

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.

In Memorium: Fred Rorrer, Hunter Education Specialist

Fred Rorrer, a longtime hunter education specialist with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission who taught thousands of North Carolinians about respect and enjoyment of the outdoors, died unexpectedly Oct. 11. He was 52 years old.

“Fred Rorrer was the caliber of man who, whether personally or professionally, represented conservation and this agency in the best possible way,” said Col. Dale Caveny, chief of the Commission’s Division of Law Enforcement, which administers the state’s Hunter Education Program. “He was an avid outdoorsman and a great ambassador for hunting and fishing. His passing leaves a void and, for those who knew him, a real hurt.”

As a hunter education specialist, Fred was tireless as he coordinated activities with volunteer instructors; assisted youth, church and civic groups with programs and events; and provided instruction in his own scheduled hunter education courses. He was a leader in the Youth Hunter Safety Skills Tournaments

and helped bolster North Carolina teams and individuals to the top levels of national competition. As an advocate for hunting and a representative for Commission, Fred was always willing to help others achieve shared goals without wanting any credit.

Fred was a big part of the first broadcast public service announcement about tree stand safety that the agency created, back in 2008. Becky Frazier had lost her husband in a fatal tree stand accident and wanted to channel her grief into helping others



Fred instructing rifle at Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Weekend



Fred and Darrin Ball after “perfect day” April 21, 2009

avoid similar tragedies. That led to a script and storyboards, which eventually got the green light for production. It was Fred who provided the logistics and necessary gear, and made all contacts for local law enforcement and emergency services personnel to be at the taping and in front of the camera. He did all the set-up on site. His legwork enabled a film crew to get the job done. And he offered encouragement to everyone involved.

So while he doesn’t appear on camera, the 30-second spot (“TV commercial”) wouldn’t have happened without Fred. In fact, a lot of good things wouldn’t have happened without Fred Rorrer.



Behind the scenes hero

The True Meaning of Life and Hunting

By Darrin Ball

Someone once told me, "If you want to find out about a man, take him hunting."

Well, I took him hunting and did I ever find out about the man. Hunting will show your true character: what you are made of, if you respect your quarry, your hunting companions, and the outdoors. If you are selfish or if you value success over doing what is right, hunting will expose flaws.

What I found out was that there were no flaws in Fred Rorrer.

We met because we were both Hunter Education Specialists. I clearly remember our first conversation. Fred heard that



Fred with a good tom, and a good friend

I loved to deer and turkey hunt and it was evident to me that he felt the same. We talked for over an hour listening to each other's stories, talking about techniques, close misses, and each other's successes. Little did I know that this conversation would lead to a friendship of a lifetime. We started talking more frequently: laughing, joking, and sharing in each other's experiences.

Fred invited me down to his home for a late season deer hunt. We sat together in a blind one rainy December morning, just talking for hours, developing a bond that is hard for me to explain. It was just special. I took a doe that morning. It was the first in so many great hunts and even better memories. As April rolled around, I invited Fred to come up and turkey hunt. I wanted to repay his kindness. We both took a bird on that first morning: the unlikely "double." I wasn't surprised; that's just how it was with me and Fred, sitting there together; smiling, winking and then rejoicing.

Our bond was becoming stronger than ever. Fred loved it here

in the mountains. He used to tell me that when he retired, he was coming to District 9. He liked the family atmosphere that he encountered here. Sometimes we forget that what really matters are people and how we treat them.

Fred never forgot it. He loved the peaks and valleys, the cool mornings, the clear water. He loved the way a turkey's gobble echoes off the ridge tops and through the hollows. He became fast friends with guys I work and hunt with here. Fred just had that way about him. He appreciated a kind deed and he would let you know it. He wore his emotions on his sleeve, just as I do. I think that is one reason our connection was so strong.

Over the next few years, our hunting journeys carried us far and wide – from the cornfields of Indiana, through the pines of southern Virginia, across the ridges of Rockingham County, to the bottom ground of the Green River and WaterMill Farm in Polk County. What a journey it was. But, it was always the same with me and Fred: no jealousy, no hard feelings, just wanting success for the other more than yourself.

Hunting is a spiritual thing. You can't explain that to someone who doesn't hunt. Some people hunt for the wrong reasons. Fred hunted for all the right ones. Whether it was taking a young child, or helping his dad, or just sitting with a friend, Fred Rorrer got it.

I have struggled with Fred's sudden passing. How can you replace a friendship like we had? The answer is "you cannot."

That phone call in the early morning hours of Oct. 11 ripped a hole in my life. I have wondered what would ever fill that hole. I have come to realize that I can fill it with kindness, compassion and caring for others – all the things that Fred stood for. I am a better man because of Fred's influence on me.

I find myself talking to Fred still, telling him things. I know he is listening. His spirit is forever woven into my life. I also know that we will be together again; of that, I have no doubt.

So, while you are listening, Fred, and until that day comes, find us the perfect white oak to hang a stand. Find us a hickory big enough to sit side by side as that turkey is coming to the call. And just like all the times before, we will smile, we will wink, and we will rejoice.....

I miss you, bud.



With the mountains behind him



On Target with the State Hunter Education Coordinator

For all the reasons we could publish a special edition of the newsletter, the cause for this one is the worse.

Fred Rorrer died of natural causes in his sleep, sometime in the early morning hours of Oct. 11 at his home in Eden.

The sudden loss left us, his colleagues and friends, stunned, saddened and, to be honest, in a state of shock. Because of that, it is still hard to think of Fred in the past-tense, to be remembering him rather than making plans with him. But such as it is.

He was born and raised in Eden, a hometown boy who cherished the traditional values of home and family. He started work as a hunter education specialist for District 5 in February 2006.

Fred was an outstanding example of someone who did the job well, who practiced what he preached, and went the extra mile.

He was a frequent contributor to the newsletter and was very active with the outreach aspects of the Hunter Education Program, especially hunting heritage and youth involvement.

He would tell you he was a 1976 graduate of Morehead High School. He was a 1982 graduate of N.C. State University. He enjoyed motocross competition.

We would tell you he was a much appreciated, highly respected man for more reasons than any of us can list. And he is missed.

Surviving are his wife of 24 years, Cathy Evans Rorrer of the home; daughter, Ashley Paige Rorrer; son, Justin William Rorrer; sister, Delores Horne; father Bill Rorrer; other loved family members and many close and dear friends. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial donations be made to the National Wild Turkey Federation.



Capt. Chris Huebner

A Man for This Job and These Times

By Travis Casper

“You will either love the job or you will hate it; the Hunter Education Specialist job will make you or break you...”

I spoke these words to Fred Rorrer in a telephone conversation right after he was hired. He had called me to get the ins and outs of the job and what to expect. Little did I know this conversation was the start of cherished friendship.

Fred was the model of what a Hunter Education Specialist should be and more importantly a friend. He was always level headed, even keeled, and unafraid to say what needed to be said.

Fred came to Raleigh on a couple of occasions and walked in my office and shut the door. I knew I was getting ready to receive a lesson from “Old Freddie” that was well needed. From Fred I learned that I was not qualified to use a screw gun, a laugh was not that far away, and to take time to tell a story with all the details.

Over the years I learned I was wrong in the words I told Fred when he was first hired. *Fred made the Hunter Education Specialist job.*

Thank you, “Ready Freddie” for your friendship and the memories.



Fred at 2008 State Fair, photo by Minnie Bridgers, WRAL. Copyright 2008 Capitol Broadcasting Co.

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Comments and submissions are welcome.

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Hunter Education Program

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Division of Law Enforcement

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