



R3 FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Practitioner's Guide & Academics Afield Toolkit



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Trade Association



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Citation

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A Practitioner's Guide



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A woman in hunting attire, including a camouflage jacket, an orange safety vest, and an orange cap with a logo, is smiling. She has a backpack on. In the foreground, a Motorola walkie-talkie sits on a table. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

R3 and College Students

Over the past several decades, declining hunting participation across the United States has raised concerns about interest in outdoor recreation and the sustainability of a conservation system that relies heavily on hunting and shooting for financial support. Efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate (R3) diverse hunters has therefore become a high priority across the wildlife management community. One population represents a particularly promising target for R3 efforts: college students.

A national study of college students across the United States from 2018-2020 revealed that 26% of students were active hunters, 22% were potential hunters (i.e., current non-hunters who were eager to try hunting) and 3% were lapsed hunters who hunted before college but stopped for various reasons. With nearly 20 million college students across the country, this equates to millions of students who could be recruited into hunting. Many of these aspiring, first-time hunters are not familiar with hunting culture or may not pursue hunting due to lack of knowledge, skills, or social support. R3 efforts can alter that dynamic and connect with students at an opportune time in their lives - a time when they are flexible, open to exploration, and eager to build social bonds. Introducing a new activity during the college years can influence a person's life-long identity. The unique characteristics of this target audience, when combined with strategic implementation of a tested curriculum, could produce quality R3 outcomes.

Successes

Many R3 programs focused on college students, such as Academics Afield and Getting Started Outdoors (GSO), have demonstrated success at increasing approval for hunting and recruiting new hunters from non-traditional backgrounds. For example, from 2018-2020, GSO programming was offered to diverse college students in 16 states across the country. The GSO model focused on knowledge and skill development during workshop sessions typically one day in length. The purpose of GSO programs was to teach students basics of hunting, to highlight broader benefits of hunting, and to inspire students to adopt positive hunting-related beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. In 2019, Academics Afield was founded in Georgia to provide a reoccurring program that walked college students through the processes of learning how to shoot and hunt. Participation in an Academics Afield workshop is typically a three day commitment with institutions hosting 3-4 workshops per year. The Academics Afield model attempts to generate peer-based mentoring and help students develop the confidence necessary to self-identify as hunters and continue hunting into the future. Academics Afield has been replicated at 12 colleges across the southeast and is expanding. Both Academics Afield and GSO programs utilize partnerships with non-governmental conservation organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, and wildlife management agencies throughout the implementation process. They both emphasize the role of hunting in conservation as well as connections to local sources of game meat - key motivations that appeal to hunters from non-traditional backgrounds. Thorough evaluation and analysis has been conducted for both programs, showing that the college student-focused workshops attracted diverse populations of young adults and increased their approval of hunting, their hunting-related skills and knowledge, their intent to hunt, and their actual hunting behavior.



As a newcomer to UGA and the Athens area, the Academics Afield program has been an exciting way for me to meet new people with similar interests and gain knowledge and experience I'd be hard-pressed to encounter elsewhere in my busy life. Like most people, I imagine, I was not raised in a hunting or gun-owning household. Prior to getting involved in this program, I had absolutely no experience with hunting and only a basic knowledge of safe firearm handling and use due to personal interest. Through the program, I've learned so much in a very short time about responsibly hunting a variety of game and the firearms, techniques, and regulations involved. I've been able to meet people and go places I'd never know or have access to on my own. I possess skills I never thought I'd have or even need, and the program still has so much more to offer. I am grateful to Georgia Wildlife Foundation (Federation), Academics Afield and those involved and look forward to the opportunity to give back in the future.

Tristan Green-Tagalog, Academics Afield Participant, University of Georgia



Share Your Hunt™

WHY COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

WHY COLLEGE - FOCUSED R3

Introduction

Over the past several decades, declining hunting participation across the United States has raised concerns about the viability of hunting as the centerpiece of the North American conservation model. R3 efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate diverse hunters has therefore become a high priority across the wildlife management community. The Relevancy Roadmap put forth by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (2019) concluded that the future success of hunting and conservation depends on reaching broader audiences. Therefore, future hunters should include more participants from non-traditional backgrounds (e.g., women, young adults, people of color, and people from urban areas). This broader outreach is not intended to replace traditional target audiences and approaches, but add to them to create a larger and more diverse overall hunting population. Despite enthusiasm surrounding the goal of increasing relevance and inclusion in hunting, many R3 practitioners have discovered that identifying and connecting with non-traditional audiences can be a daunting task. But there is one place where all of these diverse populations can easily be found and accessed: a college campus.

Nearly 41% of young adults between the ages of 18-24 attend some type of college (e.g., 4-year, 2-year, community college), resulting in a total of over 20 million college students across the country. More than half of these students are women, roughly half are students of color (e.g., Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian), and the majority are from urban areas. Therefore, colleges provide access to an incredibly diverse audience all in one location. As students, most of these young people are excited to learn and try new things, including outdoor activities such as hunting. This openness to exploration is one dimension of “emerging adulthood” that is a key component of college students’ development as they expand their interests and form their own sense of identity. At this point in their life, college students generally have financial freedom and time for recreation and socialization, creating capacity for adoption of new outdoor activities. They also enjoy a variety of peer support and engagement (e.g., student clubs and organizations) to support these growing interests. By engaging with students on college campuses, wildlife management agencies and non-governmental organizations can tap into this vibrant, malleable, and eager audience, potentially broadening the base of support for hunting and conservation.



The country doesn't look like it did 50 years ago, hunting doesn't look like it did 50 years ago, and our hunting recruitment efforts can't look like they did 50 years ago.

Mike Worley, CEO, Georgia Wildlife Federation

WHY COLLEGE - FOCUSED R3

What do college students think about hunting?

While most college students are not hunters, research suggests that many would like to give it a try. A study of more than 17,000 U.S. college students across 22 states revealed that 50% were non-hunters, 26% were active hunters, 3% were lapsed hunters who hunted before college but stopped and 22% were potential hunters (i.e., current non-hunters who were eager to try hunting)¹ (Vayer et al. 2021). That 22% of potential hunters equates to almost six million college students nationwide, and they are far more diverse than the traditional group of active hunters, including many women and racial/ethnic minorities (Figure 1). In addition, these prospective hunters, predominantly from non-traditional hunting backgrounds, viewed hunting a bit differently than more traditional hunters. For example, while potential hunters - and even some non-hunters - approved of hunting to acquire meat and contribute to altruistic causes like supporting conservation and maintaining ecological balance, they expressed notable disapproval towards hunting for egoistic reasons such as the personal challenge of the hunt or trophies - reasons that are deemed acceptable by many active hunters (Figure 2A).

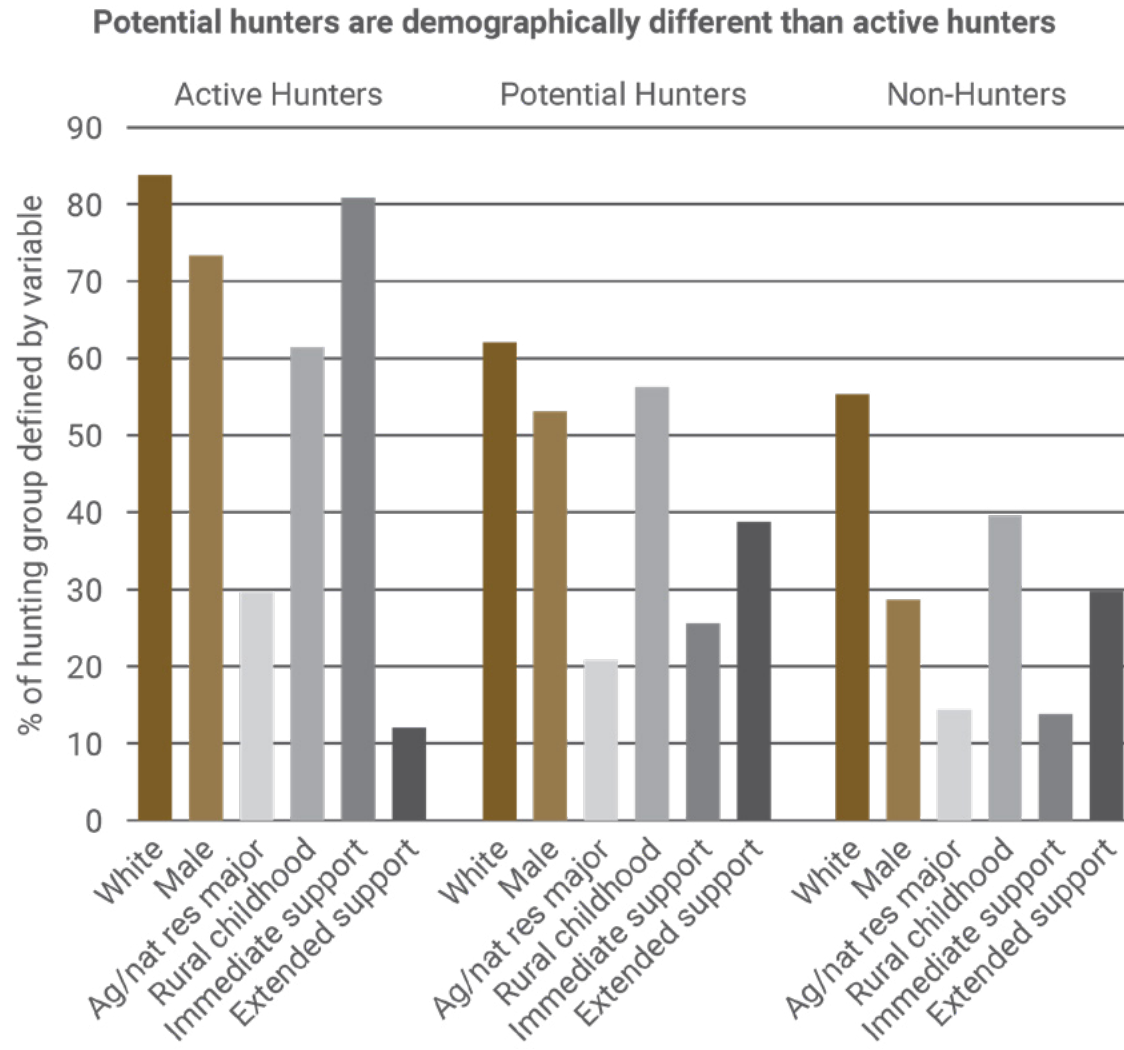
Similar patterns were observed for motivations to hunt. Rather than hunting to spend time with family or friends, or for recreation or sport, students consider hunting to help maintain ecological balance and obtain their own meat (Figure 2B). Like many non-traditional hunters, college students also face major barriers to hunting because they lack familial and social support that fosters hunting skills and knowledge. If these barriers can be addressed, the potential hunters on college campuses represent a tremendous recruitment opportunity.

22%
of surveyed college students were potential hunters

¹ To assess predictors of future hunting behavior, Vayer et al. (2021) used a market segmentation approach to identify 4 clusters of respondents based on a combination of past hunting experience and likelihood of future hunting. Non-hunters were individuals who had not hunted in the past and expressed no interest in future hunting. Potential hunters were individuals who had not hunted in the past but expressed interest in future hunting. Active hunters were individuals who hunted in the past and expressed strong interest in future hunting, plus those who indicated they were not sure about future hunting but said they might still hunt rarely or regularly. Lapsed hunters were individuals who hunted in the past but indicated they had no interest in hunting in the future, plus those who were not sure but said they might only try hunting once.

WHY COLLEGE - FOCUSED R3

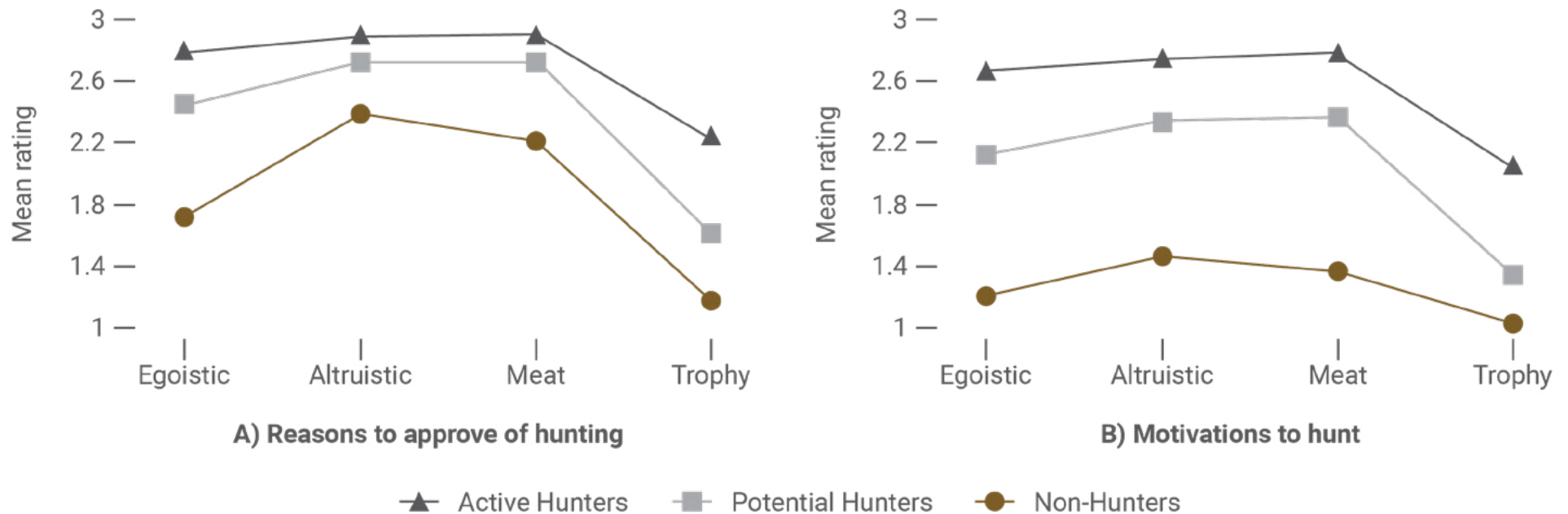
Figure 1. Demographic differences among different groups of college students across the United States (n = 17,203) based on their future likelihood of hunting. Those considering hunting in the future (i.e., potential hunters) are considerably more diverse than current (active) hunters.



WHY COLLEGE - FOCUSED R3

While hunting participation (and license purchasing) is typically the desired output of an R3 practitioner’s work, broader approval of hunting is also a valuable outcome if an overall goal is to maintain the relevance of hunting to conservation in the eyes of a changing public. Roughly 60% of college students approved of legal regulated hunting, compared to the 80% approval among Americans in general. This reflects a generational shift in attitudes toward wildlife and how people feel about hunting (Vayer et al., 2021). Therefore, college campuses also offer R3 practitioners a unique opportunity to reach this younger and more skeptical generation, potentially reshaping the way they think about hunting and its connection to conservation. For all of these reasons, R3 efforts targeting college campuses could be an efficient and effective strategy for addressing declines in both hunting participation and public support for hunting across diverse populations.

Figure 2. Comparison of mean ratings among future hunting groups of college students across 22 universities in the United States, 2018–2020, based on A) reasons to approve of hunting, and B) motivations to hunt (n = 17,203). Approval items were rated on a scale from 1= disapprove to 3= approve. Motivations were rated on a scale from 1= no, I would not hunt for this purpose to 3= yes, I would hunt for this purpose.



WHY COLLEGE - FOCUSED R3

Key Takeaways - Why College Students?

- Diverse population of potential hunters that is present everywhere and easy to find
- Nearly 1/4th of college students across the United States who have never hunted before express interest in hunting
- Students are at development stage where they are eager to experience new things (e.g., hunting) and create new identities
- Peer networks on campuses provide social support needed for sustained participation



A group of seven people, including men and women, are standing in a field. Some are wearing military-style clothing and holding rifles. The background shows a line of trees under a blue sky with light clouds. The foreground is filled with green, out-of-focus foliage.

CASE STUDIES OF COLLEGE R3

CASE STUDIES OF COLLEGE R3

Introduction

When considering a college-focused R3 program, it is important to choose a format that aligns well with resources, partners, and desired outcomes. Effective programs should share qualities that appeal to the motivations and values of college students, such as hunting's connection to conservation and locally sourced meat, but with content and experiences delivered in different ways to meet the needs of the instructors and the target audience. Below, we briefly describe several different approaches taken by existing, college - focused R3 programs. In the next section, we discuss outcomes associated with some of the programs introduced here.



GSO Workshop
University of Northern Colorado



Academics Afield Workshop
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff



Wild Sustenance Program
University of Montana &
State University of New York

CASE STUDIES OF COLLEGE R3

Single-Day Skills Training Model

Example Program: Getting Started Outdoors (GSO)

Primary Contact: Lincoln Larson, Ph.D. - North Carolina State University - LRLarson@ncsu.edu

Description: This is perhaps the most common model used in R3 programming as it represents a skill-development course with a manageable time commitment for both practitioners and first-time participants. These one-day clinics, which often focus on recruitment of students from non-traditional hunting backgrounds, provide students with a comprehensive overview of hunting, covering topics such as regulations, ethical shot placement, and game meat preparation. Typically, this format has both a classroom and a field component, which integrates hands-on training focused on hunting skills as well as firearm safety. In some cases, when time and resources permit, the workshop might be followed by a mentored hunt. The Getting Started Outdoors (GSO) program was led by NC State University and conducted across 17 universities in 16 states as part of a multi-state R3 project, serving a total of 327 students. GSO program curriculum can be found at gwf.org/R3Toolkit.

Advantages: Single-day R3 events are common, and many existing R3 curricula can be adjusted to suit the needs and preferences of college students. From a logistical perspective, this format - which can be replicated multiple times throughout the year - can accommodate more students than a cohort mentoring model and often requires smaller commitments and fewer resources.

Disadvantages: Students will have limited social support following the event and may not have the opportunity to reconnect, unless an additional, post-workshop mentoring model is offered. The time constraints of the single-day experience does not allow for in-depth content or field experience, and limits capacity for evaluation.

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

CASE STUDIES OF COLLEGE R3

Mentoring Model

Example Program: Academics Afield

Primary Contact: Coral Minchey- Georgia Wildlife Federation -cminchey@gwf.org

Description: This model aims to engage the same individual student with the same coach for multiple meetings. Academics Afield hires a student coordinator and uses peer student coaches to recruit and engage students from non-traditional backgrounds into hunting and shooting. Using an application process, participants are accepted to the program based on experience levels. The program consists of 3-4 workshops a year, each focusing on a different species. Each workshop is composed of several unique events that deliver a manageable portion of curriculum and build upon one another. First, the students attend a classroom presentation covering conservation, species biology, hunting strategy, regulations, ethics, and safety. Following the classroom education, the participants receive hands-on firearm training on a range. Lastly, the students experience a one-on-one mentored hunt. The hunts are celebrated with a wild game culinary social that allows students mingle with their peers/coaches and forge the lasting relationships necessary to create a collegiate hunting community. Throughout the workshops, participants receive support from peer coaches and local professionals/volunteers from conservation or firearm organizations. This program has been implemented at 12 institutions across the southeast and made over 1,000 touchpoints to workshop participants since its inception in 2019. See the R3 for College Students: Academics Afield Toolkit section of this document for more details about the program including unique variations among the different approaches to program implementation.

Advantages: The highlight of this format is the formation of social bonds among participants (student to student and student to coach) through prolonged and regular engagement. Additionally, with averages of 6-8 students participating per workshop, it is easy to provide individualized support.

Disadvantages: The reach of a mentoring format is smaller compared to Skills Training models, primarily because the format focuses on quality versus quantity of engagement. Additionally, it is challenging to replace student participants who drop out for various reasons (strenuous course load, athletic commitments, etc.) because the events build on one another. It is challenging to recruit enough peer coaches to achieve true mentoring. Expenses can be significant and are program specific.



CASE STUDIES OF COLLEGE R3

Course-Based Hybrid Model

Example Program: Wild Sustenance Program

Primary Contact: Libby Metcalf and Josh Millspaugh, University of Montana and State University of New York (elizabeth.metcalf@umontana.edu; joshua.millspaugh@mso.umt.edu)

Description: Students receive academic credits for participating in the Wild Sustenance Program. This class introduces hunting to college students from a variety of majors and is intended for students who have not yet had the opportunity to hunt. There are two components to the course: on campus class meetings and a 3-day immersive workshop at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch owned by the Boone and Crockett Club in Dupuyer, MT. On campus, students discuss the role of hunting in wildlife management, the history of wildlife conservation, hunter ethics, and human dimensions of hunting. The 3-day field experience provides students with time in the field, on the shooting range (including conversations about firearm safety), and in the kitchen to understand the entire hunting process from field to table. Open dialogue and respectful discourse about motivations for hunting and concerns about hunting is encouraged. Food is an important part of the program as well: a deer is harvested on the ranch, a professional butcher demonstrates how to process the deer with student help, and a professional chef prepares wild game every meal and teaches students how to cook wild game. The Montana course has been operating for 4 years, serving 15-20 students each year.

Advantages: The course offers an immersive field component where students learn by doing. This helps create a social support around hunting that reinforces many of the lessons. The field component is complemented by at least a 10 week long classroom experience where students circle back to topics from the field component to go deeper based on their interests.

Disadvantages: This course does not replace traditional hunters education courses, but does offer an “add-on” feature of hunter education. However, this is often challenging to organize or find a certified instructor for. The course can be time intensive for students, which might discourage enrollment.



CASE STUDIES OF COLLEGE R3

Professional Development Hybrid Model

Example program: Delta Waterfowl's University Hunting Program

Primary Contact: Joel Brice, Chief Conservation Officer, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, Email: jbrice@deltawaterfowl.org

Description: The Delta Waterfowl University Hunting Program (UHP) provides college students with a firsthand waterfowl hunting experience and equips them with a holistic view of hunting and conservation that prepares them for potential careers in wildlife conservation. Through the UHP, Delta aims to provide students who do not have a hunting background (i.e., non-hunting wildlife degree majors) with hands-on participation in the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The UHP consists of four fundamental components: (1) a hunter safety course with an emphasis on ethical and social issues of hunting, (2) a shooting skills day to learn about firearm skills and safety, (3) a mentored hunt at a well-managed property, and (4) a post-hunt meal that features the actual game harvested and highlights hunting camaraderie. Delta Waterfowl started this program in 2017 with five universities. During the 2022 academic year, the program was offered at 72 universities across the United States and Canada and will reach over 100 schools in 2023. Delta Waterfowl covers all costs and organizes all activities associated with this program. Their Duck and Goose Hunting 101 course can be found at todayshunter.com.

Advantages: The program offers ultimate flexibility as each UHP is custom-built by the Delta R3 team and local volunteers specific to the school, location, and participants. Multiple activities across the school semester keep students involved and excited as they build toward the “big event” of the hunt and post-hunt meal. Delta has accumulated sustainable funding sources to continue the program year after year.

Disadvantages: Delta can only guarantee one hunting opportunity for migratory birds.



CASE STUDIES OF COLLEGE R3

Mentoring Model paired with Collegiate Chapters

Example Program: Ducks Unlimited Collegiate Chapters

Primary Contact: Justin Aycock – Ducks Unlimited – jaycock@ducks.org

Description: This program utilizes established collegiate chapters focusing on conservation to implement Academics Afield curriculum. Ducks Unlimited (DU) has 110 collegiate chapters across 27 states. Many of these chapters already consist of both experienced hunters and non-hunters who are already interested in learning how to hunt. In the 39 years that they have had collegiate chapters, DU estimates students have informally mentored 3500 other students in hunting and shooting. This programming model takes an existing social support network and offers tested college - focused R3 programming to non-traditional hunters. Although there is a designated R3 intern, the entire collegiate DU chapter takes on the responsibility of recruiting participants, educating them via established curriculum, and hosting hunts. This partnership began in 2023, so enrollment data is not yet available.

Advantages: The DU collegiate chapters are already present at colleges, providing access to an established social support network.

Disadvantages: Chapter members focus on waterfowl conservation, and this could limit a participant's exposure to other game species. The chapters are an already established community and may intimidate participants that are outside of the organization. Collegiate chapters are run by volunteers and may struggle to accurately implement complex R3 workshops.



CASE STUDIES OF COLLEGE R3

Key Takeaways - Keys to Successful Programing

- Understand audience background, needs, and desires (which may be different from traditional hunters)
- Focus on things that motivate students such as hunting's connection to conservation and nature
- Focus on things that motivate students such as hunting's connection to a food sources and preparation of wild game meat
- Utilize demographically diverse instructors that match the student audience
- Remove significant cost and transportation barriers wherever possible
- Embed opportunities for authentic reflection and Q&A, allowing time for processing new information and ideas (especially because hunting is an entirely new concept for many students)
- Provide ample opportunity for social interactions and support both during and after the program
- Build and cultivate relationships across multiple partners to ensure the long-term success and continuity of programs





OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

Overview

Getting Started Outdoors (GSO) and Academics Afield represent two approaches that achieved a common goal: to engage college students in the world of hunting. GSO is considered a skills development model while Academics Afield is considered a mentoring model. Through their shared focus on college students, both of these programs contribute to the revitalization of hunting by fostering new hunters and cultivating an appreciation for conservation among a diverse cross section of individuals. Although content of each program is similar among participating institutions, formats vary based on existing infrastructure, available resources, available game species, timing/season, and other unique features of the host locations. Common themes in both programs across all institutions include a hunters' role in conservation and hunting ethics; scouting/tracking tips and hunting scenarios; proper use of hunting gear and equipment; firearm safety and shooting practice; and game recovery, processing and meat preparation. Both programs are also underpinned by robust evaluation frameworks that align with the innovative objectives of R3 efforts, offering some insights into their efficacy.

Collectively these college R3 programs have drawn audiences that were different from typical hunters. Potential hunters that attended programs were frequently from bigger cities, female, and/or a person of color. Both GSO and Academics Afield students shared a motivation to hunt for food, engage with nature, and maintain ecological balance. Importantly, providing these students with a tailored recruitment experience resulted in reported increases in hunting skills and knowledge, positive beliefs about hunters, overall confidence in hunting, and an increased understanding of hunting's connection to conservation. Evaluations from both programs also revealed benefits in terms of participants' likelihood to hunt, purchase a hunting license, and engage in other hunting-related behaviors both before and after the program. Ultimately, both approaches exemplify the successful realization of many R3 goals, demonstrating that college-focused R3 efforts may represent a convergence of intent and outcomes that could help to reshape the hunting landscape and foster a generation of more conservation minded hunters and hunting advocates.

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

Getting Started Outdoors

From 2018-2020, state wildlife agencies, NGOs, and university collaborators worked together to develop a framework for a “Getting Started Outdoors: Hunting 101” workshop designed specifically for college students without previous hunting experience. The workshop’s purpose was to teach students basics of hunting, to highlight broader benefits of hunting, and to inspire students to adopt positive hunting-related beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Workshop content was similar, but delivery formats varied slightly by state. All workshops were typically one or two days in length - including both a classroom (regulations, safety, conservation connection, etc.) and hands-on component (target shooting, game processing, etc.).

Overall, the evaluation focused on 327 participants in 19 different hunting workshops across 16 different states. Demographic attributes of student participants in the GSO program (mostly undergraduate students) were far more diverse than those of traditional hunters: 42% were women, 27% were racial/ethnic minorities, and the vast majority (83%) were from cities or urban areas. The students’ primary motivations to hunt were being close to nature, contributing to conservation and ecological balance, and obtaining local free-range meat. Wildlife agencies and NGOs hosting the workshops appealed to these interests by emphasizing conservation connections and preparation of wild game meat during the workshops.

Across the multi-state sample, the GSO workshops resulted in increased intention to hunt and growth in other hunting related variables (approval of hunting, confidence in hunting, etc.).² Following the workshops, 50% of the participants said they would definitely hunt in the future and 34% reported that they would probably hunt. The majority of participants were also very likely (51%) or likely (30%) to purchase a hunting license, which is an important consideration for many wildlife management agencies. A number of other hunting related behaviors were very likely as well following the workshops, ranging from befriending a hunter to eating wild game meat (Figure 3).

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

Getting Started Outdoors (continued)

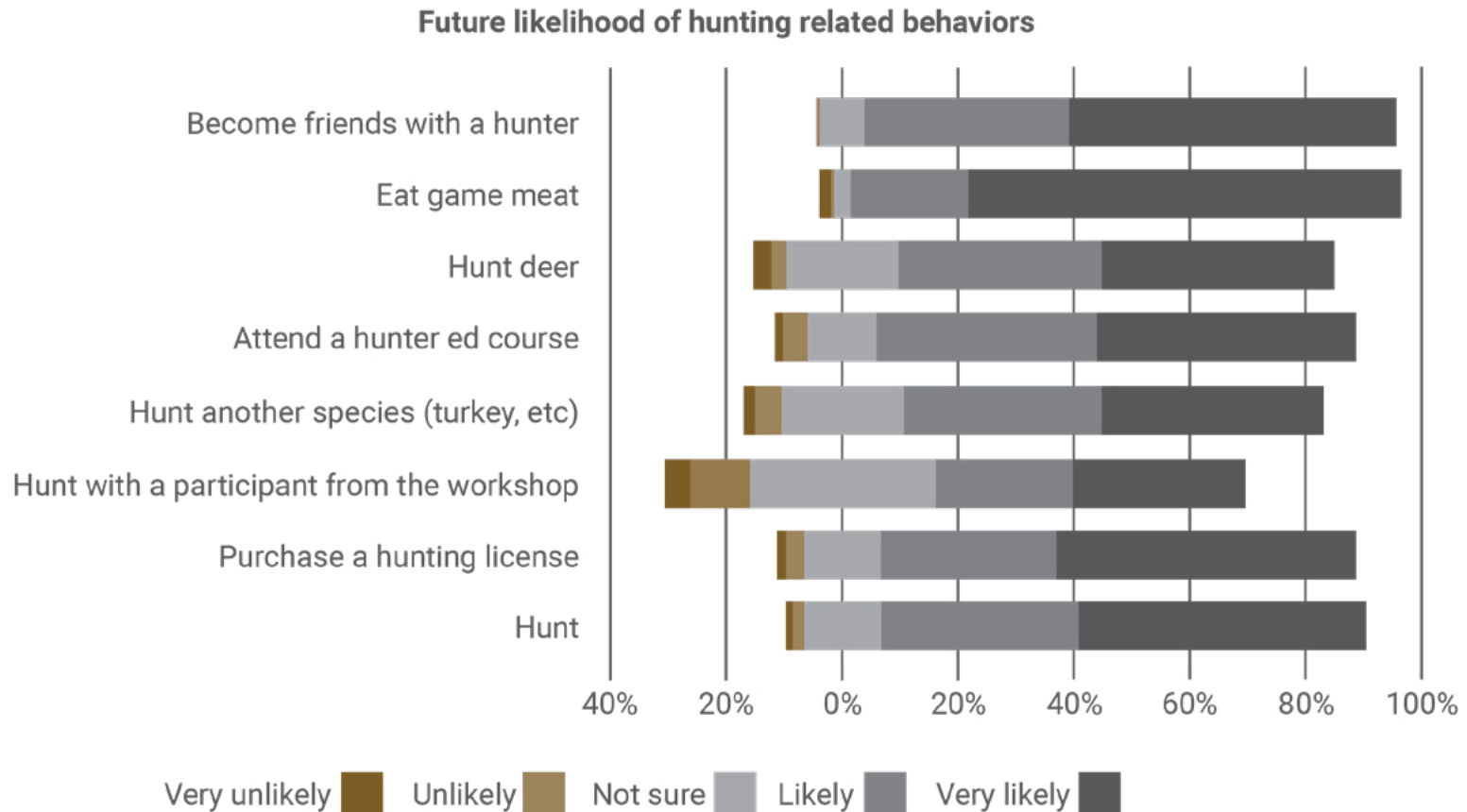


Figure. 3. College students self-reported likelihood of engaging in hunting-related behaviors after participating in a GSO workshop.

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

Getting Started Outdoors (continued)

Despite interest and enthusiasm surrounding hunting, college students face a number of barriers to participation. The most significant barrier reported by students was a lack of confidence in their hunting skills (only 5% of participants felt confident prior to participation). However, following the workshops 41% of students reported feeling confident in their hunting skills - a notable improvement given the short time frame of the one- or two-day workshop (Figure 4). While most participants came in with a positive view of hunting (79%) that number increased to 93% following the workshop. This suggests the program's emphasis on the connection of hunting to conservation and locally sourced food resonated with college students. Being new to hunting, the majority of incoming students reported that they did not have anyone to hunt with (71%); this was reduced to 53% of participants by the end of the workshop. The workshop experience did not effectively address all barriers, however: many students still acknowledged the high cost of hunting and the time required to engage in the activity. Providing an environment that encourages social bonding with other students and facilitators (e.g., providing a meal, comfortable Q&A sessions, etc.), both during the workshops and afterwards, was important in cultivating these social connections around hunting and encouraging sustained participation.

While most participants came in with a positive view of hunting **79%**
that number increased to **93%** following the workshop.

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

Getting Started Outdoors (continued)

Participants who attended a mentored hunt opportunity following the workshops were more than twice as likely to hunt and/or purchase a license in the future. Shortly after the GSO workshop, 50% of attendees affirmed they would definitely hunt in the future, while 34% expressed they would probably hunt. Additionally, 13% remained uncertain about their prospective involvement in hunting. Follow-up surveys over one year after the workshops concluded revealed sustained benefits: 34% of workshop participants reported having hunted at least once after the program ended, and another 45% said they would probably hunt in the future.

Variable	Before Workshop (%)	After Workshop (%)
Confidence in hunting skills	5	41
Positive beliefs about hunting	79	93
Lack knowledge/skills required to hunt	80	28
Lack knowledge/skills required to prepare game meat	72	28
Don't have anyone to go hunting with	71	53
Costs associated with hunting	51	58
Lack of free time required to hunt	41	51

Figure 4. Barriers to hunting and beliefs about hunting reported by college students before and after participating in a Getting Started Outdoors workshop.

²The analysis of GSO workshop outcomes by von Furstenberg et al. (2023) utilized a pre-post survey methodology to compare changes in attitudes and behaviors related to hunting before and after the learn-to-hunt experience. Participants' intended behaviors (future hunting, purchasing of a hunting license, befriending a hunter, etc.) were measured in the post-program survey.

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

Academics Afield

Academics Afield was founded in Georgia in 2019, after several years of research and development, to build upon current R3 programming by introducing college students from nontraditional backgrounds to hunting and shooting. The program's purpose is to create a collegiate hunting community, led by a supervised student intern, who coordinates a comprehensive introduction to a variety of game species via knowledge/skill development and peer mentoring through time. The program expanded beyond Georgia in 2021 to include North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana. This expansion process involved intensive work within each state to build partnerships between the state wildlife agencies, the academic institution, and an NGO that would facilitate the programming. Programs provided 3-4 workshops a year, with 3-4 events per workshop. Formats varied slightly between locations according to student needs and available resources. Events consisted of classroom education (hunting's role in conservation, biology, hunting strategy and regulations) and field components (target shooting, guided hunt, game processing, culinary social). Programs were implemented at five historically black colleges and universities in Georgia, Alabama and Arkansas in 2022.

Since 2019, Academics Afield has made over 1,000 touchpoints to workshop participants across the southeast. In an evaluation of participants active 2021-2023, Academics Afield has captured the perspectives of 226 students across 8 states. As with GSO programming, students participating in Academics Afield were notably more diverse compared to traditional hunters: 57% were women, 29% were racial/ethnic minorities, and the majority grew up in cities or urban areas (79%). Three quarters of the students had never been hunting and only 20% reported having an immediate family member who hunts. These college students, like those in GSO, were motivated to try hunting primarily to obtain locally sourced meat, to engage with nature, and maintain ecological balance.

Students participating in Academics Afield were notably more diverse compared to traditional hunters:

57% were women, **29%** were racial/ethnic minorities

While evaluation was used to understand who was attending Academics Afield programs, it was also incorporated both formatively (students reflected on each event/hunt) and summatively (pre-post program assessment) throughout the program. Pre-program surveys were completed by all students who participated in Academics Afield, and post-program surveys were completed by students after the program concluded. The formative assessments following each event/hunt were used to improve and optimize the program while it was ongoing, with students rating elements of the experience and describing their likes and dislikes.

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

Academics Afield (continued)

Variable	Before Workshop (%)	After Workshop (%)
Confidence in hunting skills	7	40
Positive beliefs about hunting	96	100
Lack knowledge/skills required to hunt	87	16
Lack knowledge/skills required to prepare game meat	84	36
Don't have anyone to go hunting with	94	45
Costs associated with hunting	58	39
Lack of free time required to hunt	39	48

Figure 5. Beliefs about hunting and barriers reported by college students before and after participating in a Academics Afield workshop.

The summative assessments at the end of the program were designed to measure the impact of Academics Afield on participant's hunting-related behaviors and perceptions.³ Like GSO, the results of Academics Afield were very positive (Figure 5). Barriers to hunting associated with a lack of skills and knowledge were reduced from 87% pre-program to only 16% after completion. Knowledge of hunting and firearms laws was another prominent barrier, with 71% reporting it as a constraint; this was reduced to 7% percent following Academics Afield. Furthermore, 55% of students indicated that they were likely to have a partner to hunt with after participating in the Academics Afield program, with only 6% reporting they had a hunting companion before the program. Providing an environment that encourages socializing with other students and facilitators (e.g., providing a meal, comfortable Q&A sessions, etc.) was an intentional element of this program, both during the workshops and afterwards, with the aim of cultivating these lasting relationships around hunting and encouraging sustained participation.

Following participation, 64% of participants said they would definitely hunt and another 23% said they would probably hunt. After participation, student's agreement with the belief that hunters care about conserving wildlife and natural resources increased from 77% to 95%. As the Academics Afield program continues to grow, collection of additional longitudinal data will facilitate assessment of long-term program impacts on hunting participation. In Academics Afield's flagship state, Georgia, tracking of long-term outcomes for Academics Afield participants has already started. Hunting license database records show that 47% of previous Academic Afield students purchased a Georgia hunting license the following year. Of these license buyers, 63% were first time buyers.

³ The Academics Afield program assessed hunting-related perceptions and behaviors both before and after events, with the specific number of events varying by location. In the first year of the Academics Afield program, a pre-post program assessment was conducted by averaging measurements taken before and after event(s) at six universities across four states; these included Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (GA), Georgia Southern University (GA), Louisiana State University (LA), North Carolina State University (NC), University of Georgia - Athens (GA), and University of Tennessee - Knoxville (TN).

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE-FOCUSED R3

Summary of Evaluation

Results of these evaluation efforts support the idea that college students are a large, untapped pool of potential hunters that may be receptive to R3 efforts. There is substantial interest in hunting among diverse college students, and results reveal positive impacts of R3 workshop participation on students' hunting-related skills, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors - especially when sustained social support (e.g., mentored hunts) is present. Although not every college student who attends a workshop will ultimately become a hunter, evidence also shows that many will become more vocal hunting advocates with the capacity to contribute to conservation in other ways. Furthermore, the data suggests R3 programming in a variety of formats can produce positive R3 related outcomes. For all of these reasons, agencies and organizations hoping to expand and enhance R3 efforts should strongly consider programs that focus on college students. Lessons learned through this research can help managers develop more effective and culturally relevant R3 tools and strategies as they seek to reverse declines in hunting participation by targeting non-traditional hunting populations such as college students.

Key Takeaways

- Attracts diverse audiences (women, people of color, students from urban areas, etc.)
- Addresses major barriers to entry by helping student build hunting-related knowledge, skills and confidence
- Increases likelihood of participation in a hunting-related behaviors (including purchasing a hunting license)
- Enhances positive perceptions of hunting and support for hunting among young adults
- Program participation often translates into long-term hunting behavior



A woman in camouflage gear and an orange cap is the central focus, holding a can. She has camouflage face paint on her cheeks. In the background, two other people in similar gear are visible, one wearing an orange cap and another in a camouflage shirt. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor or nighttime setting.

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AN ACADEMICS AFIELD TOOLKIT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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To retrieve “R3 For College Students: A Practitioner’s Guide & Academics Afield Toolkit” in its entirety, visit gwf.org/r3toolkit.



WHY IMPLEMENT ACADEMICS AFIELD

WHY IMPLEMENT ACADEMICS AFIELD

Introduction

Academics Afield is a college learn-to-hunt program that developed as part of the National R3 Movement. It was spear-headed by the Georgia Wildlife Federation with support from the Georgia R3 Initiative (GA DNR-WRD, GWF, NWTF, GA SCI, DU). Program funding has been primarily provided by the WSFR program of the USFWS and NSSF. In North America, the majority of wildlife conservation dollars are funded by hunters, anglers, and target shooters. Hunting participation has been declining since the 1980s highlighting the need to increase and diversify the number of active hunters. R3 strives to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters, anglers, and target shooters. Academics Afield is an R3 Mentoring Model designed off of the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model: provide trial opportunities to interested members of a specific target audience, address pertinent barriers, and provide pathways for next steps.

Objectives

- Engage individuals from non-traditional backgrounds in hunting and shooting sports
- Provide knowledge and skills to a curious and receptive audience
- Establish social support structures for long term participation

These objectives complemented the goals of the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry which wanted to train future wildlife professionals in hunting to be more familiar with traditional North American Wildlife Management. With extensive support from faculty and leadership at the university and strong partnerships with Georgia Wildlife Federation and the Georgia R3 Initiative, the first Academics Afield program officially launched in 2019 at the University of Georgia. Universities hosting programs provide experiential learning opportunities and possibly certifications for their students.

Outcomes

Academics Afield Program Evaluation revealed that participants:

- Were more diverse than traditional hunters (57% female and 29% minority)
- Were newly recruited to hunting as 75% had never participated prior
- No longer reported lack of knowledge/skills as a barrier to hunting after participation (87% pre-program to 16% post-program)
- No longer reported lack of a partner as a barrier to hunting after participation (94% pre-program to 45% post-program)
- Purchased licenses the following year (47% of a sample of 66 participants in GA)

Additional details and more conclusions can be reviewed in the previous section of this Toolkit "College Focused R3: A Practitioner's Guide" found at gwf.org/R3Toolkit. If you are interested in implementing an Academics Afield program, please coordinate with Georgia Wildlife Federation – education@gwf.org.



Establishing the Academics Afield program at UGA was an obvious win for our wildlife students. Hunters are foundational to many research techniques wildlife biologists utilize on a regular basis. More significant than the skill development though, is the new perspective Academics Afield students gain regarding a segment of conservation stakeholders. Offering this program to our wildlife students helps them better prepare for future careers in natural resources. I recommend this program for students of any school of study because of its rigorous curriculum and significant skill development.

Dr. Steve Wrigley, 13th Chancellor of the University System of Georgia

WHY IMPLEMENT ACADEMICS AFIELD

Building Community

Academics Afield is more than a learn-to-hunt workshop. It aims to create a collegiate hunting community providing social support networks. Programs recruit diverse college-aged hunters and also retains and reactivate established hunters by engaging experienced students as peer-coaches who may have abandoned the activity after leaving their hometown for college. Wild game culinary socials after hunts enable organic conversation, sprouting friendships and connecting new participants to existing resources. Depending on the level of engagement from coaches, Academics Afield may positively influence the existing hunting community by improving conservation literacy, providing mentoring training, and encouraging positive interactions with the non-hunting community.

Results of Academics Afield evaluation efforts support the idea that college students have great potential as a target audience for R3 workshops. They are congregated, explorative, and have broad social networks. Academics Afield participants leave the program with more knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage in hunting and the shooting sports. Evaluations also demonstrate positive changes in hunting-related beliefs, attitudes, and behavior.

Fundamentals of Academics Afield

1. Educate new and existing hunters on conservation history and hunting's role in the North American Model of Wildlife Management
2. Implement program evaluations for a data-driven program design
3. Host 3-4 hunting workshops a year with each workshop offering species biology education, firearm training, a one-on-one mentored hunt, and a wild game culinary social
4. Coordinate via a student intern with peer coaches enhancing immediate social support network
5. Integrate students to support structures and available resources for post program participation

Fostering Reverence

Academics Afield ensures its alumni are not merely participants but stewards for conservation and positive representatives of the hunting community. This is achieved with a curriculum that emphasizes a hunter's role in conservation, inspires gratitude for wildlife and wild places, encourages ethical practices, and stresses respect for hunters and non-hunters alike. In the words of Aldo Leopold, "When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."



GROUNDWORK

Preparing for an Academics Afield Program

PREPARATION

Introduction

The decision to launch a learn to hunt program should not be taken lightly. There are many moving pieces to a model like Academics Afield. However, with thoughtful planning and ample preparation, participants can make great memories and you can grow your program to achieve the maximum number of desired outcomes. Please consider the following subjects as introductions to the preparatory exercises necessary for complete program implementation. Thought has been put into the order of the subjects, but many should be worked on concurrently. Additional information, example templates, and potential structures can be found in the associated Appendices.

Setting up Academics Afield

We encourage a three-legged support structure to ensure the success of the Academics Afield program: an academic institution to efficiently reach students; the state wildlife agency to improve access to resources and land; and a non-governmental wildlife organization to improve efficiencies and reduce potential red-tape barriers. The importance of working with a university with leadership passionate about the opportunity for their students cannot be understated. Universities with Natural Resource degrees of study have high potential. Identify a Faculty Advisor who agrees to assist the student intern in recruitment and logistics. It is easiest for a non-governmental organization to hire the student intern and provide programming assistance, but the University can as well. The state wildlife agency can provide potential instructors/coaches, access, equipment, and opportunities for funding. By working with multiple partners, you can leverage existing experience, infrastructure, and connections to bring effective programming to non-traditional audiences. Refer to the appendices for example partnership documents.

PREPARATION

Evaluation and Tracking Efforts

Evaluation and tracking are essential to the success and improvement of Academics Afield. Several tools have been provided to aid these efforts.

The program was designed for the non-traditional audience. Thus, students with little or no hunting experience will benefit most from participation. To aid selection of program participants an “Applicant Screening Questionnaire” template has been provided in the appendix. It can be utilized as an application for interested students. The program must then collect pre-participation data of selected participants to measure demographics and establish a baseline of hunting experience, confidence, and conservation knowledge. Refer to the template “Pre-program Survey” for this purpose. Results of the Pre-Program Survey can prepare program practitioners to better address participant needs. When distributing program materials, keep in mind the students tend to be more responsive to text messages as opposed to emails.

After programming, a Post-Program Survey should be implemented to compare change in behavior and attitude of participants due to participation. Refer to the template “Post-program Survey.” A Post - program Survey should also be implemented so practitioners can improve programming based off of feedback from participants. The degree of change can be a measure of program success. We recommend use of a QR code at the conclusion of the event for participants to complete surveys before departure.

Another measure of success, can be participation in hunting through time. This can be assessed via a “Follow-up Survey” or examination of license buying behavior. Refer to the template “Follow-Up Survey”. The second method requires state wildlife agency record access and the birthdates or DNR Customer Identification Numbers of your program alumni. Even if you don’t have access to agency records, be sure to collect this data from your participants as it may be valuable for future national Academics Afield evaluations.

PREPARATION

Finances

Academics Afield was designed to be run by students, for students. This supports development of a hunting community within the student body and reduces staffing costs. The student staff consists of a student intern and volunteer student coaches. The student intern should be paid to ensure consistency and reliability. Here is an example of typical costs (\$13/hour at ~5 hours/week at 12 weeks/semester = \$780). Weekly hourly totals vary depending on workshop design. Student interns can be paid hourly with travel costs reimbursed or by stipend. Management and oversight of intern in some capacity will be required. Volunteer student coach participation may be incentivized with hunting opportunities, fun social events (wild game culinary social), and other non-monetary means.

Equipment and supplies to set up a program must be acquired. Many state wildlife agencies or R3 practitioners have firearm sets that can be rented for programming. You may also consider purchasing firearms for your program. A set of twelve shotguns with interchangeable barrels (smooth bore and rifled w/scope) is a great option. This enables pursuit of small game, upland or migratory bird, and deer at short range. Ideally all firearms will be the same to reduce complexity of instruction and student use. We recommend the 20-gauge pump action Mossberg 500 combo (model 5047). Expect an initial cost of approximately \$7,000 for the shotguns and supporting equipment. If possible, identify a local dealer who is willing to support community organizations and offer discounts. After original purchase, program supplies can be maintained with approximately \$500 a semester. It is advised for the non-governmental organization to hold and distribute funds for convenience. If necessary, a Memorandum of Agreement should be used to hold all partners accountable to their commitments. Refer to the appendices for an example memorandum.

Species and Equipment Considerations

When designing your Academics Afield program, consider your participants ability to replicate the hunt after the program concludes. Selecting species that are accessible and equipment that is attainable will aid post program replication. For example, dove and squirrel are relatively easy to find, harvest, process, and prepare in the kitchen. Also, the equipment required to pursue these species is limited and affordable. Duck and deer require additional gear, knowledge, and land access, but with a little extra support they are also excellent species for an Academics Afield program.

PREPARATION

Academics Afield Coordinator (Student Intern)

The student intern is the backbone of an Academics Afield program. They organize and implement most aspects of the program with limited supervision. Ideal candidates will have experience in hunting and shooting, an understanding of teaching and sales/marketing, and excellent communication skills. A candidate that also has established relationships within the natural resources programs at the university can be beneficial.

The student intern will market to and recruit non-traditional student participants and experienced student coaches. They will also organize workshops each semester by working with partners to provide an educational training, firearm training, guided hunt experience, and wild-game meal per workshop. Throughout the workshops the student intern will administer evaluation tools (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) to track program success. Finally, they'll draft a summary blog, video, or social media campaign for outreach after each workshop.

Inevitably the student intern will need to resign from the role due to changing circumstances (academic responsibilities, graduation, etc.). When this happens, recruiting a replacement from the pool of existing student coaches can be very efficient. We recommend the new intern shadow outgoing intern as part of their training. This ensures continuity between interns and reliable programming for participants.



PREPARATION

Workshop Design

The objective is to host 3-4 hunting workshops a year. Refer to the “Program Styles & Schedules” document in the appendix for more details.

Each workshop consists of:

- History of conservation
- Species biology and hunting strategy
- Ethics and safety
- Firearm training
- Mentored hunt
- Wild game culinary social

A workshop is broken down into multiple events. The history of conservation, species biology, hunting strategy, ethics, and safety is often provided over a 1.5-hour classroom education. Firearm training is required for participation in the hunt. The student intern is encouraged to become a certified Range Safety Officer or Certified Shooting Sports Coach to safely run this event. Adequate instruction and safety measures taken are situation specific. Then a mentored hunt with student coaches and a wild game culinary social concludes the workshop. Preparations should be made in advance to have an already deceased animal so students can see the field breakdown and potential cooking methods in the event the mentored hunt does not result in a harvest. The wild game culinary social is simply a meal with a game meat component, discussing preparation of game meat, conversations, reflections, questions, and laughter. The appendix features more information on processing venison.

PREPARATION

Student Coach Recruitment and Training

The Academics Afield Coordinator recruits student coaches via networking and word of mouth. Coaches are students that have hunting experience and are willing to volunteer their time to teach new people. Coaches are invited to participate in all aspects of the workshop. Although not always achievable, this ensures consistency between trainings and hunts. Program practitioners and/or the student intern should meet with the coaches separately to discuss safety, ethics, and sensitivity toward event participants from different backgrounds. Refer to the “Coach Recruitment & Training” document in the appendix for more details. Some programs may choose to supplement their student coaches with professionals or volunteers from the conservation or firearm community such as Hunter Education Instructors, Wildlife Officers, Biologists, Range Safety Officers etc. It is important to have enough experienced hunters engaged to properly guide new participants.

Insurance and Liability/Media Releases

Acquiring liability insurance can be a hurdle for programs. Short-term limited policy coverage can be utilized, but it is typically not cost-effective. If your organization does not have liability insurance for programming, it is recommended you partner with another organization who can cover the event. Traditional “hook and bullet” wildlife conservation organizations may have coverage already (Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, National Wild Turkey Federation, National Deer Association, First Hunt Foundation etc.), state agencies often have coverage if they are hosting programming on public land and state statutes often cover private landowners when offering hunting opportunities paid or unpaid. This may or may not be relevant or adequate for your specific needs.

In addition, participants should sign a liability and media release waiver. The media release is important so that imagery from your program can be used for reporting and future marketing. Post-event press releases and posts that feature photos of diverse participants having fun are very helpful for future recruitment. An example waiver is available in the appendix.

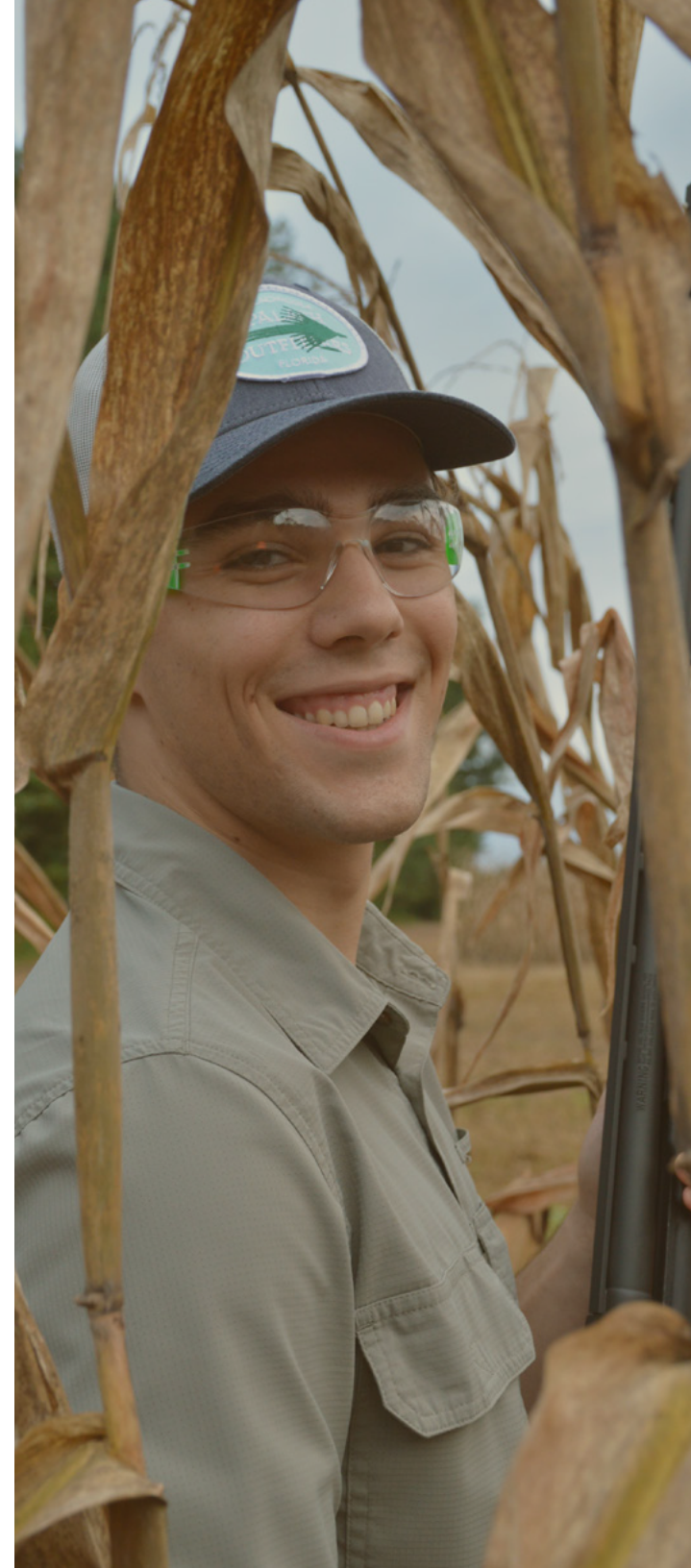
PREPARATION

Participant Recruitment

The Academics Afield Coordinator (student intern) and Faculty Advisor should work together on recruiting participants. Refer to the appendices for flyers, FAQs, registration tools etc.

Most common methods include:

- Speak at student chapter meetings for on-campus groups (e.g., The Wildlife Society)
- With professor permission, advertise the program to students during the first couple minutes of class
- Email flyers via university listservs
- Approach groups of people in halls, cafeterias, classes to tell them about the program
- Set up booths at extracurricular recruitment events
- Professors may offer extra credit for participation
- Professors may want to establish course credit
- Advertise on social media via geofencing technology
- Partner with recreation departments or campus shooting sports clubs
- Post ppt. slides on campus TVs
- Approach faculty in natural resource, recreation, or criminal justice degrees
- Identify and advertise in student activity newsletters or university social media





FULFILLMENT

Implementing an Academics Afield Program

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Academics Afield is focused on creating outcomes as opposed to outputs. Thus, extensive effort is invested into a single participant. In order to provide students a comprehensive education, an Academics Afield workshop is composed of 3-4 events, each event often held on different days requiring advanced preparations: classroom learning, firearm training, and a mentored hunt with a wild game meal incorporated.

A student in the program is encouraged to attend all events within a workshop. You will find college students will ask for exceptions, so adapt, keeping safety and proper education in mind. You may modify the events to better suit your cohort and available resources, but the general outline for the program is elaborated on below. The order of events should be followed, with lessons building upon each other, preparing students for the next event.

Some programs host a Welcome/FAQ seminar before launching the program as a recruitment strategy. Some programs utilize a rolling admissions strategy between workshops while some programs strive to work with the same cohort of students for multiple semesters.

Programs should require hunter education in advance of a workshop, either as a group or online. Serve food at events to incentivize participation. In advance, create a drive link for everyone to add and view pictures that are taken throughout participation. Most importantly, Academics Afield is a college hunting community so foster relationships amongst participants and with coaches.



IMPLEMENTATION

Classroom Training

This 1-2 hour event sets the stage for the rest of the workshop. It familiarizes students with the Academics Afield program and covers the history of conservation, species biology, hunting strategy, ethics, and safety. Have a staff member of the university or your student intern reserve a room on campus for the event. It is helpful to recruit a qualified instructor from the college or guest speaker to speak about the target species biology or hunting strategy. This introduces more community resources and can introduce students to potential careers in conservation.

Share the Welcome to Academics Afield Presentation (found in the curriculum section of this toolkit) to cover the history of hunting and its role in wildlife conservation. In addition, prepare the students for the type of hunt in which they will participate. Presentations covering species biology and hunting strategy for deer, duck, dove, and squirrel are included in the curriculum section of this toolkit. Try to present information in a way that also prepares students for organizing a hunting expedition on their own. This includes scouting, interactive maps, topography resources, public land access, weather, appropriate attire, laws, licenses, and the correct equipment to bring on a hunt. Hand out and review the Hunter's Regulation booklets. Introduce the firearm that will be used in this program (crossbow, shotgun, rifle, etc).

We encourage making this classroom training interactive to keep the students engaged and interested. Bring examples of field tools, safety equipment, or ammunition for them to handle. Ask students questions and hand out prizes. Finally, incorporate breaks. Even the most invested student will need a rest after 50 minutes of lecture.



I have greater respect for the role that hunters play in protecting our environment.

Academics Afield Student

IMPLEMENTATION

Firearm Training

The firearm training component of Academics Afield walks all participants through safe firearm handling. This is usually an afternoon event ranging from 3-5 hours depending on size of the group and their skill levels. Often, the student participants do not have experience using firearms and find the training to be one of the most fun events in the workshop. It is interactive and they likely have more opportunities to use the firearm at this event than during the actual hunt.

Introduce the students to the type of firearm they will be using, how it works and its parts. Understanding terminology will improve their skill development when receiving shooting feedback and ensure safety measures are fully understood. Safety is your number one priority and must be discussed at the beginning of the training prior to the students using the equipment. Test the students on the Cardinal Rules of Firearm Safety. Refer to the appendix for example shooting curriculum and safety briefing. Familiarize students with safe handling, carrying, loading, and unloading of the firearm. The goal of this event is to ensure the student is comfortable with the firearm, understands safety, and is sufficiently accurate so that they make ethical shots on an animal.

Utilize your unique resources including school shooting sports centers, state ranges, local shooting ranges, or private property. The hunting and shooting community are very receptive to educating the local students on the proper use of firearms. Use a technique for practice that will be applicable to what they will experience on the hunt. For example, if you are hunting deer, practice aiming at a stationary target, whereas for dove or duck, practice aiming at flying clays. Clean the firearms after the shooting training with the students, teaching the students proper technique. This continues to build confidence for the students. Schedule the firearm training close to the hunting event so that the students remember the training and techniques. Make sure the students leave feeling comfortable with the equipment and invite them to ask questions to ensure they're knowledgeable. Remind them of the excise tax paid on firearms and ammunition and that, as target shooters, they are contributing to wildlife conservation.

IMPLEMENTATION

Mentored Hunt

On the day of the mentored hunt, there will be many moving parts, but it can be the most meaningful aspect of Academics Afield for the students. Expect for this activity to take half a day on a weekend. Provide the option for students to meet at the school to carpool to the hunt location. Carpooling has the added benefit of students getting to know each other during the ride to the property. For an ideal hunt, there will be a 1:1 ratio of participants and coaches. If you are unable to find enough students with hunting experience to mentor the participants, recruit faculty members, staff from state agencies, public volunteers, or other members of the conservation community that want to assist with passing on the tradition.

How you prepare for the hunt will depend on the type of property to be hunted. If it is public land, scouting prior to the event is essential to setting students up at optimal locations. If it is private land, discuss with the landowner where the students should be placed. Including everyone in a group text prior to going afield allows communication throughout the hunt and helps participants stay in touch after the program.

Make sure the students are prepared for the type of hunting they will do (stalking, still hunting, hunting with dogs, etc.) and review this information with them prior to the hunt. Remind them of their Cardinal Safety Rules, expectations of land owners, ethics, and pertinent laws. Physically view their hunting licenses in advance or day of ensuring they are legal. Remind them of their contribution to conservation via their purchase. Speak with the coaches independently prior to mentoring about how best to guide the new hunters. Coaches need to be open to the participants' feelings; need to walk participants through a clean and safe shot; teach how to approach an animal post shot; and be willing to answer questions from the students without judgment. Coaches need to remember non-traditional hunters have different perspectives and to be sensitive to these nuances.

If no one has a successful harvest, discuss that this is part of hunting and mention the positive experiences that did happen. Teaching them to scout the area and look for game sign is still a lesson learned. Sometimes you see interesting signs of animal life that are not related to the target species that can be useful for the next workshop. Be prepared for field dressing harvests at the end of the hunt. Also, have a backup plan in case there are no successful harvests. For example, harvest an animal prior to the hunt and have it available for the field dressing demonstration. Students should be offered an opportunity to participate but do not force them to field dress the animal if they are not comfortable with it yet. Each student will progress at their own rate and have a different level of comfort. Remind them of their contributions to conservation via species population management achieved through legal regulated hunting.

IMPLEMENTATION

Game Meal

A wild game culinary social may sound intimidating but it doesn't have to be fancy. The goals of this meal are to allow students to prepare meat from a harvest, taste wild game, ask questions, tell stories, and above all socialize.

It is very impactful to teach participants how to prepare and cook the meat from a harvest. It is easiest to come prepared with game meat that is already cooked or easily cooked. It is okay if the meat provided is not from the target species for the hunt. Venison burgers are a favorite. They are a quick and easy option that allow students to participate in meal preparation. Some students will not be inclined to eat certain species, so having more than one protein option may make them feel more comfortable. Recall, even if we are not creating hunters, we want to create hunting advocates via positive experiences.

Allow ample time for students to eat and mingle with their peers and coaches. This socializing helps forge the lasting relationships necessary to sustain their hunting participation and foster a collegiate hunting community. This time spent laughing and retelling stories from the field is often the most memorable aspect of the hunt.

This is also a good time to debrief, conduct a Q&A, pass out handouts, and complete any evaluations. Sow the idea that participants this year, may be valuable student coaches next year. A mentor does not have to be an expert, just know more than the student and provide support. Provide them dates of the next workshop, resources available for independent replication, and remind them of their contributions to wildlife conservation.



A photograph of three individuals in camouflage attire standing in a field. On the left, a woman in a camouflage jacket and hat holds a rifle. In the center, a person with their back to the camera wears a blue backpack and a cap. On the right, a man in a camouflage suit and sunglasses also holds a rifle. The background features a row of tall, dried corn stalks on the left and a clear sky. The foreground is filled with green, low-lying vegetation. A large white title is overlaid across the center of the image.

CHRONICLES OF ACADEMICS AFIELD

CHRONICLES

Introduction

Academics Afield programming can look and function in many different ways between programs. The strongest programs tend to have significant support from non-governmental conservation organizations, state wildlife professionals, and university leadership. This three-legged stool approach allows for flexible student hiring, improved access, and effective recruitment of participants and coaches respectively.

The following examples of 2021 Academics Afield Programs demonstrate the unique stories of different programs, insightful lessons, and key takeaways. Differences came about due to the priorities, opportunities, and challenges of the region and conservation community.

Implementers strived to achieve the following criteria, but adaptations were made as outlined below. Identifying challenges, remaining flexible, and responding to evaluation is key to a program's success.

Fundamentals of Academics Afield

1. Educate new and existing hunters on conservation history and hunting's role in the North American Model of Wildlife Management
2. Implement program evaluations for a data-driven program design
3. Host 3-4 hunting workshops a year with each workshop offering species biology education, firearm training, a one-on-one mentored hunt, and a wild game culinary social
4. Coordinate via a student intern (Academics Afield Coordinator) with peer coaches enhancing immediate social support network
5. Integrate students to support structures and available resources for post program participation



A photograph of the University of Georgia's main archway at night. The archway is a dark, ornate metal structure with three pillars and a central arch. Two bright lights are mounted on the top of the arch. The archway is illuminated from below, and the scene is set against a backdrop of lush green trees and a clear blue sky. In the background, a white building with columns is visible. The text "UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA" is overlaid in white, bold, serif font across the center of the image.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Partners

- University of Georgia (UGA)
- UGA Warnell School of Forestry's Young Alumni Association
- Georgia Wildlife Federation (GWF)
- Georgia DNR - Wildlife Resources Division
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Ducks Unlimited
- Georgia Chapter of Safari Club International

Primary Contact

Coral Minchey
Academics Afield Facilitator
Georgia Wildlife Federation
cminchey@gwf.org
770-787-7887



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Program Description

Academics Afield at UGA was the first Academics Afield chapter established in 2019. It is led by an undergraduate student intern with guidance from staff at GWF. The program consists of 3-4 multi-week workshops a year, each focusing on a different species. The short duration workshop model is more flexible than extended programs and allows students to participate when their schedule allows. Interns recruit participants for programming prior to each individual workshop primarily by word of mouth to the natural resource focused students. This rolling recruitment method increases program exposure and ensures anyone who wants to participate has the opportunity to apply. Applications from alumni of previous workshops are given priority over other students to ensure these committed new hunters have continued access to mentoring. Selected participants complete hunter education online at their own pace prior to participation.

The student intern identifies qualified student coaches to provide one-to-one guidance to the students. Student coaches are invited to all trainings, but typically only participate in the mentored hunt. Often student coaches are incentivized by permitting them to hunt alongside or after participants. Venison burgers, campfires, and socializing at the post hunt meal can also be an enticing incentive. If the program cannot identify enough student coaches, GWF and other NGOs assist with coaching. The program provides dove, deer, duck, and sporting clays workshops.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Takeaways

GWF designed the program in partnership with a university that had significant support from college administration. The program has received continued engagement from college faculty. This has led to successful recruitment of participants and coaches.

Academics Afield at UGA secured funding via an endowment established by the UGA Warnell School of Forestry's Young Alumni Association to maintain the program in perpetuity.

Housing the program's firearms took some research and some patience. Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 925 (a)(1), firearms sold to a state department or agency are exempt from the requirements of the Gun Control Act. A public university is technically a state agency and is able to accept firearms. GWF donated firearms to UGA making them easily available for Academics Afield events.



UGA student intern providing firearm instruction to new duck hunter.



UGA student intern providing firearm instruction to new deer hunter.

A photograph of the North Carolina State University clock tower and a flag. The clock tower is a tall, slender, light-colored stone structure with a clock face near the top. The clock face is circular and features a central figure, possibly a bird or a person, surrounded by numbers. The tower is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. To the left of the tower, a flagpole holds the North Carolina state flag, which is blue, white, and red with a yellow emblem. The text "NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Partners

- North Carolina State University (NCSU)
- North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF)
- Wake County Wildlife Club
- NC Wildlife Resources Commission

Primary Contact

Dr. Liz Rutledge
North Carolina Wildlife Federation
liz@ncwf.org
919-833-1923



NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Program Description

Academics Afield launched at NCSU with NCWF. NCSU Faculty actively researches R3 efforts at college institutions making the partnership a great fit. NCWF and NCSU selected a dedicated PhD graduate student to implement the program. They marketed the program to potential participants as a competitive three-semester opportunity. The coordinator advertised the opportunity via list serves within all colleges and accepted students with varying degrees of study. The program held an info meeting, selected student participants for the year's cohort, and held their first firearm training workshop during spring 2021. This ensured students were committed and prepared to participate in the first fall hunt. By maintaining the same student participants for a longer period of time, the program developed a strong sense of community within the cohort and between the students and coaches.

The program established an enduring partnership with the local Wake County Wildlife Club, which has a vested interest in conservation, education, and preparing future hunters. The club provided hunter education courses, hosted firearm training events, and mentored hunt coaches. Students were able to access this support network even after completion of the program. The partnership with the Wake County Wildlife Club was essential in providing liability coverage for the range events and acquiring coaches for the program. This was found to be a beneficial model for future expansion of the Academics Afield program because there are numerous similar Wildlife Clubs across North Carolina.

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Takeaways

The program recruited a cohort of committed students for year-long participation to establish a strong community and increase confidence in participants. Participation waned throughout the year; however, this was found to be beneficial as the remaining students were able to get more practice and one-on-one guidance.

Expanding NCWF's liability coverage to include learn-to-hunt programming was not achievable. The program had to work with partners to provide insurance for events. They were able to obtain short-term limited policy coverage for a hunt, but the cost was not sustainable.

Identifying student coaches was challenging. Thankfully a few very experienced student coaches were retained and they participated in every event of the workshops. Additional support came from Hunter Education Instructors. They composed a majority of the coaching volunteers in the program and brought wealth of knowledge.



NCSU Academics Afield students and coaches socializing before a duck hunt.



NCSU student intern coaching a new duck hunter.

A large, multi-story red brick building with a prominent central clock tower. The tower has a white clock face and a dark, pointed roof. The building features numerous windows with white frames and a central arched entrance. The text "CLEMSON UNIVERSITY" is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image. In the foreground, there is a paved walkway, a small landscaped area with bushes, and a statue on a pedestal to the right. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Partners

- Clemson University
- South Carolina Wildlife Federation (SCWF)
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)
- Upstate Coon/Squirrel
- South Carolina Wildlife Partnership Council
- National Wild Turkey Federation

Primary Contact

BeBe Dalton Harrison
South Carolina Wildlife Federation
bebe@scwf.org
803-256-0670



CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Program Description

Academics Afield at Clemson University launched with SCWF. Clemson University Faculty had implemented R3 workshops previously making the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Science welcoming environs for a reoccurring learn to hunt program. SCWF was encouraged to work with the Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TWS) to identify participants, coaches, and interns. Students in professional organizations such as TWS tend to be ambitious and promising candidates for the Academics Afield Coordinator internship.

The program benefited from having their interns in student organizations to aid in marketing efforts. Student coaches and participants were recruited from TWS for semester long involvement. Most of these students were studying natural resources. Academics Afield at Clemson also partnered with the Student TWS Chapter on their Annual Buzzard Banquet- an event at the end of the academic year celebrating wild game. This event strengthened and expanded the students' hunting relationships and increased their comfort with wild game foods.

SCWF provided a variety of opportunities to the program via their strong partnerships with many other wildlife conservation organizations. SCDNR hosted an in-person hunter education seminar and hunts on special use property for participants.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Takeaways

Academics Afield at Clemson partnered with multiple entities to provide a variety of opportunities including in-person hunter education, firearm training, hog, deer, and squirrel hunting.

The program provided students hunting experiences on both public and private land. Hunting public land enables easier student replication, but can sometimes reduce harvest opportunity.

SCWF had to develop a strategy for scheduling events that considered the potential time conflicts students face. The program had to consult academic schedules, syllabi, sports calendars, and TWS conference dates when planning out their workshops.



Clemson students squirrel hunting.



Clemson students gaining skills and knowledge from local Game Wardens.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

KNOXVILLE

UT KNOXVILLE

Partners

- University of Tennessee Knoxville (UT Knoxville)
- Tennessee Wildlife Federation (TWF)
- Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)
- Delta Waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited

Primary Contact

Jeb Beasley
Tennessee Wildlife Federation
jbeasley@tnwf.org
615-925-9182



UT KNOXVILLE

Program Description

Academics Afield at UT Knoxville launched with TWF approaching UT Knoxville with the opportunity to establish a college learn-to-hunt program. TWF and their Hunt and Fish Hunt Academy already had multiple tools in their toolkit to lead a program such as Academics Afield successfully. They recruited a large cohort of 15 students. Participation waned when a new semester started because student's schedules changed and student coaches' priorities changed.

Their first workshop in Fall of 2021 was firearm focused. This was designed to be a solid foundation for the rest of the program. Students then experienced classroom education and a mentored hunt per species. Academics Afield at UT Knoxville students learned squirrel, dove, deer, waterfowl, and rabbit. In hindsight, the program would have preferred to include more shooting practice throughout the duration of the program both so students felt more prepared but also to emphasize how the excise tax on firearms and ammunition is related to conservation.

The mentored hunts were successful at teaching students biology and strategy; immersing students in nature; and allowing them to experience a hunt regardless of if there was a harvest at the end. Most of their hunts did not lead to harvests, thus regular culinary socials were not achieved. Programs can anticipate the possibility of not taking a harvest by bringing game meat to the event. Even if it is not the same species, the opportunity to try wild meat is influential to an individual's development as a hunter. This planning effort can extend to provide dressing and butchering learning opportunities as well.

UT KNOXVILLE

Takeaways

The TWF's Hunt and Fish Academy has a great partnership with the TWRA. By identifying common goals and identifying ways to help each other, the two organizations accomplish more together than they could individually.

By partnering with other groups on campus, such as Delta Waterfowl and Ducks Unlimited, the program was able to provide more experiences for students.

TWF, TWRA, and Ducks Unlimited pooled resources to continue funding Academics Afield at UT Knoxville and expand the program to other universities in the state.



UT Knoxville students after a successful dove hunt.



UT Knoxville students dove hunting.

BRAND GUIDELINES



LOGO VARIATIONS

Several Academics Afield logo variations are available to suit many contexts.



White on Translucent Academics
Afield Brown



White Transparent



Gray Transparent



Gray on White Backer

LOGO USAGE



Maintain a margin of 1/8 logo height.



DO NOT use on distracting backgrounds.



DO NOT stretch or skew.



DO NOT rotate.

TYPOGRAPHY & COLOR

H1: CAMBRIA BOLD, UPPER CASE, Academics Afield BROWN, 30pt min.

H2: Roboto Bold, Academics Afield Gray, 20pt min. (for presentations)

Body Text 1: Roboto Regular, Academics Afield Gray, 18pt min. (for presentations)

H3: Roboto Bold, Academics Afield Gray, 14pt (for documents)

Body Text 2: Roboto Regular, Academics Afield Gray, 12pt (for documents)

Footer 1: Roboto Regular, Academics Afield Brown, 12pt



Academics Afield Brown
RGB: 123/92/37
CMYK: 42/56/100/29
#7b5c25



Academics Afield Grey
RGB: 88/89/91
CMYK: 0/0/0/80
#58595b

IMAGERY

Content

Use only tasteful photos. Choose photos that convey the whole hunting experience from the field to the table (not just the kill).

Resolution

Source high resolution photos.

- 72ppi min. for screen use
- 300dpi min. for print applications

Color Consistency

When working with images from diverse sources maintaining color consistency can be a challenge. When appropriate, consider using a 15-75% opacity Academics Afield Brown filter on your images.



Unfiltered Pair



Filtered Pair



WELCOME TO ACADEMICS AFIELD



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



National
Wild Turkey
Federation



— & —



NSSF
The Firearm Industry
Trade Association



WHAT IS ACADEMICS AFIELD?

A collegiate hunting community that:

- Shows you hunting's critical role in conservation
- Teaches you to hunt safely and responsibly
- Empowers you to provide your own food
- Helps you build a welcoming community



HUNTING & SCIENCE BASED MANAGEMENT

- Today, hunting is a legal and regulated harvest of wildlife
- Biologists develop and regularly adjust regulations to protect wildlife populations from:
 - Over hunting
 - Over population
- Laws require meat be prepared for human consumption and not wasted
- Hunters played a key role in establishing these responsible practices

A woman with long brown hair tied back, wearing a grey tank top and dark pants, is working in a field of tall, dry grass. She is holding a shovel with a wooden handle and a metal blade. She has a large, worn canvas bag slung over her shoulder. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment with trees in the background. The text "HUNTING IS CONSERVATION" is overlaid in white, bold, capital letters across the center of the image.

HUNTING IS CONSERVATION

19th CENTURY MARKET HUNTING

- Wildlife was seen as an inexhaustible resource
- Market hunting became common to supply various commercial demands
- Over-harvesting began decimating many wildlife populations
- Sportsmen begin to realize the biggest threat to game was commercial exploitation



19th CENTURY MARKET HUNTING

- By 1840, noted sportsman and writer Henry William Herbert observed declines in:
 - Heath hen
 - Whitetail deer
 - Turkey
 - Snowshoe hare
- Dramatic declines in buffalo and passenger pigeon raised awareness of the problem



ERA OF DECIMATION

- Change was on the horizon but it was almost too late
- Many species were on the brink of extinction
- Four game species were lost forever
- The 1800's became known as the "Era of Decimation" for American wildlife



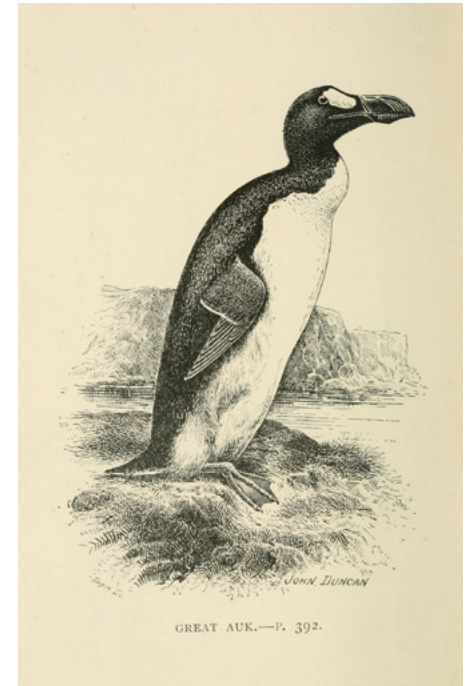
Passenger Pigeon



Heath Hen



Labrador Duck



Great Auk

CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — THE FOUNDERS

George Bird Grinnell

- An avid hunter and angler who campaigned for:
 - 1886 organization of the National Audubon Society
 - 1894 Yellowstone Park Protection Act
 - 1900 Lacey Act
 - 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act
 - Boone and Crocket Club formation
 - Establishment of National Forests
- Grinnell was an influential friend of Theodore Roosevelt



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — THE FOUNDERS

Theodore Roosevelt

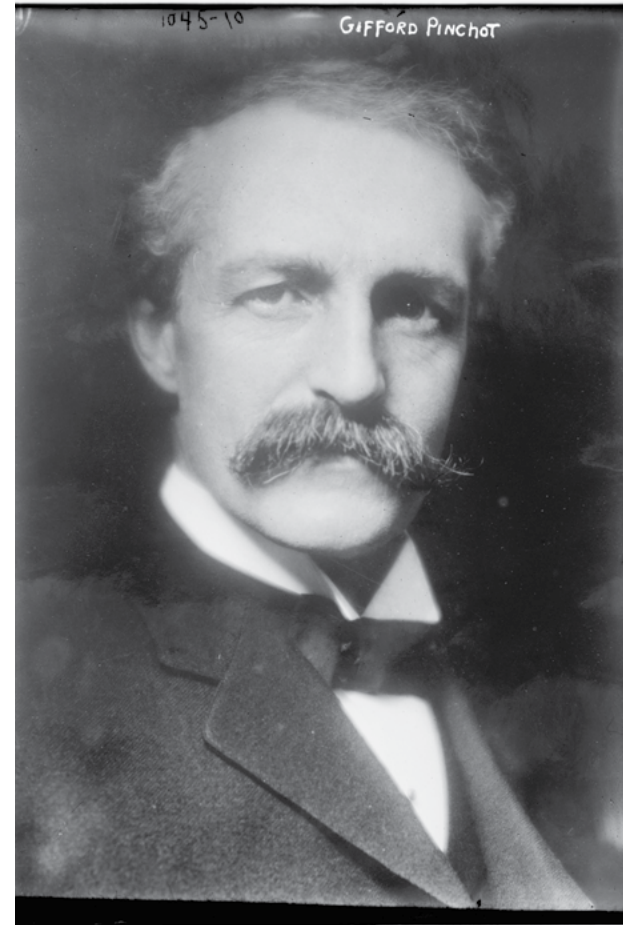
- Renowned hunter, explorer, and naturalist
- As U.S. President Roosevelt established:
 - The United States Forest Service (USFS)
 - 150 National Forests
 - 51 Federal Bird Reserves
 - 18 National Monuments
 - 5 National Parks
 - 4 National Game Preserves
- In total Roosevelt protected 230 million acres



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — THE FOUNDERS

Gifford Pinchot

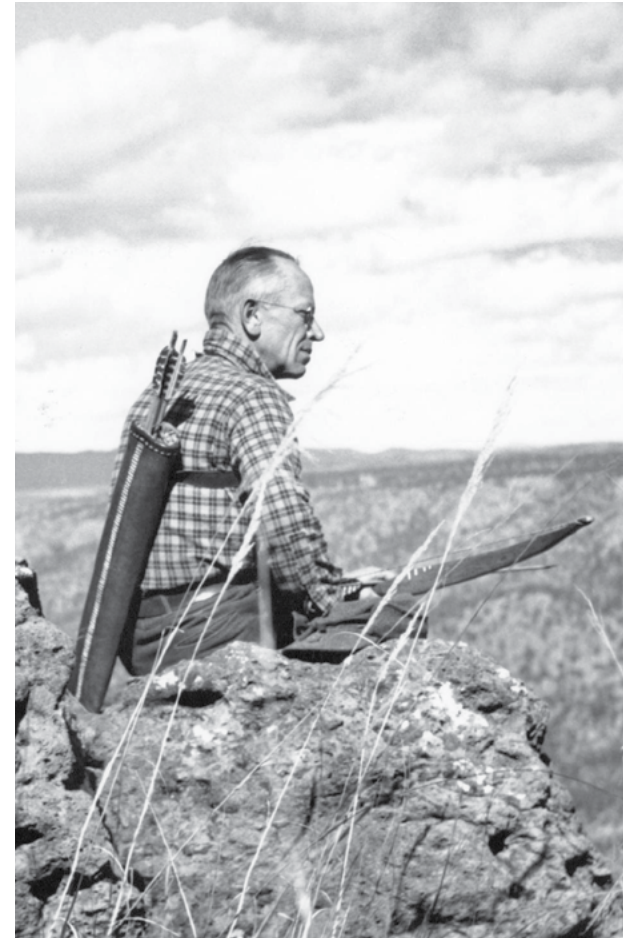
- Chief of the Division of Forestry and then USFS
- Primary founder of the Society of American Foresters
- Professionalized forest management
- Advocated for sustainable harvest of natural resources



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — THE FOUNDERS

Aldo Leopold

- A hunter, conservationist, educator, and writer
- Established responsible game management practices
- Influenced creation of the U.S. Wilderness System



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — A NEW PERSPECTIVE

The North American Model

- Wildlife resources are a public trust
- Markets for game are eliminated
- Allocation of wildlife is by law
- Wildlife can only be killed for legitimate purpose
- Wildlife is considered an international resource
- Science is the proper tool to discharge wildlife policy
- Democracy of hunting is standard

These principles mean that wildlife is owned by the people, not the landowner. Wildlife is managed by state and federal agencies according to science and law for the benefit of all people.

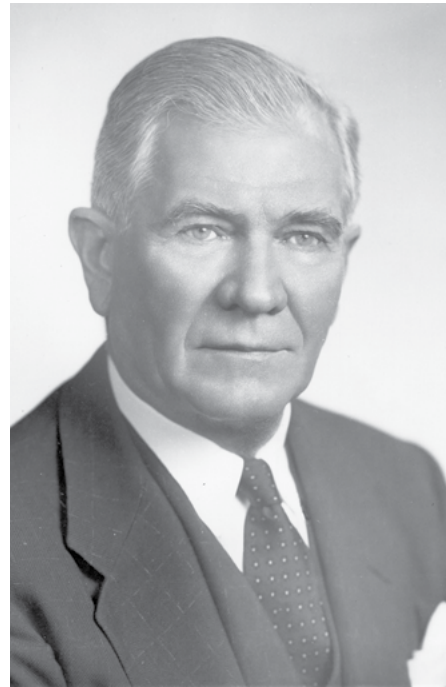
CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — FUNDING

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act 1937 (Pittman-Robertson Act)

- Established a funding stream for wildlife conservation by:
 - Placing an excise tax on manufacturers of firearms and ammunition
 - Distributing collected funds to states exclusively for wildlife management
- Supported by sportsmen and industry leaders (Federal & Remington Arms) alike



Pittman



Robertson

CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — FUNDING

Sport Fish Restoration Act 1950 (Dingell-Johnson Act)

- Established funding for fishery conservation by:
 - Placing an excise tax on fishing equipment manufacturers
 - Distributing collected funds to states exclusively for fishery management
- Wallop-Breaux Amendment of 1984 increased funding with excise tax of boat fuel



Dingell



Johnson

CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — FUNDING

How much does this contribute to conservation?

- Over **\$22.9 billion** in total since 1937
- Nearly **\$1 billion** in 2019 alone

* Sportsmen and Sportswomen Generate Nearly \$1 Billion in Conservation Funding

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/sportsmen-and-sportswomen-generate-nearly-1-billion-conservation-funding>



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — FUNDING

How is the money used?

- Wildlife habitat procurement and management benefiting game and non-game species
- Wildlife population management
- Enforcement of wildlife protection laws
- Hunter safety education
- Boating access improvements
- Angler and aquatic education programs



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — FUNDING

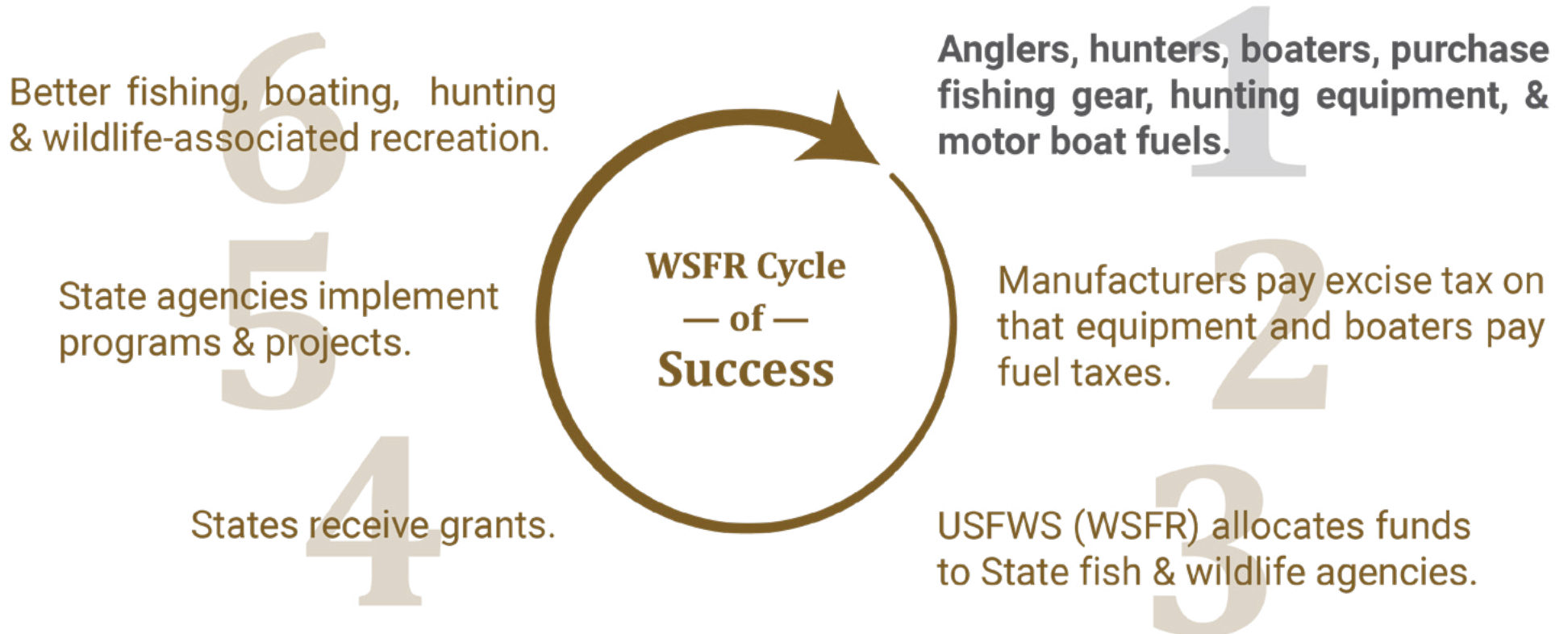
Funding Apportionment

- Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration (WSFR) funds are directed by the Federal Treasury and apportioned to the states using these formulas:
- Wildlife Restoration Apportionment Formula: 50% of funds are based on land area of the state and 50% is based on the number of license holders
- Sport Fish Restoration Apportionment Formula: 40% of funds are based on land/water area of the state and 60% is based on the number of license holders
- **Your hunting and fishing license purchases make a difference**



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — FUNDING

How It Works



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — RECOVERY

Pronghorn Antelope

- Population in 1900 — 13,000
- Population in Today — 1,000,000

Elk

- Population in 1900 — 40,000
- Population in Today — 1,000,000



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — RECOVERY

Wood Duck

- Population in 1900 — Near extinction
- Population in Today — 5,500,000

Turkey

- Population in 1900 — 650,000
- Population in Today — 7,000,000+



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — RECOVERY

Whitetail Deer

- Population in 1900 — 500,000
- Population in Today — 30,000,000



CONSERVATION MOVEMENT — YOUR ROLE

As a hunter you:

- Fund conservation with your hunting related purchases
- Harvest wildlife responsibly thus preventing overpopulation and related problems such as:
 - Environmental damage
 - Wildlife disease
- Serve as the eyes and ears of your state wildlife agency by:
 - Offering insight into species populations
 - Reporting poaching
- Develop a deep respect for nature and may influence your peers to develop the same

HUNTING BY THE NUMBERS

In the United States

- There are 15 million hunters
- Hunting has a \$110 billion economic impact
- Hunting supports 688,542 jobs
- Hunting provides \$32 billion in wages

* 2020 Economic Impact of Hunting and Shooting Technical Report by the Sportsmen's Alliance

A group of five people, three men and two women, are gathered outdoors in a grassy field. They are all wearing camouflage clothing. One man on the left is gesturing with his hands while speaking to the others. A woman next to him is eating. In the center, a woman in a camouflage jacket and tan pants stands with her hands on her hips. To her right, another woman in a camouflage jacket and orange safety vest stands with her hands on her hips. Further right, a man in a camouflage jacket and tan pants is holding an orange cup. On the far right, a man in a camouflage jacket and orange cap is leaning against the back of a black pickup truck. The truck has "4X4 OFF ROAD" written on its side. A water bottle is on the truck's bed. In the foreground, there are some items on the ground, including a black bag and a red cup. The background consists of a line of trees under an overcast sky.

GETTING STARTED

BEFORE WE GO AFIELD

Before we hunt let's discuss some of these prerequisites:

- Hunting Safely
- Hunting Responsibly
- Hunting as a Community

A woman with dark hair is shown in profile, looking out of a window. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden light from a sunset or sunrise illuminating the background. Outside the window, a savanna landscape with scattered trees is visible. The word "SAFETY" is overlaid in white, bold, capital letters across the center of the image.

SAFETY

SAFETY

As a hunter, your safety and the safety of those around you is your responsibility.

- Safe firearm handling
- Personal protective equipment
- Preparedness

SAFETY

Safe Firearm Handling

- Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
- Always point your gun in a safe direction.
- Never point your gun at anything you don't intend to shoot.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until your ready to shoot.
- **Be sure of your target, what's in front of your target, and what's beyond.**

SAFETY

Personal Protective Equipment

- Eye protection
- Ear protection
- Blaze orange
- Full body harness for tree stand hunting



SAFETY

Preparedness

- A hunt plan
- Proper attire
- Food and water
- Navigation aids
- First aid equipment

RESPONSIBILITY



KEEP IT LEGAL

Hunting legally is your responsibility.

- Attend a hunter education course (it's often required to purchase a hunting license)
- Buy a hunting license and carry it with you.
- Study and understand the rules and regulations that apply to the area you are hunting.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions! Your state wildlife agency, game wardens, and rangers are eager to help.

FAIR CHASE

What is fair chase?

Fair chase ensures the hunter does not have an unfair advantage over the game animal by balancing a hunter's capability and gear against the game animal's ability to escape. Fair chase is regulated by:

Law

Example: Shining deer (use of spotlights to hunt deer after dark) during hunting season is illegal in many states as it gives the hunter an unfair advantage.

Local Tradition

Example: In some regions hunting deer with dogs is a celebrated activity. However, in other areas it's not considered fair chase.

Individual Choice

Example: An expert rifle hunter may choose to hunt with a bow instead as bowhunting is more challenging and reduces the hunter's advantage over the game.

ETHICAL SHOTS

Ethical shots ensure a quick kill and reduce the chance of wounding. Consider the following when determining if a shot is ethical:

- Effective range of your equipment (rifle, bow, etc.)
- Your experience and skill with the equipment
- Position of the animal and the animal's anatomy for best shot placement
- The animal's location (Will you be able to retrieve the animal?)
- What lies in front of and beyond your target

LEAVE NO TRACE

Leave wild places & creatures better than you found them by:

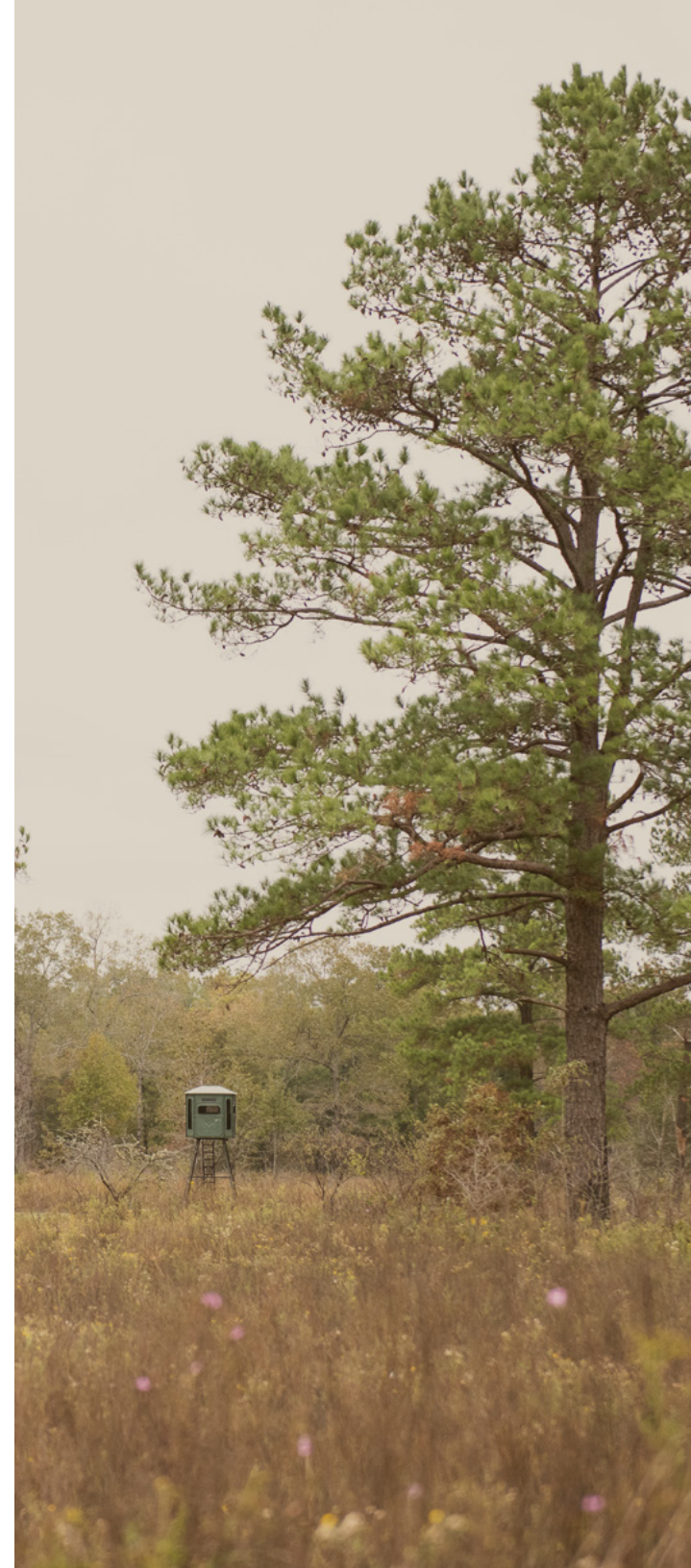
- Plan Ahead & Prepare
- Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Others

Learn more at: [Int.org](https://www.int.org)

OPPORTUNITIES & ETIQUETTE

There are hunting opportunities everywhere!

- Public Land
 - Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)
 - State Parks
 - National Forests
 - Wilderness Areas
 - Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
 - Municipal Properties
- Private Land
 - Farms
 - Ranches
 - Hunting Clubs
 - Hunting Leases



PUBLIC LAND ETIQUETTE

Abide by these principles when hunting on public land:

- Understand and follow all regulations/rules
 - General state/federal regulations
 - Specific rules that pertain to the property you are hunting
- Respect recreators and other hunters (public land is for everyone)
- Practice Leave No Trace

PRIVATE LAND ETIQUETTE

Abide by these principles when hunting on private land:

- **GET PERMISSION!** Always get permission from the landowner before accessing or hunting on private land.
- Understand and follow all regulations/rules
 - General state/federal regulations
 - Any rules the landowner may dictate
- Respect the landowner and show gratitude. Hunting on private land is a privilege.
- Practice Leave No Trace

Two hunters are kneeling in a field of tall grass and brush. They are wearing camouflage clothing and bright orange safety vests. The hunter on the left has his arm around the shoulder of the hunter on the right. The hunter on the right is holding a rifle. In the foreground, a deer is lying on the ground. The text "BUILD A COMMUNITY" is overlaid in the center of the image.

BUILD A COMMUNITY

BE WELCOMING

Hunting is for everyone regardless of:

- Race
- Gender
- Or other immutable characteristics

**We're all human beings!
Please be welcoming.**



BE UNDERSTANDING

Hunting can be intense. Some people may:

- Cry
- Grieve
- Dance
- Want a high five

**These reactions are all ok!
Please be understanding.**



BE AN AMBASSADOR

As a hunter you represent the hunting community as a whole. Be a good ambassador by:

- Respecting the animals you pursue and harvest
- Speaking eloquently when discussing hunting and sharing your whole experience from the field to the table (not just the kill)
- Taking and sharing only tasteful photos



A group of four people, two men and two women, are standing outdoors in a wooded area. They are all smiling and holding rifles. The man on the far left is wearing a dark blue t-shirt, camouflage shorts, a baseball cap, and sunglasses. The man next to him is wearing a red and white striped polo shirt, blue jeans, and sunglasses. The woman in the center is wearing a brown t-shirt, black pants, glasses, and a watch. The woman on the far right is wearing a red t-shirt with 'GEORGIA BULLDOGS' printed on it, light blue jeans with rips, and a watch. They are all wearing utility bags. The background consists of trees and a concrete wall. The text 'GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY



WHITETAIL DEER HUNTING



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



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— & —



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The Firearm Industry
Trade Association



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY

GADNR — Gino D'Angelo — Kevin Rose — Matt Goode — Moriah Boggess

WHY HUNT WHITETAIL DEER?

There are many reasons to hunt deer. Here are just a few:

- Whitetail deer are abundant with a herd of 30,000,000
- In many areas whitetail deer have few natural predators (other than humans)
- Many state wildlife agencies depend on hunters to prevent whitetail deer overpopulation and the resulting:
 - Habitat destruction
 - Starvation
 - Disease
- Whitetail deer are an excellent source of natural protein
- Your hunting license and equipment purchases help fund conservation

A young woman with a braid is shown in profile, holding a deer antler and examining it closely. She is wearing a green turtleneck. In the background, another person with long dark hair is visible, wearing a plaid shirt. The scene appears to be an educational or outdoor activity.

GETTING TO KNOW WHITETAIL

GENDER IDENTIFICATION

Males (Bucks)

- Typically larger body size than females
- Have antlers which are grown and shed annually
- New antlers will be covered by a protective velvet



GENDER IDENTIFICATION

Females (Does)

- Typically smaller body size than males
- Do not grow antlers



SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

In the continental U.S. you may encounter 2 deer species of the *odocoileus* genus.

- Whitetail Deer
- Mule Deer

Depending on your location you may need to differentiate between them.

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

Whitetail Deer

- Whitetail deer have a brown tail which they raise when alarmed revealing a white underside and rear
- Ears are round and erect
- Faces are mostly brown with white rings around the eyes and nose
- Antler tines grow from a single main beam



Buck



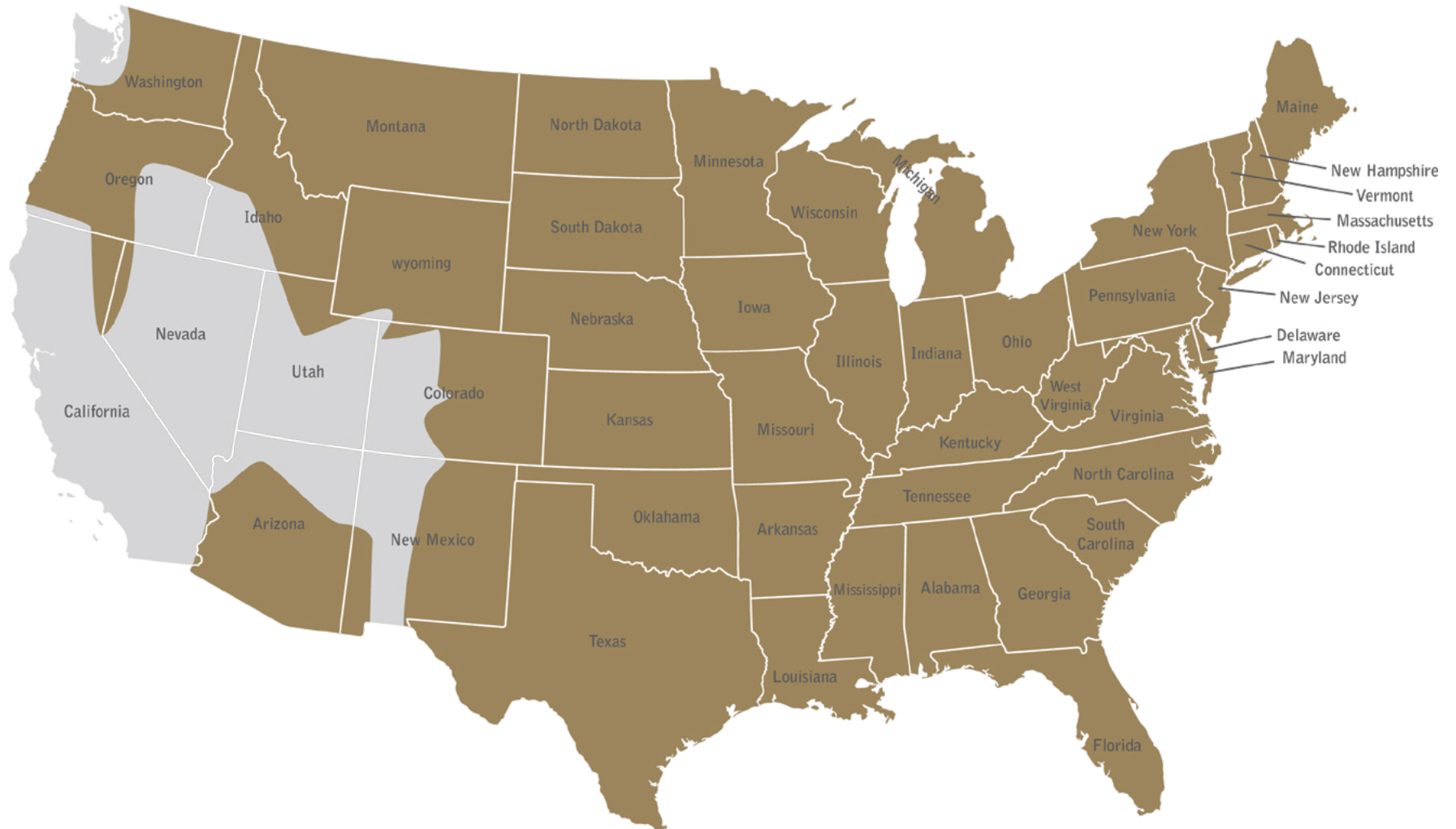
Doe



Fawn

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

Whitetail Deer Range



SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

Mule Deer

- A mule deer's rear features a large white patch and a rope like tail with a black tip
- Ears are large and spread outward (like a mule)
- Faces are mostly white from the nose to the eyes
- Antlers feature bifurcated (forking) tines



Buck



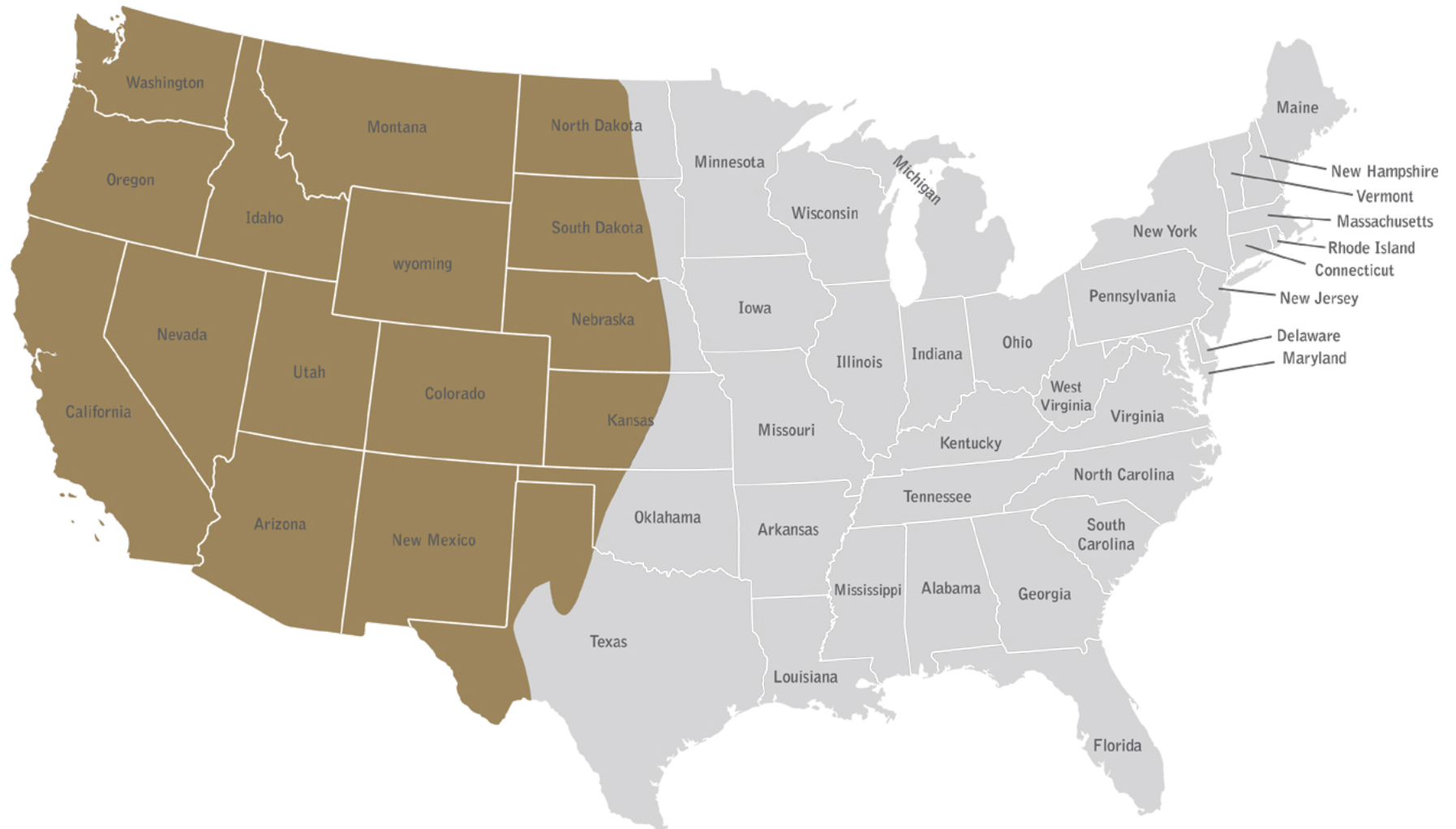
Doe



Fawn

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

Mule Deer Range



WHITETAIL DEER HABITAT

Whitetail deer are classified as **Generalists**. This means they easily adapt to live in a variety of habitats including:

- Mountains
- Coastal areas
- Agricultural lands
- Suburbs
- Deciduous forests
- Evergreen forests
- Swamps
- Marshlands

Whitetail have varied ranges depending on habitat and herd size. However bucks typically have a larger range (travel further) than does.

Identify hunting property with adequate amount of food, water, cover, and space



FOOD SOURCES

Whitetail deer are herbivores. Their food sources will vary depending on location, season, etc.

In southeast forests forage may include:

Forbs

- Beggar's lice
- Pokeweed
- Ragweed
- Partridge Pea
- Old-Field Aster
- Grape
- Goldenrod

Shrubs

- American Beautyberry
- Maple-leaf Viburnum
- Sumac
- Strawberry Bush

Trees

- Oak Saplings
- Blackgum
- Buds from numerous species

Hard Mast

- Acorns
- Beech

Soft Mast

- Persimmon
- Muscadine
- Blackberry
- Plum

BEHAVIOR

- Whitetail deer are the most shy and cautious deer in North America
- They are **Crepuscular**. This means they are most active around dawn and dusk.
- Whitetails generally use consistent trails between cover and food sources
- Bucks are typically solitary. However, they may form social groups outside of breeding season.
- Does are more social. An adult doe will usually be seen with several generations of her female offspring.

Choose a hunting location along a deer's trail to, within, or from food sources and hunt during dawn and dusk

SENSES

Sight

- Panoramic 250-300 degree vision
- Better night vision than day vision
- Difficulty seeing reds including hunter orange
- Excellent movement detection

Hearing

- Similar to human range but better at perceiving high frequencies

Remain as still as possible! When movement is required move slowly. Only move when the deer's vision is obstructed or directed elsewhere.

If you can see the deer's eyes the deer can see you.

SENSES

Smell

- 500-1000 times better than humans
- 297 million olfactory receptors (humans only have 5 million)
- Can discern 6 smells simultaneously

Understand wind direction and hunt in a location where deer will approach from upwind



BREEDING

Breeding season occurs annually in the fall and is known as the “Rut”

Testosterone increases in bucks prior to the rut. This causes:

- Shedding of velvet from antlers
- Behavioral changes including:
 - Skill sparring
 - Demonstrative sparring (to establish dominance hierarchy among bucks)
 - Territory communication (scrapes and rubs)

Courtship Phase

- Bucks start investigating does for signs of estrus
- Bachelor groups disband
- Bucks begin increasing their range (traveling further)

Tending Bond

- Bucks remain with a doe for 24-72 hours
- A doe is only receptive to breeding during estrous (approximately a 24 hour period)

BREEDING

Reproduction

- Fawns are born in the spring
- Does will give birth to 1-3 fawns
- The gestation period is 6.5 months (200 days on average)
- A fawn's birth weight is 6-7lbs
- Fawns are able to walk at birth
- A doe will hide her fawns for 3-4 weeks and nurse them 3-4 times daily
- The weaning period is 5-8 weeks
- Deer will reach reproductive maturity in 1.5 years on average

COMMUNICATION

Vocal communication is used for alarm/distress calls, maternal-neonate calls, and mating calls

Snort and Blow

- Used to alert nearby deer to possible danger

Grunt, Grunt-Snort, or Grunt-Snort-Wheeze

- Used as an aggressive call to establish dominance
- Used while tending to a doe in estrous

Bleat

- Used by does during the rut and by fawns to communicate with their mother

COMMUNICATION

Visual communication is used for alarm/distress, dominance display, and aggressive threats

- Whitetail deer raise their tail when alarmed which reveals the white underside and creates a flag to alert nearby deer to possible danger
- Dominance and threats may be signaled by dropping the ears, erecting body hair, flaring the nostrils, and turning to a broadside stance

If you hear or see a deer communicating alarm (snort, blow, raised tail), remain very still.

COMMUNICATION

Olfactory (scent) communication is the most important form of communication

Whitetail deer have a number of scent glands including:

- Nasal
- Forehead
- Preorbital (located at the inside corner of the eye)
- Tarsal (located on the inside of each hind leg)
- Metatarsal (located on the lower outside of each hind leg)
- Interdigital (located between the toes)
- Preputial (located in the genitals of bucks)

These are used to communicate social and reproductive status

SIGN

Rubs

- Bucks rub trees during late summer and early fall
- This serves two purposes:
 - It removes velvet from new antlers
 - It creates a territorial marker (rubbing deposits scent from the forehead glands)



SIGN

Scrapes

- Scraping removes the leaves and reveals the dirt below. The deer will urinate across the tarsal glands located on it's hind legs to deposit scent onto the exposed dirt.
- Deer will also deposit scent from their preorbital and forehead glands on branches above the scrape.
- Bucks and does make scrapes year-round but will do so more frequently during the rut.



SIGN

Tracks

- Whitetail deer hooves consist of two divided/cloven toes which leave distinctive tracks
- Tracks on very soft ground may feature two small impressions behind the toes. These are made by the deer's dew claws.



SIGN

Droppings

- The appearance of deer scat varies according to diet. Below are two examples.



SIGN

Sheds

- Whitetail bucks shed their antlers annually.
- If you look carefully you may find them.



Consider mapping out locations where you observe sign to understand and predict deer activity in an area

A high-angle photograph of two hunters in a field. They are wearing camouflage clothing and bright orange safety vests and caps. The hunter on the left is holding a small, dark, round object, likely a shell or bullet, in his hand. The hunter on the right is looking down at it. The background shows a natural, outdoor setting with grass and trees. The text "HUNTING WHITETAIL" is overlaid in the center of the image.

HUNTING WHITETAIL

TYPES OF HUNTING

Ground Hunting

- Ranges from free to expensive and offers differing degrees of concealment
- Still Hunting
 - This involves sitting and waiting for deer to come to you.
 - Success can be enhanced with a blind. Blinds can be store bought or constructed with natural materials.
 - This form of hunting is often necessary in dense forested terrain.
- Spot and Stalk
 - This involves searching for deer (generally using binoculars or spotting scopes) and then stalking into effective shooting range.
 - This is best suited open or semi-open terrain.
 - This is a rigorous and physically demanding form of hunting.



TYPES OF HUNTING

Elevated Hunting

- Ranges from moderate to very expensive and offers differing degrees of concealment
- This provides extended lines of sight for hunter, safer shooting angles, and positions the hunter above the deer's typical plane of sight and scent.
- Tree Stands
 - Portable, semi-portable, or stationary
 - Common configurations include lock-on, ladder, and climbing stands
- Elevated Blinds
 - Typically stationary
 - Many homemade and store bought types available
- Always wear a full body harness when participating in elevated hunting



CALLS

Some experienced hunters use calls to bring deer into shooting range.

- Rattling is a common calling method. This simulates the sound of antlers rattling as would occur when two bucks are fighting.
- Grunt, bleat, and snort-wheeze calls imitate whitetail deer vocalizations.
- Practice is key! While a good caller can bring deer in, a bad caller can easily drive them away.

EQUIPMENT

Rifles and Handguns

- Rifles and handguns feature a rifled barrel
- They fire a brass or steel cased cartridge that contains a projectile, powder, and primer



EQUIPMENT

Shotguns

- Shotguns are a versatile smooth bore firearm that may be used for many types of hunting
- They fire a shotshell typically composed of a brass base and plastic case
- For deer hunting, shotguns generally will be loaded with buckshot or a rifled slug



EQUIPMENT

Muzzleloaders

- Muzzleloaders utilize a separate projectile, powder charge, and primer
- The powder charge and projectile are loaded into the muzzle while the primer is loaded in the breech
- Many states have hunting seasons exclusively for muzzleloaders (primitive weapons)



EQUIPMENT

Longbows, Recurve Bows, Compound Bows, and Crossbows

- Bows fire an arrow (or “bolt” for crossbows)
- For deer hunting the arrow generally will be tipped with a broadhead
- Many states have special hunting seasons exclusively for bowhunting



EQUIPMENT

Other Items

- A hunting license
- Ear and eye protection
- Weather appropriate camouflage or earth toned clothing
- A blaze orange garment may be required
- Full body harness if applicable
- Binoculars (optional)
- Calls (optional)
- Equipment to care for your harvest (more on this later)
- General preparedness items (water, food, navigation aids, flashlight, first aid kit, etc.)

EQUIPMENT

Regulations

- Many states have regulations regarding the caliber/gauge of firearm that may be used
- For archery hunting, high tech sights, nocks, etc. may be restricted
- Always check local regulations when selecting equipment

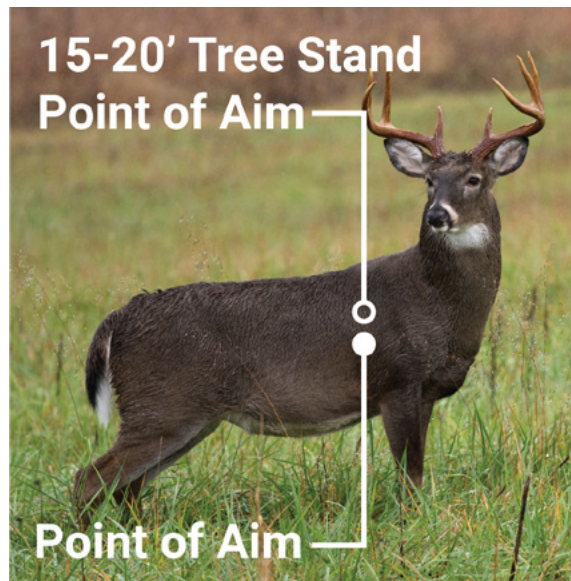
Responsibility

- Understand the range of your equipment and your skill with that equipment

ANATOMY & SHOT PLACEMENT

Ethical shots ensure a quick kill and reduce the chance of wounding. Understanding anatomy is essential to achieving an ethical shot.

- Target the heart and lungs
- A well placed shot to these vital organs will result in a quick kill
- Broadside shots are best



BLOOD TRAILING

If the deer does not fall immediately after the shot, blood trailing may be necessary.

- Make a mental note of the deer's location upon shot impact and at last sighting.
- Wait! The deer may not expire quickly. Beginning blood trailing too soon may cause the deer to run further.
- Start looking for blood at the aforementioned locations. The blood drops may be difficult to see so be patient and look carefully. Avoid walking along the deer's path as this may disrupt the blood trail.
- When you find blood, mark it's location. Note the color of the blood.
 - Bright red blood indicates a heart or lung shot (continue trailing)
 - Dark red blood indicates a liver or intestinal shot (wait before proceeding)
- When appropriate, begin looking for the next drops. Mark each blood sighting (this aids backtracking).
- Work quietly! Look up often to take in the big picture (the deer may be right in front of you).

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Know the Rules

Many areas have rules regarding tagging, reporting, transporting, and processing deer. Understand the applicable regulations before you proceed.



CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Options

There are a variety of methods to care for your harvest. These are the primary options:

- Option 1: Field dress your deer and then transport it to a professional deer processor to have it butchered into freezer-ready cuts.
- Option 2: Skin and field dress your deer, quarter it, and then transport the meat to a professional deer processor to have it butchered into freezer-ready cuts.
- Option 3: Skin and field dress your deer, quarter it, and then butcher it into freezer-ready cuts at home.

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Field Dressing and Skinning

After killing a deer the carcass must be cooled quickly to reduce chances of spoilage. Field dressing involves removing the deer's internal organs and is the first step toward cooling your deer.

If you plan to quarter your deer, the hide must be removed. This process is called skinning.

Quartering

This involves breaking down the deer's carcass into manageable sections. Preferences vary but common cuts produced are:

- 2 front quarters (front legs)
- 2 rear quarters (rear legs)
- 2 loins (backstraps)
- 2 inner loins (tenderloins)
- 2 racks of ribs
- Neck meat



CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Equipment

Common equipment required for field dressing, skinning, and/or quartering includes:

- Sharp knife
- Saw, loppers, or other heavy cutting tool for joints (optional)
- Rubber gloves
- Gallon-sized bags
- Large cooler and lots of ice
- Painter's tarp for cleanliness if working on the ground
- Gamble and rope if hanging the deer

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Other Considerations

- Show respect and gratitude for your harvest.
- Take and share only tasteful photos.
- Transport your deer discretely as to not alarm others.
- The deer remains you leave behind will serve as a valuable food source for other wild creatures. However, dispose of the remains in an area not frequented by humans or pets.

Additional Resources

- Hank Shaw
- Meat-Eater
- Your state wildlife agency website



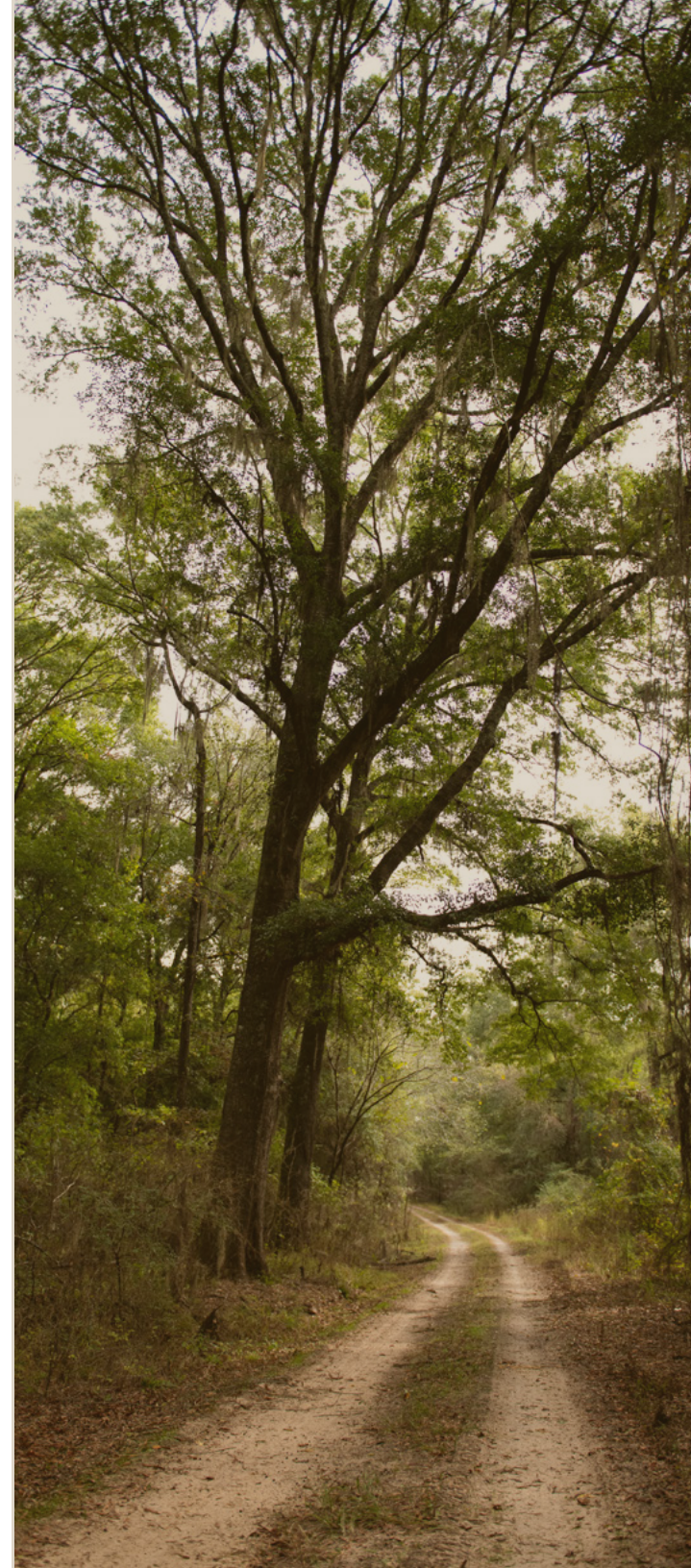


PLANNING YOUR HUNT

PLAN YOUR HUNT

Planning begins long before deer season. Below is the general process.

- Scout potential hunting locations
- Select a hunting location(s) based on the information gathered during scouting
- Finalize your plan



DIGITAL SCOUTING

Free digital tools can be a great asset before you go afield.

- Google Earth
 - Historic satellite imagery (This can provide insights into logging activity, burn areas, beetle kills, etc.)
 - Topographic maps
 - Endless map overlays
- County Tax Assessor Online Property Records
 - Land boundaries
 - Property ownership information
- Weather Sites and Apps
 - Forecasted conditions
 - Historic conditions

There are also paid digital tools that combine many of the aforementioned features.

- onX, GOHUNT, HuntWise, HuntStand, Gaia GPS Premium, Etc.

PHYSICAL SCOUTING

Scouting on location provides invaluable information including:

- Deer sign (rubbed trees, scrapes, game trails, droppings)
- Food sources
- Deer travel corridors, funnels, bedding areas, etc.
- Wind direction
 - Predominate wind direction
 - Thermals (warming air in the morning will rise uphill and cooling air in the evening will sink downhill)
- Access
 - Where can I park my vehicle?
 - Can I get in and out of the area safely in the dark?
 - If I kill a deer, can I get the deer out of the area?
- Potential locations for blinds or tree stands

Understand the rules for any location before visiting. Always ask permission before entering private land. DO NOT TRESPASS!

SELECT A LOCATION

Now that you've done some scouting, select the best location. Ask yourself the following:

- Where will I most likely find deer?
- Is accessing and retrieving a deer from this location feasible?
- How will wind direction and weather impact my hunt in this location?
- Do I understand the hunting rules and regulations for this location?

MAKE A PLAN

Now that you've selected a location, finalize your plans:

- Select the best hunting method and equipment for your location.
- Gather equipment and supplies.
- Familiarize yourself with your equipment and practice your shooting skills.
- If applicable, set up infrastructure (blinds, tree stands, etc.) in advance.
- **Use a lifeline!** Always share your hunt plan with a trusted individual outside of your hunting party. Let them know where you'll be and when you expect to return.



A woman with tattoos on her left arm, wearing a blue polo shirt, is cooking in a kitchen. She is holding a metal strainer with a large amount of green and red vegetables. The kitchen has wooden cabinets and a countertop with various items like a blender and a cutting board. The text "GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY



WATERFOWL HUNTING



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ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY
GADNR — Dale D. Humburg — Kara Nitschke

WHY HUNT WATERFOWL?

There are many reasons to hunt waterfowl. Here are just a few:

- Your hunting license and equipment purchases help fund conservation.
- Waterfowl hunting will introduce you to unique habitats, amazing scenery, and unforgettable experiences.
- Waterfowl hunting is fun!
- A crispy roast duck is delicious and providing your own food is rewarding.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service depends on hunter harvest data to set regulations and maintain healthy waterfowl and migratory bird populations.

A male mallard duck is shown in profile, facing left, with its wings fully extended. The duck's head is turned slightly towards the viewer. It has a distinctive green cap, a red eye, and a bill that is red at the base and yellow at the tip. The neck is a mix of brown and white, and the body is primarily brown with a white patch on the side. The wings are spread wide, revealing a mix of brown, grey, and blue feathers. The duck is standing in shallow water, with some ripples visible around its feet. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brownish-green.

GETTING TO KNOW WATERFOWL

TAXONOMY

Waterfowl Classification

- Order: Anseriformes
- Family: Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Swans)
- Subfamily: Anserinae (Geese and Swans)
- Subfamily: Anatinae (True Ducks)
 - Tribe Anatini (Dabbling Ducks)
 - Tribe Aythyini (Diving Ducks)
 - Tribe Mergini (Sea Ducks)
 - Tribe Oxyurini (Stiff Tailed Ducks)

CHARACTERISTICS

Geese and Swans

- K Selected (long gestation & slow maturation)
- One Complete Molt (shed old feathers & grow new feathers)
- Monogamous (mate for life)
- Male & Female Raise Young
- Breed at 2-3 years
- No Renesting
- Sexes Monomorphic (males & females look the same)

Ducks

- R Selected (short gestation & quick maturation)
- Two Molts Per Year
- Temporary Bonds
- Female Raises Young
- Breed at 1 year
- Will Renest
- Sexes Dimorphic (males & females look different)

CHARACTERISTICS

Dabbling Ducks

- Legs at center of body
- Smaller foot than divers
- Generally have iridescent speculum (patch of distinct color on secondary wing feathers)
- Usually swim with tail held above water
- Tip head and body into water to feed while the tail remains above the surface
- Spring off water surface to take flight

Diving Ducks

- Legs at rear of body
- Large foot
- Generally have dull speculum
- Usually swim with tail close to water
- Dive completely below water to feed
- Run along water's surface to take flight

DABBLERS

Dabbling species include:

- Green-winged Teal
- Mottled Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- Blue-winged Teal
- Cinnamon Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Gadwall



DIVERS & STIFF-TAILED DIVERS

Diver species include:

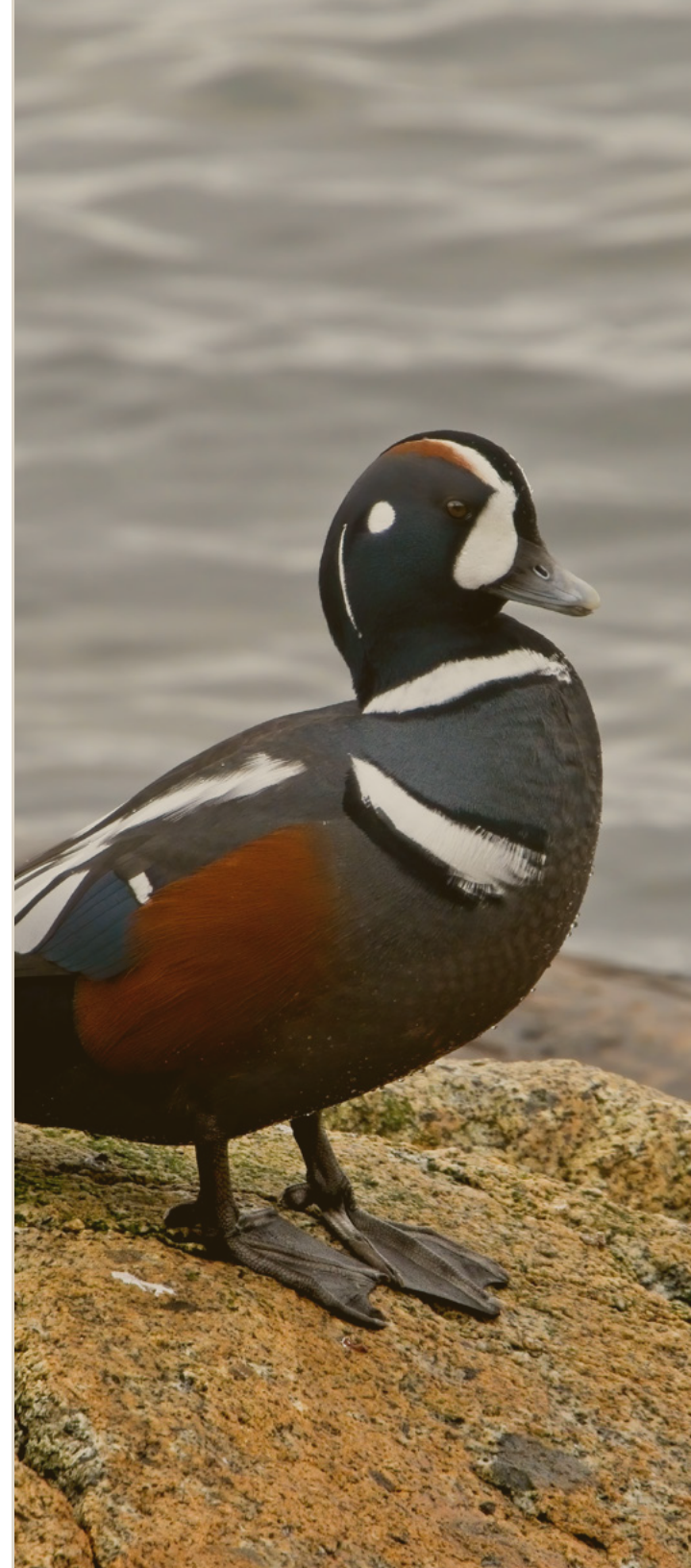
- Canvasback
- Redhead
- Ring-necked Duck
- Greater Scaup
- Lesser Scaup
- Ruddy Duck
- Masked Duck
- American Wigeon



SEA DUCKS

Sea Duck species include:

- American Black Duck
- Eiders
- Scoters
- Harlequin Duck
- Oldsquaw
- Goldeneyes
- Bufflehead
- Mergansers



MIGRATION

Waterfowl fly long distances to find resources needed for reproduction and survival.

- The northern pintail duck for example will winter in Central America, Mexico, and the southern U.S. However, they will migrate north into Canada and Alaska to breed and nest once the ice breaks up.
- Almost all waterfowl migrate
- The migration is triggered by a number of factors including:
 - Day length
 - Temperature
 - Hormonal changes
- Waterfowl navigate these vast distances using:
 - Topographical features
 - Position of the sun and stars
 - And even the earth's magnetic field

MIGRATION CORRIDORS



HABITAT

Waterfowl depend on wetlands. Examples of wetland habitats include:

- Seasonal wetlands
- Beaver ponds
- Marshes
- Swamps
- Rivers
- Lakes/reservoirs
- Open ocean

- The type of wetland preferred by each species is dependent on the food the wetland supports. For example:
 - Dabbling ducks usually feed on seeds and submerged leafy vegetation. They're usually found on shallower water.
 - Diving ducks typically feed on fish, mollusks, and aquatic plants/roots. They often dive to considerable depths to feed or escape danger. They're usually found on larger deeper bodies of water.

MOVEMENT PATTERNS

Typical waterfowl movement patterns are as follows:

- At or near sunrise the birds will come off the roost
- They'll move to a feeding area
- After feeding, the birds will retreat to a sheltered location to loaf and preen
- In late afternoon, they may return to the feeding area
- At sunset the birds will return to the roost

Be at your hunt location prior to sunrise. Many hunters don't hunt evenings to let the waterfowl rest.

LEARN MORE

There are many resources to discover more about waterfowl in your area. Here are just a few.

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Your state's wildlife agency
- Conservation groups such as Ducks Unlimited





HUNTING WATERFOWL

TYPES OF HUNTING

Pass-shooting

- This involves sitting stationary and shooting birds as they fly over
- Location selection is key for pass-shooting as the hunter must be positioned on the route birds will take between roosting and feeding areas

TYPES OF HUNTING

Decoy Hunting

- This is similar to pass-shooting but involves placing waterfowl decoys near your location to entice birds to come in shooting range
- The number of decoys can range from 12 to over 100
- Decoys must be very visible from the sky or they will go unnoticed by passing birds
- Decoys should be placed so that there is an open space for birds to land among them



TYPES OF HUNTING

Jump-shooting

- This involves crawling, walking, running, paddling/rowing, or drifting within shooting range of birds on the water or land and then flushing (jumping) them into the air.
- Stealth is essential when stalking into shooting range
- If you're using a boat, remember it is illegal to shoot from a watercraft that is under motor power or in motion resulting from motor power. Always wear a personal flotation device in a boat.

ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUES

Some experienced hunters use calls to bring birds into shooting range.

- There are calls for almost every waterfowl species and hunting situation.
- Practice is key! While a good caller can bring birds in, a bad caller can easily drive them away.

Dogs

- Many hunters will use dogs to retrieve downed birds



CONSIDERATIONS

Waterfowl hunting requires concealment.

- A hunter wading in a timbered wetland can achieve concealment by simply hiding amongst tree trucks
- Blinds on shore or on a boat offer very effective concealment. These blinds may be store bought or constructed with natural materials.

Wind and position

- Waterfowl prefer to land and take off into the wind.
- Typically it's best to choose a location with the wind at your back. Having birds approach from the front is best for shot opportunities and maintaining concealment.
- Situating yourself in a crosswind is another good option.



EQUIPMENT

Firearms

- Shotguns (12 and 20 gauge are most common)
- Regulations often require a magazine plug to limit shotgun capacity
- A choke appropriate to the ammunition used
- Federally approved nontoxic birdshot size “F” or smaller
- Possession of lead shot while waterfowl hunting is illegal
- Always check local regulations when selecting equipment.

EQUIPMENT

Other Items

- A hunting license
- Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (waterfowl are federally regulated)
- Ear and eye protection
- Weather appropriate camouflage or earth toned clothing
- Waders
- Personal flotation device (if hunting from a boat)
- Equipment to care for your harvest (more on this later)
- General preparedness items (water, food, navigation aids, flashlight, first aid kit, etc.)



SAFE & ETHICAL SHOTS

In addition to the basic rules of safe firearm handling consider the following:

- Know every hunter's position in your area
- Establish a safe zone of fire
- Don't shoot birds over another hunter's position
- Things get dirty when you're trudging through the mud. Obstructed shotgun barrels and muddy shotshells can be very dangerous! Ensure your barrel is clear and shells are clean.
- Allow birds to come within 40 yards before shooting.
- With exception of specific situations, shooting birds in flight is always encouraged as it is considered fair chase.

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Know the Rules

There are Federal and local rules regarding possession, reporting, field dressing, and transporting waterfowl. Understand the applicable regulations before you proceed.



CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Field Dressing

There are various techniques for field dressing waterfowl. Here are three common methods.

- **Breasting:** This simple method involves splaying the skin open and removing and retaining the breasts.
- **Skinning:** This method involves peeling the skin from the breasts and legs. Then removing and retaining them.
- **Plucking:** This method involves plucking the duck, removing the head, feet, wings and entrails, and retaining the whole bird with the skin.

**In many areas if you field dress your waterfowl in the field, an intact head or one fully feathered wing must remain attached during transportation!
Check your local regulations!**

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Equipment

Common equipment required for field dressing includes:

- Sharp knife and/or shears
- Rubber gloves
- Gallon-sized bags
- Cooler and ice

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Other Considerations

- Show respect and gratitude for your harvest.
- Take and share only tasteful photos (piles of deceased waterfowl may alarm others)
- The waterfowl remains you leave behind will serve as a valuable food source for other wild creatures. However, dispose of the remains in an area not frequented by humans or pets.

Additional Resources

- Hank Shaw
- Meat-Eater
- Your state wildlife agency website



A person wearing a grey knit beanie, a dark green Carhart jacket, and dark pants is standing in a swampy forest. They are holding a long rifle across their shoulder. The background consists of tall, thin trees and a body of water with some vegetation. The text "PLANNING YOUR HUNT" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

PLANNING YOUR HUNT

PLAN YOUR HUNT

Planning begins before you go afield. Below is the general process.

- Research your target species
- Scout potential hunting locations
- Select a hunting location(s) based information gathered during scouting
- Finalize your plan



RESEARCH

Understanding the waterfowl species in your area is key to a successful hunt. Develop a firm understanding of the following:

- Species and sex identification
- General and species specific regulations
- Preferred food sources
- Habitat preferences

SCOUTING

Now that you understand your target species, use a combination of digital and physical scouting to evaluate hunting locations. Consider the following:

- Proper habitat
- Food sources
- Wind direction
- Concealment opportunities for hunters
- Access: Can I get in and out of the area safely in the dark?
- Retrieval: If I kill a bird here, can I retrieve it?

Understand the rules for any location before visiting. Always ask permission before entering private land. DO NOT TRESPASS!

SCOUTING

Free digital tools can be a great asset while scouting.

- Google Earth
 - Satellite imagery
 - Topographic maps
 - Endless map overlays
- County Tax Assessor Online Property Records
 - Land boundaries
 - Property ownership information
- Weather Sites and Apps
 - Forecasted conditions
 - Historic conditions

There are also paid digital tools that combine many of the aforementioned features.

- onX, GOHUNT, HuntWise, HuntStand, Gaia GPS Premium, Etc.

SELECT A LOCATION

Now that you've done some scouting, select the best location. Ask yourself the following:

- Where will I most likely find my target species?
- Is accessing and retrieving birds from this location feasible?
- How will wind direction and weather impact my hunt in this location?
- Do I understand the hunting rules and regulations for this location?

MAKE A PLAN

Now that you've selected a location, finalize your plans:

- Select the best hunting method and equipment for your location.
- Gather equipment and supplies.
- Familiarize yourself with your equipment and practice your shooting skills.
- **Use a lifeline!** Always share your hunt plan with a trusted individual outside of your hunting party. Let them know where you'll be and when you expect to return.



A woman with a grey knit hat and a green blanket is sitting in a green folding chair on a log by a lake. The lake reflects the surrounding trees, which have some autumn-colored leaves. A rifle is lying on a log in the foreground. The scene is outdoors during the day.

GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY



DOVE HUNTING

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



National
Wild Turkey
Federation



— & —



NSSF
The Firearm Industry
Trade Association



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY

GADNR — Cornell Lab of Ornithology — Dr. Campbell Joseph Nairn — Miles Brown
Reggie Thackston

WHY HUNT DOVE?

There are many reasons to hunt dove. Here are just a few:

- Your hunting license and equipment purchases help fund conservation
- Dove hunting is an active and social pursuit (you don't have to be super quiet)
- It's appropriate for the whole family
- Dove hunting is fun! Its the most popular game bird in the U.S.
- Bacon-wrapped dove jalapeno poppers are delicious

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service depends on hunter harvest data to set regulations and maintain healthy dove and migratory bird populations.

A photograph of a dove perched on a tree branch. The dove has a light brown head and neck, a dark beak, and a large, dark eye. Its body is covered in light-colored feathers with dark spots on the wings. The background is a soft, out-of-focus natural setting. The text "GETTING TO KNOW DOVE" is overlaid in white, bold, serif font across the middle of the image.

GETTING TO KNOW DOVE

MOURNING DOVE

Characteristics

- Gray to brown coloration with black spots on wings and bordering tail feathers
- Plump body with small head and beak
- Long pointed tail (unique among U.S. dove species)



MOURNING DOVE

Behavior

- Fly at speeds of 44-55 mph
- Very agile in flight and capable of sudden ascents, descents, and turns
- Feed rapidly on open ground by pecking and pushing litter aside (will not scratch at ground)
- Will store collected food in an enlargement of their esophagus called a crop and then fly to a perch to digest the meal

MOURNING DOVE

Habitat

- Generally prefer large expanses of open country, scattered trees, and wooded edges such as:
 - Grasslands
 - Agricultural fields
- Prefer water sources (ponds, puddles, streams) with little surrounding vegetation
- Dove will avoid dense timber and swamps

Don't ignore neighboring property when evaluating a dove field. Consider the totality of dove habitat and resources in the area.



MOURNING DOVE

Food Sources

- Seeds
- Cultivated grains
- Wild grasses
- Weeds
- Herbs
- Occasionally berries and snails
- Can drink brackish water

A well maintained dove field provides bare ground with easy access to mature food source.



MOURNING DOVE

Nesting

- Nests are built among dense foliage in tree branches, vines, etc.
- In western habitats nests may be built on the ground
- Will nest in urban and suburban settings
- Nests are a flimsy construction composed twigs and stems with little insulation
- Will reuse nests built by other species

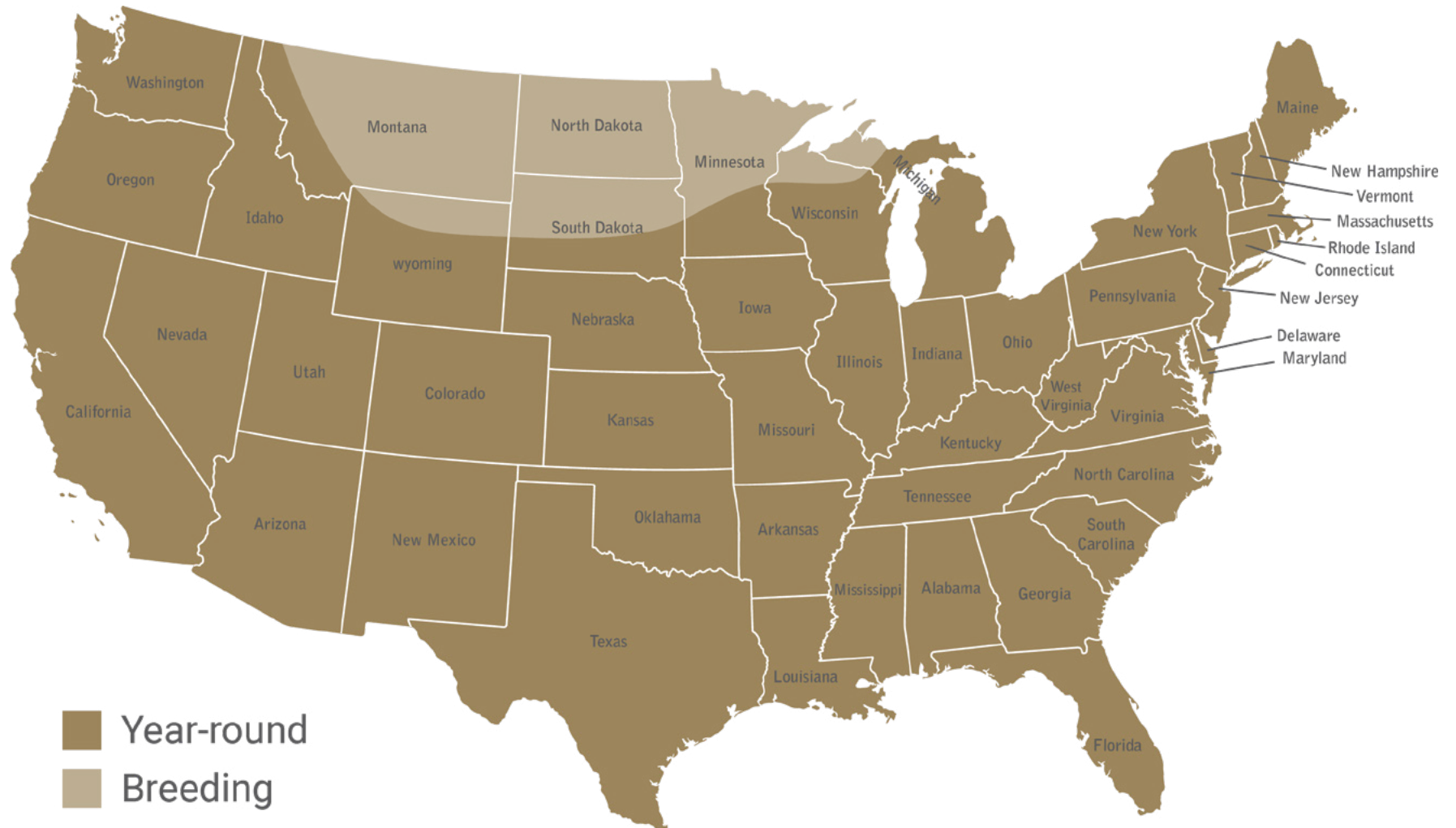
MOURNING DOVE

Reproduction

- A clutch consists of 2 eggs
- 1-6 broods per year (1-3 in the southeast)
- Incubation period is 14 days
- Offspring hatch with closed eyes and sparse cream colored down
- They are helpless and dependent on adults for warmth
- Nestling period is 12-15 days

MOURNING DOVE

Range



RELATED SPECIES



Common Ground Dove



White Winged Dove



Eurasian Collared Dove



Rock Dove or Rock Pigeon



HUNTING DOVE

TYPES OF HUNTING

Pass-shooting

- This involves sitting stationary on a dove field and shooting birds as they fly over
- Some hunters will use dogs to retrieve downed birds

Decoy Hunting

- Similar to pass-shooting except stationary or movement decoys are used to attract birds

Falconry

- Properly permitted falconers may use raptors (predatory birds) for dove hunting



EQUIPMENT

Firearms

- Shotguns (12 and 20 gauge are most common)
- A choke appropriate to the ammunition used
- Birdshot #2 or smaller is typically required (some areas require lead-free shot)
- Federal regulations require that repeating shotguns be plugged to limit shell capacity to 3
- Always check local regulations when selecting equipment.



EQUIPMENT

Other Items

- A hunting license
- Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (doves are federally regulated)
- Lots of ammunition
- Ear and eye protection, weather appropriate camouflage or earth toned clothing, and a hat with a brim
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- A chair, stool, or 5 gallon bucket
- Lots of water
- Decoys (optional)
- Equipment to care for your harvest (more on this later)
- General preparedness items (water, food, navigation aids, flashlight, first aid kit, etc.)

SAFE SHOTS

In addition to the basic rules of safe firearm handling consider the following:

- Never shoot below a 45 degree angle. **DO NOT shoot low birds!**
- Know every hunter's position on the field
- Never shoot birds over another hunter's position
- Stay in your position

Consider walking to your location on the field in blaze orange so other hunters can see your location. Be sure to remove and conceal your orange garment once the hunt begins to avoid alarming the dove.

DOVE TIPS

Consider the following for a successful hunt:

- Ensure hunters are spread out evenly around the field
- Select a location that provides concealment but doesn't limit visibility (at the wood line, among tall grass, etc.)
- Avoid unnecessary movement. Dove are very aware of movement.
- Allow doves to come within 25–35 yards before shooting.
- Swing through the dove, pull the trigger, and follow through with the shotgun swing in one smooth, continuous movement.



Image courtesy of
Tennessee Wildlife Federation

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Know the Rules

There are Federal and local rules regarding possession, reporting, field dressing, and transporting dove. Understand the applicable regulations before you proceed.



CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Field Dressing

There are various techniques for field dressing dove. Here are two common methods.

- Breasting: This simple method involves splaying the skin open and removing and retaining the breasts.
- Plucking: This method involves plucking the dove, removing the head, feet, wings and entrails, and retaining the whole bird with the skin.

**In many areas if you field dress your doves in the field, an intact head or one fully feathered wing must remain attached during transportation!
Check your local regulations!**

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Equipment

Common equipment required for field dressing includes:

- Sharp knife and/or shears
- Rubber gloves
- Gallon-sized bags
- Cooler and ice

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Other Considerations

- Show respect and gratitude for your harvest.
- Take and share only tasteful photos (piles of deceased dove may alarm others)
- The dove remains you leave behind will serve as a valuable food source for other wild creatures. However, dispose of the remains in an area not frequented by humans or pets.

Additional Resources

- Hank Shaw
- Meat-Eater
- Your state wildlife agency website



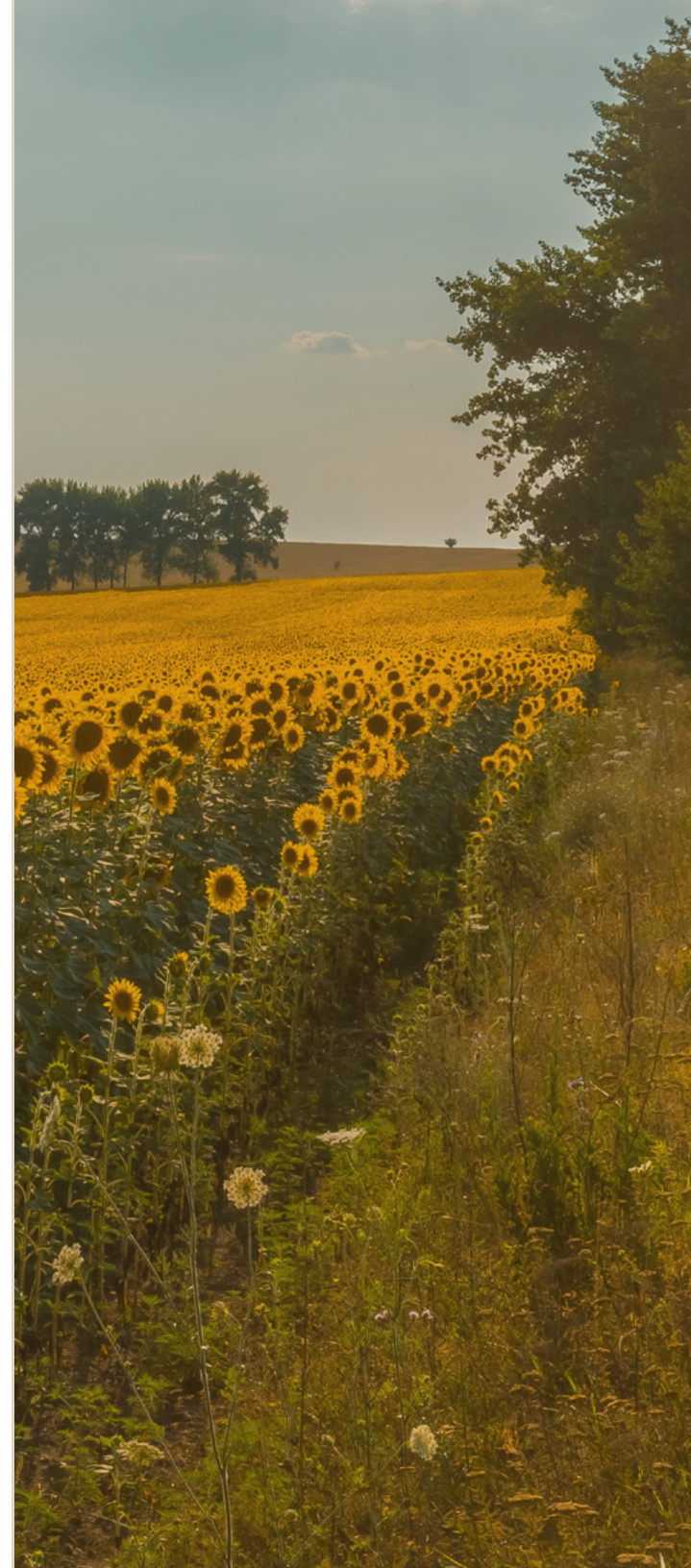
A photograph of two men in a field of tall grass and corn stalks. The man on the left is wearing a green t-shirt, a camouflage cap, and sunglasses, holding a shotgun. The man on the right is wearing a camouflage t-shirt, a blue and white cap, and holding a shotgun. The text "PLANNING YOUR HUNT" is overlaid in the center in white, bold, sans-serif font.

PLANNING YOUR HUNT

PLAN YOUR HUNT

Planning begins before you go afield. Below is the general process.

- Research your target species
- Scout potential hunting locations
- Select a hunting location(s) based information gathered during scouting
- Finalize your plan



RESEARCH

Understanding the dove species in your area is key to a successful hunt. Develop a firm understanding of the following:

- Which dove species are in your area
- How to identify your target dove species in flight and differentiate it from non-game birds. Consider the following resources for dove identification:
 - Bird watching websites
 - Your state wildlife agency
- General and species specific regulations

SCOUTING

Managed Dove Fields

- Often fields on public and private land are managed specifically for dove hunting.
- Typically a quick internet search will reveal dove fields/hunts in your area.

Other Opportunities

Aside from managed fields, agricultural areas provide great dove hunting opportunities.

- Harvested wheat stubble
- Corn silage fields
- Harvested sunflower fields
- Farm ponds with exposed banks

SCOUTING

Free digital tools can be a great asset before you go afield.

- Google Earth
 - Satellite imagery
 - Topographic maps
 - Endless map overlays
- County Tax Assessor Online Property Records
 - Land boundaries
 - Property ownership information
- Weather Sites and Apps
 - Forecasted conditions
 - Historic conditions

There are also paid digital tools that combine many of the aforementioned features.

- onX, GOHUNT, HuntWise, HuntStand, Gaia GPS Premium, Etc.

SCOUTING

Use a combination of digital and physical scouting to look for these features:

- Fields with little ground cover and food (seeds, grain, etc.) on the ground
- Fields 10 acres or larger
- Fields in open areas rather than isolated in extensive woodlands
- Fields on ridges rather than in bottomlands
- Fields with easy access to water
- Perches (dead trees, power lines, etc.)
- Fields with cover to conceal a hunter (wooded edges, patches of tall grasses/crops)

Understand the rules for any location before visiting. Always ask permission before entering private land. DO NOT TRESPASS!

SELECT A LOCATION

Now that you've done some scouting, select the best location. Ask yourself the following:

- Where will I most likely find doves?
- Is accessing this location feasible?
- Do I understand the hunting rules and regulations for this location?

MAKE A PLAN

Now that you've selected a location, finalize your plans:

- Select the best hunting method and equipment for your location.
- Gather equipment and supplies.
- Familiarize yourself with your equipment and practice your shooting skills.
- **Use a lifeline!** Always share your hunt plan with a trusted individual outside of your hunting party. Let them know where you'll be and when you expect to return.



A person wearing a camouflage hat and a green long-sleeved shirt is sitting on a black bucket in a field of tall green grass. They are holding a rifle vertically. The background shows a dense line of trees under a clear sky. The text "GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY



SQUIRREL HUNTING



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



— & —



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY
GADNR — Olivia Menard

WHY HUNT SQUIRRELS?

There are many reasons to hunt squirrel. Here are just a few:

- Squirrels are abundant
- Many state wildlife agencies depend on hunting as an ethical and efficient way to maintain healthy squirrel populations
- Squirrels have historically been an easy and economical protein source. There are many delicious recipes and squirrel still graces many dinner tables today.
- Your hunting license and equipment purchases help fund conservation

A photograph of a squirrel perched on a tree branch. The squirrel is facing right, looking towards the edge of the frame. It has a greyish-brown body with a lighter underbelly and a long, bushy tail. The tree branch is thick and has rough, peeling bark. In the foreground, there are several long, thin pine needles. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a forest setting. The text "GETTING TO KNOW SQUIRRELS" is overlaid in white, bold, serif font across the middle of the image.

GETTING TO KNOW SQUIRRELS

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL

Characteristics

- Predominantly gray coat with white on underside of head and body
- Some may exhibit a brownish coloration
- Weight: 11-25 ounces
- Length: 15-20 inches



EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL

Habitat

- Dense stands of trees
- Prefer hardwood stands
- Abundant in both urban and rural areas
- Home territories span a few acres

Behavior

- During spring and summer they are most active in the morning and afternoon.
- In winter peak activity shifts to the afternoon.

Hunt in the morning or afternoon
in stands of deciduous trees.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL

Breeding

- Gray squirrels generally mate in winter and again in summer
- The gestation period is approximately 44 days
- Litters range from 1-8 offspring (2-4 is most common)
- Squirrels are blind and hairless at birth but will open their eyes after 4-5 weeks
- Young will be weened in 10 weeks

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL

Range



EASTERN FOX SQUIRREL

Characteristics

- Fox squirrel coloring varies. Below are some examples:
 - Solid black
 - Pure blond
 - Silver-gray with black head
 - Brown-orange with orange underside
- Weight: 24-42 ounces
- Length: 20-26 inches



EASTERN FOX SQUIRREL

Habitat

- Woodlands next to openings
- Prefer mature coniferous or coniferous/hardwood woodlands with open understories
- Will tolerate of prairie-type environments
- Home territories span a few acres

Behavior

- They are generally active throughout the day.

EASTERN FOX SQUIRREL

Breeding

- Fox squirrels generally mate in midwinter
- The gestation period is 44-45 days
- Litters range from 1-6 offspring (2-4 is most common)
- Squirrels are blind and hairless at birth but will open their eyes after 4-5 weeks
- Young will be weened in 8-9 weeks but may remain with the adult for an additional month
- Older females may have another litter in summer

EASTERN FOX SQUIRREL

Range



AMERICAN RED SQUIRREL

Characteristics

- Predominantly reddish-gray coat with white or cream on underside of head and body
- Eyes are edged in white. Ears are tufted in winter and sides of the body have a black line in the summer.
- Weight: 7-10 ounces
- Length: 11-15 inches



AMERICAN RED SQUIRREL

Habitat

- Prefer coniferous forests at higher elevations but may be found in coniferous/hardwood forests as well
- Can thrive in suburban and urban settings
- Home territories span a few acres

Behavior

- During spring and summer they are most active in the morning and afternoon.
- During fall they remain active all day.
- In winter they are most active during midday hours.

Hunt in the morning or afternoon
in stands of evergreen trees.

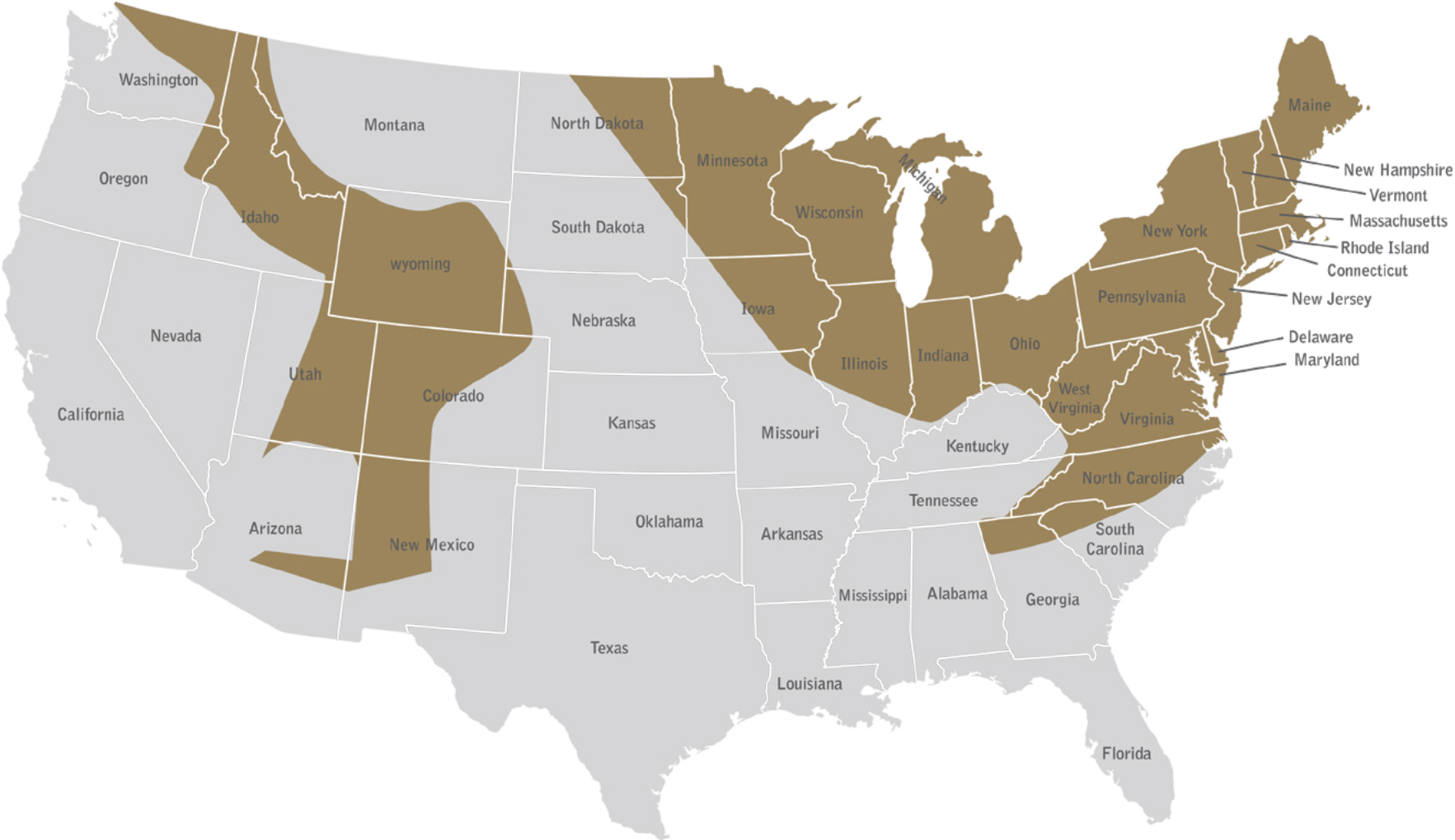
AMERICAN RED SQUIRREL

Breeding

- Red squirrels generally mate twice annually (late winter and mid-summer)
- The gestation period is 33-35 days
- Litters range from 1-8 offspring (2-5 is average)
- Squirrels are blind and hairless at birth but will open their eyes after 4-5 weeks
- Young will be weened in 7-8 weeks

AMERICAN RED SQUIRREL

Range



FOOD SOURCES

Food sources will vary by location. In the southeast U.S. sources include:

- Pine seeds
- Acorns
- Hickory nuts
- Flowers and buds
- Fruits
- Fungi
- Insects
- Occasionally bird eggs



SPOTTING SQUIRRELS

Indications of squirrel activity include:

- Chewed pinecone remains
- Chewed acorn/nut shells
- Trees with evident nesting
- Squirrel barking (alarm call)

Conditions and activity

- Squirrels will be most active during breeding season
- Dry days with little wind are best for spotting squirrels
- Squirrels may not leave the nest on the coldest days

HUNTING SQUIRRELS

WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT
AREA
ROAD CLOSED
TO VEHICULAR
TRAFFIC
FOOT TRAVEL
INVITED



TYPES OF HUNTING

Stalking

- Stalking involves walking slowly and using your senses
- Take a few slow steps and then:
 - Look and listen for movement
 - Listen for nearby barking



TYPES OF HUNTING

Still Hunting

- Still hunting involves sitting quietly and using your senses
- Look and listen for movement
- Listen for nearby barking



TYPES OF HUNTING

Dog Hunting

- This style hunting involves a well trained squirrel dog
- When released, the dog will search for squirrels
- Once located the dog will tree the squirrel and begin barking to alert the hunter and hold the squirrel in position until the hunter arrives
- Dogs may also assist with squirrel retrieval



CALLS

Some experienced hunters use calls to bring squirrels out of hiding.

- Calls simulate squirrel vocalizations such as barks, chatters, whistles, and squeals.
- Practice is key! While a good caller can bring curious squirrels out to investigate, a bad caller can easily drive them away.

EQUIPMENT

Firearms and Primitive Weapons

The most common squirrel hunting firearms are:

- Rifles/Handguns (rimfire .22 cal or smaller)
- Shotguns (loaded with birdshot, #2 shot or smaller)

Some hunters opt to use:

- Muzzleloaders
- Longbows
- Recurve Bows
- Compound Bows
- Crossbows

Always check local regulations when selecting equipment.

EQUIPMENT

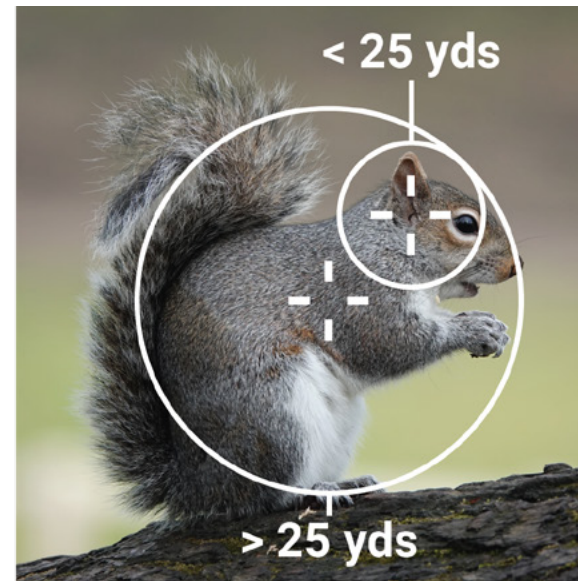
Other Items

- A hunting license
- Ear and eye protection
- Weather appropriate camouflage or earth toned clothing
- A blaze orange garment may be required
- Vest with game pouch or backpack, binoculars (optional)
- Equipment to care for your harvest (more on this later)
- General preparedness items (water, food, navigation aids, flashlight, first aid kit, etc.)

ANATOMY & SHOT PLACEMENT

Ethical shots ensure a quick kill and reduce the chance of wounding. Understanding anatomy is essential to achieving an ethical shot.

- Target the head or lungs
- For single projectiles aim for the head or lungs (pictured left)
- For shotguns (pictured right)
 - Aim for the head at 25 yards or less
 - Aim mid-body at distances over 25 yards
 - Maximum effective range is generally 50 yards



SAFE SHOTS

Shooting a treed squirrel requires high angle shots. In addition to the basic rules of safe firearm handling consider the following:

- Every projectile you fire skyward will come down somewhere. Always know what's beyond your target!
- When using a rifle/handgun always seek shots where the squirrel is in front of a backstop (tree trunk or heavy branch).

CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Field Dressing

There are various techniques for field dressing squirrel. In general the process involves removing the hide, head, feet, tail, and entrails.

Equipment

Common equipment required for field dressing includes:

- Sharp knife and/or shears
- Rubber gloves
- Gallon-sized bags
- Cooler and ice




CARING FOR YOUR HARVEST

Other Considerations

- Show respect and gratitude for your harvest.
- Take and share only tasteful photos
- The squirrel remains you leave behind will serve as a valuable food source for other wild creatures. However, dispose of the remains in an area not frequented by humans or pets.

Additional Resources

- Hank Shaw
- Meat-Eater
- Your state wildlife agency website

A photograph of two men in a grassy field. The man on the right is wearing a dark cap, glasses, and orange earplugs, and is holding a black shotgun horizontally. The man on the left is wearing a light-colored cap, glasses, and orange earplugs, and is looking towards the man with the shotgun. The background consists of tall grass and a line of trees under a bright sky. The text "PLANNING YOUR HUNT" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

PLANNING YOUR HUNT

PLAN YOUR HUNT

Planning begins before you go afield. Below is the general process.

- Scout potential hunting locations
- Select a hunting location(s) based information gathered during scouting
- Finalize your plan



DIGITAL SCOUTING

Free digital tools can be a great asset before you go afield.

- Google Earth
 - Satellite imagery (This can provide insights into forest type and density)
 - Topographic maps
 - Endless map overlays
- County Tax Assessor Online Property Records
 - Land boundaries
 - Property ownership information
- Weather Sites and Apps
 - Forecasted conditions
 - Historic conditions

There are also paid digital tools that combine many of the aforementioned features.

- onX, GOHUNT, HuntWise, HuntStand, Gaia GPS Premium, Etc.

PHYSICAL SCOUTING

Visiting allows you to further evaluate a location's potential to hold squirrels. Look for the following:

- Potential habitat (Example: dense hardwood stands for gray squirrels)
- Squirrel sign (chewed acorn shells, nests, etc.)
- Food sources
- Listen for squirrel barking

Understand the rules for any location before visiting. Always ask permission before entering private land. DO NOT TRESPASS!

SELECT A LOCATION

Now that you've done some scouting, select the best location. Ask yourself the following:

- Where will I most likely find squirrels?
- Is accessing this location feasible?
- Do I understand the hunting rules and regulations for this location?

MAKE A PLAN

Now that you've selected a location, finalize your plans:

- Select the best hunting method and equipment for your location.
- Gather equipment and supplies.
- Familiarize yourself with your equipment and practice your shooting skills.
- **Use a lifeline!** Always share your hunt plan with a trusted individual outside of your hunting party. Let them know where you'll be and when you expect to return.



A group of people are standing in a field of tall grass. On the left, a man in a grey t-shirt and a tan baseball cap is looking towards the right. Behind him, another man in a grey t-shirt and a tan baseball cap is partially visible. In the center, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a pink t-shirt and light blue overalls, is smiling and looking towards the right. To her right, a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark blue t-shirt and sunglasses, is also smiling and looking towards the right. On the far right, a man with short brown hair, wearing a red t-shirt with a white 'G' logo and grey shorts, is looking towards the right. In the background, there is a dense line of trees. The text 'GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY' is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

GET OUT - BE SAFE - ENJOY

APPENDIX

Templates & Resources



LETTER OF INTENT TEMPLATE

Name of Sender

Name of Partner Organization

Address of Sender

City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name of Receiver

Name of Host Organization

Address of Receiver

City, State, Zip Code

Name of Receiver,

This is a Letter of Intent that formalizes our interest in establishing an Academics Afield program at insert name of college or university. In partnership with insert list partners, we formally acknowledge that we are committed to establishing an Academics Afield program and introducing students to hunting and the shooting sports. We do not consider the terms and conditions stated in this letter as binding.

We understand that Academics Afield has the goal to create a supportive community, providing opportunity for those who have little to no hunting experience to try the activity in a safe and comfortable setting. As the point of contact with insert name of partner organization, I understand that to successfully implement this program, we will need to (insert list of contributions). I agree to work with partners to accomplish our greater goal.

To ensure successful program implementation, I will work with partners to provide appropriate support for a student intern who will guide other students through the program. I also understand the importance of sharing the achievements and challenges of program establishment and implementation with others. Upon conclusion of program implementation, I will aid in program evaluation and make data-driven improvements for Academics Afield in future years.

I look forward to future conversations regarding logistics, budget, and the potential of an Academics Afield program at insert name of college or university.

Sincerely,

Signature of Sender

Printed Name of Sender

A Microsoft Word version of this template is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT EXAMPLE

This Collaboration Agreement (hereinafter “Agreement”) is entered January 1, 2022 (the “Effective Date”) by and between Georgia Wildlife Federation, a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is “To encourage the intelligent management of the life sustaining resources of the earth – its essential water resources – its protective forests and plant life – and its dependent wildlife – and to promote and encourage the knowledge and appreciation of these resources, their interrelationship and wise use, without which there can be little hope for a continuing abundant life” (“GWF”); and Albany State University a 501(c)(3) Public University in the University of Georgia System whose mission is “To aspire to excellence, engage historically diverse and underserved populations, and expand access to higher education (“ASU”).”

WHEREAS both organizations share a deep-rooted concern for the well-being of the next generation and empowering historically diverse and underserved populations;

WHEREAS both organizations desire to help each reach a broader audience with greater impact than either could achieve on its own;

WHEREAS both organizations will collaborate to engage and educate prospective new hunters, engage and educate established hunters in order to strengthen the collegiate hunting communities. Our overarching goal is to engage new audiences from non-traditional backgrounds in hunting, shooting sports and outdoor pursuits. This joint project shall be referred to herein as “Academics Afield (AA).”

Therefore, the parties agree to the following:

- 1. GWF Deliverables:** As appropriate and feasible, GWF will distribute funding and perform the deliverables as set forth in Exhibit A.
- 2. ASU Deliverables:** As appropriate and feasible, ASU in collaboration with additional partners will perform the deliverables as set forth in Exhibit B.

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT EXAMPLE

3. General:

- a. Payment: GWF will provide direct payment to ASU for ...to support AA.
- b. Receipt: ASU shall immediately return a receipt acknowledging delivery of funds. Receipt shall be delivered by e-mail to jane.doe@gwf.org or by mail to:

Georgia Wildlife Federation
Attention: Accounts Payable
11600 Hazelbrand Rd NE
Covington, GA 30014

- c. Report: ASU must provide regular updates on field activities to GWF staff. Program partners will work together on reporting to GWF describing the successes and challenges of the work outlined in Exhibit B. Comprehensive performance and financial interim reports are due...
- d. Term: The initial Term ("Term") of this Agreement shall begin as of the Effective Date and extend through December 31, 2022. This Agreement may be terminated by either party on thirty (30) days' written notice.
- e. Effect of Termination: In the event of termination, the funding will be used in accordance with the budget to the extent commitments have been made, and the remainder shall be used for other projects to be conducted by either partner that the funder for that portion of the funding approves.

4. Intellectual Property:

- a. Ownership: Each Party is aware that the other Party owns certain trademarks, service marks, copyrights and other intellectual property, including but not limited to copyrighted materials, trademarks, logos, and trade names ("Background IP"). The Parties may jointly develop certain intellectual property ("Foreground IP") in furtherance of this Agreement. In consideration of the terms of this Agreement, ASU does hereby assign all rights to the Foreground IP to GWF.
- b. Licensing: GWF does hereby grant ASU an irrevocable, nonexclusive right to use, publish, reproduce, and distribute the Foreground IP for use during the Term of this Agreement for the purposes of Academics Afield. In consideration of the terms of this Agreement, ASU hereby grants GWF a nonexclusive right to use, publish, reproduce, and distribute ASU Background IP during the Term of this Agreement for the purposes of Academics Afield, subject to use guidelines.

5. Additional Terms and Conditions:

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT EXAMPLE

Georgia Wildlife Federation
11600 Hazelbrand Rd NE
Covington, GA 30014

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

Date: _____

Albany State University
504 College Drive
Albany, GA 31705

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

FIN/SSN: _____

Date: _____

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT EXAMPLE

Exhibit A: GWF Deliverables

As appropriate and feasible, GWF will have the following roles and responsibilities consistent with the work program:

1. Maintain/Improve existing AA programs at UGA, GS and ABAC
2. Expand AA programs to Fort Valley State University and Albany State University
3. Host regular meetings to aid in collaboration and communication amongst partners
4. Provide administrative support
5. Provide strategic advice to for AA expansions
6. Help with developing programming, training, curriculums and outreach materials
7. Coordinate with NC State to facilitate evaluation analysis efforts
8. Purchase Firearms, Ammunition and additional supplies
9. Co-Manage Student Coordinator including hiring, payroll, travel and supplies reimbursement
10. Assist programs regarding financial options to sustain the program in the future
11. Collect materials and generate an addendum to existing AA toolkit focusing on needs and barriers of minority students to be useful for future AA expansions
12. File required collective Reports as necessary to satisfy funding requirements

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT EXAMPLE

Exhibit B: ASU Deliverables

As appropriate and feasible, ASU in collaboration with partners and Student Coordinator will:

1. Follow the programmatic goals, outlines, and structures outlined in ...including, but not limited to the below items
2. Establish an AA program at the institution. Provide at minimum four workshops per year. Workshops will consist of multiple events with an average of 8-10 participants per event; a fourth workshop series may be solely focused on shooting
3. Implement the survey and focus groups upon as directed by NC State
4. Coordinate with NC State to select participants that are best suited for the program. Utilize the Screening Questionnaire.
5. Coordinate with GWF and NC State to implement Pre and Post program evaluation links to be completed by participants.
6. Coordinate with GWF to collect participant tracking data (State DNR Customer Identification Numbers or names and birth dates) for analysis in following years pending state data availability.
7. Utilize the Post-Event Survey for in house program evaluation after the shooting and guided hunt events. Please scan these surveys and upload to google drive.
8. Maintain communication and share all materials and conclusions pertinent to the below program objectives. The below objectives will be referenced when USFWS, the grantee, gauges our implementation success:
 - a. Increase and diversify hunting participation among college students, with a particular emphasis on recruiting students of color
 - b. Understand hunting motivations and constraints across diverse populations and evaluate the program's impact on the beliefs, attitudes, skills, and social support needed for long-term hunting participation
 - c. Build the infrastructure, partnerships, and overall capacity to sustain the success of R3 efforts targeting college students
9. Identify financial options for sustaining the programs in the future
10. All equipment will remain with ASU for use in R3 activities in future years
11. Comprehensive performance interim reports are due...
 - a. Performance reports must contain:
 - b. A comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work
 - c. A description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate
 - d. A description other pertinent information relevant to the project results

A Microsoft Word version of this example is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit

FUNDING OPTIONS

Overview

It is recommended to have \$3,000-\$6,000 per year to maintain this program. This is after an upfront purchase of equipment for about \$8,000. This is relatively a small cost for program implementation. This does not account for the time spent planning, managing a student intern, and providing the support necessary to have an excellent program.

Funding Successes

University of Georgia's Success

The final event of the spring semester every year at UGA is a sporting clays competition. It is a component of the fundraising efforts the Warnell School of Forestry's Young Alumni Association hosts. This is significant because the Alumni Association fundraises in support of the Academics Afield program. A passionate and committed R3 professional held office with the Alumni Association and argued that an endowment should be created to ensure funding for a student intern in perpetuity. They reached their fundraising goal of \$100,000 dollars in 2022 which should generate enough return so that Georgia Wildlife Federation will be able to continue hiring a UGA student intern to host Academics Afield regardless of other funding sources. Georgia Wildlife Federation will draw on these funds in 2023. This was a landmark achievement as it is the first self-sustaining Academics Afield program.

Tennessee Wildlife Federation's Efforts

TWF has submitted requests to the State Agency to receive sub-awarded Pittman Robertson money for their R3 programming. This has been a successful "contract" model for the Agency and the Federation's Hunt and Fish Academy, but had not yet extended to Academics Afield. TWF also has a close working relationship with Ducks Unlimited who is advocating to the State Agency for funding the program. The trick here, is the request for funding comes last. Conversation and developing mutually beneficial partnerships is the first step. Once the agency informally is interested in the ask, submit the proposal in the format and language that they would need it to be in when requesting Pittman Robertson Dollars from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. The 75:25 match opportunity is valuable and should not be overlooked.

North Carolina Wildlife Federation Success

NCWF established a strong partnership with Wake County Wildlife Club to implement Academics Afield programming for North Carolina State University. This partnership provided hunter education courses, firearm training and support as coaches. Club members deeply valued the opportunity to prepare North Carolina's future hunters and as a result has committed to sustaining the program through time programmatically and also financially. Wake County Wildlife Club, NCWF and NCSU will be able to continue offering conservation education and skill development into the future.

FUNDING OPTIONS

Funding Successes (continued)

Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation

Academics Afield in Arkansas will be funded by several sources for the 2023/2024 school year. The Conservation License Plate program, that began in 2000, provides monies for scholarships and education efforts in Arkansas and promotes the next generation of outdoors enthusiasts. This specialty license plate program, featuring an outdoor pursuit or wildlife native to Arkansas, will be the main funding for Academics Afield in Arkansas. The Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation and the Arkansas Outdoor Society, also supports the Academic Afield effort in Arkansas through the provision of food, gear, and programming materials. We believe in the power of partnerships and landowners and municipalities have also donated space and time for students to learn and experience hunting and recreational shooting in Arkansas.

Other Resource Acquisition Opportunities

Industry Partners

- Large corporate companies are always looking for tax write offs
- Big box stores such as Walmart frequently help their local communities
- Hunting gear manufacturers recognize the need to invest in the next generation

NGO Partners

- Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports has a comprehensive list.
<https://cahss.org/r3-overview/r3-funding/>
- Candid-Foundation Center and GuideStar help connect you to philanthropic opportunities.
<http://candid.org>
- Local chapters of National Wild Turkey Federation, Safari Club International, Ducks Unlimited etc.

INTERN JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

Insert Name of Host Organization Internship

Insert Name of College or University Academics Afield Student Coordinator

Position Length:

One semester with extension based on performance

Hours:

~5 hours per week, up to 15 on event weeks

Job Description:

The insert name of host organization is seeking qualified student candidates for a part-time Academics Afield Coordinator position at insert name of college or university. The Academics Afield Coordinator will introduce interested students with limited or no hunting experience to hunting. The coordinator will conduct workshops to provide the tools, experience, and support to help these students become hunters. The coordinator will work closely with the insert titles of supervisors as part of the larger recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) initiative to increase participation in and societal understanding of hunting.

Job Responsibilities:

- Recruit: Market to and recruit 12 non-traditional student participants and experienced student coaches
- Implement: Organize two workshops per semester. Work with partners to provide an educational training, firearm training, guided hunt experience, and wild-game meal per workshop.
- Evaluate: Administer evaluation tools as directed. Draft a summary blog, video, or social media campaign for outreach after each workshop.
- Other duties as assigned

Qualifications and Desired Skills:

- Current student available for the insert year and semester
- Experience in teaching, sales and/or marketing
- Experience shooting and hunting
- Excellent communication skills both verbal and written
- Must be a self-starter with the ability to work independently with minimum supervision
- Must possess leadership skills, organizational skills, and work well as a team member

Compensation and Perks:

- \$13/hour
- Mileage reimbursement
- Shooting Safety Certification
- First Aid/CPR Certification

How to Apply:

Interested students should submit a cover letter, resume, unofficial transcripts, and contact information of three references in a single document to insert contact email address. Applications due by insert date.

A Microsoft Word version of this template is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit

INTERN TRAINING & COORDINATING

Introduction

Congratulations on your internship and welcome to the Academics Afield program. This document is your introduction to the resources available and a task list for your training.

Resources in this Tool Kit

The initial set of documents to prepare you for the program include:

- Programs Styles and Schedules
- Flyer Example
- Coach Recruitment and Training
- Participant FAQ Template
- Recruitment Email Template
- Registration Example
- Liability and Media Release
- Welcome to AA and Hunted Species Curriculum Outlines
(A PowerPoint and PDF version of each presentation is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit)
- Firearm Training Rifle
- Firearm Training Shotgun
- Venison

Additional Resources

Each Academics Afield program is unique. Many details will be specific to your program/area. Familiarize yourself with the following:

- Processing, butchering and cooking wild game
- Which licenses are needed for which species
- Next steps hunting programs (for future opportunities for participants)
- The role hunting has on species population management and ecological balance

Task List

Complete the following as soon as possible:

- Is there an email account all interns use to communicate with all participants?
- Do you have current Hunting Licenses necessary for the year?
- Take Shooting Coach certification course
- Take First Aid certification course
- Meet with all supervisors and partners for your school
- What is your plan for recruitment of participants and coaches?
- Do you have a paper copy of the hunting regulations to reference if participants have questions?
- Do you have access to the program evaluations and a plan to distribute them?

PROGRAM STYLES & SCHEDULES

Semester at a Glance

- Minimum of two workshops (spring semester may contain one shooting-only workshop)
- Recruit: find participants that have limited to no hunting experience
- Retain: follow through and follow up, be there for their challenges and successes, encourage other hunting opportunities such as conservation organization local chapters, always be on the lookout for the next intern
- Reactivate: engage other student hunters to be coaches

Program Styles

1. Cohort Style: Heavy recruitment occurs in March advertising admission to a year-long program. The same participants meet frequently for one year with the program concluding in late February. Have a backup list to maintain participation if dropouts occur.
2. Independent Workshop Style: Recruitment occurs before every workshop with event dates advertised before participation selection.

Program Schedules

Consider school calendars, sports calendars, and hunting seasons to ensure highest rates of participation. Consider implementing everything before Thanksgiving and before students “check out” for graduation.

PROGRAM STYLES & SCHEDULES

Cohort Style Scheduling

Cohort Style- Typically Starts Mid-Spring Semester

Week 1: Heavy recruitment of participants and coaches creating competition for year-long participation in this year's coveted cohort

Week 2: Continue recruitment efforts and implement application and screening questionnaire

Week 3: Have selected participants complete pre-program survey

Week 4: Host education night with "Welcome to Academics Afield" curriculum and a Firearm 101 Non-Live Fire Introduction

Week 5: Firearm training and cleaning, participants complete post-event survey

Week 6 or over the summer: Have participants complete hunter education

Cohort Style- Continues into Fall Semester

Week 1: Plan semester workshops and recruit more coaches

Week 2: Have participants complete registrations and waivers

Week 3: Host education night to cover "Species Biology" curriculum

Week 4: Firearm training and cleaning, participants complete post-event survey

Week 5: Hunt with pre-planned game processing demonstration and game meal, participants complete post-event survey

Week 6: Create report on lessons learned, accomplishments, and plan for next workshop

Week 7: Have participants complete registrations and waivers

Week 8: Host education night to cover "Species Biology" curriculum

Week 9: Firearm training and cleaning, participants complete post-event survey

Week 10: Hunt with pre-planned game processing demonstration and game meal, participants complete post-event survey

Week 11: Create report on lessons learned, accomplishments, and plan for next workshop

Cohort Style- Continues into the following Spring Semester

Week 1: First workshop planning occurs prior to spring school start date in order to host small game hunt while season is still in

Week 2: Have selected participants complete registrations and waivers

Week 3: Host education night with "Welcome to Academics Afield" and "Species Biology" curriculums

Week 4: Firearm training and cleaning, participants complete post-event survey

Week 5: Hunt with pre-planned game processing demonstration, participants complete post-event survey

Week 6: Conclude year long program with a final celebratory culinary social, participants complete post-program survey

Week 7: Create report on lessons learned, accomplishments, and plan for next cohort

PROGRAM STYLES & SCHEDULES

Independent Workshop Style Scheduling

Independent Workshop Style- Typically Starts Fall Semester

Week 1: Plan first workshop and recruit participants and coaches

Week 2: Continue recruitment efforts and implement application and screening questionnaire

Week 3: Have selected participants complete pre-program survey and registrations

Week 4: Have participants complete hunter education and waivers

Week 5: Host education night with “Welcome to Academics Afield” and “Species Biology” curriculums

Week 6: Firearm training and cleaning, participants complete post-event survey

Week 7: Hunt with pre-planned game processing demonstration and game meal, participants complete post-event survey

Week 8: Create report on lessons learned, accomplishments, and plan for next workshop

Week 9: Host education night with “Welcome to Academics Afield” and “Species Biology” curriculum, any new participants complete pre-program survey, registrations, hunter education, and waivers

Week 10: Firearm training and cleaning, participants complete post-event survey

Week 11: Hunt with pre-planned game processing demonstration and game meal, participants complete post-event survey

Week 12: Create report on lessons learned, accomplishments, and plan for next workshop

Independent Workshop Style- Continues into Spring Semester

Week 1: First workshop planning occurs prior to school start date in order to host small game hunt while season is still in

Week 2: Recruit participants and coaches and implement application and screening questionnaire

Week 3: Have selected participants complete pre-program survey and registrations

Week 4: Have participants complete hunter education and waivers

Week 5: Host education night with “Welcome to Academics Afield” and “Species Biology” curriculums

Week 6: Firearm training and cleaning, participants complete post-event survey

Week 7: Hunt with pre-planned game processing demonstration and game meal, participants complete post-event survey

Week 8: Create report on lessons learned, accomplishments, and plan for next workshop

Week 9: Host education night with “Welcome to Academics Afield” curriculum and a generic shooting skills curriculum, any new participants complete pre-program survey, registrations, and waivers

Week 10: Shooting training and cleaning, participants complete post-event survey

Week 11: Firearm competition or new skill development, participants complete post-program survey

Week 12: Create report on lessons learned, accomplishments, and complete inventory

EXAMPLE FLYER



ACADEMICS AFIELD

ABOUT US

Academics Afield is a program dedicated to educating collegiate students about game species, hunters safety, planning a hunt, and communication amongst the hunting community. Learn-to-Hunt events are a perfect opportunity to meet peers, learn more about hunting as conservation, and gain confidence in a safe, low-pressure environment. At least two hunts will be hosted each semester and will comprise of several events for educating participants.



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

PARTICIPANT:

- Student of any year in college
- Little to no experience hunting
- An interest in learning
- Open-minded
- Great attitude toward new experiences
- Will be paired with an experienced hunter

STUDENT COACH:

- Student of any year in college
- Experienced in hunting and firearm safety
- Patience and willingness to teach
- Passion for sharing experiences
- Will be paired with a new hunter to provide guidance

CONTACT:

CORAL MINCHEY

CMINCHEY@GWF.ORG

[HTTPS://GWF.ORG/ACADEMICSAFIELD/](https://gwf.org/academicsafield/)

EXAMPLE FLYER

Want to Learn How to Hunt?

Want to Teach Others?

We are selecting a handful of enthusiastic and curious students to take part in...



Academics Afield!

A series of low-cost workshops that will teach you how to be a safe, ethical, and skilled hunter!

Have Experience?

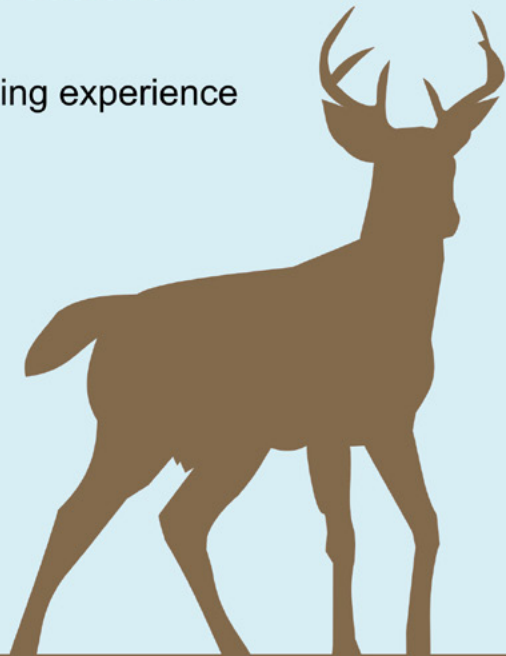
Volunteer with Georgia Wildlife Federation!

What's required?

- Participants must have little to no hunting experience
- Commitment to several events
 - Hunter Education Self-Paced Online
 - Jan. 25th 5:30 Strategy @SSEC
 - Feb. 3rd 3:00 Firearm Training
 - Feb. 4th 7:00 AM Guided Hunt

Interested?

Contact gs@gwf.org
or scan to apply!



COACH RECRUITMENT & TRAINING

Recruit student coaches first, then utilize outside partners to provide support as needed. Research suggests new hunters like to award the term mentor to those they believe deserve it, so call your student guides coaches not mentors (Wildlife Management Institute, 2020).

Student Coaches

What is a coach? Someone who helps guide a new hunter; a coach with more experience is better, but less experience is better than no support at all. It's okay if they aren't an expert, if they at least know their weaknesses, coaches can facilitate learning for themselves and the participant.

Why volunteer to coach for Academics Afield? Traditional pathways of hunter recruitment (generation to generation) are declining. We need to help preserve our hunting heritage, maintain science-based ecosystem health, and ensure conservation funding.

How to "sell?" Touch into their desire to teach, pass on a tradition, meet a new hunting buddy, share the excitement of a first harvest again!

"We were lucky to be born into a hunting family, some other people weren't so lucky"

Student Participants

What is a student? An individual who wants to learn, in this case they want to learn how to hunt but need support mentally, physically and/or emotionally (Hunting Mentor Guide, 2019).

Mentally: knowledge to perform skills- scout, shoot, dress, cook

Physically: practice shooting, where to go, what to bring (clothing, food), where to hike/set up blinds/stands, physical exertion levels, hands on dressing techniques

Emotionally: need a safe space to experience the highs and lows. Maybe they need someone to call later on while cooking or planning their first independent hunt

COACH RECRUITMENT & TRAINING

Coach Training

Discuss expectations with your coaches. Participants may be from a wide variety of backgrounds, so the environment should be safe, welcoming, and allow for learning. Coaches should be conscious of language, their sayings, and their personal bias. We want to create a “Be Welcoming” atmosphere where we are all in this together to share hunting and the outdoors with each other, and to offer support throughout. Coaches should be confident in shaping safe behaviors.

When teaching a skill rely on the acronym EDGE: Explain, demonstrate, guide and enable

Discuss how to respond to a harvest. Let the participant guide the response. Let them know all ways to respond are okay: high fives/laughter/crying/express gratitude/prayers. Ask if they want to take a photo, don't assume. Bring wet wipes to wipe blood away, stick the tongue back in mouth if it's a deer, have the animal on ground not in a truck. Demonstrate the respect we have for the animal through the photo.

Take photos and videos during the education setting, shooting practice, pre shot, post shot, cooking etc.



Resources

- Hunting Mentor Guide, 2019. Archery Trade Association and National Deer Association. <https://archerytrade.org/staff/hunting-mentor-guide/>
- Field to Fork Curriculum, 2020. Archery Trade Association and National Deer Alliance. <https://archerytrade.org/staff/field-to-fork-curriculum/>
- Wildlife Management Institute, 2020. The Missing Link in R3: Making Mentorship Work. <https://www.southwickassociates.com/r3-mentoring/>

PARTICIPANT FAQ TEMPLATE

What is Academics Afield?

This is a national program developed by Georgia Wildlife Federation with partnership from GA DNR-WRD, National Wild Turkey Federation, GA Chapter of Safari Club International, and Ducks Unlimited. The goal is to foster interest in hunting among college students with limited hunting experience. Academics Afield is active at over a dozen universities across the US.

How many events are there in this program, and what are they?

There are at least two workshops per semester. A workshop includes game species biology education, hunting strategy training, firearms training, a guided hunt, and a wild game meal. There may be more informal events and expeditions depending on your programming.

Attendance at all events in one workshop is expected for you to participate in that workshop's specific hunt. The events are designed to build on each other, you'll have a better experience the more events you attend.

Where are the events/hunts held?

We aim to host all events within 60 minutes of the school, but some circumstances may require further travel.

What is the cost for students?

It depends on your specific program, but most are less than insert cost - an amazing value. However, the participant will need to cover the cost of:

- Clothing: Inexpensive camouflage clothing can be found at Walmart, thrift stores, or online. However, brown and green clothing is okay as well. Avoid brighteners and scents in your laundry detergent.
- Hunter Safety Course: Courses vary by state, refer to state wildlife agency for more information. An on demand, self-paced, 8-hour course is typically available for less than \$40. In person hunter education courses are available as well.
- Licenses: Cost of licenses vary by state, refer to state wildlife agency for more information.

****We will provide participants with guidance on the above purchases ****

Is it OK to participate even if I have some concerns about hunting?

Yes!! Everyone has different comfort levels with the notion of hunting and all that goes along with it. We will provide a thoughtful and respectful environment for you to explore this unique connection to food and nature. Most participants have reservations about hunting, and we hope to address these concerns throughout the program.

If I've hunted before, can I participate?

The program is designed for people with limited to no hunting experience. However, if you have limited hunting experience and are not confident on your own, apply as you might be able to participate too.

Note that, if people have hunted a lot they might want to serve as a peer coach in the program. We are actively searching for volunteers and would love your support. See contact information below.

PARTICIPANT FAQ TEMPLATE

Can I participate if I'm not a student?

The program is designed for students. However, if space is available, a select number of other university community members may be able to participate as well. This availability varies from year to year and program to program.

What if I am not selected?

We are happy to suggest similar opportunities through partner organizations.

Where can I learn more?

More information can be found at [insert web address](#)

If you still have questions contact:

[Insert contact information](#)

A Microsoft Word version of this template is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit

RECRUITMENT EMAIL TEMPLATE

The following emails are intended for interested students. Include the FAQ document, a link to “Applicant Screening Questionnaire,” and links for hunter education courses with the emails.

Email 1 Draft

Thank you for expressing interest in Academics Afield! Attached is a FAQ document, but please let me know if you have any outstanding questions.

1. Please complete your application insert link to application. The deadline to apply is the insert date and time.
2. The next step of learning to hunt is completing your hunter education through this online course insert link to course (if your program isn't hosting an in-person class). A Hunter Safety Course may be completely online, but frequently takes approximately 8 hours, with the ability to space it out over a few days. Start early!

You can expect to hear whether you have been accepted into the program by the insert date. Thank you!

Email 2 Drafts

You and your supervisor both will decide who will participate. Send out the appropriate selection response (1, 2, or 3).

1. Congratulations you have been accepted into Academics Afield! Refer to the attached registration document for your next steps.
2. Thank you for applying to participate in Academics Afield, we actually think you'd be great as a coach in our program....
3. We had many great applicants, but unfortunately you have not been selected to participate this time. We will retain your information and keep you on the waiting list in case a space opens up. Additional opportunities to learn how to hunt can be found with: insert links to other opportunities

A Microsoft Word version of this template is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit

REGISTRATION EXAMPLE

Registration for Statesboro Academics Afield College 2022 Squirrel Hunt

Complete the following to participate (if you need to cancel at any point, please let us know):

1. Please take the pre-program questionnaire [here](#). Only do this one-time during participation of Academics Afield.
2. Please complete a [Georgia Hunter Safety Course](#) (if you have not previously completed it). These courses are completely online and will take you approximately 8 hours, but you can space it out over a few days.
3. Please create or log into your GA DNR customer account at <https://license.gooutdoorsgeorgia.com/Licensing/CustomLookup.aspx>
 - Register for the “Academics Afield Statesboro 2022 Squirrel Hunt” event [here](#).
 - Purchase Hunting Licenses:
 - Add Hunting to your cart. Check out- your total should be \$15 plus tax (hunting license revenue goes directly back into wildlife conservation in Georgia).
 - OR purchase the comprehensive Sportsman’s License for \$67.50. A Sportsman’s License provides all state paid hunting and fishing privileges (some free licenses may be required (see here), with the exception of the paid Alligator Harvest Permit and Federal Duck Stamp. Hunting, Big Game, Georgia Migratory Bird Stamp, Trout, and Salt and Freshwater Fishing privileges are included.
 - Print a copy of your license or download the Go Outdoors Georgia app.

Schedule

Training

Classroom and Field

10/11/2022 (6:00pm – 7:30) – SSEC Room 2

- Welcome to Academics Afield
- Squirrel Biology & Hunting Strategy

10/14/2022 (3:30pm – Sunset) – Baygall Sporting Clays

- Meet at SSEC at 2:45 to carpool
- Shotgun Training

Guided Hunt and Lunch

Participants are paired with an experienced coach and they hunt public land

10/15/2022 (7:00am-12:30) – Di Lane WMA

- Meet at SSEC at 6:15am to carpool
- Squirrel cleaning instruction
- Tailgate grilled wild game lunch and debrief

A Microsoft Word version of this example is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit

LIABILITY & MEDIA RELEASE EXAMPLE

Event Name _____ Date _____

1. I grant full permission to any and all foregoing the unconditional right to use my photographic likeness, name, and/or voice in regards to any publication, audio, or video.
2. As an active participant/volunteer I represent to the landowners, operators, program partners, city, county, state, and federal agencies, referred to as owners hereafter, that I am capable of recognizing and assuming all risk and dangers normally associated with all outdoor activities, particularly those related to hunting, fishing, firearms, and the use of live ammunition.
3. I understand that my successors, heirs, personal helpers, and traveling companions agree to hold harmless staff, Board of Directors, agents, outfitters, volunteers, owners, and collaborators from any and all liability associated with injury or loss sustained in association with, or during the execution of this event.
4. I understand that this event may involve firearms. Firearms, when mishandled, can be dangerous. I understand that this event may take place by bodies of water and with fishing tackle. These locations and equipment can be inherently dangerous. Further, I understand that it is my responsibility to use the utmost care in the exercise of hunting, firearm and/or boating and fishing safety. I intend to do so.
5. I represent that I am capable of participation and acknowledge that this release is being relied upon by the above named organization in permitting me to participate. I represent that I am legally permitted to handle firearms.
6. By signing this agreement I acknowledge this event involves risk, I assume full responsibility for actions and for injury or loss that may result from participation. I also waive and release all other participants, owners, sponsors, volunteers, instructors, and/or any other parties involved in the event from any and all claims, damages, injury, or loss connected with this event.

Name _____

Address _____

Emergency Contact Name _____

Emergency Contact Phone _____

Signature _____

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Welcome to Academics Afield

Introduction

- What is Academics Afield?
- Hunting & Science Based Management

Hunting Is Conservation

- 19th Century Market Hunting
- Era of Decimation
 - Species Extinction
- Conservation Movement - The Founders
 - George Bird Grinnell
 - Theodore Roosevelt
 - Gifford Pinchot
 - Aldo Leopold
- Conservation Movement - A New Perspective
 - The North American Model
- Conservation Movement - Funding
 - Pittman-Robertson Act
 - Dingell-Johnson Act
 - Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration (WSFR)
- Conservation Movement - Recovery
 - Pronghorn Antelope Herd Restoration
 - Elk Herd Restoration
 - Etc...
- Conservation Movement - Your Role
 - Each hunters important role in conservation
- Hunting by the Numbers
 - Hunting's contributions to economic output, jobs, and wages

Getting Started

- Introduction to Hunting Safely, Hunting Responsibly, and Hunting as a Community

Safety

- Safe Firearm Handling
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Preparedness

Responsibility

- Keep It Legal
- Fair Chase
- Ethical Shots
- Leave No Trace
- Opportunities & Etiquette
- Public Land Etiquette
- Private Land Etiquette

Build A Community

- Be Welcoming
 - Hunting is for everyone regardless of race, gender, or other immutable characteristics. We're all human beings! Please be welcoming.
- Be Understanding
 - Hunting can be intense. Some people may, cry, grieve, dance, or want a high five. These reactions are all ok! Please be understanding.
- Be an Ambassador
 - As a hunter you represent the hunting community as a whole. Be a good ambassador by...

Get Out - Be Safe - Enjoy

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Whitetail Deer Hunting

Introduction

- Why Hunt Whitetail Deer?

Getting to Know Whitetail

- Gender Identification
- Species Identification
 - Whitetail Deer (characteristics)
 - Whitetail Deer Range
 - Mule Deer (characteristics)
 - Mule Deer Range
- Whitetail Deer Habitat
- Food Sources
- Behavior
- Senses
 - Sight
 - Hearing
 - Smell
- Breeding
- Communication
 - Vocal
 - Visual
 - Olfactory
- Sign
 - Rubs
 - Scrapes
 - Tracks
 - Droppings
 - Sheds

Hunting Whitetail

- Types of Hunting
 - Ground Hunting
 - Still Hunting
 - Spot and Stalk
 - Elevated Hunting
 - Tree Stands
 - Elevated Blinds
- Calls
- Equipment
- Anatomy & Shot Placement
- Blood Trailing
- Caring for Your Harvest

Planning Your Hunt

- Plan Your Hunt
 - Overview of general process
- Digital Scouting
- Physical Scouting
- Select a Location
- Make a Plan
 - Finalizing your plans

Get Out - Be Safe - Enjoy

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Dove Hunting

Introduction

- Why Hunt Dove?

Getting to Know Dove

- Mourning Dove - Characteristics
- Mourning Dove - Behavior
- Mourning Dove - Habitat
- Mourning Dove - Food Sources
- Mourning Dove - Nesting
- Mourning Dove - Reproduction
- Mourning Dove - Range
- Related Species
 - Common Ground Dove
 - White Winged Dove
 - Eurasian Collared Dove
 - Rock Dove or Rock Pigeon

Hunting Dove

- Types of Hunting
 - Pass-shooting
 - Decoy Hunting
 - Falconry
- Equipment
- Safe Shots
- Dove Tips
- Caring for Your Harvest

Planning Your Hunt

- Plan Your Hunt
 - Overview of general process
- Research
- Scouting
- Select a Location
- Make a Plan
 - Finalizing your plans

Get Out - Be Safe - Enjoy

Waterfowl Hunting

Introduction

- Why Hunt Waterfowl?

Getting to Know Waterfowl

- Taxonomy
- Characteristics
 - Geese and Swans vs. Ducks
 - Dabbling Ducks vs. Diving Ducks
- Dabblers (species list)
- Divers & Stiff-Tailed Divers (species list)
- Sea Ducks (species list)
- Migration
- Migration Corridors (flyways)
- Habitat
- Movement Patterns
- Learn More (resources to learn more about waterfowl in your area)

Hunting Waterfowl

- Types of Hunting
 - Pass-shooting
 - Decoy Hunting
 - Jump-shooting
- Additional Techniques
 - Calling
 - Dogs
- Considerations
 - Concealment
 - Wind and Position
- Equipment
- Safe & Ethical Shots
- Caring for Your Harvest

Planning Your Hunt

- Plan Your Hunt
 - Overview of general process
- Research
- Scouting
- Select a Location
- Make a Plan
 - Finalizing your plans

Get Out - Be Safe - Enjoy

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Squirrel Hunting

Introduction

- Why Hunt Squirrels?

Getting to Know Squirrels

- Eastern Gray Squirrel
 - Characteristics
 - Habitat
 - Behavior
 - Breeding
 - Range
- Eastern Fox Squirrel
 - Characteristics
 - Habitat
 - Behavior
 - Breeding
 - Range
- American Red Squirrel
 - Characteristics
 - Habitat
 - Behavior
 - Breeding
 - Range
- Food Sources
- Spotting Squirrels
 - Indications of squirrel activity
 - Conditions and activity

Hunting Squirrels

- Types of Hunting
 - Stalking
 - Still Hunting
 - Dog Hunting
- Calls
- Equipment
- Anatomy & Shot Placement
- Safe Shots
- Caring for Your Harvest

Planning Your Hunt

- Plan Your Hunt
 - Overview of general process
- Digital Scouting
- Physical Scouting
- Select a Location
- Make a Plan
 - Finalizing your plans

Get Out - Be Safe - Enjoy

PowerPoint and PDF versions of these presentations are available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit.

FIREARM TRAINING-RIFLE

1. Introduction and Overview

- a. Introduce yourself, have them introduce themselves to each other
- b. Give an overview of what the day is going to look like

2. Cardinal Safety Rules

- a. Safety is common sense but don't take it for granted, do everything with purpose
- b. Even when you think it's natural, you can slip up
- c. Handling firearms is serious business. No goofing around with guns; do not drink alcohol when handling guns, or when you may be handling guns in the immediate future; always observe the four Cardinal Safety Rules

#1. Always Consider A Gun Loaded

Never rely on someone else's word that a gun is unloaded.

#2. Always Keep Your Firearm Pointed In A Safe Direction

Be alert to the location of the muzzle and the muzzles of firearms held by others. Never allow anyone to point a firearm at you.

#3. Always Keep Your Finger Off The Trigger Until You Are Ready To Fire

Keep your trigger finger outside the trigger guard until your sights are aligned and you intend to shoot. Mechanical safeties are made to help keep people safe, but they should not be relied upon. Mechanical safeties may fail, just as any mechanical device may fail as a result of wear, improper use, breakage, etc.

#4. Always Be Sure of Your Target and What May Be In Front of and Beyond

Target identification: Never fire unless you can identify your target unequivocally and are sure of what is in front of and behind the target. Know where your field partners are at all times.

d. Range Safety

- Keep the action open until you are safely in the station barrier
- Do not load until you are in the station and pointed down range
- Everyone can call a ceasefire if they see something dangerous
- Help point out safety tips to each other

3. How To Determine Your Dominant Eye

- a. Create and hold up a small hole between your fingers of both hands with your arms extended; focus on a stationary object through the hole and slowly pull your hands toward your face; the eye that the hole comes to is your dominant eye.
- b. Hold the gun on the side of your body of your dominant eye.

FIREARM TRAINING-RIFLE

4. How A Rifle Works

- a. A rifle is usually a rifled bore shoulder firearm capable of shooting a single projectile at long ranges
- b. It's okay to ask how a gun works when borrowing or using an unfamiliar firearm. Even if you are experienced, a quick run-through keeps everyone safer
- c. Parts:
 - Action
 - Trigger and trigger guard
 - Safety
 - Barrel
 - Bore (rifling)
 - Muzzle
 - Sights or Scope
 - Comb
 - Stock
 - Butt Pad
- d. Caliber - the size of a rifle or handgun bore with units in inches or millimeters and the size of cartridges designed for different sized bores
- e. When the trigger is squeezed a firing pin hits the primer of the cartridge. The primer ignites the powder and the pressure from the burning powder propels the bullet down the barrel. The rifling in the barrel causes the bullet to spin which keeps the bullet stable in flight resulting in better accuracy.
- f. Proper stance and hold of firearm is required for accuracy and consistency
- g. Aim a rifle - keep head straight up, press cheek firmly into the stock, hold firearm tight in shoulder pocket, match sights with target, exhale, squeeze

5. Malfunctions

- a. If a jam occurs or a shell does not eject, put the safety on, keep the gun pointed down range and ask for help

6. Targets Tips and Tricks

- a. Place the butt of the gun in the meaty pocket between your clavicle and shoulder
- b. Keep head far enough from scope but close enough that there is just a thin even black circle around outside-called eye relief
- c. You want the gun going off to surprise you, squeeze, don't pull the trigger
- d. Breathing techniques - breath in a full breath, breathe out slowly and squeeze trigger at end of exhale, don't anticipate
- e. Allow your body to absorb the energy, don't resist it

7. Practice Shooting

- a. Practice carrying and positioning with an unloaded gun first, critique as needed
- b. Keep an eye on body language, we don't want anyone uncomfortable
- c. Promote socialization and engagement among participants

8. Cleaning

- a. Step-by-step tutorial as they clean their firearms alongside you
- b. Clean the inside of the barrel with a solvent using a rod or snake
- c. Clean the action with solvent and cloth patches
- d. Lubricate the action with gun oil and cloth patches
- e. Apply light coat of gun oil to inside and outside with gun oil wipes or cloth

9. Debrief

- a. Questions
- b. Information for the next event

FIREARM TRAINING-SHOTGUN

1. Introduction and Overview

- a. Introduce yourself, have them introduce themselves to each other
- b. Give an overview of what the day is going to look like

2. Cardinal Safety Rules

- a. Safety is common sense but don't take it for granted, do everything with purpose
- b. Even when you think it's natural, you can slip up
- c. Handling firearms is serious business. No goofing around with guns; do not drink alcohol when handling guns, or when you may be handling guns in the immediate future; always observe the four Cardinal Safety Rules

#1. Always Consider A Gun Loaded

Never rely on someone else's word that a gun is unloaded.

#2. Always Keep Your Firearm Pointed In A Safe Direction

Be alert to the location of the muzzle and the muzzles of firearms held by others. Never allow anyone to point a firearm at you.

#3. Always Keep Your Finger Off The Trigger Until You Are Ready To Fire

Keep your trigger finger outside the trigger guard until your sights are aligned and you intend to shoot. Mechanical safeties are made to help keep people safe, but they should not be relied upon. Mechanical safeties may fail, just as any mechanical device may fail as a result of wear, improper use, breakage, etc.

#4. Always Be Sure Of Your Target And What May Be In Front Of And Beyond

Target identification: Never fire unless you can identify your target unequivocally and are sure of what is in front of and behind the target. Know where your field partners are at all times.

d. Range Safety

- Keep the action open until you are safely in the station barrier
- Do not load until you are in the station and pointed down range
- Everyone can call a ceasefire if they see something dangerous
- Help point out safety tips to each other

3. How To Determine Your Dominant Eye

- a. Create and hold up a small hole between your fingers of both hands with your arms extended; focus on a stationary object through the hole and slowly pull your hands toward your face; the eye that the hole comes to is your dominant eye.
- b. Hold the gun on the side of your body of your dominant eye

FIREARM TRAINING-SHOTGUN

4. How A Shotgun Works

- a. A shotgun is usually a smooth bore shoulder firearm capable of shooting multiple pellets at short ranges.
- b. It's okay to ask how a gun works when borrowing or using an unfamiliar firearm. Even if you are experienced, a quick run-through keeps everyone safer
- c. Parts:
 - Action
 - Trigger and trigger guard
 - Safety
 - Barrel
 - Bore (smooth and slug)
 - Muzzle
 - Choke (dispersal pattern of shot)
 - Rail
 - Sights or scope
 - Comb
 - Stock
 - Butt pad
- d. Gauge- refers to the diameter of the inside of the barrel and the size of the shells designed for different sized bores. Historically, this is related to the number of pellets, of equal diameter to the bore, that can fit in the barrel out of a pound of lead (Ex: 10, 12, 16, 20 ...) Generally, lower gauge guns will have more power per pellet than a higher gauge gun
- e. When the trigger is squeezed a firing pin hits the primer of the shell. The primer ignites the powder and the pressure from the burning powder propels the wad and shot down the barrel.
- f. Proper stance and hold of firearm is required for accuracy and consistency
- g. Point a shotgun- raise gun to cheek to look straight down rail, level with dominant eye, nestle butt in shoulder pocket, cover the target with the muzzle, squeeze

5. How The Ammo Works

- a. Shot- another term for pellets. Shot sizes: larger # shot means more pellets because of the smaller size of each pellet
 - Shot
 - Casing
 - Wad
 - Powder
 - Primer
- b. When the trigger is squeezed a firing pin hits the primer of the shell. The primer ignites the powder and the pressure from the burning powder propels the wad and shot down the barrel.

6. Malfunctions

- a. If a jam occurs or a shell does not eject, put the safety on, keep the gun pointed down range and ask for help

7. Targets Tips And Tricks

- a. Place the butt of the gun in the meaty pocket between your clavicle and shoulder
- b. Bend your knees and lean forward into the gun
- c. When shooting moving targets, point at the target with the muzzle and squeeze
- d. When shooting stationary targets, align and aim the beads to the target and squeeze
- e. You want the gun going off to surprise you, squeeze, don't pull the trigger
- f. Allow your body to absorb the energy, don't resist it

FIREARM TRAINING-SHOTGUN

8. Practice Shooting

- a. Practice carrying, stance and positioning with an unloaded gun first
- b. Keep an eye on their body position and stance, critique as needed
- c. Keep an eye on body language, we don't want anyone uncomfortable
- d. Promote socialization and engagement among participants

9. Cleaning

- a. Step-by-step tutorial as they clean their firearms alongside you
- b. Remove and clean choke with a solvent and cloth patch
- c. Remove barrel and clean the inside of the barrel with a solvent using a rod or snake
- d. Replace choke
- e. Clean the action with solvent and cloth patches
- f. Lubricate the action with gun oil and cloth patches
- g. Apply light coat of gun oil to inside and outside with gun oil wipes or cloth
- h. Replace barrel

10. Debrief

- a. Questions
- b. Information for the next event

VENISON

Motivations to Hunt

Approximately 50% of all new hunters today are motivated by food. Henceforth you want to empower them to make a harvest; handle the meat safely and efficiently; and turn the harvest into edible protein that they can enjoy.

Guidance

Your Academics Afield Student Coordinator should be an avid hunter who can help guide students on what to do if they harvest. Ideally your student coordinator will already know the below information, but if you want to double check here are common considerations.

Deer Harvest Potential Supplies

Your program needs sharp knives (coaches can bring theirs for students to use), gloves, gallon sized baggies (to retain tenderloins), coolers (if you use ice also bring scentless heavy duty contractor bags to keep the meat dry-reducing bacteria spread) and hand cleaning materials wipes. You will want to teach students the skill of dressing (gutting) at a minimum. Game meat tastes better and is safer the faster you break a large animal down to cool. If you or your student coordinator don't possess these skills, a partner somewhere does.

Deer Harvest Planning

- Depending on the land you are hunting on, if you harvest, where will you dress out the animal? Who will lead this instruction?
- After you dress out the animal, will you quarter it there into manageable chunks for ease of transportation? If necessary, who will lead this instruction? Or will you drag it to a vehicle to bring to a skinning shed or it to a processor? Prices vary for processors, but expect a cost of at least \$100.00 dollars.
- If you quarter it, will you bring it to a processor to finish butchering it? Or will you teach individuals how to butcher their own meat (not a required component of Academics Afield general programming, but a very valuable extra class if possible).
- If you harvest a deer, students should be prepared to store approximately 30lbs of meat
- If students cannot store 30 lbs of meat there are a few options
 1. Donate to Academic Advisor or NGO partner for future Academics Afield programming (this allows you to serve wild game at all of your hunts regardless of harvest further connecting students to the activity)
 2. Do any of the other students want some meat that they can store?
 3. Call the DNR to identify a program or food bank that accepts venison.

Additional Resources

IHEA Hunters Connect How to Videos



APPLICANT SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction and Instructions

Thanks for your interest in the Academics Afield program. The program is designed to teach people how to hunt that have an interest, but no (or very limited) previous hunting experience. All of the necessary training and equipment will be provided. Because our program can (unfortunately) only accommodate 12 participants this year due to logistical constraints, we ask anyone who is interested to take 3-5 minutes to apply using the form below. If you are not selected for the program this year, we hope that you will have an opportunity to participate in the future. Thanks again for your interest in Academics Afield!

General Information

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Birthdate _____ Female Male Other (specify) _____

University Information

What university do you currently attend? _____

In what state is your university located? _____

Which of the following best describes your current academic standing/position?

Undergraduate Student Graduate Student Other (specify) _____

APPLICANT SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

Which of the following **BEST** describes your college major or field of study (or likely major, if you are currently undecided)? (check one)

- Agriculture & Natural Resources (Agriculture, Ecology, Conservation Biology, Environmental Science, Crop & Soil Science, Animal Science, Natural Resource Management, Parks and Recreation, etc.)
- Science & Math (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Math, Statistics, Public Health, etc.)
- Engineering & Technology (Engineering, Materials Science, Computer Science, etc.)
- Business & Economics (Accounting, Economics, Finance, Management, etc.)
- Social Science & Humanities (Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, History, English, Religion, Language & Linguistics, Education, etc.)
- Arts (Architecture, Design, Performance Arts, etc.)
- Other (specify) _____

Have you hunted in the past?

- Yes (within the past 5yrs) Yes (not within the past 5yrs) No

IF YES to any past hunting. Overall, how many times have you hunted?

- Less than 5 times 5-10 times More than 10 times

Do you have family members who hunt?

Do you have friends who hunt?

- Yes (many) Yes (a few) No Yes (many) Yes (a few) No

APPLICANT SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

The Academics Afield program cohort will participate in a number of activities throughout the coming year. These activities include educational meetings, shooting range sessions, hunts, and possibly more (dates are to be determined). Which of the following best describes your availability to participate in events over the coming year? (check all that apply)

- I am able to participate in events this academic semester
- I am able to participate in events next semester
- I am able to participate in events during the next academic year

Finally, please tell us why you want to participate in the Academics Afield program.

A Google Form version of this evaluation tool is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit



PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

Introduction and Instructions

Thank you for your interest in this hunting program for college students. Before your participation begins, we'd like to learn more about you and your perspectives regarding hunting. We'll be asking some similar questions at the end of the program. Your responses to this survey will help us improve future programming. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Thanks in advance for your participation.

General Information

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Email 1 _____ Email 2 _____

University Information

What university do you currently attend? _____

In what state is your university located? _____

Which of the following best describes your current academic standing/position?

Undergraduate Student Graduate Student Other (specify) _____

Section 1: Your Connection to Hunting

1.1. Have you ever been hunting before? (check one)

Yes I accompanied someone hunting, but did not personally hunt. No (skip to 1.2)

1.1a. About how old were you when you first went hunting? (age in years) _____

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

1.1b. How many times have you gone hunting in the last 12 months?

(specify number of separate hunting trips) _____

1.1c. What species did you hunt? (check all that apply)

Deer Waterfowl Turkey Small birds or game Other _____

1.2. Do any of the following people in your life hunt? (check all that apply)

Father Mother Sibling Grandparent Other family member

Friends Partner/spouse/significant other Other _____

1.3. Overall, to what degree do you think the following groups of people are supportive of hunting?

(Circle one response for each item.)

	Not Supportive	Supportive	Very Supportive
Your immediate family	1	2	3
Your extended family	1	2	3
Your friends	1	2	3

1.4. How often do you participate in the following activities related to hunting?

(Circle one response for each item.)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Watch TV shows/videos or play video games about hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Read magazines about hunting	1	2	3	4	5
View websites, blogs, or social media posts about hunting (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Talk to family and friends about hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Eat game meat obtained through hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Participate in recreational shooting or archery	1	2	3	4	5

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

1.5. Have you used a firearm or archery equipment before?

Yes No (skip to 1.6)

1.5a Which of the following firearms or archery equipment have you used before?

Rifle Shotgun Pistol Crossbow Bow (compound, recurve, long bow)

1.6. People hunt for a variety of reasons. How important to you is each of the following potential reasons to hunt? (Circle one response for each item.)

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important
To engage in sport and/or recreation	1	2	3	4
To relax or escape from everyday life	1	2	3	4
To be closer to nature and the outdoors	1	2	3	4
To harvest a trophy animal	1	2	3	4
To spend time with family and friends	1	2	3	4
To seek a new adventure	1	2	3	4
To obtain local, free range meat	1	2	3	4
To control wildlife populations that are causing problems for people	1	2	3	4
To control wildlife populations that are damaging ecosystems	1	2	3	4
To contribute to wildlife conservation	1	2	3	4
To test and challenge my outdoor skills	1	2	3	4
To connect more closely to sources of food	1	2	3	4
Others (specify)	1	2	3	4

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

1.7. Have any of the following been a barrier to your previous hunting participation? (check all that apply)

- Would rather do other activities
- Lack free time required to hunt
- Don't have anyone to go hunting with
- Don't know where I'm allowed to hunt
- Lack of available hunting land where I currently live
- Moved away from the area I typically hunt to attend college
- Lack transportation to get to hunting areas
- Lack knowledge/skills required to hunt
- Lack knowledge/skills required to prepare game meat to eat
- Lack of knowledge about hunting and firearm laws
- Unsure of how/where to store equipment and firearms
- Costs associated with hunting (license, tags, equipment, firearms, travel, etc.)
- Have not completed a hunter education course
- Have a moral/ethical objection to hunting
- Reluctant to personally kill an animal
- Don't feel comfortable around firearms or hunting equipment
- Don't feel comfortable around hunters and hunting culture
- Worried non-hunting family and friends may judge me
- Feel discouraged or frightened by negative experiences I've had in the outdoors
- Don't feel comfortable due to the lack of racial/ethnic diversity associated with hunting
- Other (specify) _____

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

1.8 To what extent do you agree with this statement?

I feel like I have the social support I need to become a successful hunter.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

1.9. How confident do you feel about your skills and knowledge in the following areas?

(Circle one response for each item.)

	Not at all confident	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Extremely confident
Firearm safety	1	2	3	4	5
Shooting skills	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting regulations	1	2	3	4	5
Choosing the right hunting gear	1	2	3	4	5
Scouting and selecting hunting spots	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical shot placement	1	2	3	4	5
Field recovery/dressing of wild game	1	2	3	4	5
Butchering and preserving game meat	1	2	3	4	5
Cooking harvested game meat	1	2	3	4	5

1.9a. Overall, how confident do you feel about your hunting skills and knowledge? (check one)

Not at all confident Slightly confident Somewhat confident Confident Extremely confident

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

1.10. How do you feel about the following statements related to hunting and hunters?
 (Circle one response for each item.)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Hunting is a safe activity	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting is a wise use of natural resources	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters behave responsibly and follow laws	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters care about conserving wildlife and natural resources	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting can be an ethical means to acquire locally sourced meat	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting provides a direct way to connect with nature and ecosystems	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters financially contribute to wildlife conservation	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting is cruel and inhumane to the animals	1	2	3	4	5
People who want to hunt should be provided an opportunity to do so	1	2	3	4	5
Wildlife conservation is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting has a positive impact on wildlife conservation	1	2	3	4	5

1.11. What are TWO THINGS you hope to get out of this hunting program?

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

Section 2: Your Other Activities

2.1. What other outdoor-recreation activities do you participate in, if any? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure Sports
(climbing, biking, skiing, surfing, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jogging/Running |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Watching | <input type="checkbox"/> Off Road Vehicles (4WDs, ATVs, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing/Kayaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Viewing/Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

2.2. What cooking or food sourcing activities do you participate in, if any?(check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking Classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Foraging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Edible Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping at Farmers' Markets |

2.3. Do you belong to or donate to any of the following organizations? (check all that apply)

- Hunting or Wildlife Conservation Organizations
(Ducks Unlimited, NWF, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, QDMA, etc.)
- Other Environmental or Nature-based Organizations
(The Nature Conservancy, The Audubon Society, Sierra Club, etc.)
- I am not a member of any hunting, conservation, or environmental organizations.

Section 3: Background Information

3.1. In what year were you born? 3.2. With what gender do you identify?

Year _____ Female Male Other (specify) _____

3.3. Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White | <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern/North African | |

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

3.4. Which of the following BEST describes your college major or field of study (or likely major, if you are currently undecided)? (check one)

- Agriculture & Natural Resources (Agriculture, Ecology, Conservation Biology, Environmental Science, Crop & Soil Science, Animal Science, Natural Resource Management, Parks and Recreation, etc.)
- Science & Math (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Math, Statistics, Public Health, etc.)
- Engineering & Technology (Engineering, Materials Science, Computer Science, etc.)
- Business & Economics (Accounting, Economics, Finance, Management, etc.)
- Social Science & Humanities (Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, History, English, Religion, Language & Linguistics, Education, etc.)
- Arts (Architecture, Design, Performance Arts, etc.)
- Other (specify) _____

3.5. How would you best describe the area where you grew up? (check one)

- A large city or urban area (more than 250,000 people)
- A medium-sized city (50,000-250,000 people)
- A small city (10,000 to 50,000 people)
- A small town or rural area (10,000 people or less)
- Other (specify) _____

3.6. Academics Afield is dedicated to providing a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for all. Do you agree to uphold these values throughout your engagement in Academics Afield and beyond?

- Yes

A Google Form version of this evaluation tool is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit



POST-EVENT SURVEY

Introduction and Instructions

Thank you for participating in this Academics Afield event. We'd like to learn more about your experience. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below. We value your feedback and your suggestions, which will help us to improve future programming. First, for attendance tracking purposes, please provide the following information.

General Information

Event Date _____ DNR # or Birthdate _____

Name _____ Email _____

1. What was your impression of each of the following during this event?

(Circle one response for each item.)

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Logistics and organization (including event timing)	1	2	3	4	5
Facilities and location	1	2	3	4	5
Safety of event	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of information covered	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of coaches and instruction	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of event	1	2	3	4	5

2. How likely are you to recommend this event to a friend? (check one)

Very likely
 Likely
 Not sure
 Unlikely
 Very unlikely

POST-EVENT SURVEY

3. What did you like the MOST about this event?

4. What did you like the LEAST about this event?

5. What would you change or add to IMPROVE this event in the future?

A Google Form version of this evaluation tool is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit



POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

Introduction and Instructions

Thank you for participating in our Collegiate Hunting Community. We'd like to ask a few questions to gain a better understanding of how your participation in this program shaped your perceptions of and interest in hunting. Your responses will help us improve future programming. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. Thanks in advance for your participation.

General Information

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Email 1 _____ Email 2 _____

Your University and State _____

Section 1: Your Program Experience

1.1. Overall, how would you rate your experience in the Academics Afield Program? (check one)

Very negative Negative Neutral Positive Very positive

1.2. How would you describe the length of the program? (check one)

Too long About right Too short

1.3. How would you describe the overall time commitment required for the program? (check one)

Too long About right Too short

1.4. How would you describe the number of participants in the program? (check one)

Too many About right Too few

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

1.5. How would you describe skill level of the program? (check one)

Too advanced About right Too novice

1.6. How would you rate each of the following aspects of the program?
(Circle one response for each item.)

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Quality of information/instruction	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of information/instruction	1	2	3	4	5
Usefulness and practicality of information/instruction	1	2	3	4	5
Instructors' knowledge and experience	1	2	3	4	5
Instructors' ability to explain and demonstrate	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of hunting rules and regulations	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of firearm safety and marksmanship	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of hunting gear and equipment	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of scouting and game recovery	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of game meat processing	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of cooking & game meat preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of hunting-conservation connections	1	2	3	4	5

1.7. How effective was the program in accomplishing the following? (Circle one response for each item.)

	Not at all effective	Somewhat effective	Effective	Very effective
Increasing your interest in hunting	1	2	3	4
Providing you with the skills/knowledge needed to begin hunting safely	1	2	3	4
Providing you with the skills/knowledge needed to clean and prepare wild game meat	1	2	3	4
Providing opportunities to meet and connect with fellow hunters	1	2	3	4
Helping you facilitate hunting and hunting conversation with your family and friends	1	2	3	4
Increasing your knowledge of the role hunters play in conservation	1	2	3	4

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

1.8. What did you enjoy the most about the Academics Afield program?

What topics/skills covered did you find most helpful/interesting? What event was most memorable?

1.9. What did you like the least about the Academics Afield program?

Is there anything else we could have done to make your experience more effective and enjoyable? Are there any additional hunting skills that you would like to have learned or discussed?

1.10. Did your participation in the program impact your hunting participation, skills, or views in any way?

Please explain.

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

Section 2: Your Future Hunting Participation

2.1. How likely are you to hunt in the future?
(check one)

- I will definitely NOT hunt (Skip to 2.2)
- I will probably NOT hunt (Skip to 2.2)
- Not sure
- I will probably hunt
- I will definitely hunt

2.1a. If you might go hunting in the future, how often do you think you will hunt? (check one)

- Might try it once
- Rarely (once every few years)
- Regularly (at least once a year)

2.2. After this program, to what extent do you think you can do these things?

(Circle one response for each item.)

	Definitely	Maybe	Could not
Plan a hunt	1	2	3
Spot game	1	2	3
Track game	1	2	3
Understand game behavior and biology	1	2	3
Process game	1	2	3
Shoot proficiently	1	2	3
Safely handle a firearm	1	2	3

2.3. In the future, how likely are you to do the following?

(Circle one response for each item.)

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Not sure	Likely	Very likely
Purchase a hunting license	1	2	3	4	5
Attend a hunter education course or another hunting program	1	2	3	4	5
Hunt deer	1	2	3	4	5
Hunt any other species (turkey, waterfowl, small birds or game, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Go on any type of hunt with another participant from the program	1	2	3	4	5
Become friends with someone who is a hunter	1	2	3	4	5
Eat game meat obtained through hunting	1	2	3	4	5

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

2.4. Do you expect any of the following to be a barrier to your future hunting participation?
(check all that apply)

- Would rather do other activities
- Lack free time required to hunt
- Don't have anyone to go hunting with
- Don't know where I'm allowed to hunt
- Lack of available hunting land where I currently live
- Moved away from the area I typically hunt to attend college
- Lack transportation to get to hunting areas
- Lack knowledge/skills required to hunt
- Lack knowledge/skills required to prepare game meat to eat
- Lack of knowledge about hunting and firearm laws
- Unsure of how/where to store equipment and firearms
- Costs associated with hunting (license, tags, equipment, firearms, travel, etc.)
- Have not completed a hunter education course
- Have a moral/ethical objection to hunting
- Reluctant to personally kill an animal
- Don't feel comfortable around firearms or hunting equipment
- Don't feel comfortable around hunters and hunting culture
- Worried non-hunting family and friends may judge me
- Feel discouraged or frightened by negative experiences I've had in the outdoors
- Don't feel comfortable due to the lack of racial/ethnic diversity associated with hunting
- Other (specify) _____

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

2.5 To what extent do you agree with this statement?

I feel like I have the social support I need to become a successful hunter. (check one)

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

2.6. How confident do you feel about your skills and knowledge in the following areas?

(Circle one response for each item.)

	Not at all confident	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Extremely confident
Firearm safety	1	2	3	4	5
Shooting skills	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting regulations	1	2	3	4	5
Choosing the right hunting gear	1	2	3	4	5
Scouting and selecting hunting spots	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical shot placement	1	2	3	4	5
Field recovery/dressing of wild game	1	2	3	4	5
Butchering and preserving game meat	1	2	3	4	5
Cooking harvested game meat	1	2	3	4	5

2.7. Overall, how confident do you feel about your hunting skills and knowledge? (check one)

Not at all confident Slightly confident Somewhat confident Confident Extremely confident

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

2.8. How do you feel about the following statements related to hunting and hunters?
 (Circle one response for each item.)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Hunting is a safe activity	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting is a wise use of natural resources	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters behave responsibly and follow laws	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters care about conserving wildlife and natural resources	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting can be an ethical means to acquire locally sourced meat	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting provides a direct way to connect with nature and ecosystems	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters financially contribute to wildlife conservation	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting is cruel and inhumane to the animals	1	2	3	4	5
People who want to hunt should be provided an opportunity to do so	1	2	3	4	5
Wildlife conservation is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting has a positive impact on wildlife conservation	1	2	3	4	5

2.9. Do you have the resources you need to find and connect with potential hunting mentors and mentorship opportunities after this program ends?

Yes Not sure No

2.9a. IF YES, what are some of the resources (people, organizations, etc.) where you plan to seek out mentors and mentorship opportunities?

2.9b. IF NOT SURE or NO, what would help you feel more comfortable seeking and finding mentors and mentorship opportunities in the future?

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

2.10. Please list any other suggestions or comments you have about the Academics Afield program.

A Google Form version of this evaluation tool is available at gwf.org/R3Toolkit



FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Introduction and Instructions

You participated in Academics Afield within the last few years. To further gauge the success of that program and to learn from and improve it over time, we have some follow-up questions. Thank you for your time and input.

Participation In New Opportunities

1. As a result of participating in this program, have you participated in any new hunting-related activities?

Yes No

2. If no, why didn't you participate in any new activities?

3. If yes, what activities?

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

4. Select the skills and knowledge training you received. (check all that apply)

- How hunting is related to conservation
- Species biology
- Hunting strategy
- Firearm training
- Guided hunt
- Harvest processing
- Butchering Techniques
- Cooking Techniques
- Other (specify) _____

5. Select the support and additional resources you received. (check all that apply)

- Met other novices to continue learning with
- Met experienced individuals to help mentor you after the program
- Learned about conservation organizations that you engaged with after the program
- Learned about educational materials that you utilized after the program

6. What additional support do you need to continue participating in hunting-related activities?

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Specific Hunting Skills

7. To what degree did this program help or encourage you to develop new hunting skills? (check one)

- A lot Some A little Not at all

8. Of the skills you learned in the program, which of the following have you continued to develop on your own? (check all that apply)

- Planning a hunt
- Navigation
- Selecting the right clothing and equipment
- Spotting game
- Tracking game
- Blind or stand placement
- Game biology and behavior
- Game calling
- Shooting safety
- Shot placement
- Processing game
- Butchering game meat
- Cooking game meat
- Other (specify) _____

9. What additional hunting skills (not stated above) have you acquired since participating in the program?

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

License Purchase

10. As a result of participating in this program, did you buy a hunting license?

Yes No

11. If yes, please specify which, how many, and year purchased.

12. As a result of participating in this program, did you buy a firearm or bow?

Yes No

13. If yes, please specify which and year purchased.

14. Did participation in any other programs influence your decision to buy a license?

Yes No

15. If yes, which programs?

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

16. Did participation in any other programs influence your decision to buy a firearm or bow?

Yes No

17. If yes, which programs?

Participant Information

18. Name _____

19. College Attended _____

20. Years of Attendance _____

21. Do you have any more thoughts you'd like to share regarding how Academics Afield influenced you?

22. Are you interested in engaging as a coach to new participants as an Alumni to the program?

Yes No Maybe

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