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Why We Need to Teach Children to Hunt

Lessons Learned—Back to the Basics
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The International Hunter Education Association – United States of America (IHEA-USA) is an organization involving some 55,000 instructors across the United States of America. The IHEA-USA is affiliated with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The Hunter & Shooting Sports Education Journal is the official publication of the International Hunter Education Association-United States of America. It is published four times annually (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) and distributed to more than 55,000 administrators and volunteer instructors in Canada, El Salvador, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa and the United States of America who are responsible for education programs that total 650,000 new hunters annually. The purpose of the publication is to increase the skill and effectiveness of hunter education in administrators and instructors so they can improve the enthusiasm, safety, ethics and proficiency of their students as they embark on lifetime enjoyment of hunting and the shooting sports.

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As we relax into the quiescent of winter, our thoughts turn from hunt and harvest towards a time of reflection and planning. Some of you may plan your curriculum for next year’s hunter education class, next year’s hunt, or if you are like me, you are working on your land management plans. As a biologist and land manager, winter is the perfect time to set pen to paper and develop these plans.

As educators to students of the outdoors, we are skilled at teaching safety and ethics and strive to lead by example in all things related. Yet our goal is also to pass on the tradition of hunting, which includes respect for the habitats that sustain the flocks, coveys, and herds that we harvest from. As hunters and shooters, we are conservationists. As a conservationist, it is time for us to think about how we can develop a plan for our own lands for conservation in our backyards. The continuity of habitats between state and private is crucial for the success of species given their different needs seasonally and the large home range in which many of them live. The planning need not be difficult. Aldo Leopold said, “Acts of creation are normally reserved for gods and poets, but humbler folks may circumvent this restriction if they know how to plant a pine for example, one need be neither a god or poet; one only need a good shovel.” Planning for your project doesn’t need to be laborious, complex, or expensive.

The first step is observation. Observe the animals and markings on your property and take inventory of what is there or isn’t there that you’d like to see. Take a walk on your property at different times of the day as not all animals are active at the same hours. This will allow you to build a more comprehensive list of what is in abundance. Record the time, weather, species, and number of individuals that you see. Look for signs of their presence as well. Tracks, marks on trees, or dens are all signs of animals. If you are unsure of what the tracks are, take a photo with an item, such as a quarter, for scale. If you are unsure of the animal, record information such as size, using comparison to an animal you are familiar with, color, distinguishing
markings, the way it carries its tail, or other traits that stand out which will help identify the animal. Next, observe the plants on your property. Do you have mostly woods, fields, or manicured lawn? What do those habitats look like? Are they contiguous, composed of only a few species or rich in diversity? Take a soil sample and have it tested for the type of soil (clay, loam, sand, or a mixture of each) as this will limit the types of plants that can grow on your land.

Once you have a working inventory, think about your goals for your property. Maybe you’d like to plant native seed plants for birds to eliminate the need for a summer bird feeder. Bird feeders are great to watch birds, but not so fun when they bring in bears. Maybe you’d like to create a food plot for deer and game birds that is beneficial year ’round. If so, you’ll want to pick out the right type of native cover seed for your soil conditions; prepare a planting schedule, including crop rotation, to allow for proper nutrient cycling; set up mowing schedules that won’t harm grassland nesting birds or young fawns; and create buffers for animals to feel safe to travel to the nearest woodlot so your plot is used at an optimal rate.

Just grabbing a bag of “food plot seed” off a shelf can create frustration if it isn’t the right blend for your area or adequate for the goals of your plan. Goals and objectives should be specific with realistic timelines for plants to grow and wildlife to learn the new resources on your property. Also, remember that what you plan for on your property influences populations at a broad scale as everything is connected. The geese who use your neighbor’s pond may feed in your field.

The real key to success is twofold. First, remember to have patience with the process. An oak stand will take years to grow and most plants do not really produce fully until their second or third year. Have fun and do not worry about perfection. Keep a journal of what actions you take, how wildlife inventory adjusts, and the success of your actions. Sometimes it takes several attempts to find the right balance of what is needed on your property to help with population goals. Second, don’t be afraid to reach out for assistance, prepared with the inventory and goals you’ve already developed. There are many organizations who are happy to help with the planning process from your local state biologist, university cooperative extensions, soil and water conservation district, or forester to regional federal technicians with the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or Bureau of Land Management. Success with your property’s habitat management is all part of the matrix to achieve goals as a biologist that we set on a state and national level for population levels, diversity, and habitat connectedness. So, get your pens out and start planning, so that when the ground thaws you are ready to get your shovels dirty and increase your local populations for harvest well into the future.■
Standards: Why Are They Important?

In order to ensure that our students are given clear and precise instruction, it becomes necessary to align instruction with standards. IHEA-USA standards to be precise. Standards ensure better accountability—holding both instructors and our online vendors responsible for what is being taught in their courses is key. The practice of aligning learning to standards also helps ensure that a higher level of learning and retention is attained by our students, and guides instructors and vendors in the process of course development and assessment, helping to keep them on track.

Standards-based instruction helps guide the planning, implementation, and assessment of student learning. The use of standards to streamline instruction ensures that teaching practices deliberately focus on agreed-upon learning targets. Expectations for student learning are mapped out with each prescribed standard.

Instructors and vendors follow standards-based teaching to ensure that their students meet the demands targeted. Following a standards-based model for classroom and online assessment and instruction is an approach instructors and vendors use to track student performance and plan focused instruction to meet the specific needs of students.

The Third-Party Review Process

It is with great excitement that I am able to tell you that IHEA-USA now has our Third-Party Review process in place! It has taken the efforts of many to see this process through and ensure that not only are the standards in place, but also that these standards are being incorporated in the courses provided to our students. Thank you to all who have been involved in this process!

There are many reasons behind a third-party review process. First would be to remove any bias in the evaluation of the courses provided. Second would be to ensure the consistency of the evaluation, and third would be to ensure the review is done in a timely manner.

Currently, this process will review and certify the online hunter education (See Executive Director’s Comments on page 8)
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vendors that are being used across the United States. Love online learning or hate it, it is not going away. For almost all states and many students, the online learning opportunity has been beneficial; but we are not going to debate that today. With this being said, your organization is going to ensure IHEA-USA standards for both content and delivery are met by our partners and online vendors!

IHEA-USA certification of these courses benefit the vendors, states, and most importantly, the students. The online vendors benefit from certification with ability to ensure their customers (the states) that their course has met the standards that were developed by their peers. The certification immediately opens the door for a state to start a conversation with the online vendor who has been certified by the IHEA-USA. For states it relieves them from having to do the work of reviewing every course that is presented to them. It truly makes it very easy for a state administrator to determine which course vendors they will work with and virtually ensures reciprocity. The students who choose to use the IHEA-USA-certified online options available will benefit the most. These students will know they are taking a course that has met the current standards developed by the 50 states which will help ensure their certification will reach across state lines. Students will also have the ability to choose the course which will best suit their needs. Their course and standards will address all the areas that need to be addressed to help them become safe, responsible, knowledgeable, and informed hunters.

Again, we are very excited to be able to perform this service for our volunteer instructors, students, vendors, and individual state administrators. Be on the lookout to see which online courses will soon be IHEA-USA certified for both content and delivery!

Be sure to get someone out shooting and hunting that has never hunted before, and have a safe hunt.

Send Us Your Stories!

One of the main goals of the Journal is to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and teaching experience that can help improve the education process of the more than 650,000 new hunters annually. In order to fulfill that goal we need the input of instructors in the field. Please submit your stories and/or photos about teaching techniques that work for you, thoughts about the state of our hunting heritage today, anecdotal stories about “it happened to me” in class, visual training aids, etc... don’t worry about spelling or grammar.

Every submission that is chosen for print receives a gift from supporting manufacturers.

Send your submission to Susie Kiefer at susiekiefer@msn.com.

No computer? You can mail your submission to: IHEA-USA Journal, PO Box 432, Wellington, CO 80549.
CONVENIENT FOR STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION

The Ruger® 10/22 Takedown® combines all of the features and functionality of the 10/22® rifle, with the ability to easily separate the barrel from the action for convenient storage and transportation. The simple reassembly of the barrel and action yields a rock-solid return to zero for consistent, reliable performance. Packed in a convenient carry-case (included), the Ruger® 10/22 Takedown® makes it easy to keep America's favorite rimfire rifle by your side.
The Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson) Program and the Hunter Education subprograms are well-known for funding wildlife research and restoration projects, as well as hunter education. Yet important human dimensions research is also funded that can contribute to our understanding of hunters, and is especially important in the development of state recruitment/retention/reactivation (R3) efforts. Consider some of the latest research findings and lessons learned conducted by the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC):

Hunting license sales peaked in Pennsylvania (PA) in 1982 with a total of 1,311,234 licenses sold before declining. PGC started to study license churn, and discovered that between 2009-2013, 42% of hunters purchased a license five out of five years, and 11% purchased four out of five years. However, 23% purchased one license every five years, and another 25% purchased two or three licenses every five years. In 2011, PGC conducted a lapsed hunter survey to determine what factors were affecting hunters’ decision not to purchase a license. Contributing factors included:

- Amount of personal free time
- Not enough places to hunt
- Not enough access
- Work/family obligations
- Not enough game
- Not enough trophy game
- Cost of licenses

They also asked if lapsed hunters intended to purchase a license in the coming year.

Given this information, PGC embarked on a targeted outreach communications campaign that would 1) target infrequent hunting participants, and 2) connect with hunter identity and motivate lapsed hunters to reactivate. Test market research was conducted, and a goal of increasing annual license sales by 1.5% was set with the target of one million licenses sold annually by 2018. GoHuntPA.org was launched in fall 2014 and included the website (with resources for purchasing a license, finding where to hunt, and tips of what to do after a hunt), online displays, a mobile

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**GoHuntPA: Lessons Learned From a Targeted Outreach Campaign**

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app, and billboards. What happened after the campaign? License sales declined by -0.96% in 2014 and another -0.92% in 2015. Would these declines have been worse without the campaign? It is impossible to know.

**Four Lessons the PGC Learned by Conducting the GoHuntPA Campaign:**

1) There is no way to measure the impact of the campaign versus what would have happened without it. It’s important to plan ahead for evaluation and adaptive management. More specifically-targeted campaigns with control groups allow for better evaluation;

2) 60% of the test market said they were considering buying a license, but planned behavior did not equal actual behavior;

3) The campaign failed to reverse license sales trends as projected; and

4) The campaign did not reduce any of the barriers for lapsed hunters

**Shooting Range Permit Buyers: Are They Future Hunters?**

PGC owns and operates 29 public shooting ranges. Most are unstaffed, and all have rifle ranges between 100-300 yards; 16 ranges also have an attached handgun range. Regulations require that recreational shooters possess a valid range permit or hunting license to use these facilities. Shooting range permits were introduced in 2011 and cost $30 per year (a resident hunting license costs $20 per year.)

Who are the range permit holders in PA? 86% are PA residents, and 88% are male. 45.3% are ages 25-44 and 31.9% are ages 45-64. These individuals already own and are familiar with firearms, know the location of state game lands, and know how a permit works. Is Hunter Education a barrier to this audience buying a hunting license? Two focus groups of range permit holders were conducted by Pennsylvania State University in 2016. They asked about:

- Experience purchasing a permit and why they chose to use PGC ranges
- Hunter/Trapper Education
- Were they aware a resident hunting license was cheaper?
- Did they have any interest in hunting?

**The Results:**
- PGC shooting ranges were seen as an alternative to private ranges. Participants were not individuals looking for a gateway to hunting, but people looking for convenience and shooting opportunity.
- Individuals identified as shooters, not hunters. Most had never purchased a hunting license, and also felt the permit was easier and more convenient to purchase than a hunting license.
- Was hunter education a barrier? Yes and no. Yes because most would rather pay the extra $10 for the permit than take a hunter education course. No because they were not interested in becoming hunters. The reasons given for not wanting to hunt included: not being comfortable with so many other hunters; not wanting to kill an animal; and a perceived decline in game populations.

**Female Hunter Focus Groups**

On behalf of PGC, PennState Harrisburg’s Center for Survey Research conducted focus groups of female hunters in February 2017. While many of the key findings were specific to PA, other findings would be of interest to other state hunter education programs including:

- **Motivation for hunting:** Female hunters reported that food was a main motivation for hunting, and also a love of nature and being outdoors.

- **Hunter education:** A little over half of the participants took hunter education in-person when they were children and the rest as adults. Most felt the content of the hunter education course was good, but the lecture format was boring.

- **Marketing to female hunters:** Female hunters surveyed overwhelmingly disliked pink camo. All participants expressed frustration with women’s hunting clothing (high cost, lack of selection, and unrealistic fit). Most participants agreed that women’s hunts would be a great way to get more women involved in hunting.

- **Challenges being a female hunter:** Participants noted a number of challenges, including going to the bathroom,
difficulty dragging an animal out of the woods, issues with equipment sizing and functionality, and unequal treatment (especially by their male counterparts.)

Participants suggested ways to get more women to hunt including utilizing social media to create women-only hunting forums, do better advertising of women-only hunting events, consider women-only hunter safety or skills courses, and introduce hunting or gun safety in schools to get girls involved and interested at a young age.

**Hunting license purchases:** Participants in one focus group received a description of the federal Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson) allocation. All but one of the female hunters agreed that it would be a motivating factor to purchase a hunting license every year, even if they knew they could not go hunting, and that PGC should communicate this better to motivate people to buy hunting licenses.

**Suggestions to PGC from female hunters:**
- Decrease regulations, especially on smaller antlered deer, as a better way of managing the population
- Offer a family discount for hunting licenses
- Extend seasons to give more time to hunt
- Make private land hunting permits more accessible
- Separate the deer season to have individual buck and doe seasons
- Offer a no-point restriction for first-time deer hunters, similar to the mentored youth license

This article was co-written by Christina Milloy (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and by Coren Jagnow (Pennsylvania Game Commission).

Christina Milloy is a Fish and Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. She is the National Lead for the Wildlife Restoration Program and Hunter Education. Contact Christina via email at christina_milloy@fws.gov or call her at 703-862-5761.

Coren Jagnow is the Chief of Research and Education Division and Human Dimensions Specialist with the Pennsylvania Game Commission’s Hunter Education Program. Contact: cjagnow@pa.gov 717-787-1434.

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On a weekend in mid-October, 350 competitors ranging in age from seven to 70 converged on the grounds of Cavern Cove Competition Range in Woodville, Alabama, to take part in NSSF’s 2017 Rimfire Challenge World Championship. The two-day match ended with Kolby Pavlock of Kuna, Idaho, taking the top Championship title for the third consecutive year. He first won the title in 2015 as a Junior, and this year he took top honors shooting Limited Class with iron sights.

Competitors tackled 14 stages, seven for .22-caliber rifle and seven for .22-caliber handgun. Five side matches added to the excitement and challenge, while providing additional opportunities for prizes. In a testament to the powerful and positive influence the Rimfire Challenge has had on young shooters and family involvement, four of the top 10 match finishers came from the Junior category.

“It is incredibly gratifying to see so many mothers, fathers, and other adult family members so invested in their children’s success at the Rimfire Challenge,” said Tisma Juett, NSSF Manager, Recruitment and Retention. “This is what the future of the shooting sports looks like, right here, right now, and we encourage everyone with a stake in our heritage to embrace these young shooters so that they can do the same someday with their own children.”

Professional competitive shooter Julie Golob attended the event and introduced her daughter to her first Rimfire Challenge shooting match.
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“Best. Day. Ever. She was safe. She had so much fun.” Golob posted to her Facebook fan page. “I couldn’t be any more proud.”

The NSSF Rimfire Challenge is a family-friendly activity designed to teach new shooters how to get started in competitive shooting. The program’s focus is having fun while being safe on the range.

NSSF, the trade association for the firearms industry and host of the 2017 Rimfire Challenge World Championship, extended its congratulations to all the shooters who attended the match. It also thanked the match’s sponsors, including Tandemkross, Advanced Technology International, Majestic Arms, O.F. Mossberg & Sons, and Alchim Gun Parts, whose support made possible the success of this year’s World Championship.

The day after the World Championship concluded, the National Shooting Sports Foundation announced that the NSSF Rimfire Challenge will be transitioned to a new organization: the Rimfire Challenge Shooting Association. The transition takes place Jan. 1, 2018.

Originally developed by Sturm, Ruger & Co.’s Ken Jorgenson, along with author and TV personality Michael Bane and the late Nelson Dymond, a long-time and well-known shooting match director who held a strong passion for rimfire firearms, the program was first known as the Ruger Rimfire Challenge. NSSF took over the administration of the program in 2014, changing its name to the NSSF Rimfire Challenge. The new organization will be led once again by Ken Jorgensen and Michael Bane.

Designed to introduce new shooters to the shooting sports in an exciting, family-friendly format, Rimfire Challenge matches focus on competition with .22-caliber rifles and pistols. Matches are open to shooters of all ages and shooting experience levels, with events conducted at ranges nationwide and an annual World Championship taking place each October.

“It’s truly a great thing to see this program return home to the people who had this wonderful idea to begin with,” said Tisma Juett, NSSF Manager, Recruitment and Retention. “The NSSF is proud to have been a part of growing a shooting sport that has proven to be such a wonderful activity for mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, neighbors and friends in which to participate. We wish Ken and Michael much success and look forward to many more firearms owners joining the shooting sports with them.”

“I am excited to once again be involved in the day-to-day operation of the Rimfire Challenge events,” said Jorgenson. “The concept originally created by Nelson and implemented as part of the Ruger Rimfire Challenge is as valid today as it was in the beginning. We will work to continue that vision and grow the rimfire competition opportunities for shooters of all skill levels.”

“I could not be happier to once again be a part of the Rimfire Challenge!” Bane added. “It is a wonderful sport, a way to bring whole families into the competition. Ken and I are committed to bringing the Rimfire Challenge to the next level. It’s going to be fun!”

Details on the new Rimfire Challenge Shooting Association forthcoming. Visit www.nssf.org for more on NSSF.

Attention: Instructors! Got yours yet?

The 2017 edition of Hunter’s Handbook magazine is now at state and provincial warehouses and ready for instructor distribution to students. The magazine is the official student publication of the IHEA-USA. This “how-to” guide takes the student beyond mandatory general safety guidelines, offering selection and use information regarding a variety of hunting-related products, with a special emphasis on safety in the field. The publication also contains the student and instructor entry form for the IHEA-USA 2018 Heritage Hunt.

If you have not received your copies, contact your state or provincial coordinator to arrange shipment. The publication is free of charge. If you prefer to contact us directly, we will pass the information on to your coordinator. Send an e-mail to barbara@focusgroupseattle.com or call her at 206-281-8520. Please provide your name, phone number, shipping address and the number of copies you require for student distribution.
Trapping in North America is heavily regulated by state and provincial wildlife agencies, providing a critical wildlife management technique. AFWA’s North American Trapper Education Program can provide trappers with the knowledge they need to be successful, ethical, and help promote the future of trapping. This free online program is available at:

http://conservationlearning.org

Trapping Best Management Practices (BMPs) are carefully researched recommendations designed to ensure animals are humanely captured. Developed as part of the largest trap research effort ever conducted, BMPs feature the latest scientific information about trapping techniques and equipment, along with practical advice from experienced trappers and wildlife biologists.

Trapping BMPs exist for 22 species of furbearers:
fishwildlife.org/best_management_practices

DID YOU KNOW?

BMPs:

- Trapping BMPs are recommendations, not laws. Each state fish and wildlife agency decides how BMPs are used in their trapper education programs.

- Data collected and used to develop BMPs are consistent with internationally-accepted scientific standards for the evaluation of trapping techniques and the welfare of animals captured in traps.

- The Wildlife Society has a Standing Position which supports regulated trapping and the development and application of BMPs.

North American Trapper Education Program:

- This course is already used by a number of states to certify trappers. AFWA State Agency Directors approved and recognized this course as reciprocal where mandatory trapper education is required to obtain a license in a state.

- 7,000 students have already completed the course.

- The course teaches basic trapper education in addition to providing knowledge about BMPs for trapping.

BMPs and the North American Trapper Education Program are intended to maintain the integrity of furbearer management programs throughout the nation and to sustain trapping methods now and in the future.

AFWA encourages you to spread the word about the North American Trapper Education Program and Trapping BMPs!
ATTENTION ALL INSTRUCTORS: WIN A BRAND-NEW YAMAHA KODIAK 700EPS ATV!

The 2017 edition of Hunter’s Handbook is now making its way through the system for you to distribute to your hunter education students. For 26 years, the Handbook has been the official student publication of IHEA-USA. Hunter’s Handbook is an ideal collateral training tool for students to take home and further their knowledge about how products and techniques can enhance their experience in the field.

HERE’S ALL YOU NEED TO DO

In each issue of Hunter’s Handbook, there is a Quick Action Card that students fill out to get more information on products they are interested in. This also earns them a chance to win an all-expense paid hunting trip of a lifetime, and many other exciting prizes.

We ask that you have the students fill out the card and turn it in to you at the end of the class. From that point you simply put the entries in an envelope and mail them to:

Hunters Handbook
PO Box 912
Seahurst, WA  98062-0912

EVERY SINGLE card in the envelope then becomes an entry ticket for you to win the Yamaha ATV.

That’s it! Your students get a great publication, a chance to win fabulous prizes (student names picked for prizes are also won by instructors and state administrators!) AND you are entered to win this world-class ATV.
Greetings fellow Hunter Education Instructor

As one of the over 55,000+ Hunter Education Instructors (one of the largest volunteer corps in the USA) we are asking you to formally join IHEA-USA, the voice of hunter education across the country.

Your annual $30 IHEA-USA membership not only assures that all hunter education instructors have a voice, but also ensures the consistency and relevance of the classes you teach, and also includes these great benefits:

* **Liability Insurance**: Individual memberships are provided with Volunteer Liability Insurance up to $1,000,000 per occurrence. This policy provides protection for a bodily injury or a property damage liability claim arising out of the performance of the registered volunteers’ duties.

* **Exclusive “Instructor only” opportunities**: Purchase significantly discounted merchandise and closeouts offered by hunting and firearms manufacturers and distributors. Discounts include name-brand optics, tree stands, knives, firearms, archery equipment, laser pointers, and more. Up to 60% off! One purchase will more than pay for your membership.

* **IHEA-USA Membership Card**
  * **IHEA-USA “Member” Pin**
  * **IHEA-USA “Member” Decal**
  * **IHEA-USA Membership Patch**
  * **IHEA-USA window decal**

* **Award-Winning IHEA-USA Hunter & Shooting Sports Education Journal** quarterly. The Journal is packed with articles on new instructional techniques, improving your shot, helping wounded vets, the latest equipment, survival techniques, hunting clubs, and more.

For only $30 annually, you get much more than what you paid for. Lifetime memberships are also available and include all the annual membership items, but in addition include $100 Cabela’s gift card, a nice Cabela’s brand duffel bag, and other great items.

Please support IHEA-USA’s mission to continue the heritage of hunting worldwide by developing safe, responsible, knowledgeable, and involved hunters. Become part of the hunter education community that keeps giving back to the wonderful men and women out there volunteering their time to pass down our cherished hunting/trapping traditions.

Sincerely, Brad Heidel, Executive Director, IHEA-USA

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**Individual ANNUAL or LIFETIME Membership Information**

Name: ________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
City: ____________________________________________ Province/State: ________________
Postal Code: ________________________________ Phone: ( ) __________________________
Fax: ( ) ____________________________________ E-Mail: ____________________________________

I prefer (check one): ☐ E-Mail  ☐ Paper correspondence

**Lifetime OR Annual Membership**

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<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Payment Plan</th>
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**Total Payment: $** ____________________________

**Method of Payment (USFunds only):**

☐ Check/Money Order  ☐ American Express  ☐ Master Card  ☐ Visa

Card Number: ____________________________ Expiration Date: __________

Name on Card: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

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**Mail to**: IHEA-USA • 800 East 73rd Ave., Unit 2, Denver, CO 80229

**Website**: www.IHEA-USA.org • **Phone**: (303) 430-7233 • **E-Mail**: info@ihea.com

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Each NEW Instructor Annual Member and each New Instructor Life Member will have their names entered into a drawing for one of the following prizes:

1. **Ruger American 300 Win Mag rifle** (#16912) (**see note below**)
2. **Alpen Optics package**: One (1) 10x42 Model #365 Pro Binocular; one (1) Model #725N, 15-45x60 Waterproof Spotting Kit (includes scope, table-top tripod, car window mount and hard case); and one (1) Kodiak Rifle Scope Model #2045, 3-9x40, wide angle.
3. **Mathews Genesis Bow**

The prize drawing will take place on April 5, 2018, and the winners will be notified by email or phone. Prize winners’ names will be posted on the IHEA-USA website.

**Federally firearms requirements required for this item; and any FFL dealer fees will be the responsibility of the winner.**

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Each ANNUAL $30 IHEA-USA Individual Membership includes:

1. **IHEA-USA Membership Card**
2. **IHEA-USA “Member” Pin**
3. **IHEA-USA “Member” Decal**
4. **IHEA-USA Patch**
5. **IHEA-USA Responsible Hunting static cling Window Decal**
6. **Special early bird invitations to IHEA-USA events** (www.ihea.com).
7. **Exclusive “Member Only” opportunities to purchase significantly discounted merchandise and closeouts offered by hunting and firearms manufacturers and distributors** (www.ihea.com).
8. **Liability Insurance—Individual memberships of the IHEAUSA are provided with Volunteer Liability Insurance up to $1,000,000 per occurrence. This policy provides protection for a bodily injury or a property damage liability claim arising out of the performance of the registered volunteers’ duties. Applicable to USA Only.**

**In addition to the benefits listed above, each new IHEA-USA Lifetime $4500 Membership will include:**

- $100 Cabela’s Gift Certificate
- Recognition on the IHEA-USA website as a Lifetime member.
- Certificate signed by the Executive Director of the IHEA-USA.
- Continuing the Heritage Raffle Print (16" X 20")
- Getting Ready for the Hunt Print (16" X 20")
- “Lifetime Member” Lapel Pin
- Cabela’s Brand Duffel Bag (29" L X 16" W X 14" H)
- Embroidered with “Lifetime Member”

Membership rewards are subject to change.
"WIN the HUNT of a LIFETIME!...it says in Hunter’s Handbook, published annually by Focus Group, Inc., and distributed to hunter education (safety) students throughout North America by program staffs and instructors, in just about every state and Canadian province, as well as in other countries.

By Steve Hall, TX Hunter Education Coordinator

Dreams Come True at the Annual IHEA-USA Heritage Hunt

The "Heritage Hunt," as it has come to be named, is sponsored by the International Hunter Education Association-USA (www.ihea-usa.org), an organization that represents all 50 state programs, and Focus Group, Inc. The lucky winners represent the nearly 55,000 instructors, most of whom are volunteers, and the 650,000+ hunter education students that are trained annually throughout North America. Brad Heidel, IHEA-USA Executive Director, continually reminds people that the goal of his organization is to support state fish and wildlife agencies and their hunter education programs, develop hunter education standards, and to promote the mission “to teach safe, responsible, knowledgeable, and involved hunting and shooting practices.”

Over 27 million students have completed hunter education since the first mandatory program in New York in 1949. The historic program is considered a “rite of passage” for hunters, and has reduced hunting incidents by well over 2/3 since its inception—not to mention improving overall compliance to hunting regulations, and enhancing the behaviors and image of hunters and hunting. Heidel continued, “your hunter education certification has opened the door to a world of wonderful experiences outdoors with friends and family.”

Students and instructors submit a FREE entry form (stitched within Hunter’s Handbook) or enter online at www.huntershandbook.com/enertextowin. They answer a few survey questions about their hunting lifestyle and activities and request entry into the all-expense-paid Heritage Hunt drawing.
"It’s a Dream Come True!"
Hunter Education Instructor
Dorothy “Dotty” Pezzi,
Pompano Beach, FL

“I thought it was a very strange voice message,” said Dorothy “Dotty” Pezzi, 2017 hunter education instructor winner from Florida, “but I saved Brian’s message (Brian Thurston, Focus Group, Inc. president who started the Heritage Hunt) on my phone, because I still can’t believe it!” as she motioned with her phone to listen to his message, “it’s a dream come true!” Dotty teaches with her husband, John, near Fort Lauderdale at an indoor range. With permission from Focus Group, she donated her hunt to her teaching partner and paid her own expenses so she could “tag along” on the Dream Hunt. “He hasn’t got to enjoy such hunts as much as me, and he works hard, so I wanted him to be the Hunter!”

“Watching the Kids Light Up!”
Tim Hixon, Hixon Land & Cattle Ranch, Cotulla, TX

The Hixon Land & Cattle Ranch near Cotulla, Texas, once again hosted the 2017 hunt, something the ranch owners, Tim and Karen Hixon, both former commissioners of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, strongly believe in. “I like watching the kids light up,” said Tim Hixon. Their son, ‘Timo’ Hixon, now four-time host of the Heritage Hunt, and Mrs. Hixon agreed. “We’ve enjoyed it and are happy to be involved in hosting such opportunities. Folks just don’t get enough of these types of experiences!” The Hixons also host many Wounded Warrior Hunts and their favorite, a program Mr. Hixon helped start in Texas, the Texas Youth Hunting Program (tyhp.org). “We’ve hosted lot of hunts over ten years, and hope to keep providing more opportunities for groups that promote safe hunting!”

Mike Hehman, hunt manager, has worked for the Hixons for a decade. He takes real pride in knowing that he and his staff have significantly improved the quality of habitat and deer on the ranch. He addressed the hunters the Friday night before the first big hunt. “It is important to look at deer numbers, age, and genetics when managing the herd— along with continually improving the habitat through various practices.” He added, “I hope each of you have a great time this weekend, but know that you also are helping us with our management goals on the ranch!”
Instructor Michael McDonald from Arlington, WA, practiced hard and brought his own rifle on the hunt. “Wanting to make sure I don’t miss,” he said.

Guide Landon Gulick, Bigfoot, TX, measures the antlers on Michael McDonald’s nice buck. Gulick took score, weight, and age data as part of the Hixon Ranch Wildlife Management Plan—to improve the health and quality of habitat and wildlife on the ranch, including trophy whitetails.

“Special thanks to the Hixon family—Tim, Karen, and Timo; ranch manager Mike Hehman; hunt guides Blake Martin, Eddie Price, Landon Gulick, Doss Summers, and Dale Herrington; Hixon ranch staff Gabe, Trey, Siboney, Andrew “A.J.,” and Biancha Chap; Veronica Martin, Robert Vasquez, and Chef Bubba Laughinghouse; CarecoTV’s videographer, John Doolen; and TPWD’s hunter ed staff, Brock Minton.

Thanks too to the 2017 Heritage Hunt product sponsors including: Birchwood Casey (targets and accessories); Buck Knives (101 Hunter knives); Cabela’s (hunt clothing); CarecoTV (TV production); Federal Premium/Vista Outdoor (ammunition); Hunter’s Handbook (Heritage Hunt); LaCrosse (boots); Lansky (sharpening sets); Milwaukee Tool (heated jackets); Otis (hunting systems/firearm cleaning equipment); Vortex Optics (binoculars); YETI (tumblers); and EZ Gutter (gutting tool).
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THE GOLD STANDARD® 100% MONEY-BACK GUARANTEED!
It might come as a surprise to many in the field of conservation education to hear that the number of individuals participating in state-regulated trapping programs (let’s just call them “trappers”) is increasing while, to the dismay of just about everyone in conservation, hunter numbers continue to decline. Hunters, trappers, and anglers are the “on the ground” conservationists of agencies and it is mostly their license and permit dollars, their survey information, and many of their observations from the field that help agencies manage fish and wildlife. We all know that. But despite the fantastic efforts being put forth to recruit and retain hunters, we are struggling to do it. Surprisingly however, a national survey of trappers conducted by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) found that the number of trappers had actually increased nationwide from 2004 to 2015 by about 20%, with some states seeing as much as a 30% increase. (See the survey results at: www.fishwildlife.org/files/2016_Summary_of_Trapping_Report_Final_Draft.pdf.) This came as a surprise, considering what we know about hunter numbers.

It is encouraging that many states still have folks that are interested in this challenging pursuit. Likely, this number of trappers is influenced by the value of fur pelts, bones, and meat, as well as the growing number of nuisance wildlife. But what we don’t really know is whether this increase is the result of new folks taking up trapping, or folks who had dropped out and are coming back. Either way, the number is up and we need to educate these trappers, whether they are new trappers taking on a new outdoor pursuit or old trappers coming back—a lot has changed with traps and trapping techniques. No matter who sets it, one trap set in the wrong place can cause agencies problems that most would rather avoid.

About 180,000 trapping licenses were sold during 2014, up from about 150,000 in 2004. The folks who buy these licenses are similar to hunters: most are male, middle aged, and Caucasian, and they trap for some of the same reasons hunters hunt.

But what do we know about trapper education? Just as the increase in trapper numbers is surprising, some of what we know about trapper education might come as a surprise as well. In the survey mentioned above, AFWA asked state agencies about trapping regulations and trapper education programs. What we found is that about 70% of states have a trapper education program, with about 50% of those programs being administered by the state agency and the other 50% administered by a state/local trapper association. It is a great partnership between state agencies and local trapper associations to offer trapper education.
We also found that trapper education is mandatory in 60% of states. Most of these states that require trapper education require it of first-time trappers, but some states require it of all trappers. While trapping is among the most technique-driven method of harvests that states regulate, 61% of current trappers report they have not taken a trapper education course. We also have learned that trapper education participation rates vary across the country, with the highest (79%) of trappers in the Northeast having taken trapper education, and lowest rates of participation in the South (20%).

As we all know, that differs significantly from hunter education numbers. And we also know that hunter education has made hunting safer and better for everybody involved. Wouldn’t the same happen for trapping?

One of the things AFWA has done to try and make it even easier for states to provide trapper education is the development of the North American Trapper Education Program. This program was developed in conjunction with the IHEA-USA, national trapper associations, and wildlife professionals. Part of the goal of the AFWA’s trapper education program is to make it easy for agencies to provide trapper education and to standardize trapper education across the country, similar to what has been done with hunter education, and make trapping better for everyone. While trapping laws and regulations certainly vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, many things are the same: ethics, trap types, setting techniques, use of baits and lures, etc. The North American Trapper Education Program has content-based chapters with each chapter having a particular learning objective(s). Ethics are stressed throughout. There is even a trapper education booklet that agencies are free to print and modify to meet their particular needs. The course is also available online at www.conservationlearning.org and it is absolutely free. Well, it’s free for users. AFWA foots the bill to host the site that manages the program, but the program is totally free to anyone. Some states have even modified this online course to create a state-specific course. We encourage states to do that as well, and we at AFWA are willing to work with states to make that happen.

So, part of my simple goal in writing this article is to encourage every state that has a regulated trapping program to make sure that your hunter, trapper, and outdoor education instructors know about the AFWA National Trapper Education Program. If hunter education has improved hunting, trapper education should improve trapping…oh, and we have been working on that in many other ways too. (See our ad about BMPs in this edition of the IHEA-USA Journal).

If you are involved with hunter, trapper, or other outdoor education in your state, please consider utilizing this resource. To date, it has been underutilized, but there are a growing number of trappers out there who could benefit from the lessons it teaches. Agencies themselves could benefit from the lessons it teaches as well, because one trap set in the wrong place can create a lot of headaches for managers and administrators alike. And ideally, with the use of this program, trapping can continue to be improved as an important part of modern wildlife management. For more information on the AFWA North American Trapper Education Program, contact Bryant White at bwhite@fishwildlife.org.

SAVE THE DATE

2018 IHEA-USA Annual Conference
June 25th-28th, 2018
Anchorage, Alaska

Join us for a fun-filled week of networking, learning, and exploring the world of hunter education.
Scheduled conference highlights include:

• Keynote Speaker Dallas Seavey-4-time Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race winner, lifelong outdoorsman, motivational speaker
• Conservation Day activities at the Rabbit Creek Shooting Park and the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
• IHEA-USA Region meetings
• Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game staff presentations on topics including subsistence hunting, Dall sheep research and hunting, and small game hunting used as a recruitment tool
• Richard Lynch-presentations on volunteer management, customer service, and positive attitudes
• A taste of Alaska’s abundant resources-salmon, halibut, reindeer...

Dallas Seavey
My name is Brent Buech, and I am an Iowa Hunter Safety Instructor. I would like to share a story from this past spring in the turkey woods with you.

A few years ago, a close friend and an experienced outdoorsman, Tanner Dell, and I decided to start introducing youth, who were interested, to the sport of turkey hunting. This past year we decided to take Ty, a young man from my church. Ty also participates in YHEC, Youth Hunter Education Challenge, in which he excelled in the previous summer. YHEC teaches youngsters how to be a safe and successful hunter, so I knew that I had picked the right person to take on the hunt.

In the weeks prior to the season opener, I would go on early-morning scouting trips. I would continually drive past a public hunting area, and each time I noticed turkeys feeding in the field south of the timber. After discussing the option with Ty and Tanner, we decided that would be the spot to hunt opening morning. With the season quickly approaching, we had to familiarize Ty with the gun and red dot sight, so out came the paper targets. By having a practice shooting session on the farm, we were able to decide on an effective shooting range, safe shooting zones, and other things that Ty remembered from the Hunter’s Safety Course.

Before we knew it, the alarm went off on April 8th. While eating a donut and driving to the parking lot, we discussed shooting hours and when it was appropriate to wear blaze orange, which is walking to and from the hunting spot. During the walk from the parking lot to our hunting spot, we encountered a steep banked creek. This turned out to be a teaching opportunity. We were able to show Ty how to cross the creek in the safest way possible by handing the unloaded gun across the creek, similar to a fence crossing situation. These types of teaching while in the field are ones that he will always remember. I say this because some of the lessons that are taught in the classroom can be forgotten in the field due to the excitement of the hunt.

Shortly after crossing the creek, we arrived at our spot on the edge of the food plot that still had standing corn in it and was located to the north of the timber. After putting out two hen decoys and one three-quarter strut jake decoy fifteen yards from the spot, we were ready for the Toms to appear. Just before the sun popped up over the horizon, we heard our first gobble. This made our sleepy hunter perk up, to say the least. Our first visitor of the morning was a raccoon that made his way from the timber to the standing corn.

The next thing to do was some calling. By doing some yelps on the diaphragm call, and some cuts and purrs, Ty got to learn many calling techniques. Shortly after letting out the calls, we had an encounter with a group of hen turkeys. This made all of us excited including Tanner, who was being our camera man. Then, to our left appeared three beautiful strutters on top of the hill in the food plot. With a couple more mouth call cuts, we had one of those strutters on a string. Before I knew it, that big old bird was twenty yards in front of us, and Ty made the camouflage Mossberg bark. As the tom continued to do the flop, Ty handed me the gun and retrieved his bird with a smile on his face. After showing off the gobbler to the camera, we had it tagged and were leaving with a bird in hand and orange hats on our heads.

On the drive home that day, I realized how important and fun it is to take a youth hunter on a hunting trip. I know I will be continuing to take youth on hunting trips, and I hope I have encouraged you to do the same.

That concludes my springtime story, and remember, if you have the chance to take a child hunting, please do so and make it a learning experience.
THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM STARTS INDOORS

Hunters learn something every time they go afield, yet their foundation as safety-conscious, ethical hunters likely begins in your classroom. The knowledge they gain from dedicated volunteer hunter education instructors like you sticks with them for a lifetime and also helps them mentor new hunters.

Through its printed and digital materials, the National Shooting Sports Foundation has been assisting volunteer instructors with teaching students about firearms safety, ethical hunting and conservation for decades. We can help with your mission.

Visit NSSF.org to order materials today.
This is the third and final installment honoring 2017 Gallery of Guns Champions of Hunter Education. Each year, Gallery of Guns recognizes the outstanding efforts of dedicated hunter education instructors.

Though only six are chosen for the award each year, there are many many more deserving of recognition and our thanks for the thousands of hours they volunteer to teach hunting safety, ethics, and the myriad of things that go into perpetuating our hunting traditions.

Each of our Gallery of Guns Champions of Hunter Education winners will receive a 270-caliber Ruger American Rifle from GalleryofGuns.com.

Bill Bennett, director of marketing for Davidson’s and GalleryofGuns.com, said they are honored each year to recognize the Champions of Hunter Education, who assure our hunting heritage is passed to other generations.

“Without IHEA instructors, the heritage of hunting could be jeopardized,” Bennett said. “Hunter education is such an important part of developing ethical and responsible hunters for future generations.”

Here then are Champions of Hunter Education.

Leonard C. Hart Jr. Stafford, Virginia

“Leonard Hart is a tireless and innovative hunter education instructor who is dedicated to safe and ethical hunting. He is especially devoted to introducing young folks and women to hunting and other outdoor activities,” said James M. Clarke in nominating Hart for this award.

Hart became a hunter ed instructor in August of 2005 and by the end of 2016 had logged 3,396 hours of volunteered service, averaging more than 300 hours per year in a little more than 11 years, said Clarke, a fellow hunter ed instructor on Hart’s team. In that time, Clarke said Hart has trained 3,734 students.

For his part, Hart said he became a hunter ed instructor because “I wanted to give back to the hunting community and do whatever I could to make sure hunting is around for future generations and help introduce others to this great experience.”

Hart, a senior systems analyst for Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., said he is able to balance his passion for hunter education and work because of his employer. “I am lucky to work for a company that offers vacation days allowing me to take time off for hunter education and other activities dealing with this sport,” he said. “The more important question is ‘balancing family life and hunter education.’ I’m very blessed to have a spouse who understands how important this is to me while supporting me in doing this.”

Hart is a Virginia Master hunter education instructor and is also a charter and life member of the Virginia Hunter Education Association. He’s also a certified International Bowhunter...
Education Program, Treestand Safety and NRA instructor.

Hunter education has numerous important impacts on students, Hart said, including “getting them outside to enjoy the wonderful outdoors, learning how to do things the right way, learning self-confidence, introducing them to this wonderful sport, and helping like-minded people.

But Hart also trains the trainers, including Clarke, who Hart recruited four years ago. “I can attest that he is an aggressive and compelling hunter ed instructor recruiter,” Clarke said. “He coordinates hunter ed activities in three counties and on Quantico Marine Corps Base. He has developed an impressive group of 38 hunter education instructors. Leonard is a key trainer of other instructors.”

But that is not all. Hart also, in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, heads the Advanced Training Rifle and Pistol Team that trains other instructors. Hart was also asked to be on a select group tasked with developing a new Advanced Training Teaching Skills curriculum for volunteer instructors. “As an information technology professional, Leonard was instrumental in creating innovative slide presentations for these courses,” Clarke said. The courses are considered so important that completion of the Teaching Skills set now constitutes one of two options for advanced courses required to become a master hunter ed instructor in Virginia, Clarke said.

Hart also leads Hunter Skills Weekends each year to introduce families to various aspects of hunting and puts together a team of instructors to help run an air rifle competition at a Baptist Church Wild Game Dinner and Outdoor Activities Day, which annually draws more than 600 participants. Since 2009, Hart has helped run the range at the Virginia National Archery in the Schools Program State Championship and helped with the International Bowhunting Organization event. He also helps run the annual Virginia Hunter Education Challenge, in which middle- and high-school students across the state compete in rifle, shotgun, archery, and outdoor skills.

He is also lead instructor at his Izaak Walton League of America chapter and organized an Outdoor Skills Day for families. He also helps organize the annual Friends of the NRA Banquet.

Hart keeps a personal connection with his students as shown by his reaction when, after a 2016 IBEP bowhunting education course, he was approached by a 15-year-old student with his single-parent mother, who asked about hunting on the Quantico base. Hunters must be 18 to hunt alone on the base, so Hart agreed to be his sponsor and took him on seven hunting trips this past season. Ever the recruiter, Hart is mentoring the student as a junior hunter education instructor.

So why do all this? What does Hart want his students to learn? “Safety, ethics, and that the biggest joy of hunting is not the trophy but enjoying the outdoors and knowing there are people out there to help them,” he said.
James Davis

Since becoming a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department certified hunter education instructor in 1995 and bowhunter education instructor in 2006, James Davis has certified 3,113 students in hunter education; certified 31 new hunter ed instructors; attended 87 instructor workshops; taught more than 2,020 hours in the hunter ed program; and, in 2009, was inducted into the Texas Hunter Education Hall of Fame.

“While working full-time (Davis) was able to rearrange his work schedule any time he was asked to volunteer and provide a service to the community through hunter and bowhunter education classes, outreach events, and workshop opportunities,” said Texas Hunter Education Program Administrator Steve Hall in nominating Davis.

Davis offers monthly classes and teaches multiple times during the busy fall season, Hall said, and he became a Hunter Education Area Chief Instructor in 2004, and a Bowhunter Education Area Chief Instructor in 2016, so he can train new hunter and bowhunter education instructors.

When Davis retired from the Pipefitters Local Union 211 in 2002, “he quickly transitioned to a full-time volunteer,” Hall said.

Being retired makes it “easy” to balance his volunteerism, Davis said, and when asked why he dedicates so much to it, he replied, “I enjoy teaching the kids.”

Hall said Davis began teaching at the largest blackpowder store and shooting range in Texas, introducing students to muzzleloading by offering tours of the facility during breaks, and teaching students during live firing exercises. When that facility closed, Davis “immediately visited local community centers and city facilities to develop new partnerships so he could continue teaching hunter and bowhunter education classes,” Hall said.

Davis began teaching at different city buildings and brought awareness of hunter and bowhunter education programs through education and “an extremely professional representation of TPWD,” Hall said. “Because of his professional demeanor and the reputation he builds, he is able to open doors for other programs to utilize these same facilities, including the TPWD boater education and angler education programs.”

Davis has also volunteered for the NRA Youth Hunter Education Challenge and travels across Texas recruiting youths and instructors, and works with facilities and shooting ranges to host local, regional, and state competitions. He also helps secure scholarships so top young competitors can attend national competitions.

In return, Davis hopes his students learn “how to be safe, respect their firearm, and everyone around them.”

And when asked why hunter education is important to him, Davis said he wants to “ensure hunting is carried on to our young in a safe, fun, and respectful manner. I really love what I do.”

He is also an active member of the Texas Hunter Education Instructor Association and for the past 10 years has worked with SCI-Houston and the Houston Safari Club to offer a hunter-education class, which has grown so successfully that two classes are now offered each year.

“James is always first to step up and volunteer with large events and expos such as TPWD’s week-long involvement during the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo,” Hall said. And Davis works at many other large outdoor expos, promoting hunter and bowhunter education and recruiting instructors as he goes; and he’s been involved with Take Me Outdoors Houston as an active participant at workshops.

“His main motivation,” Hall said, “is to better educate himself so he can pass along the knowledge and newly-acquired skills to his students.”

“Each time I place a call-out to volunteers for assistance with any event, ranging from an expo to a wildlife presentation to a hands-on shooting experience, James is always the very first volunteer to sign up,” Hall said. “He has never let me down on a short notice when I am in a pinch for volunteers. He has an impeccable record with the public and is admired by other instructors for his dedication and service. I receive calls to request James, specifically, to teach a class or coordinate an event.

“Even when he is recovering from health issues or, recently, a few broken bones, nothing slows him down from getting the volunteering job done. He is a man of his word and James is someone I can consistently rely upon to exceed expectations and continue the hunting heritage.”

Hunter education is important to students, Davis said, because it “teaches them safety and respect for wildlife and the environment.”

In return, Davis hopes his students learn “how to be safe, respect their firearm, and everyone around them.”

And when asked why hunter education is important to him, Davis said he wants to “ensure hunting is carried on to our young in a safe, fun, and respectful manner. I really love what I do.”
IF YOU’RE NOT FIRST YOU’RE LAST
WEATHERBY - THE FASTEST ON THE PLANET
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NOTHING SHOOTS FLATTER, HITS HARDER, OR IS MORE ACCURATE
Let’s Talk About Your Moose Garden

By Jeff Anderson, Colorado Hunter Education Instructor

Today we don’t hunt, trap, or fish, we...harvest! What does that mean? When I was young and went hunting, trapping, and fishing, I took along something—gun, traps, rod and reel, that would hopefully kill an animal. I did not bring along a spade or a rake. My aim was to kill it, take its life away, not pull it out of the ground. To read the hunting and fishing literature today is like reading a garden magazine. —John W. Laundré

We know as hunters—a minority in our society—that it is important to pay attention to our image, to be mindful of how non-hunters view us as a whole. It’s not always easy to reconcile this, though, because we are also a group that largely rejects and finds silly the notion of political correctness.

One aspect of what we do as hunters that has been watered down increasingly over the years is that, when we are successful, we take a life. We kill. I kill. While it is essential that we each individually and introspectively face and accept this fact, it isn’t necessarily an easy thing to say. And so we euphemize. Instead of acknowledging that I killed and bearing that accountability, whether emotional or psychological or social or whatever, we may find it easier to use different words. There are commonly-used substitutes that reveal a callus and almost disdainful attitude toward the creature’s life: blasted, hammered, wasted, whacked, smoked...the euphemism I hear most often, though, is harvest.

Late last year I asked a question on a hunting group’s Facebook page about what terminology members of that group use. The responses were varied, and despite my hope that a trend would emerge, it seems that no one expression is greatly preferred.

I confess that the use of the word harvest in this context is a pet peeve of mine. It too readily dilutes what we really do, too easily cleanses our hands of the blood of an animal that we did, in fact, kill. Even when for valid reasons we opt not to be so blunt about it, we can still choose better words. In response to a question about how a hunt went, for example, I might say I filled my tag, or I shot an elk, or I got a nice deer, or I took a cow (although for many of us it would be more truthful to use the word missed in these replies). To call killing “harvesting” sounds even more inane if it’s part of a question. Modify the age-old query to “Did you harvest your deer?” and you’re gonna get looked at funny. That just doesn’t sound right.

I can’t condemn the term across the board, though. When Wildlife Managers, biologists, rangers, or others whom we have charged with the task of managing our wildlife are doing their job, they rightfully view animal species in terms of herds or populations and pay close attention to things like habitat, carrying capacity, and so forth. Their aim is to ensure that the right numbers of animals can be found in the right places and that they are healthy. In this macro view, wildlife is, in fact, a resource to be balanced and managed, and the concept of hunter harvest as a measurement—as a management tool—as a measurement—is appropriate. It makes sense to talk about “last year’s elk harvest” in the context of how much the overall elk population decreased due to hunter activity. If you say that you want to tell me about the moose you harvested last year though, I may wonder where you found a moose garden.
Browning has introduced a rifle that many are calling a “semi-custom production rifle.” What gives the X-Bolt Pro this classification is the level of specialized finishing touches and higher-end construction that is above the already top-tier X-Bolt family of hunting rifles.

The new Browning X-Bolt Pro has many features that set it apart from the average production rifle. Most notably, the stock is a second-generation design that is constructed using a full 360° carbon fiber wrap with a compressed foam core. The stock is extremely lightweight, rigid, and includes textured gripping panels, a palm swell and is coated with Cerakote Burnt Bronze finish for added protection.

The receiver of the rifle is corrosion-resistant stainless steel with the durable Cerakote Burnt Bronze finish applied. It has glass bedded into the stock for accuracy and is drilled and tapped for the solid X-Lock scope mounts.

The fluted barrel of the X-Bolt Pro is a lightweight sporter contour and features a new proprietary lapping process that provides consistent, superior accuracy, reduced fouling, and easier bore cleaning. The barrel lapping also allows customers to avoid the need for a time-consuming break-in process. The muzzle of the barrel is threaded to accept the included muzzle brake or thread protector cap. This rifle is ready to go, right from the box.

Other Features:
- Feather trigger
- Free-floated barrel
- Bolt unlock button
- 60° bolt lift
- Rotary magazine
- Tang safety
- Inflex recoil pad
- Sling swivel studs

For more information on Browning products, please visit their website at www.browning.com.

**New Products: Browning Steps up the Game with the New X-Bolt Pro Rifle**

The X-Bolt Pro has a classy looking spiral fluted bolt and enlarged fluted bolt knob that aids in sure operation. Like the stock, the barrel, bolt, and bolt handle are coated with the Cerakote Burnt Bronze finish that looks great and mutes the color of the gun for better concealability from keen eyes.
Why We Need to Teach Children to Hunt

By Dr. John Huber

The outdoor industry advocates for outreach, especially to the next generation. We all take it as accepted wisdom that teaching outdoor skills is beneficial, but that’s not a concept easily accepted by some. If you’ve never experienced a sunrise from a blind or watched the sun sink under the horizon while you’re working to get in just one more good cast, it’s something hard to imagine.

In fact, many of us have a hard time actually verbalizing why teaching outdoor skills—especially hunting—are beneficial. To that end, Clinical Forensic Psychologist Dr. John Huber is more than willing to offer six reasons why it’s beneficial to teach children to hunt.

Gun Safety
Knowing how to safely shoot and handle firearms is an essential skill for people to learn. By teaching your children to hunt, you’ll be teaching them skills that will teach them to respect guns, not fear them.

Gaining Confidence
Learning about wild game, their patterns and habits (natural science), taking that knowledge, applying it, adding shooting skills and patience, all the things that must come together to get that first buck. That amount of empowerment and accomplishment is not easily duplicated. Teaching life skills about preparation, hard work, and determination.

Responsibility
Hunting teaches respect for laws as they gain knowledge about game and land management. Establishing a strong character to make a good citizen. I will never forget watching my 11-year old daughter watching a beautiful 14-point buck walk within 40 feet of her as she watched that buck through her night scope. Listening to her ask if she could take the shot, then watching her just focus on that animal as it walked away. It was still before first light and I told her that she had to wait. She watched as it finally disappeared into the brush some 350 yards away, still too early to shoot. Teaching etiquette and sportsmanship can pay big dividends later in life.

Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle
Getting outdoors, away from the Internet, hiking through the woods in 20-degree weather with frost on the ground hours before daylight is not for the faint of heart. Experience that will teach our children they can overcome many obstacles in life. It definitely gives a reason to get off the couch if you know that in a few months you will be on the game trail.

Parent/Child Bonding
The bonding experience between a parent and their child as they take on a task that few in modern times will learn. The attachment and mutual respect that can only come from an experience such as hunting. Creating memories and traditions that will be shared and explored for generations.

Teaching Conservation Hands-On
Understanding the circle of life, how nature works without a textbook. There is nothing like watching a fawn and its mother in an open field looking out for predators, then watching that fawn year after year grow and develop, eventually having offspring of its own.

About Dr. John Huber
Texas-based Dr. John Huber (www.mainstreammentalhealth.org) is the chairman for Mainstream Mental Health, a non-profit organization that brings lasting and positive change to the lives of individuals that suffer from mental health issues. A mental health professional for over twenty years, Dr. Huber is a Clinical Forensic Psychologist, and he is a practitioner with privileges at two long-term acute care hospitals. In addition, Dr. John Huber is a professor and teaches undergraduate and graduate psychology at Texas State University.
Lesson Learned—Back to the Basics

By Keith Byers, Hunting and Shooting Related Consultants LLC

Not long ago I was asked to do a short Firearm Safety/Hunter Education program for my church’s youth. We had a tragedy happen in our community when a small child came in contact with a firearm and shot themselves by accident, resulting in death. My pastor approached me and asked would I be willing to speak with our youth about firearm safety. Of course I agreed and began to think about what I needed to cover in the one-hour allotted time I was given during their Vacation Bible School time.

Over the course of a two-week period, I thought about what I needed to cover in the short class. I have been a Hunter Education Instructor and have instructed hundreds of classes during my 31 years as a Conservation Ranger (Game Warden) in the state of Georgia, so I was very familiar with all aspects of firearm and hunter safety. After a great amount of thought I knew I wanted to make the greatest impact I could on these young minds. With only an hour of time, I came up with the idea that it was probably best to go back to the Basics. The Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety!

After I got my class materials and props set up, my first question to the class was, “How many people in here has shot a firearm?” Everyone raised his or her hand. My second question was, “What do you think is the most important firearm safety rule?” The answers were, “Keep the safety on, keep your finger off the trigger, keep the gun unloaded, and a few others. At that point I came to the realization that while all these answers were good, they were not exactly what I was looking for.

A few days after the class I began thinking about how the class went, and I wondered how many hunters out there also have gotten away from the Basics of Firearm Safety when hunting. In our classes we teach these rules to new hunters, but we also need to look for opportunities to remind experienced hunters about the basics they may not have thought about for years. How many out there don’t think about, ignore, or have forgotten about the Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety and what they mean? There are evidently a few, because we still have hunting incidents/accidents in every state each year. Most of these incidents/accidents could have been prevented if the hunter would have practiced the rules in the Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety.

Treat every firearm with the respect due a loaded gun.

It might be loaded, even if you think it isn’t.

When you think about this, this is only common sense. If you treat every firearm as if it were loaded, whether it’s loaded or not, you are committing yourself to being the best at handling a firearm. How many times have we heard the story about the person that got shot or someone doing the shooting with an “unloaded firearm,” only to make the statement later, “I didn’t know it was loaded.” I once watched a police officer pick up a .357-caliber revolver that he stated was not loaded. He was thinking about purchasing the firearm and he placed it inches from his face as he slowly squeezed the trigger while watching the gap between the cylinder and the forcing cone. Luckily we were outside and he had the barrel pointed up when the firearm went “boom!”

Be sure of the target and what is in front of it and beyond it.

Know the identifying features of the game you hunt.

Make sure you have an adequate backstop—don’t shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.

A violation of this rule can be devastating. When you have a hunter taking aim on another hunter or outdoor person, the results are usually tragic. It is imperative that all hunters completely identify their target before they squeeze over the muzzle of your firearm, you have control over your firearm and where it shoots. Even if it happens to discharge accidentally, if you always maintain control of the muzzle, you are still in control of what direction the projectile will travel from the barrel.

Watch that muzzle! Keep it pointed in a safe direction at all times.

This is the most important of all the Commandments. If you have control
the trigger. They can’t be 99.9% sure—they must be 100% sure that is a deer or turkey or whatever game animal they are hunting. If you are hunting upland game and you lose sight of your hunting partners, a quail or pheasant is not worth the risk of possibly shooting someone. Moral of the story: if in any doubt at all, do not shoot!

Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot. This is the best way to prevent an accidental discharge.

Bottom line, keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot. That way if you trip or stumble while carrying your firearm, you will not pull the trigger accidently.

Check your barrel and ammunition. Make sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions and carry only the proper ammunition for your firearm.

Even a partial obstruction in the barrel of a firearm can cause an explosion. Always keep your firearms clean, especially the barrel and action. Inspect and clean your firearms after each use. Always use the proper caliber or gauge ammunition—that’s why the gun manufacturers stamp it on the barrel. Just so you will know!

Unload firearms when not in use. Leave actions open; carry firearms in cases and unloaded to and from the shooting area.

It always amazed me, the vehicles that I used to stop when I worked as a Game Warden, and the individuals that transported loaded firearms. I remember one night getting into a high-speed chase with a vehicle where the persons inside were night-hunting deer. About a mile into the chase, the vehicle abruptly stopped. My partner and I ordered two males and two females out of the vehicle. I noted the females were crying. After searching the vehicle, we found why they stopped and why the females were crying. The .30-06 caliber rifle they were using fired accidentally inside the cab of the truck. The bullet had traveled through the floor and punctured the right front tire. Moral of the story, don’t carry a loaded firearm in your vehicle and don’t do stupid stuff.

Point a firearm only at something you intend to shoot. Avoid all horseplay with a gun.

This, my fellow hunters and firearm owners, is a no-brainer! When you pick up a firearm, you have the power of life and death in your hands. This is not to be taken lightly. You don’t play around with firearms and you only point it at a target or the game you intend on taking. I cringe at the thought of how many times I as a Game Warden was probably looked at through the scope of someone’s firearm. Not to take a shot at me but to identify who I was, or better said, to confirm who I was. Each time you use your scope as a set of binoculars to identify something you have seen is dangerous. If it turns out to be human, you just pointed a loaded firearm at someone. Tip: go buy and use a set of binoculars!

Don’t run, jump, or climb with a loaded firearm. Unload a firearm before you climb a fence or tree, or jump a ditch. Pull a firearm toward you by the butt, not the muzzle.

Always unload your firearm and make it safe if you see yourself getting into a hazardous situation. It has always amazed me the number of hunters out there that when they get out of their vehicle in the morning to go deer hunting, this is usually before daylight, if their firearm is not already loaded they will load it before going to their stand. If their firearm will hold 30 rounds of ammunition, they will load with all 30 rounds including putting one in the chamber. My question has always been: Why? You are about to go walking in the woods, in the dark. You can’t shoot anything along the way because it is dark. However, thousands of hunters every season still stumble through the woods in the dark with a loaded firearm, creating a very unsafe situation. I have posed the question to Hunter Education classes over the years and have received several interesting answers such as Sasquatch, ghosts, boogers, bears, hogs, and the plain “I am just scared of the dark.”

Store firearms and ammunition separately and safely. Store each in secured locations beyond the reach of children and careless adults.

This is a very good rule, especially if you have small children around and those careless adults that do not need to be around firearms. It is also a good idea that everyone that knows how to handle a firearm needs to be able to pick up those firearms that are in your house to check it and see if it is loaded, and also to be able to unload it and make it safe. Encourage non-hunters to attend one of your classes so they will understand all these rules and feel safer in a hunting household.

Avoid alcoholic beverages before or during shooting. Also avoid mind- or behavior-altering medicines or drugs.

Hunting and shooting requires a quick and clear mind. We usually think of illegal drugs when the word drug is used. But this means all drugs. Even those you have a prescription for or over-the-counter medications that are capable of affecting your ability to make a quick, clear decision. If you are sick enough to be on these types of medications, you’re probably better off not participating in either hunting or shooting.

We have just gone through the Ten Commandments of Firearms Safety. This is the backbone of the Hunter Education and Firearm Safety programs. When it comes down to it, it is getting back to the Basics. If you as a hunter or firearm owner live by and practice these rules, gun and hunting incidents/accidents will become a thing of the past.
Instructor Discount Corner

Huntego CleanShot

Discount for instructors on CleanShot, the first “shoot-through” bore-cleaning device.

Discounts are now available for hunter education instructors from Huntego CleanShot on their high-velocity, highly effective bore-cleaning device that field cleans your gun’s bore in an instant.

“A clean gun is a safe gun,” said founder and CEO Curt Whitworth. “Safe and responsible hunting is the framework of our hunting heritage. We are delighted to support the tireless efforts of volunteer instructors throughout the hunter education system.”

The first-of-its-kind patented technology power scrubs, traps particles, and wipes your bore clean with the firing of a CleanShot round—the only product that can make that claim. Simply load a CleanShot cartridge and safely fire at the range or in the field—removing fouling, plastics, and other contaminants in less than a second.

Manufactured with the same processes and standards as current ammunition, CleanShot is currently available in 12-gauge, though Huntego plans to release 20- and 28-gauge and 410-bore. They are also developing loads in 9mm and 5.56. CleanShot’s commitment to the invention and innovation of gun bore cleaning solutions is changing the game forever.

Hunter education instructors can get the CleanShot discount by visiting https://huntegoltd.com/ and using the discount code IHEA1718 at checkout.

Walker’s

Walker’s, maker of famous hearing-protection products, knows using ear protection while hunting in the field is just as important as it is on a shooting range, and in an effort to prevent irreversible hearing loss, they’re working to get the word out through the IHEA-USA.

In addition to sponsoring this Winter issue of the Journal, GSM offers hunter education instructors generous discounts on their products. Instructors may not realize the lifelong impact they have on students when they teach proper ear protection and are in the prime position to emphasize the importance of it.

“Most hunters wear hearing protection while sighting-in guns, but not when they are hunting,” said Ben X. Smith of GSM Outdoors. “It might be because they feel only taking one shot won’t have any impact on their hearing, but continued exposure to muzzle blast year after year (especially hunting in an enclosed blind) can really do irreversible damage.”

There are better choices than ear plugs or muffs that just block all sound. Hearing commands and conversation at a shooting range improves the safety and enjoyment of the experience. The ability to hear while hunting in the field is essential for safety as well as successful hunting. Walker’s offers electronic products that deliver crisp, clear sound, but instantly compress loud noises such as gun shots, to prevent hearing damage.

Two excellent choices from Walkers are the Silencer Ear Buds and Razor Patriot Slim Electronic Muffs. For more information on these and other hearing protection products, visit online at gsmoutdoors.com/walkers. While there, check out other great GSM Outdoors products for hunters.

For more information go to: www.ihea-usa.com/instructors/special-offers-for-instructors

Instructor Access for IHEA-USA Website

Hunter Education Instructors have the opportunity to purchase many items at a discounted rate on the "Special Offers" section of the IHEA-USA website! For your exclusive access go to: www.ihea-usa.com/instructors/special-offers-for-instructors. Just click on the company hyperlink you are interested in and, when prompted, enter "gohunt" as your password. The password has no space and is all lowercase.

Purchase these fine products and more!

www.IHEA-USA.org
IHEA-Mexico Celebrates 10 Years

By María I. Araujo, International Affairs Director, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

IHEA-Mexico celebrated its 10th anniversary in Morelia, Mexico, and the Texas Hunter Education Program recognized Edgar Wenzel, IHEA-Mexico president and founding member, for his leadership through 10 years of growth. “Edgar was one of 22 participants in the Hunter Education training we held in 2007 at Chaparral Wildlife Management Area, Artesia Wells, Texas, to share the IHEA standards with FEMECA, Mexico’s Hunting Federation,” said Steve Hall, Texas Hunter Education Coordinator. “In addition, Edgar was instrumental in creating IHEA-World and serves as the organization’s vice president.”

Patty Wenzel opened the conference sessions with a presentation that demonstrated the interactive and participatory approach we need in hunter education classes to create the best learning environment for students. Instructor manual highlights were reviewed and IHEA-Mexico founding members were recognized. Terry Erwin, retired Texas Hunter Education Coordinator, was recognized as IHEA-Mexico’s mentor for coordinating IHEA training with Mexico. Hubert Thummner, Mexico’s Hunting Federation (FEMECA), and Maria Araujo, Texas Parks and Wildlife, were remembered for hatching the FEMECA-IHEA partnership idea during a panel discussion at the 2007 SCI convention.

David Montoya and Jorge Villarreal led in the number of students certified this past year and received hunting knives that Kalkomey Enterprises sponsored for the top instructors. Villarreal, founding member and secretary of IHEA-Mexico, has certified 3,940 students, the highest number of any instructor in Mexico. Villarreal also helps communities develop wildlife management plans and organize patrols for wildlife law enforcement. “This multi-prong approach helps us move communities from subsistence hunting to sustainable use,” said Villarreal, manager of the Nuevo Leon Flora and Fauna Advisory Council.

The hunter education course in Mexico is free for children and women, and instructors like Manuel Marco, Club Safari México, offer free classes to people of limited resources. Involving mothers in the classes is a priority for the chapter as a strategy to recruit the entire family, not just a father and son.

IHEA-Mexico is the leading force to fight efforts to ban hunting in Mexico, including a bill introduced in the senate. “Poaching is the anti-hunters’ favorite justification for their opposition,” said Wenzel, “so we are educating people on the difference between poaching and hunting, and on ethics, laws, and field skills so they can proudly join our hunting community.” Other Latin American countries face similar anti-hunting attitudes and Wenzel has offered to train hunter education instructors in their respective countries to help build a hunting constituency throughout the region.

Since 2011, Texas and Mexico have held joint advanced workshops for instructors, thanks to a proposal by Omar Treviño, IHEA-Mexico founding member and vice president and Club Cazadores Monterrey Hunting Commission president. This year’s workshop topic was the management of Chihuahuan Desert Big Game and next year’s is waterfowl hunting. “We named Omar our honorary Texas Area Chief in Mexico for coordinating Mexico’s participation in the joint workshop,” said Hall. “Our Texas Hunter Education Instructor Association also made him a lifetime member.”

In addition to Kalkomey, IHEA-Mexico would like to thank Cabela’s, Duck Unlimited, SCI, SCI-Austin, Texas Youth Hunting Program, and Texas Hunter Education Program for their support. IHEA-Mexico’s next conference will be held in Guadalajara, Jalisco.
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