



GEORGIA WILDLIFE
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Press Release

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ACADEMICS AFIELD IN STATESBORO *A Hunting Community Courtesy of NWTF Georgia*

Statesboro, GA – Academics Afield is a learn-to-hunt program led by Georgia Wildlife Federation, supported by the Georgia R3 Initiative and the Georgia Southern University Shooting Sports Education Center, aimed at engaging college students in hunting and the shooting sports. With the tagline “A collegiate hunting community,” the goal is not to take the students out once and be done, but to build a community of individuals that can continue to support each other along their hunting journey.



Who became part of this community for Georgia Southern students? The GA State Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation. NWTF GA made the 2023-2024 programming for Academics Afield possible for Georgia Southern University students by providing funding for program implementation. By receiving this funding, the program can strengthen the platform for recruiting college students to a beloved pastime and teach them the skills necessary to hunt safely and legally. Ogeechee Technical College students, also located in Statesboro, have also joined this Academics Afield hunting community as both participants and coaches.

Support also comes from other conservation organizations. During the most recent firearm safety and training event, officers CPL Jordan Crawford and GWFC Jack Thain, of the GA DNR Law Enforcement Division attended to help teach Academics Afield participants. We also had Steve Sanders, secretary for The KT Team, a non-profit program helping physically challenged people get outdoors again, coaching the students. With their mentors beside them, the participants all managed to break clays and gain a sense of confidence in shooting these targets.

The following day, the students went on a dove hunt at Di-Lane WMA, public land about 1 hour away from campus. Once we were set up on the dove fields, we took a seat and waited for the birds. Birds were flying all over the fields, but unfortunately, not many of them were doves. This is part of the hunt though; all conditions can be right, but the intended game species might not show up. Before we called it a day, another group of hunters on the field donated a dove to our students so they could see a field dressing demonstration. It is always appreciated when experienced hunters support new participants. When folks in the community come together, we can more effectively preserve the hunting heritage.

At the end of the hunt, we ran into two more members of GA DNR’s Law Enforcement Division, CPL Timmerman and GW Redmond. They gave a brief rundown of their jobs and application process to the students and answered multiple questions. They also reiterated that sometimes the conditions are right,

but the dove doesn't show. Overall, they were able to give the students more insight into becoming successful hunters and an understanding of the bird's movement patterns.

After this Academics Afield workshop, the students have expanded their hunting community and learned that Law Enforcement Officers really aren't that intimidating. They are there to keep everyone safe, make sure the laws and regulations are followed, and be a resource for the community. With a deer hunt in the near future, we will see how else the Academics Afield community in Statesboro may grow.

The students in Academics Afield at Statesboro and the GA R3 community is grateful to NWTF GA and its members for their support in fostering the growth of new participants in shooting, hunting, and conservation.

The Georgia R3 Initiative is a cooperative effort between Georgia Wildlife Federation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division, National Wild Turkey Federation, the Georgia Chapter of Safari Club International, and Ducks Unlimited.



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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.

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