos will be judged in 10 categories:

- Birds - Mammals - Reptiles and Amphibians - Invertebrates
- Wild Landscapes - Youth, 12 and younger - Wild Plants
- Youth, 13-17 - Outdoor Recreation - Animal Behavior

Entries will be judged by a panel composed of staff from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences and N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.

All winners will be published in the January/February 2013 issue, with the grand prize image appearing on the cover. Winning photographs will be exhibited at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh and at other science museums and wildlife education centers across the state.

The grand prize winner also receives \$200. Other prizes include:

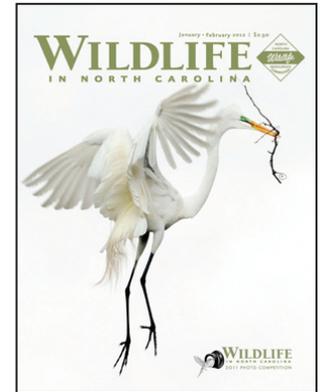
- First place, all categories, \$100.
- Second place, all categories, \$75.
- Third place, all categories, \$50.

JW Photo Labs of Raleigh is sponsoring the statewide exhibits of winning photographs.

Competition partners are UNC-TV and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. Corporate co-sponsor is the Great Outdoor Provision Co.

All photos must be entered electronically; no slides, negatives or prints will be accepted by mail.

Readers of *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine enjoy exceptional color photography and great articles on hunting, fishing, natural areas, conservation and wildlife in every issue. Subscribers also receive special spring and fall outdoor guides, with the latest hunting, fishing and outdoors information. One-year subscriptions are \$12 and three-year subscriptions are \$30, which makes it a bargain and great gift idea. Subscription information and competition rules can be found on the Commission's website, www.ncwildlife.org



Fishing and Hunting License Exemptions for N.C. Military Personnel

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is reminding military personnel that they can hunt and fish — in both fresh and coastal waters — without obtaining a license as long as they meet certain criteria. Annual and short-term hunting, inland and coastal fishing licenses are included in the exemption.



Hunting and fishing licenses exemptions are available for North Carolina military.

To be exempted from fishing and hunting license requirements, military personnel must:

- be a North Carolina resident,
- be serving full-time active military duty outside of the state in the Armed Forces or a reserve component of the Armed Forces,
- be home on leave for 30 days or less.

In addition, when hunting or fishing, they must have with them a military identification card and a copy of the official document issued by their service unit confirming that they are on authorized leave from a duty station outside of North Carolina. Military personnel also must comply with all reporting, regulatory and hunter safety requirements, including registering big game harvests and purchasing any federal migratory waterfowl stamps as required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Big Game Harvest Report Cards can be obtained from wildlife service agents or call 1-888-248-6834.

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Schedules Two Fun September Events

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW), the international program of hands-on learning and outdoor experiences, has a couple of exciting events planned for September. Registration is open to women ages 18 and older, on a first-come, first-serve basis, with a fee to cover materials and accommodations costs.

On Sept. 8-9, an overnight Outdoors Skills session for the mountains region will be held at W. Kerr Scott Lake and at Fort Hamby, in North Wilkesboro. This two-day workshop will help participants master skills and gain confidence in archery, basic fishing and tracking and wildlife identification. Saturday lunch and Sunday continental breakfast will be provided. You bring your own tent and sleeping gear. Workshop staff will be on hand to assist you in setting up camp. You'll be on your own for Saturday supper. Fort Hamby

campground has grills and potable water, and restaurants are nearby.

On Sept. 15, an Outdoors Skills session for the Piedmont region will be held at Lake Townsend, a Greensboro Parks & Recreation area. This one-day workshop to help women master skills and gain confidence in archery, aquatic wildlife identification, basic fishing and motorboat skills. Snacks and water will be furnished; participants should bring a bag lunch.

BOW annually provides safe, expert instruction in a variety of outdoor skills, including fishing, hunter safety, target shooting, archery, canoeing, motorboat safety, outdoor cooking, tracking and map-and-compass. Partial scholarships are available.

To learn more or to register, contact Outdoor Skills Coordinator BB Gillen at 919-218-3638 or email bb.gillen@ncwildlife.org.

“The Real Story,” continued

and watch the dog work.” Then Frank said, “I just love being in the ‘Great Outdoors.’ That’s what it’s all about.” Yeah, right!

Bill has been teaching hunter education a long time, but it’s a good thing he doesn’t teach the section on hunting dogs. That would be howl-arious!

Bill called his wife and I could hear her ask, “Is Ginger alright?”

Heh-heh, she didn’t even ask about him. He told her we would hunt for another 30 minutes. I thought, “Oh Yeah? We will see.”

We went to another field and I could smell quail on the far side near a pond. I picked up my pace, getting farther ahead of them. Then Bill blew that confounded whistle again. Awww, man, I had just started rolling. He almost got the leash on me, but I jerked my head back, whirled around and headed for the pond. There were quail there and it would be a good place to give them some urgently needed training. They called, but when I realized they couldn’t see me I laid low and worked on getting rid of that collar. I could

hear them shouting my name, but I stayed hidden and enjoyed the Great Outdoors on my own terms. Soon the calling stopped.

Later, I was approached by a wildlife officer, sometimes called “Game Wardens” by humans, with expletives attached. He was gentle and kind and spoke to me. Then he put me into his car and reached for his cell phone. His name badge read “Dustin Ethridge.”

I didn’t want to leave Ethridge, but soon I saw Frank’s pickup truck. The jig was up! They put me back into the truck. “The battery is gone from the collar,” Bill exclaimed. Frank said, “I’m glad we’ve got her back. When I called my wife, she told me I had better not come home until we found the dog.”

Bill told his wife about it when we got home. “I knew it,” she said, “I felt like something had happened to Ginger. It’s a good thing you came home *with* her.” Women’s intuition... I love it!

So that’s how I lost two old geezers, disabled a training collar and met one of the most helpful wildlife officers I have ever met. I can’t wait to go back to the game lands again.

And I sure hope that Wildlife Officer Ethridge is there!

The Hunter Education Program newsletter is published quarterly by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, with 2,000 copies of this, the summer issue, printed by Chamblee Graphics at a cost of \$.XX per copy. Comments and submissions are welcomed. **NOTICE:** This program receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior and its bureaus prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex in educational programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any North Carolina Hunter Education Program, activity or facility, or if you desire further information, please call or write: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Diversity and Civil Rights Programs – External Programs, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Webb 300, Arlington, Va. 22203, 703-358-1724 or Equal Employment Officer, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Personnel Office, 1751 Varsity Drive, Raleigh, N.C. 27606, 919-707-0101.



N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

Hunter Education Program

Be Courteous, Be Careful, Be Seen, Be Safe

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