



Compliments of the Hunter Education Program

Around here we are so excited for the banquet! The instructor award/recognition banquet is officially **March 28th at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Montpelier**. Have you responded yet? We hope to see you there! If you or someone you know has **dietary restrictions, or is a vegetarian**, please let us know so we can get the appropriate lunch for you. This issue features press releases from the Department, as well as articles written by staff members. If you have input—a question, a picture, or story—please e-mail Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us

Insights

Crossbows for All

The Hunter Education Program is anticipating the Fish & Wildlife Board will legalize crossbows in some shape or form by this fall's archery season. We don't know if they will legalize it for use in all seasons, just firearm seasons, or just bow seasons, but we are pretty confident that it is coming. So far, board members have been overwhelmingly receptive toward crossbows. Chris has been testifying for crossbow use in the legislature, and even wrote a great presentation on the history, current uses, and future of crossbows.

This is new for all of us, and we are trying our best to transition and understand how best to teach crossbows in our current hunter and bowhunter classes. Like anything, we are planning and conferring, trying to figure out how best to equip instructors and students with the material they need to know in order to safely handle crossbows in the field.

In order to address the anticipated arrival of widespread crossbow use in Vermont, the Hunter Education Program is conducting crossbow trainings for instructors this spring, and will be scheduling trainings for the general public soon after.

We are preparing for the need to integrate crossbows into our hunter education courses in some way. When crossbow legalization is finalized, we will decide how best to coordinate the crossbow curricula.

Thanks for working with us in order to help keep our students safe.

Hunter Education Instructor Training Course

Taking Place April 11

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is offering a New Instructor Training Course for people interested in volunteering to teach Hunter Education, Trapper Education or Bowhunter Education courses in Vermont.

The course will take place on Saturday, April 11 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Stamford Fish & Game Club in Stamford, Vt.

Policies and procedures, field techniques, and teaching methods will all be covered in order to give instructors the tools to teach future Vermont hunters how to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

“There were no hunting-related shootings last year as a result of our knowledgeable and capable hunter education instructors,” said Chris Saunders, hunter education manager for Vermont. “This serves as proof that the skills and ethics that our instructors impart to their students will serve them for a lifetime and that there is no better way for a hunter to give back to the outdoors.”

All applicants who pass the final written exam are required to pass a background check with a warden and shadow a Chief Instructor before they can teach on their own. Upon completion, they will then receive their full state of Vermont Hunter Education Instructor certification.

“Our hunter education instructors are all volunteers, donating their time to pass on a cherished Vermont tradition,” said Saunders. “The hours our instructors put in will leverage federal dollars that allow the hunter education program to function.”

Those planning to attend should RSVP by calling 802-828-1193 or register online at: <http://www.register-ed.com/events/view/60190>

Please note: at least two other trainings will be held before the hunting season begins. The Hunter Education Program will have a training at Buck Lake Camp in Woodbury, and an additional training somewhere else in the state.

Graduates from a new instructor training held in July 2014 at Buck Lake in Woodbury.
Photo courtesy Nicole Corrao



Sign Up Now for Governor's Youth Turkey Hunt

In an effort to promote youth hunting in Vermont, youth hunters are encouraged to sign up for the Third Annual Governor's Youth Turkey Hunt this spring. The young hunters will be treated to a luncheon on Sunday, April 19, at the Waterbury Fish & Game Club, where they will take part in a discussion on the importance of the hunting tradition in Vermont.

The following weekend, the young hunters will take part in a guided turkey hunt to coincide with Vermont's youth turkey hunting weekend on April 25-26.

"I always look forward to this event," Gov. Shumlin said. "It's a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a Vermont tradition with the young Vermonters who will carry it on for generations to come."

Interested youth hunters are required to submit a completed application along with a letter explaining why they would like to participate in the event. Applications are available on the Fish & Wildlife Department website and must be submitted by April 1. The event is sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) and is open to any licensed hunter under the age of 16. Previous hunting experience is not required to participate.

"Youth participation in hunting across the country, including Vermont, has been on the decline," said NWTF chapter president Don Isabelle. "We hope the Governor's Youth Turkey Hunt will help reverse this trend and entice young people in Vermont back to hunting."

"Governor Shumlin is an ideal spokesman for this program," said Isabelle. "As a lifelong hunter, he understands the importance of this tradition,"

"The youth turkey hunt is a safe and fun way to get young people into hunting," said Fish & Wildlife Department turkey project leader Amy Alfieri. "Between the excellent mentors and the hunt occurring before the start of regular turkey season, young hunters stand a very good chance of hearing turkey calls and seeing birds, and a high success rate is likely."

An initiative of the Vermont State Chapter of the NWTF, the Governor's Youth Turkey Hunt coincides with this year's Jakes' event, an annual youth turkey hunting event held by the NWTF to educate youth about wildlife conservation and stewardship of Vermont's natural resources. Each youth hunter will be provided a guide from the NWTF.



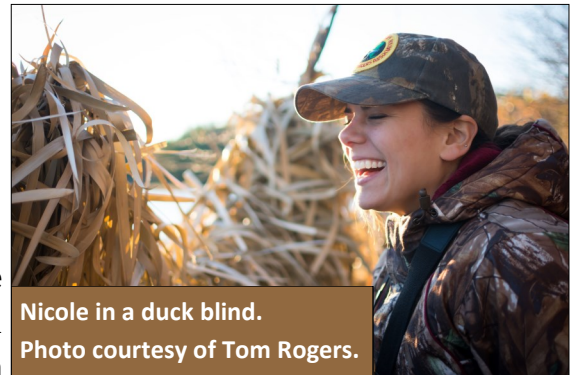
Young people are encouraged to sign up for the Third Annual Governor's Youth Turkey Hunt this spring.

Photo courtesy of Joel Flewelling.

FAQ with Nicole

Q: Are there going to be other new instructor trainings in the state?

A: Yes! We hope to hold at least two more trainings before the hunting season begins. We will have one training at our Buck Lake Camp in Woodbury, and one in the Northeast Kingdom. It is likely that we will also hold a training at our Kehoe Camp in Castleton.



Nicole in a duck blind.
Photo courtesy of Tom Rogers.

Instructor Development Opportunity: Range Officer Training

In an effort to strengthen instructor skills, and offer them training beyond that of the everyday class, the Vermont Hunter Education Program will be offering range officer trainings for all certified instructors and non-certified volunteers.

Current policy requires that instructors attend at least one training every other year to remain certified. Attending one of the range officer trainings will count toward the instructor development/in-service training requirement. Other seminars that count toward this requirement include the yearly instructor banquet, helping with new instructor training, and attending a crossbow training.

Two range officer trainings have been scheduled so far. These classes will be taught by our Shooting Range Project Technician, Daneil Pieterse and Training Coordinator John Pellegrini.

Sign up for the training at Buck Lake on June 5th here:

<http://www.register-ed.com/events/view/60188>

Sign up for the training at Kehoe on July 9th here:

<http://www.register-ed.com/events/view/60189>

Both trainings are on Thursday nights. The trainings will run from about 4pm to 7pm, starting inside with a short lecture before spending the remainder of the evening outside on the range. Water will be provided. Be sure to dress for outdoor activity.

If you have further questions regarding the trainings, please contact Daneil at (802) 272-6923.

Deer, Moose Hearings Set for March



Photo by George Bosworth

Hunters, landowners and anyone else interested in Vermont's deer and moose should plan on attending one of the public hearings being held around the state in late March.

All six of the hearings will include results of Vermont's 2014 deer seasons and prospects for deer hunting next fall as well as an opportunity for hunters to provide their observations and opinions about the current status of the deer herd and proposed deer hunting regulation changes.

The three hearings being held in Barre, Brighton and Castleton will include a review of the proposed 2015 moose hunting season, and an opportunity for the public to provide feedback on the number of moose permits recommended for 2015.

Hunters are invited to attend one of the following public hearings, held from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

March 23 Barre – Spaulding High School, 155 Ayers St., Barre, VT 05641

March 23 Bennington – Mt. Anthony Middle School Cafeteria, 747 East Road, Bennington, VT 05201

March 24 Brighton – Brighton Elementary School, 825 Railroad St., Island Pond, VT 05846

March 24 Brattleboro – Brattleboro UHS, 131 Fairground Road, Brattleboro, VT 05478

March 26 St. Albans – St. Albans Town Educational Ctr., 169 South Main St., St. Albans, VT 05478

March 26 Castleton – Kehoe Conservation Camp, 636 Point of Pines Road, Castleton, VT 05735

The proposed deer hunting regulation changes can be seen on the Fish & Wildlife Department's website www.vtfishandwildlife.com. Comments also may be submitted on the website.

Three of the proposed changes would take effect this year. The first part of archery deer season would be lengthened by ten days – seven days prior to the existing season and three days after. Crossbows would be legalized for use whenever a regular bow and arrow could be used. Archery and muzzleloader season limits would be reduced from three to two deer.

A prohibition on the possession and use of deer urine-based lures while deer hunting would be effective in 2016. This is a precaution against the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD) into Vermont.

Three Public Hearings Set for Proposed Moose Hunt

Three public hearings will be held on March 23, 24 and 26 on Vermont's proposed 2015 moose hunting permits and moose hunting regulations.

A total of 225 regular firearms moose season permits and 40 archery moose season permits would be issued and changes in a moose hunting regulation are being proposed.

The board is considering a proposal presented by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department allocating permits in 13 of the state's 21 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs).

The number of permits would be reduced from last year in nine WMUs, and permits would be for bulls-only in all WMUs except C and E1 units.

"We recommended a reduction in permit numbers and a shift toward bulls-only permits in most of the units this year based on the biological data we collected on Vermont's moose, and our population estimates indicating moose densities remain below management goals in some areas," said biologist Cedric Alexander, Vermont's moose project leader. "It's the intent of this proposal to allow slow population growth in some regions while continuing to stabilize moose numbers elsewhere."

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Photo courtesy of Chief Instructor George Bosworth.

Three Public Hearings Set for Proposed Moose Hunt

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Proposed changes to the moose hunting regulation include:

- Allowing all Vermont resident U.S. military veterans to apply in a lottery of five moose hunting permits
- Antlered and antlerless moose are defined
- Crossbow is defined
- The use of a crossbow will be allowed
- A person who has held a moose hunting permit would now wait five years before applying again.
- A person who held a moose hunting permit could not be named a “subpermittee” for five years.
- A “guide” may not carry a firearm, muzzleloader or archery equipment while guiding.
- A handgun could be carried during archery season.
- Biological samples that must be brought to a checking station are defined.

Vermont’s “archery-only” moose season will be held October 1-7. The regular moose season is scheduled for October 17-22.

The proposed 2015 moose hunt changes can be viewed by going to the Fish & Wildlife website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com) and clicking on Law Enforcement and then Rules and Proposed Rules. Comments on the proposal can be sent to ANR.FWPublicComment@state.vt.us.

Three Fish and Wildlife Board public hearings also are being held to provide an opportunity for comment on the proposed moose season. The hearings will be held from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the following locations:

March 23 Barre – Spaulding High School, 155 Ayers St., Barre, VT 05641

March 24 Brighton – Brighton Elementary School, 825 Railroad St., Island Pond, VT 05846

March 26 Castleton – Kehoe Conservation Camp, 636 Point of Pines Road, Castleton, VT 05735

The proposed permit numbers will be voted on at one more Board meeting in April.

April Turkey Seminar

Never tried turkey hunting but want to learn how? Here's your chance to get started at a First-Time Turkey Hunting Seminar being held Sunday, April 12 in Berlin.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife staff and two volunteer hunter education instructors will be putting on the 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. seminar hosted at the National Life annex building at 190 Junction Road in Berlin, Vermont.

Rodney and Theresa Elmer of Mountain Deer Taxidermy will be the instructors for this event. Theresa is a member of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board and she and her husband Rodney are among Vermont's most sought-after hunter education instructors. The Elmers are known for their incredible depth of hunting knowledge, in addition to their easy-going demeanor and humorous hunting stories.

The pair will cover basic turkey hunting topics such as hunting regulations, choosing a good location to set up your hunting blind, correct use of turkey calls, decoy placement, shotgun chokes, safe colors of clothing, and shot placement, as well as dressing and cooking your turkey.

"Turkey hunting is a popular activity in Vermont and it's easy to see why," said Nicole Corrao, hunter education specialist for Vermont Fish & Wildlife. "It's a lot of fun and is a great way of bringing home some delicious wild turkey meat for the family."

Participants are encouraged to sign up online at tinyurl.com/VtTurkeySeminar. For questions, please contact Dylan Brooks at 802-828-1193. The course is limited to no more than 30 participants.

Photo courtesy of Vermont Fish & Wildlife



Special Snow Goose Harvest Opportunity



Vermont is one of the eight eastern states that will have USFWS regulated spring snow goose hunts to help control damage by the birds to agricultural crops and marsh vegetation.

Photo courtesy of John Hall.

Vermont's spring snow goose hunt will be held from March 11 through April 24.

Since 2009, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has annually issued a "Conservation Order" to allow the reduction of the population of migrating greater and lesser snow geese as well as Ross' geese. The numbers of these geese have grown so high that they are destroying habitat for themselves and other species.

Eight states in the Atlantic Flyway (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Vermont) will hold a similar Spring Snow Goose Conservation Order in 2015.

The Vermont 2015 Spring Snow Goose Conservation Order will occur statewide. The daily bag limit is 15 snow geese. There is no possession limit. Waterfowl hunting regulations in effect last fall will apply during the 2015 Spring Snow Goose Conservation Order with the exception that unplugged shotguns and electronic calls may be used, and shooting hours will be extended until one half hour after sunset.

A 2015 Spring Snow Goose Harvest Permit is required and is available at no charge on the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com) under "Items of Special Interest." Hunters may also call the Essex Junction Office (802-878-1564) to request a permit.

Hunters will also need a 2015 Vermont hunting license (residents \$25, nonresidents \$50), a 2015 Harvest Information Program (HIP) number, a 2014 federal migratory hunting stamp (\$15), and a 2015 Vermont migratory waterfowl stamp (\$7.50).

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Special Snow Goose Harvest Opportunity

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Hunters can register with the Harvest Information Program by going to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department website or by calling toll free 1-877-306-709.

Hunters who obtain a permit will be required to complete an online survey after April 24 and prior to May 16, 2015, whether they hunted or not. Hunters without access to the internet may obtain a copy of the survey by calling 802-878-1564.

“The breeding population of greater snow geese has grown from approximately 50,000 birds in the mid-1960s to 900,000 birds today,” said David Sausville, Vermont’s waterfowl project biologist. “This increase has resulted in damage to agricultural crops and marsh vegetation in staging and wintering areas from Quebec to North Carolina. The Atlantic Flyway has established a goal of 500,000 greater snow geese to bring populations in balance with their habitat and reduce crop depredation.”

During spring migration, snow geese typically move through the Champlain Valley in late March and early April. They usually pass through Vermont fairly quickly in route to their spring staging areas along the St. Lawrence River Valley. They remain there for about a month before moving on to their nesting areas in the Eastern Canadian Arctic.

Waterfowl hunters, since 1986, through the purchase of their Vermont migratory waterfowl stamp have raised \$4.3 million in sales of stamps and the interested earned on the funds for conservation projects across Vermont. To date 79 wetland projects totaling 10,185 acres have been conserved, acquired, or enhanced for wildlife and the citizens of Vermont.

Conservation Camp Applications are Available

If you are 12 to 14 years old and want to learn about Vermont's wildlife and gain outdoor skills next summer, consider attending one of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's Green Mountain Conservation Camps.

The one-week camp program is held at two locations -- Lake Bomoseen in Castleton and Buck Lake in Woodbury. Campers participate in hands-on learning experiences about fish and wildlife conservation, ecology, forestry, orienteering, safe firearm and archery techniques, swimming, canoeing, fishing and more in an attractive outdoor setting. Natural resource professionals come to the camp during the week to share information on their programs and take campers out for field activities.

Conservation Camps open June 21 and continue until August 21. Tuition is \$250 for the week, including food, lodging and equipment. Please check the Fish & Wildlife website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com) for general information as well as information about partial and full scholarship availability. Information about the program and an online application can be found under “Education and Training” on the left side of the home page. A printable application also is available.

For more information about Green Mountain Conservation Camps contact: fwmcc@state.vt.us or call 802-828-1460.

Fish & Wildlife Grants Available to Vermont Shooting Ranges

A Vermont Fish & Wildlife grant program creating more access to safe places to shoot is continuing in 2015.

Shooting clubs, sportsmen's groups and government agencies operating shooting ranges, including archery ranges, have until 4:30 p.m. on May 15, 2015 to submit applications for grants from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The Shooting Range Improvement Grant Program was developed last year to encourage the improvement of shooting ranges and to enhance their safety and operation. This year's grant period begins July 1, 2015.

"This new program is a great help to fish and game clubs looking to improve their facilities, and to hunters and shooters looking for places to sight in their rifles and hone their skills," said Commissioner Louis Porter. "Increased range opportunities encourage hunters to become more proficient with firearms while promoting safe gun handling."

Examples of projects that could be eligible for funding include shooting range re-development, noise abatement structures, safety berms, shooting pads and stations, and the construction or improvement of access roads and parking lots. Grant money can be also used for lead mitigation. This could include recycling, reducing range floor surface drainage or liming range property.

The Fish & Wildlife Department anticipates making a total of \$30,000 available this year. These funds are derived from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program and Federal excise taxes on hunting and shooting equipment. This is a 75 percent reimbursement grant program and requires a 25 percent non-federal match from the grant recipient. This can come through 'in-kind' match, such as volunteer labor and donated equipment or cash.

Federal rules on the funding include a requirement that a range receiving one of these grants provide at least 20 hours of public use per month when in operation, and that the facility is open and made available at reasonable times to hunter education courses. Vermont nonprofit organizations, municipalities and clubs are eligible.

The deadline for application submittal is May 15, 2015. For further information or to download an application packet, visit the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department website at www.vtfishandwildlife.com. Click on "Hunting and Trapping," and then on "Shooting Ranges in Vermont." Or contact Daneil Pieterse at (802) 272-6923



Students enjoying the range at Kehoe.
Photo courtesy of Nicole Corrao

First Successful CWD Vaccine Tested in Deer

Researchers say the breakthrough may not only protect U.S. livestock against CWD but may also shed new light on human diseases suspected of being caused by prion infections, such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, kuru, familial insomnia, and variably protease-sensitive prionopathy. Some studies also have associated prionlike infections with Alzheimer's disease.

"Now that we have found that preventing prion infection is possible in animals, it's likely feasible in humans as well," said senior study investigator and neurologist Thomas Wisniewski, MD, a professor at New York University's Langone Medical Center.



Photo courtesy of John Hall.

Should further vaccine experiments prove successful, Dr. Wisniewski believes as little as 10 percent of a cervid herd would need to be inoculated to induce herd immunity.

Chronic wasting disease is found in wild and captive cervids of North America. Scientists fear CWD could possibly spread to livestock in the same regions, especially cattle.

For the study, five deer were given the vaccine; another six were given a placebo. All the deer were exposed to prion-infected brain tissue. They also were housed together, engaging in group activities similar to those in the wild. Scientists say this kept them in constant exposure to the infectious prions.

Deer receiving the vaccine were given eight boosters over 11 months until key immune antibodies were detectable in blood, saliva, and feces. The deer also were monitored daily for signs of illness, and investigators performed biopsies of the animals' tonsils and gut tissue every three months to search for signs of CWD infection.

Within two years, all the deer given the placebo had developed CWD. Four deer given the vaccine took substantially longer to develop infection, while the fifth animal was infection-free at the time of the report's publication.

Dr. Wisniewski and his team made the vaccine using *Salmonella* bacteria to mirror the most common mode of natural infection—ingestion of prion-contaminated food or feces. The team inserted a prionlike protein into the genome of an attenuated *Salmonella* bacterium, which produced anti-prion antibodies.

"Although our anti-prion vaccine experiments have so far been successful on mice and deer, we predict that the method and concept could become a widespread technique for not only preventing, but potentially treating, many prion diseases," said lead study investigator Fernando Goni, PhD, an associate professor at NYU Langone.

Note: This article was originally posted online at the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association here: <https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/150215p.aspx>

Let's Go Fishing 2015 Instructor Training Opportunities



If you love to fish and want to pass on the angling tradition to young people and their families, consider becoming a Vermont "Let's Go Fishing" Volunteer Instructor.

Instructors in the "Let's Go Fishing" Program organize and volunteer at fishing clinics in their communities to teach young people and their families about water ecology while instilling the life-long skill of fishing.

Tim Hawley, certified LGF instructor (and HE instructor!)
Photo courtesy of Cathy Merrill, LCI

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and Lake Champlain International are offering instructor training for volunteers on Saturday, March 28 at the Kehoe Education Center in Castleton and on Saturday, April 11 at the Fish & Wildlife regional office in Essex Junction.

Participants will learn what it takes to teach a clinic about fishing techniques, ethics, aquatic ecology and management, the importance of habitat conservation, and tackle craft.

Classes are informal, and it is not necessary to have a high level of fishing expertise to become an instructor. Teachers of all grade levels are especially invited to learn how to use "Let's Go Fishing" in their curriculum from elementary through high school.

Instruction, curriculum materials, assistance, and lunch will be provided at no charge. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. The workshops run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

If you are interested in attending the training and becoming an instructor, please register on-line at www.mychamplain.net/letsgofishing, or by email through letsgofishing@mychamplain.net.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Expands Southern Vt Wildlife Management Area



The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department recently added additional land to Atherton Meadows Wildlife Management Area, augmenting a large stretch of conserved area near Harriman Reservoir in southern Vermont. Photo courtesy of Carolyn Bates, Carolyn Bates Photography.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department recently expanded a wildlife management area (WMA) in Windham County. An 80-acre land donation has been added to Atherton Meadows Wildlife Management Area in the town of Whitingham, bringing the total area to nearly 900 acres.

Atherton Meadows WMA is located just south of the well-known Harriman Reservoir. It consists of hilly forests with hardwood and softwood trees, including many fruit and nut-producing mast trees and a large area of deer wintering habitat. There are also extensive

beaver ponds, wetlands and an alder swamp which provide rich habitat for a wide array of wildlife.

“This donation adds additional land to a vast, rugged, and beautiful area of conserved lands,” said Jane Lazorchak, land acquisition coordinator for Vermont Fish & Wildlife. “The department was particularly interested in this land because it protects habitat on both sides of Route 100 in an area where we know bears and other wildlife cross the road.”

“Atherton Meadows WMA, Harriman Reservoir, the Deerfield River, and the adjacent lands protected by the Vermont Land Trust combine to form an expansive gem of conserved lands in southern Vermont. This is truly a place for wildlife to thrive and for wildlife enthusiasts to enjoy,” said Lazorchak.

Fish & Wildlife Department staff have worked to improve habitat on the WMA for a variety of species. The forest has been opened up near the beaver ponds to encourage the beavers to continue to create ponds and wetlands. Department staff have also undertaken a variety of habitat management techniques on the property to improve habitat for species such as grouse, woodcock and snowshoe hare.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department manages more than 135,000 acres of land in 89 Wildlife Management Areas throughout Vermont, in order to promote wildlife habitat and give sportsmen and women more access to public lands.

Vermont Trout Unlimited Launches Fifth Annual Fly Fishing Summer Camp for Teens

Vermont Trout Unlimited announces year five of their “Fly Fishing Camp for Vermont Teens,” ages 13 to 16.

Teens interested in learning the art of fly-fishing or improving their basic skill level alongside some of Vermont’s most accomplished fly anglers, are invited to apply. The 2015 camp is scheduled for Sunday June 21st through Thursday June 25th at Quimby Country Lodge & Cottages, in Averill, Vermont.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Louis Porter supports TU’s educational efforts. “TU’s Fly Fishing Camp for Teens is an incredible program dedicated to educating our next generation of fly fishermen and women to help ensure that our precious cold water fisheries here in Vermont will be taken care of well into the future, said Porter.”

Participants in the five-day/four-night comprehensive program will learn and practice casting, basic fly tying, knot craft, insect identification and imitation (entomology), fish identification and behavior (ichthyology) safe wading techniques, angling ethics and coldwater conservation. Campers will hone their skills on local lakes, ponds and streams, including the Connecticut River.



Photo courtesy of Vermont Fish & Wildlife.

Quimby Country, (www.quimbycountry.com) is Vermont’s oldest sporting lodge and has been in continuous operation since 1894. Located in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom on Forest Lake and Great Averill Pond, Quimby’s is only a 15-minute drive from the Connecticut River.

Prospective campers are encouraged to apply no later than April 15, 2014 to secure a spot for this year’s program. The cost for the 5-day camp is \$450. Scholarships may be

available on an “as-needed” basis.

Trout Unlimited is a non-profit organization that has dedicated over 50 years to the conservation, protection and restoration of North America’s cold-water fisheries and watersheds.

For complete information about the TU Fly Fishing Camp, an application form, and many videos of the camp, go to www.vermonttroutcamp.com or e-mail Kurt Budliger, camp director, at vermonttroutcamp@gmail.com, or call Kurt at 802-223-4022.

Watershed Grants Awarded for 2015



Fifteen watershed improvement projects were chosen to receive funding from Vermont's 2015 Watershed Grant Program, according to an announcement today from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

Forty-four applications were received, requesting a total of \$387,744. The 2015 available funding totaled \$100,000 and the size of the individual grants to be awarded ranged from \$3,500 to \$14,000.

The 2015 projects cover a range of water quality and aquatic habitat projects, including these examples in three categories:

Implementation

*Restoration and clean-up efforts in the White River drainage basin (White River Partnership),

* Helping to remove a dam on the upper Wells River (CT River Watershed Council), and

*Replacement of culverts in Northfield and Duxbury to enable fish to pass and reduce flood failure risk (Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District and Friends of the Winooski)

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Watershed Grants Awarded for 2015

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Education

- *Expanding the effectiveness of lake protection strategies (Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds).
- *Explain river dynamics using a flume (Windham Natural Resources Conservation District), and
- *Milfoil spread prevention (Town of Charleston and Westmore Association).

Planning

- *Re-examining years of previously collected water quality data to guide water quality protection actions for the future (Friends of the Mad River), and
- *Walloomsac Headwaters Park Management Plan (Bennington Natural Resources Conservation District).

"Although these grants are relatively small, much is accomplished and the increased public awareness should pay benefits into the future," said Rod Wentworth of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. "We're glad to provide a funding option for what I like to think of as little grants with big results."

David Mears, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, agreed. "These grants illustrate the importance of providing tools to local communities and their partners for protecting waterways and aquatic habitats in their locales. By building on small success such as these, we make a difference in protecting clean water statewide."

The Vermont Watershed Grants fund was established by the legislature and is funded from half the proceeds from sale of the Vermont Conservation License Plate. The other half of the proceeds go to the Nongame and Natural Heritage Program. The Departments of Environmental Conservation and Fish and Wildlife co-administer the Watershed Grants program, which has been underway since 1998 and has thus far provided close to \$1.5 million to fund 351 projects.

"When Vermonters purchase a Conservation License Plate – now available as three choices - they're helping to protect clean water as well as conserving wildlife and important habitats for future generations," said Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Louis Porter. "You can support conservation and the watershed grant program by purchasing either a deer, a loon or a brook trout conservation license plate."

The conservation license plate application can be found online by searching "vt conservation plate."

The grant application period opens every year in October and closes in late November or early December. "We broadly publicize the program every fall," said Rick Hopkins of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC). "If you are wondering if your project idea might be a good candidate for funding, feel free to contact Rod Wentworth (595-5179) or myself (490-6115)." Program information can be found on the VTDEC website. The easiest way to find it is to search for "vt watershed grant."

SAVE THE DATE!

Instructor Recognition and Awards Banquet

March 28th, 2015

Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier VT

Sound Off!

This is YOUR newsletter! Have a photo or story you'd like to share? Is there something that's missing in the newsletter? E-mail Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us with your suggestions, stories, pictures or other input!.

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