

NWTF and 4-H Shooting Sports

Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. adds a new twist to a longtime partnership

Some things need to be experienced to be truly appreciated. Like hunting. And 4-H Shooting Sports, I found.

Like many of you, I was familiar with the 4-H brand and its iconic four-leaf clover logo before the NWTF partnered with the program to introduce more youth to shooting and hunting. But I didn't truly experience 4-H Shooting Sports until I attended its national training workshop in 2001. My goal in participating was to learn more about the program as I worked toward my hunting certification. (Hunting is one of the six disciplines offered through 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum, along with rifle, pistol,



> *Christine Rolka,*
Director of Education

shotgun, archery and muzzle loading.)

I took home tips on everything from hunting safety to how to hold a gun to

minimize recoil. Mostly importantly, I learned that just because you shoot doesn't mean you know how to teach others to shoot.

It was also at a 4-H training event where I first experienced the joy of watching one of my students break her first clay target.

When it comes to passion for passing on the shooting sports to future generations, 4-H volun-

teers and NWTF volunteers are very similar. You may not be surprised to hear that many times the same people volunteer for both organizations, just one example of how our missions are aligned.

NWTF dollars — more than \$2.4 million to date — and our volunteers working with local 4-H Shooting Sports clubs help provide more than 300,000 youth with shooting experiences each year.

While it's important to create shooting opportunities, it's imperative we transition these 4-H Shooting Sports graduates into hunters. Taking the safe shooters that emerge from the program and providing them in-the-field experiences will help us reach our goal of creating 1.5 million new hunters in the next decade.

As your state plans its Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. strategy, I encourage you to look for new ways to create hunters with longstanding NWTF partners like 4-H Shooting Sports. It's a goal we've shared over the years. Now's the time to take the next steps to make it a reality. — *Christine*

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About 4-H Shooting Sports



- Local 4-H Shooting Sports clubs are open to youth ages 8 to 18.
- 4-H programs are administered through local Cooperative Extension offices.
- Adult volunteers receive training at state and regional workshops to become qualified 4-H Shooting Sports instructors. These volunteers are trained to coordinate county programs and work at the local level.
- The 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum includes hunting, rifle, pistol, shotgun, archery and muzzle loading.
- More than 300,000 youth participate in the program annually through local after school programs.
- More than 23,560 youth participated in the hunting discipline in 2012. Thirty-three states offer that aspect of the 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum.
- Learn more at www.4-hshootingsports.org.

Bet you didn't know

The NWTF has contributed more than \$2.4 million to 4-H Shooting Sports programs across North America since our partnership began in 1998.



A step toward saving the hunt

This fine group of New Yorkers participated in a turkey hunting safety seminar cohosted by the Cornell Cooperative Extension's Warren County 4-H program and the NWTF JAKES program. Youth and their hunting mentors were armed with information and hands-on experiences to help them become safe and successful turkey hunters. They learned about calling, decoy layout, shotgun patterning and other tactics for hunting the wily birds.

Events like this are a great first step in creating new hunters. NWTF volunteers can provide these aspiring turkey taggers and their mentors with places to hunt and the follow up necessary to ensure they remain active in the sport.

Discover who's behind 4-H Shooting Sports activity in your state at www.4-hshootingsports.org, then find out ways your NWTF chapter can get involved. Together, we can create 1.5 million new hunters — or more!

The main event

The annual National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational drew more than 1,700 youth, parents and 4-H leaders to Grand Island, Neb., this June. About 530 youth from 32 states competed in the various disciplines, with 40 of them participating in the hunting skills competition.

NWTF Nebraska was on hand to unveil our new Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative. And a new NWTF chapter emerged from the event. We can do more together!

An on-target partnership

The NWTF has supported the growth of the 4-H Shooting Sports program at national, state and local levels since 1998. For a decade, the support was through national and state grants. NWTF Super Fund dollars are still used to purchase equipment and host events across the country. The NWTF has provided more than \$2 million to date.

4-H Shooting Sports volunteers have hosted shooting stations at NWTF JAKES events, then provide interested youth opportunities to develop their shooting skills at 4-H events year round.

The NWTF became the official sponsor of the National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational Hunting Discipline this year, another level to our partnership that supports the Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative. This focus allows us to combine our resources to create more hunters.

The 4-H Shooting Sports program is dedicated to nurturing youth development through the shooting sports.



Let us know how you are working with 4-H Shooting Sports. Send stories and pictures to crolka@nwtf.net.