



GEORGIA WILDLIFE
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Press Release

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Georgia Wildlife Federation Receives Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Grant

Covington, GA – The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) recently funded Georgia Wildlife Federation’s 2024-2025 SY project titled “Fort Valley State University Academics Afield: Connecting Underrepresented College Students to Conservation through Hunting”. Academics Afield is a college learn-to-hunt program that is implemented at several colleges and universities throughout the Southeastern United States. Founded in 2019, Academics Afield attempts to reduce barriers into hunting and the shooting sports by providing workshops available to students with little to no firearm or hunting experience. Each school’s program comes with a variety of expenses, including ammunition, hunting gear and supplies, and food for participants. These supplies are used throughout the school year at 3-4 workshops where the selected students are educated on the history of hunting and conservation, species biology, firearm safety, and hunting tactics. Each workshop culminates in a mentored hunt or firearm training field day.



In November, Academics Afield students from Fort Valley State University participated in a deer hunt in Eatonton, GA. The funding received from RMEF will enable programs like this to continue at Fort Valley State University for the 2024-2025 school year.

“Academics Afield, as a program, is instrumental in introducing a whole new population to responsible hunting as an act of conservation – that of the college student. It is our hope that students continue to be afforded the opportunity and the right to learn responsible hunting and conservation of our natural resources” said Dr. Oreta Samples with the College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology at Fort Valley State University.

Georgia Wildlife Federation is thankful for the funding from RMEF in making it possible to continue passing along our hunting heritage through our learn-to-hunt workshops.

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

For more information on Academics Afield, contact Coral Minchey at cminchey@gwf.org.

Academics Afield programming is supported by the GA R3 Initiative; National Shooting Sports Foundation; SITKA; RMEF and the GA state chapter of the NWTF.

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About Georgia Wildlife Federation

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