



# VERMONT OUTDOOR EDUCATION NEWS

*The certified volunteer connection*



## Winter 2010

*Conserving Vermont's fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont.*

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*Your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment supports Fish and Wildlife Restoration.*

## Tips and Techniques for Dealing with Young Students

**Question:** "When should my child take hunter education?"

**Answer:** "When they are ready."

More youth are excited about hunter education. It could be youth seasons. It could be hunting is an inexpensive recreation in a struggling economy. Or it could be the growing awareness of adults on the importance of youth in the future of hunting. Regardless of the reason, many classes now have students ten or younger, and this can be both rewarding and challenging. To help ensure it's the former and not the latter, consider these tips and techniques:

- Require a parent or guardian to accompany their children. You are free to set the minimum age for this.
- During registration, be sure to explain the criteria we use to pass students: 1) the written exam, 2) the 'hands-on' field test, and 3) the student's attitude.
- Do you have instructors lined up to read the test?
- Do you have youth-sized firearms available for handling and live fire.
- Note that while hunter education isn't a test of reading comprehension, most of the material is written at sixth grade level.
- Ask the parent or guardian if they will be there for their child, both in the field and in the classroom?
- Ask the parent or guardian if their child has the ability to sit through the class and understand the material? Direct them to <http://www.hunterexam.com/usa/vermont/>. This free, online study guide is a concise overview of the fundamentals of hunter education.
- As a child's age decreases, the chance of failing the class increases. Ask the parent to discuss this potential outcome with their child and what it means?
- Ask the parent or guardian to discuss hunting with their child before the class? Is their child excited about taking the class?

When the time is right, almost everyone can become apart of Vermont's proud hunting tradition. Start them off successfully, and you are helping ensuring the future of hunting in Vermont.



# A New Opportunity in the Classroom

Chris Saunders, Hunter Education Coordinator

Opportunity knocks, but it doesn't always answer to its name, especially when it's a Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

The Department's 84 WMAs play an important role in wildlife conservation and provide quality fish & wildlife based outdoor opportunities to all Vermonters, from birdwatching to fishing to, of course, hunting. Far less known, however, is just how important simply having these opportunities is to the future of hunting. Indeed, research suggests that providing hunting access is the single most important step that fish and wildlife agencies can take to keep their hunters and find new ones. That's where you, the instructor, come in. Access is useless if hunters, especially new hunters, don't know about these opportunities.

"Access is the number one issue that agencies can do something about to improve hunter recruitment and retention," said Mark Duda, Executive Director of Responsive Management, a leading natural resources survey group. "Our studies have found that the amount of federal land and the percentage of lands that are state-leased or owned lands are the most important indicators for strong hunter numbers. On the other hand, the most negative indicator is the amount of urbanization occurring in a state like housing starts."

It's no secret that hunting participation, both in terms of hunter numbers and days afield, is declining. In Vermont, this decline has stabilized recently, and there's even been some rebound, but the long term trends are still discouraging. The reasons behind this decline are also no secret. An increasingly urbanized world means fewer people are being exposed to hunting, let alone giving it a try. Those that do hunt are getting older, and they have less time to hunt because of family and work obligations. And when they do find time to hunt, they are having a difficult time

finding places to go because there are simply less places to hunt.

"Every study we do suggests private access is getting worse," said Duda. "Land is being eaten up by development, and the remaining landowners are locking people out or leasing their land to private clubs."

Public lands, like WMAs, provide free, quality training areas for new hunters. They don't have to worry about asking permission. The rules are spelled out and there are no gentlemanly agreements or arbitrary rules that favor certain animals or hunting spots for certain hunters.

## From the IHEA Hunter Education Standards:

### Goal 6. Hunting Opportunities

To introduce students to new and diverse hunting opportunities

Rationale: Hunting's future relies on expanded opportunities, convenience and a broad base of support.

Objectives (Students will be able to):

1. Identify opportunities to go hunting on public and private lands; what species they would like to hunt and be able to prepare a sample-hunting plan for a particular species of their choice.
2. Learn how they can be more involved and find out about advanced hunter education, hunter education volunteer opportunities, conservation groups and other groups that support hunter education efforts.

In addition, the Department's WMAs are well distributed throughout the state, and when combined with other state land, Green Mountain National Forest, and Vermont's two U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges, they virtually ensure every Vermonter is within easy reach of hunting. Oddly though, many of the lands are lightly used.

"We have found there's both physical and psychological access," said Duda. "Physical access is obvious. But psychological access is just as important. Hunters assume there are not enough places to hunt and assume there are fewer places to hunt than in the past. This appears to be driven in part by a lack of information about hunter access locations."

In short, the access has to be easily accessible, and for new hunters, one of their first introductions to public hunting access should be your course. This is nothing new. Introducing students to hunting opportunities has long been an objective in the hunter education standards. However, there are some new tools you can use to make this lesson interactive and local. All the Department's WMAs are now featured on the Website and in the Guide

*continued on page 3*

**Opportunity Knocks**, *continued from page 2*

to the Wildlife Management Areas of Vermont book. Both include detailed colored maps of each site with UTM coordinates, plus key habitat features and common fish and wildlife, including game species and hunting opportunities. Print or copy the information from one or more of your local WMAs and divide your class into small groups. Assign the groups a WMA and species to hunt then have them develop a hunting plan; another hunter education learning objective. Remember hunting plans include where you are going, when you are going, and who you are going with. This means knowing when the seasons are open and what the limit is, deciding where to enter and leave, and choosing an area of the WMA that might be a promising place to hunt. When they are done, have them present their plans to the class.

This exercise allows you to cover more topics since your students are learning about personal preparedness, hunting plans, the Law Digest and local hunting opportunities. So while neither you nor the Department can add more hours in the week nor provide day care or maid service, we can all help ensure that once a hunter finds the time to get into the woods or in the marsh, they know a great WMA nearby. This might even allow them to hunt more or even introduce a new person to the ranks of one of Vermont's strongest definitions of its rural character.

Mark Your Calendar	
March 20, 2010	Volunteer Recognition & Awards Program, Castleton
April 17, 2010	Volunteer Recognition & Awards Program, Montpelier
June 4-6, 2010	Becoming an Outdoor Family, Groton
September 17-19	Becoming an Outdoor Woman, Castleton

**Firearms Notes**

John Pellegrini, Hunter Education Technician

Remember firearms are available at our regional offices in Essex, St. Johnsbury and Springfield, Edward F. Kehoe Green Mountain Conservation Camp, and the Waterbury Office. We recently standardized these inventories with bolt action .22 rifles, youth-sized (mostly) .20 gauge shotguns, and action sets to meet most of your class needs. Numbers vary depending on space, but there are at least a dozen .22s in each location. Regional office firearms are available on first come, first served basis. So please call the regional offices in advance to assure that there is someone there to assist you in checking out the firearms. You can designate a spouse or friend for pick up, but the responsibility remains with you. For the time being, muzzleloaders, .243 youth deer rifles, and other firearms, such as 12 gauges, are only available through the Waterbury office. In addition, ammunition will continue to be shipped from Waterbury.

Please clean the firearms prior to return. A deep cleaning is unnecessary, but a bore snake through the barrel and a wiped-down action, particularly the bolt, is helpful. If you are not familiar with a particular firearm, do not strip it, please note anything that is broken or not working properly.





## 2010 Let's Go Fishing Instructor's Training

**When:** Saturday, March 13, 2010

**Where:** Edward F. Kehoe Camp, Castleton, VT

This is a great chance to share your enthusiasm for working with kids and families who really like to fish. If you love to fish, and want to teach others, please join Vermont Fish and Wildlife for its annual Let's Go Fishing Instructor's Training on March 13th. The Department will provide instruction, assistance, and curriculum materials. There is no charge for the training and meals will be provided. The workshop will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and end at 7:00 p.m.

All you need to volunteer is an interest in helping others learn to fish. We'll teach you ethical fishing, ecology and management of Vermont's fishery resources, tackle craft, and effective techniques for catching fish. As a certified instructor, you can go back to your community, school, or organization and develop fishing clinics that are both educational and fun.

If you would like additional information, or to register, please contact Trish Pelkey at [trish@gwriters.com](mailto:trish@gwriters.com) or call 802-747-7900.

### The 2009 LGF Instructors Training Workshop Trish Pelkey and Jan McCoy, Program Coordinators

The 2009 Instructor Training workshop was held at the Barre Fish & Game Club with 20 participants attending.

In staying with our one-day format, Trish Pelkey and Jan McCoy kept participants quite busy. We started our day reviewing the instructor handbook before breaking into groups and picking activities that cover the four themes of a Let's Go Fishing clinic: Fishing Skills; Tackle Craft; Ecology and Water Resource Management; and Ethics. Participants were asked to demonstrate a skill from each of the themes and answer questions from the group. This is a great way to learn what it would feel like to present in front of students.

Warden Sean Fowler come in to talk about the responsibilities of a warden and to answer questions, and after a great lunch we finished up with the presentations, went over the forms that are required for a Let's Go Fishing clinic, and discussed strategies for a successful workshop.

We would like to thank the Barre Fish & Game Club for great food and a perfect setting for our training.

We are looking forward to our 2010 training on March 13th, which will be held at the Edward F. Kehoe Camp in Castleton, VT. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in becoming a Let's Go Fishing Instructor please call Trish at 802-747-7900 for a registration form.



2009 Instructor's Training participants.



Fish ID.



Learning to instruct others on spin casting.

## New Hunter Education Program Instructors in 2009

### Basic Firearm Hunter Education

Instructor
Emil Lenny
David Martin
Kevin Sadowski
Amber Ashley
Jeremy Baker
Emily Bixby
Saul Blocher
Heaven Burt
Therese Butler
Wendy Butler
Ashleigh Carr
Randall Case
Colin Conger
Troy Darby
Joseph DeForge
Adam DeGree
Howard Dudley
Casey Elmer
Daniel Forcier
Elysia Gingue
Kaitlin Hayes
Leroy Hayes
Charles Hewes
Pete Hommel
John Howard
Leonard Howard
Eric Lamontagne
Lars Lilienthal
Thomas Malanchuk
Mark McCarthy
Derek Murphy
Stephen Oster
Stanley Pekala
Robert Priestly
David Ribbans
Kenneth Robertson
Morgan Rogerson

Instructors Continued
Robin Rousseau
Betsy Rutledge
Joseph Safrenek
David Sausville
Jeffrey Sisters

### Bowhunter Education

Instructor
David Martin
David Bent
Emily Bixby
Saul Blocher
Heaven Burt
Ashleigh Carr
Victor Chaput, Jr.
Colin Conger
Troy Darby
Adam Degree
Casey Elmer
Cheryl Frank
Ed Gallo
Elysia Gingue
Kaitlin Hayes
Eric Lamontagne
Lars Lilienthal
Thomas Malanchuk
Mark McCarthy
Ronald Morgan
Alan Nass
Stanley Pekala
William Pratico, Jr.
Robert Priestly
David Ribbans
Kenneth Robertson
Morgan Rogerson
David Sausville

## Education Manager's Message

Mark Scott, Education Manager

As we enter 2010, I am constantly reminded how fortunate our Department is to have large cadre of active dedicated volunteers to introduce and teach people of all ages about fishing, hunting, trapping and the outdoors. The greatest outdoor gift that anyone could give is what many of you do throughout the year – time, knowledge and passion about the outdoors. The quality of our volunteer instructors is top notch.

Our Department is committed to support and improve what you do. As the New Year rolls in, it's always exciting to note new resolutions or program enhancements. This year's is no exception. Chris Saunders, Hunter Education Coordinator and I just came from a meeting with Tom Decker, our Chief of Operations, where we learned that Tom has been working hard to get our hunter education training coordinator position back to the Department. Barring any unforeseen roadblocks or last minute changes, we should be able to start recruiting for a new Hunter Education Training Coordinator in mid to late January. We will keep you posted.

Last year, both our Green Mountain Conservation Camps and Hunter Education classes saw a record number of students participating, and Let's Go Fishing continues to get a stronghold on many new Vermont schools. To each of you who helped last year, thank you. To our dedicated direct line Fish and Wildlife Education Staff of Chris Saunders, Ann Shangraw, Jan Finn, Trish Pelkey, Jan McCoy, John Pellegrini and Amber Ashley, I salute you for making 2009 a memorable, record setting year.

I hope to see you at our banquet on either March 20 at Kehoe Camp or April 17 in Montpelier. Our Education team will be hosting one get together in Montpelier and a second one in Castleton to accommodate people in the south. I would be thrilled to see you bring as your special guest a new potential volunteer to one of these events. I bet all of us know of someone who would know of a good new educator.

Remember, I'm only a phone call or email away if you ever wish to speak with me about any of our educational efforts. Your unselfish giving will ensure the future of fishing, hunting, and trapping in Vermont forever.

*Mark E Scott*

## 2009 Becoming an Outdoor Woman

Ann Shangraw, Information & Education Specialist

Becoming an Outdoor Woman (B.O.W) was held on September 18th – 20th at the Edward F. Kehoe Conservation and Education Center in Bomoseen this year. All 60 spaces were quickly filled, and 49% were first-time attendees. This statistic is extremely important to validate our goal of introducing new individuals to the outdoors.

Workshops this year consisted of fishing, shooting and outdoor skills such as compass reading. Due to the generosity of a local conservation camp partner, Woodard Marine, we were able to experience Lake Bomoseen from the decks of two pontoon boats. Participants, as well as instructors, enjoyed the opportunity to fish the entire lake and observe the habitat.

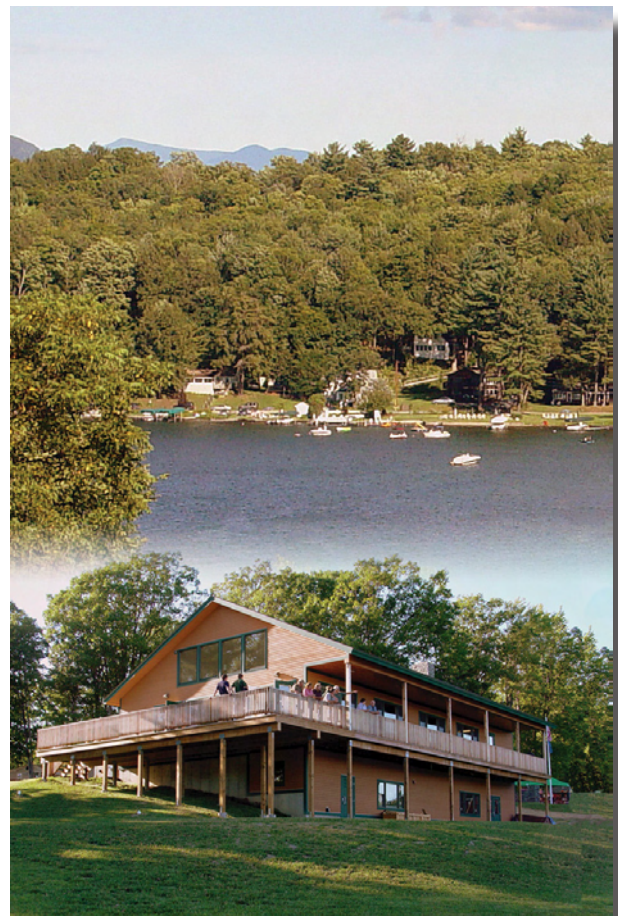
Returning instructors were greeted by all with excited anticipation while new instructors were anxious to come aboard. Mark Goodrich, Lynn Levine, Susan Damone Balch, Jeni Slattery, Casey Elmer, Rodney Elmer and Craig Bottessi were new faces to the fantastic instructor line-up; all expressing desire to continue with the program in future years.

Program highlights and registration will be available in January for the 2010 program. The 2010 event will be held at the E. Kehoe Conservation and Education Center on September 17-19, 2010. Brochures and registration forms will be available to download from the Department website by early February 2010.



## Kehoe Conservation Education Center offers perfect meeting location!

If you are looking for a place to hold your special event, conference or meeting consider the Kehoe Conservation Education Center in Castleton.



This facility has everything you need:

- 1,500 square feet of meeting space
- Audio visual equipment
- Dining room with seating for 150 people
- Wrap around deck
- Plenty of parking
- Free for Hunter Education and Let's Go Fishing classes.

For more information or reservations contact Ann Shangraw at 802-241-3720 or email [ann.shangraw@state.vt.us](mailto:ann.shangraw@state.vt.us).

## Where Have We Been?

Trish Pelkey, Lets Go Fishing Coordinator

2009 was a busy year for the Let's Go Fishing Program. We had interactive displays at the LCI Angler Day at the Ballpark in Essex, the Yankee Sportsman Classic, Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival, Winooski Afterschool Conference, Addison/Rutland County Out-of-School Time Programs, and Dead Creek. We held 38 clinics and offered Let's Go Fishing programs in 12 schools.

Volunteers are needed to expand the Let's Go Fishing Program (LGF) to all areas of the state. There are approximately 230 certified instructors throughout Vermont, but we need more! There are two kinds of volunteers needed: Certified instructors and instructor assistants. If you would like to become a certified instructor, you would go through a day-long training program to learn all of the basics of holding your own Let's Go Fishing event. Most certified instructors are affiliated with a club, group, or school that hosts the clinic. If you prefer not to host your own clinic, but would like to assist an instructor, we need your help too. As an instructor assistant, you help organize the event, and teach parts of the clinic based on your particular skills.

The LGF Program is also interested in teachers who want to use the program in their classrooms. The LGF program now offers its curriculum with GE's in mind. It has been used in math, physical education, science, and reading classes. Special training is available to guide teachers through the curriculum if they have any questions.

It is easy to become a volunteer. If you are over 18 and would like to share your love of fishing with the next generation of anglers, contact us here at the office or fill out and return the form below.

## New Let's Go Fishing Instructors in 2009

Instructor
Krista Ainsworth
Amber Ashley
Laurie Bizier
Jodi Bushway
Doug Cramer
Deb Daigneault
Francois Daigneault
Brian Divelbliss
David Frisque
Mary Heath
Dustin King
Douglas Neet
John Nelson
Dawn Oakes
David Sausville
Karyn Stannard



Tackle ID.



Fly fishing demo.

- I am interested in becoming a LGF Instructor
- I am a teacher and would like to use LGF in my classroom.
- I would like to be added to the LGF mailing list

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_



*Mail this form to Trish Pelkey, Let's Go Fishing Program, PO Box 6004, Rutland, VT 05702*

## Chief Instructors & Mentoring Program

Ann Shangraw, Information & Education Specialist

Hunter Education's most valuable assets are our instructors. With this in mind, we are implementing our long talked about mentoring program.

This program will be spearheaded by experienced instructors who have accepted the title of "Chief Instructor." The first Chief Instructors were chosen because of their experience, understanding of program goals and ability to lead others. Every county now has a minimum of one Chief Instructor, with more to be added.

These chief instructors will, among other things, introduce newcomers to the program and assist them with gaining hands-on, practical experience. Instead of being limited to our one or two training opportunities a year, applicants will now be able to get their feet wet faster.

The mentoring program process is simple:

1. New instructors must still complete an application.
2. Once a background check has been completed, the new volunteer will be teamed up with their area's Chief Instructor.
3. The new volunteer must then assist a Chief Instructor in (1) one or more classes demonstrating the skills and knowledge required, until gaining the Chief Instructor's endorsement for certification.
4. During training period, the new volunteer must attend a Mentored Instructor Workshop offered by Hunter Education. This evening workshop will focus on program guidelines and procedures.
5. Upon the recommendation of the Chief and approval by the Hunter Education Program, the certification will be awarded to the new instructor.

If you have any questions or are interested in becoming a Chief Instructor, please contact me directly at (802)241-3720 or [ann.shangraw@state.vt.us](mailto:ann.shangraw@state.vt.us).

Don't forget the online study guide. This guide is much shorter and focuses on the information we test them on. This makes it a good resource for all current students, even those in traditional classes. In addition, we hope the site will provide some guidance to parents who are wondering if their child is old enough to understand the information: <http://www.hunterexam.com/usa/vermont/>

## Regional Homestudy Testing

Ann Shangraw, Information & Education Specialist

Homestudy courses are increasingly popular, now representing over 50% of our basic firearm courses. To augment this demand, we will begin scheduling regional field days throughout the state for students who choose to complete the internet homestudy course. Securing locations and instructors will be another important role that Chief Instructors will play in the program. However, we will handle registration. Field days will be posted on our website once finalized. This option will not replace instructor-lead homestudy courses.

### Internet Homestudy Course Reminders

- The address is: <http://homestudy.ihca.com>
- Only an alternative to the paper manual and workbook; not a replacement. Students can still opt to read the manual and fill out the workbook
- The field day and written exam are still required.
- It's free.
- No registration or private information is required.
- The material in the online course is nearly identical in content and organization to the manual.
- Vermont law and regulations are not covered, so it's essential you review the law digest with your students.
- Students should expect to spend at least ten hours online.
- Not appropriate for people with dial-up connections.
- Students must bring the printed documentation that they completed all (14) of the online quizzes.

