



N.C. Hunter Education Program Newsletter

Third Quarter 2014



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

Payday for Hunter Education Program Volunteers

**By Bill Stancil,
Rocky Mount Hunter Education Instructor**

As a hunter education instructor, have you ever asked yourself: “Why am I still doing this? Where is my reward for spending hours involved in teaching other people (mostly strangers) about hunting and how to do it safely? Where is the payday for the time and effort I put into the Hunter Education Program?”

If you have, rest assured that you are not alone. Like you, I am a volunteer instructor and have been helping to teach the course for some 20 years and, quite frankly, there have been times when I asked myself, “Why am I doing this year after year? What am I getting out of it?”

After all, there is no monetary payment for the time and effort spent teaching the course.

We put students through the whole Hunter Education Program gamut — the purpose of the program, finding resources, firearms identification and safe handling of firearms, deer stand safety, primitive weapons, survival and first aid, wildlife habitat, conservation, preservation, hunting ethics and what the law requires of the hunter.

Then we test them to see if they have absorbed what we have been teaching from our knowledge and experience and the course materials.

We instructors want everyone in our classes to pass the test. It is a matter of pride with us when we can award everyone the patch and the assurance that a certification card will follow, identifying them as a “Safe Hunter” who can hunt with a licensed adult and, when they reach age 16, acquire their own hunting license.

“That’s the students’ payday, but when do I get mine?” I ask myself sometimes.

I am nearing 80 years of age and do not teach as much as I once did. Very soon, perhaps, I will not teach anymore, though I will continue to write about it and, therefore, support and remain a part of this great program.

Recently, while working on a freelance assignment, I went to a restaurant to interview the vice-president of



Volunteers are the backbone of hunter education instruction.

operations for an advertisement in the local newspaper. When I introduced myself to him, tears suddenly formed in his eyes and he said, “You’re the one!”

As I sat down at a table, wondering what he meant, he called his wife over to the table and introduced me.

“You made our son’s dream come true,” he said. Then they both had tears in their eyes.

“Our son’s dream was to be able to hunt,” he continued. “In 2006 both he and I took the hunter education course you taught at West Mount Ruritan Club. Our son had a disease that affected his reading and his understanding of what he read. When test-time came, you took him into another area and helped him understand what the course was about and what the test was asking.

“He passed the test.”

The father said that the biggest thrill in his son’s life was getting that hunter education patch and the accompanying certification card.

“Adam loved to hunt and was able to live his dream for five years, until he died in 2011,” he said. “We will always be grateful to you for that.”

I knew his bittersweet thank you was my payday. And now I mark my Hunter Education Instructor tab ...

PAID IN FULL!

Burke County Schools Expand Archery Program

By Wes Blair,
District 8 Hunter Education Specialist

The popular National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) has grown by 31 instructors in District 8, following a 10-hour training session for Burke County Public Schools in June.

NASP was introduced statewide in 2004 by the Wildlife Commission. Incorporating Olympic-style archery in a gym setting for elementary, middle and high school students, NASP promotes physical and mental activity while teaching responsibility. District 8 has 30 schools participating, thanks to efforts of wildlife enforcement



Wes Blair, right, helps a NASP student retrieve arrows.



NASP uses adaptable equipment for increased participation.



Archery through NASP builds concentration and is fun.

officers, like Master Officer Phillip Tallent, and volunteer instructors like Michael Steele. Thanks to their efforts and collaboration, Burke County Public Schools has agreed to purchase an archery kit for each of its elementary and middle schools — all which are offering the program in the current school year.

Steele, a physical education teacher with Burke County Schools and a NASP instructor since 2007, has coached several elementary school teams to wins in the state Virtual NASP Tournament. Several of those teams later advanced to national level at an annual NASP championship in Kentucky.

The NASP program and equipment are both designed for adaptive use and enjoyment, and are well suited for youth who may not be inclined to participate in other team sports. Reports and testimonials from schools with the NASP indicate that discipline issues with students seem to decrease when the NASP is implemented. It is a unique way to engage students in outdoor-related activities with a non-traditional educational approach.

For more information on the National Archery in the Schools Program, visit <http://naspschools.org> or contact your district's Hunter Education Specialist.



On Target with the State Hunter Education Coordinator

Re-engagement, youth involvement, lapsed license holders, 18 to 35-year-olds and the future of conservation have become focus topics within wildlife agencies around the country.

Recruitment, retention and reactivation have been dubbed “R3” and in my experience, when topics get an acronym, you know it is getting serious!

In August, the National Shooting Sports Foundation reported in a widely distributed news release, “Hunter education is a great way to introduce or reconnect young people to the natural world and it is a key strategy to build the next generation of hunters, who have been — throughout American history — some of the most dedicated and successful conservationists.”

In this issue we have plenty of examples of R3.

Hunter Education Specialist Wes Blair highlights the successes of the National Archery in the Schools Program in District 8. Staff and volunteers have done an outstanding job of recruiting schools into NASP and getting buy-in from principals, superintendents and school boards. The result is thousands of students engaged in a discipline of the shooting sports.

North Carolina once again did an outstanding job at the 2014 Youth Hunter Education Challenge recently held in Mansfield, Pa. I have been assisting with this event for the last decade and volunteer instructor Carson Hobson has coached a team every year that I’ve been there. I was excited to see the achievement of his team with its national title. This definitely can be attributed to Carson’s leadership! Congratulations to all

the teams for their hard work at nationals.

The Hunter Education Program recently reached out to the Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permit holders in the state from the 2013-14 hunting season. Seven Hunter Education courses were scheduled throughout of the state in August based from maps generated from Geographic Information Services (GIS) software, which was used to identify the highest concentration of permit holders in different areas of our state.

Direct mail and email campaigns were used to advise permit holders of the available courses and the response rate has been excellent.

Looking closer at the data, we found the mean age of the Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permit holders was 33.2 and the highest percentage of permit holders were 16-25 years old. From July 2013 until May 2014, the total number of apprentice permits issued in North Carolina was 6,764, with 5,374 of them in-state residents.

We also reached every state and the District of Columbia, with the exception of Hawaii and North Dakota. And 11 permits went to residents of other countries.

As Bill Stancil reflects in this issue, we need to find our small victories and successes with our involvement in hunter education. We should take pride in placing people on successful pathways to participation in conservation. Your commitment and those accomplishments, one student at a time, are our “payday.” Until next time, keep your muzzles high and powder dry.

Travis J. Casper

Contact Information for the Hunter Education Program

District Hunter Education Specialists

- D-1 Chet Clark, 252-506-1360 chet.clark@ncwildlife.org
- D-2 Chris Kent, 252-521-5190 christopher.kent@ncwildlife.org
- D-3 Hilton Best, 252-904-9873, hilton.best@ncwildlife.org
- D-4 Kevin Crabtree, 910-876-2376 kevin.crabtree@ncwildlife.org
- D-5 Carissa Shelton, 336-455-0292 carissa.shelton@ncwildlife.org
- D-6 Michael Nye, 704-218-1206 michael.nye@ncwildlife.org
- D-7 Tim Lemon, 336-430-5144 tim.lemon@ncwildlife.org
- D-8 Wes Blair, 828-726-1160 wes.blair@ncwildlife.org
- D-9 Darrin Ball, 828-891-4093 darrin.ball@ncwildlife.org

North Carolina Hunter Education Program, Raleigh staff

- Admin Assistant Nancy Boykin, 919-707-0041 nancy.boykin@ncwildlife.org
- Public Affairs Geoff Cantrell, 919-707-0186 geoff.cantrell@ncwildlife.org
- HEP Coordinator Travis Casper, 919-707-0337 travis.casper@ncwildlife.org



N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
Hunter Education Program
Be Courteous, Be Careful, Be Seen, Be Safe
1717 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1717

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North Carolina Again Tops in International Youth Competition

The Yadkin Patriots of Forbush Middle School took top honors as junior champions at the 29th annual International Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC), a demanding week-long shooting and outdoors skills competition held July 21-25 at Mansfield, Pa.

The Patriots' roster included Coaches Carson Hobson and Brian Lineberry, and competitors Colton Bullin, Brady Carter, Jacob Matthews, Austin Stanley and Matthew Lineberry. The team came from East Bend, N.C. Other notable finishers from North Carolina in the pre-collegiate shooting sports championship included:

- Hunter Efrid, of Albemarle, second in the senior individual overall category.
- The Red Wampus Cats of Forbush High School took third place in the senior team division.



The Forbush junior, senior teams and coaches at YHEC.

The Red Wampus Cats' roster included Coach Chris Poplin and competitors Jordan Dinkins, Colton Horn, Dylan Horn, Dylan Poplin and Jordan Yale.

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