



N.C. Hunter Education Program Newsletter

Fourth Quarter 2014

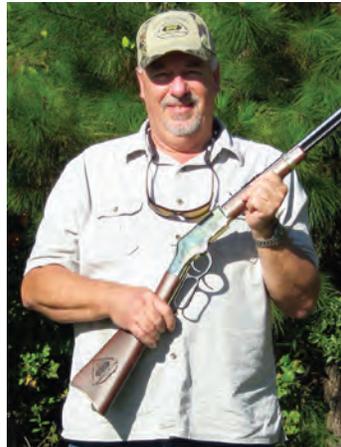


The men and women who volunteer as hunter education instructors serve as teachers, mentors and coaches. The service they deliver is, quite literally, lifesaving.

Hunter Education Program Instructors of the Year



D-1 Mike Bennett, Martin Co.



D-2 Kim Tavasso, Pitt Co.



D-3 Carl Rohr, Vance Co.



D-4 Marty Webb, Cumberland Co.



D-5 Tom Wassack, Randolph Co.



D-7 LuRae Doub, Yadkin Co.



D-6 Todd Barnette, Stanly Co.

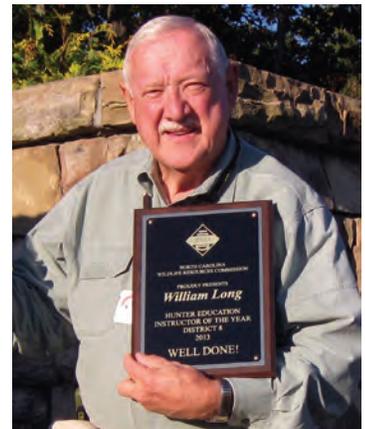


D-9 David Franklin, Haywood Co.

Congratulations Volunteers!

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has recognized nine volunteers who teach hunting education as the “2014 Instructors of the Year.” The instructors, each representing one of nine districts statewide, were presented a commemorative model Henry Golden Boy .22 caliber rifle in honor of their service, in local ceremonies. The Wildlife Commission personalized the rifles with inscriptions and sequenced serial numbers to make them unique to the Hunter Education Program.

“In the Wildlife Commission’s strategic plan, the agency is tasked to feature strong partnerships,” said Travis Casper, program coordinator. “There is no stronger partnership than that with our volunteers, who help in all aspects of promoting conservation and hunting. They have our thanks and admiration.”



D-8 Bill Long, Catawba Co.

Shooting Stations Designed, Built by Volunteers

By Kevin Crabtree
D-4 Hunter Education Specialist

Karol Koval, a dedicated hunter education instructor in District 4, has donated two innovative shooting stations to the Hunter Education Program.

Koval and his neighbor, Brady Binde, designed and built the shooting stations. These useful shooting stations were recently used at the Cape Fear Youth Day at the Wellons Farm, near Linden.

At the Cape Fear Youth Day event, we operated two shotgun shooting stations and a .22 rimfire range. Generally, the youngest and smallest youth were assigned to the .22 range due to the physical requirements of shooting a shotgun. It also can be easier for the youngest youth to be a better marksman at a stationary target versus a moving target.

Koval had worked this event in years prior and found himself and other instructors assisting the youth by holding the fore end of the .22 rifle not only to help them aim but also to help them support the weight of the firearm. This hands-on experience motivated Koval to develop a shooting station that would allow the youth to handle the firearm and aim it independently.

The station's base consists of a 24- by 36-inch platform. On either end of the platform are three holes. An adjustable monopod shooting stick is inserted into one of the platform holes. The shooting sticks are adjustable in height from approximately 13 to 48 inches. The adjustments that can be made with the shooting stick allow these stations to be used by almost any size shooter.

In addition, the platforms provide a stable, level surface for the shooter to stand, sit or kneel while shooting.



One of the shooting stations now being used.

The holes drilled in the platform are designed to “hold” the shooting stick upright independent of the shooter needing to stabilize the shooting stick. The design worked flawlessly at the recent youth event.

A much appreciated “pat on the back” for Koval and Binde for their innovation, motivation and generosity in donating these stations to the Hunter Education Program. Great job, guys! Thanks!

New Campaign Begins for Safe Firearms Storage

As part of a new national campaign, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) is urging hunters to remember what they can do to prevent firearm accidents in the field, at the range, at home and everywhere in between. That means remembering: “The Hunt Isn’t Over Until You Are S.A.F.E.”

S.A.F.E. stands for

- Secure your firearms when not in use;
- Awareness of those around you who should not have unauthorized access to firearms;

- Focus on your responsibility as a firearm owner, and
- Educate yourself and others about safe firearm handling and storage.

The Hunt Isn’t Over Until You Are S.A.F.E. campaign is part of the Project ChildSafe program, which NSSF launched in 1998.

The Hunter Education Program endorses the campaign. For more information on safe firearm storage and obtaining a free firearm safety kit, including a gun lock, visit www.projectchildsafe.org.



On Target with the State Hunter Education Coordinator

In the last edition of the Hunter Education Program newsletter, I mentioned the national focus being placed on recruitment, retention and reactivation. The International Hunter Education Association, the Council for the Advancement of Hunting and Shooting Sports, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the National Wild Turkey Federation, the National Rifle Association, Ducks Unlimited and many other conservation partners are expending resources on this issue. Millions of dollars and countless hours are being spent to understand issues. Strategies have been drafted, implemented and will be evaluated to see what works.

So, where does Hunter Education Program fit into these strategies and can we stay viable? The answer is YES, but we must adapt.

Our first adaptation is strategically picking our audience. We cannot be everything to everybody and strategically deciding who to recruit will make us more efficient. How many times have we heard, "It's all about the kids." I am not discounting the need to get youth involved. This demographic is very important. However, to sustain participation in a new activity, an individual must have a social support from family and friends. If an individual is not receiving support for an activity it is very unlikely participation will be sustained.

Hunter safety programs started in states with ready-made audiences. Hunters took their kids to a class when they were 12 years old. The students had already been afield and wildlife agencies were attempting to equip them with the knowledge to point their muzzle in a safe direction, identify their targets and only take a shot

when they were sure it was safe.

North Carolina is experiencing population growth and a shift in demographics. The state grew by 21 percent from 1990 to 2000 and is expected to grow by another 50 percent by 2030. North Carolina has become a more urban state. This has contributed to a shift in the demographics of hunters that must be recognized. The average age of the hunter is tracking upward with the state's increasing urban identity. Hunting Business, a marketing publication, states new hunters are starting at an older age. This later-in-life introduction should cause us to look at delivery.

There is merit in recruiting adults but there are many challenges. The fear of failure, lack of success, equipment, clothing, lack of knowledge, and access to land are just a few that come up in conversations with potential hunters. In talking with a friend, my biggest surprise was his concern about clothing! He had got caught up in the camouflage marketing wars. He thought he needed the latest and greatest. There was relief when I told him he did not have to remortgage his home just to have clothes to hunt in and that if he could actually wear what he already has.

As we evaluate this, the future of hunter education depends on strong partnerships. Understanding the needs of volunteers, the needs of constituents and the expectations from the public will ensure a strong and successful program well into the future. Until next time, keep your muzzles high and powder dry!

Travis J. Casper

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N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
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Get N.C. Wildlife Update – news including season dates, bag limits, legislative updates and more – delivered to your Inbox from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Go to www.ncwildlife.org/enews.

Home From The Hunt Reminders for Waterfowl Season

Our Home From The Hunt™ campaign is reminding waterfowl hunters who use boats to exercise boating safety and hunting safety.

“Statistics show more waterfowl hunters die from hypothermia and drowning than gunshot wounds,” said Maj. Chris Huebner, the state boating safety coordinator. “Hypothermia is the loss of body heat and, left untreated, can prove fatal. Exposure to extreme cold, such as being in cold water or wearing wet clothes in cold conditions, can increase the chance of hypothermia.”

Wear protective clothing and watch the weather, he said. Let someone know where you are hunting and an approximate return time.

Additional boating safety tips include:

- Always wear a life vest.
- Don't overload the boat, especially with people.
- Keep hunting dogs prone in center of the boat.

In the event of capsizing or swamping, stay with the boat. It will provide some flotation and will be the initial focus of a rescue attempt.

Waterfowl hunters should handle shotguns in a safe manner. Be aware of muzzle direction at all times. Never shoot while standing in an unsecured boat or move in a boat with a loaded shotgun.

Go to www.ncwildlife.org/hunting or call 1-800-675-0263 for additional waterfowl hunting information.

The Hunter Education Program newsletter is published quarterly by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. We welcome your comments and submissions. 2,500 copies of this publication printed by Chamblee Graphics, Raleigh, at a cost of \$.XX per copy.

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