



GEORGIA WILDLIFE  
FEDERATION®

# Press Release

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## **FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN A TARGET SHOOTING CLASS**

**Fort Valley, GA** – The Academics Afield Program, operated by Georgia Wildlife Federation, hosted its first event for Fort Valley State University students. Public Health students and a faculty member, Dr. Oreta Samples, engaged in a firearm training day on Friday, March 24th. Ben Grizzle with Quail Forever also joined the event to educate the students on firearm training and shooting skills. Earlier in the week, the students were educated on firearm safety in preparation for the hands-on experience. The training was held at the Ocmulgee WMA Shooting Range run by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Hosting the firearm training at a WMA served as an opportunity to introduce the students to local resources they could utilize to continue their shooting sports journey.



Students test to see which eye is dominant.

The Academics Afield is a collegiate learn-to-hunt program that works to remove barriers that may prevent individuals from target shooting and hunting while providing training and opportunities to gain experience in both. The program is currently established at five colleges in Georgia and many more throughout the United States.

“For many of the participants, this was their first time ever holding a firearm. They reviewed the cardinal rules of safety and by the end of the day made improvements on their stance and aim” said Coral Minchey with the Georgia Wildlife Federation. “The success of the event lays in the hands of the students and these students made it a great experience.”

With a recent decline in active hunters, there has been a decrease in funds available for conservation. Learn-to-hunt programs, like Academics Afield, enable non-hunters to get the training and support necessary to become a hunter. Creating new hunters increases the number of licenses and ammunition purchased contributing to the funds available to the state for wildlife management. College students are excellent candidates for this programming because their recreation levels peak and they desire to try new hobbies. College students also have financial flexibility, and they begin to build their lifelong identity.

Academics Afield programming is supported by the GA R3 Initiative; National Shooting Sports Foundation; Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund and grant #F22AP00937 from the Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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**About Georgia Wildlife Federation**

Georgia Wildlife Federation was founded as a sportsman's organization in 1936 and is Georgia's oldest conservation organization. Today, members include hunters, anglers, bird watchers, hikers, educators, and all Georgians who are interested in preserving our natural resources and outdoor heritage.