

QDMA National YOUTH HUNT 2017

Ensuring the future of
our hunting heritage one
new hunter at a time.



By now, you have probably heard about QDMA's aggressive new five-year mission goals. We unveiled these new goals at our 2017 National Convention in New Orleans this past July, and have since shared them through a press release, on our website, on social media and in the last three issues of *Quality Whitetails* magazine. One important aspect of these goals

is recruitment; specifically, our plan to mentor 1 million new or beginning hunters over the next five years through our Share Your Hunt™ program, Field to Fork, individual mentor program, and partnership with Scholastic 3D Archery (see page 62 for more on this partnership).

Reaching our goal will depend heavily on the efforts of our Branches and volun-

teers, who organize hunts in their communities or simply mentor new hunters on an individual basis. With hunter numbers at an all-time low and continuing to decline, recruitment efforts have never been more important.

In an effort to “practice what we preach,” QDMA puts on its own National Youth Hunt every year. The 13th annual

Education



WHITETAIL BIOLOGY. The National Youth Hunt is much more than just a deer hunt. Participants receive a wealth of information regarding white-tailed deer, including a lesson in deer biology from QDMA CEO Brian Murphy (above, left), instruction in the skinning shed on aging whitetails using toothwear and replacement (above, center), and even a lesson on how Georgia DNR law enforcement officers use robotic deer to catch poachers.



MAKING THE SHOT. Each young hunter received one-on-one instruction in marksmanship and assistance in sighting in their rifles from members of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit out of Fort Benning, Ga. After time at the range, each hunter practiced climbing into a deer stand with their guide, where they took several "graduation shots" at deer silhouettes (and one coyote) at various ranges to build more confidence prior to actual hunts.



event took place October 26-29 at a private host property in South Georgia. The hunt, sponsored by Weyerhaeuser, hosted 10 enthusiastic young hunters who were able to harvest seven deer and one wild hog.

However, the success of the National Youth Hunt is measured by much more than just the number of animals harvested. QDMA teaches the young hunters the

importance of safety and ethics in becoming good sportsmen and sportswomen as well as the significance of being good stewards of our natural resources.

For the fifth-straight year, QDMA presented the "Sportsman of the Group" award to the National Youth Hunt participant who best demonstrated the qualities of good sportsmanship. Voted on by the

hunting guides and QDMA staff, this year's award went to 16-year-old Ben Carter of Florida, who took home a CVA Hunter .243 rifle for earning the honor.

With the National Youth Hunt, QDMA aims to introduce hunting to those who have an interest, but who would otherwise not have an opportunity to par-

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Successful Hunts



Ben Carter took this nice doe on the Friday evening hunt with help from guide Brandon Peavy.



Guide Rex Pierce helped Al LaManna kill his first wild hog on the Friday evening hunt.



Owen Schuyler harvested his first two deer ever with help from guide Jonathan Screws.



Kaylynn Johnson was also able to harvest her first two deer with the help of guide Lynn Lewis.



Guide Brittney Glaze helped Abbie LaManna harvest her #FirstDeer on the last evening of the hunt.



Jake Edwards of Ontario, Canada, got his #FirstDeer on the last evening of the hunt with the help of guide Cody Bennett.



AT THE NATIONAL YOUTH HUNT, the work doesn't stop when a deer is harvested. The young hunters are shown how to field dress, skin and process their deer for fine table fare.

participate. More than 50 nominations were submitted by QDMA Branches and other members for the 2017 hunt, and at the time of their nomination, each of the 10 selected youths had yet to take a deer. The 2017 National Youth Hunt participants included:

- Ben Carter, 16, of Florida, nominated by Stuart Richardson;
- Jake Edwards, 15, of Ontario, nominated by Michele Vardy;
- Kaylynn Johnson, 17, of South Carolina, nominated by the Lakelands Branch;
- Kelly Keen, 17, of South Carolina, nominated by the Lowcountry Branch;
- Q King, 14, of Georgia, nominated by QDMA;
- Abbie LaManna, 15, of New York, nominated by the Long Island Branch;
- Al LaManna, 12, of New York, nominated by the Long Island Branch;
- Owen Schuyler, 14, of South Carolina, nominated by Clark Coker;
- Albert Watts, 12, of Florida, nominated by Scott Brown;

- Robert Woodward, 12, of South Carolina, nominated by the Lakelands Branch

Each youth hunts with a guide, and throughout the weekend learning opportunities were plentiful. The U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) out of Fort Benning, Ga., worked one-on-one with each youth to teach rifle safety, proper use of the rifle, marksmanship and shot placement. Assisting this year were Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Green, Sgt. Ben Cleland, Spc. Forrest Greenwood, and Spc. Lane Ichord. After the hunters sighted in their rifles on the range, QDMA Senior Director of Operations John Eastman covered shot placement on white-tailed deer and then Ken Jones and Lance Dement assisted each youth in making their "graduation shots" from an actual deer stand at deer and coyote silhouettes placed at various distances.

Additional learning opportunities included educational sessions at the skinning shed, with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and about Quality

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Fun and Fellowship



KEEPING IT FUN While QDMA strives to make its National Youth Hunt a safe and successful event for the hunters, we also want to make sure these young hunters enjoy themselves while they are there. There were plenty of opportunities for fun and fellowship, with an opening evening cookout (top, left), a bird dog demonstration (top, center) and lots of great meals including venison (top, right). Another popular tradition at the hunt is a face-painting session before the first hunt between the guides and their young hunters, as well as a little #FirstDeer facepaint!



Deer Management. Guides from the host property provided a bird dog hunting demonstration. Throughout the event, the youth hunters were also exposed to the field-to-table cycle with many of the meals including venison.

The National Youth Hunt is made possible by major financial and material support from Weyerhaeuser Timber Company. Additional companies provided material support including Badlands, Bass Pro Shops, CVA, Hunter Safety System, LaCrosse Boots, Jager Pro, Leupold Optics, Mossy Oak, Remington, Summit, Tactacam and Yeti. Photography and videography support was provided by Luke Laha, Hoke Smith and Cuz Strickland.

The QDMA National Youth Hunt is the cornerstone event in QDMA's national youth outreach efforts, the culmination of numerous other youth events and hunts held each year by QDMA Branches, several of which are featured in this issue's Branch News section on pages 72-76.

Branches wishing to host hunts should explore QDMA's Share Your Hunt™ support program which can provide insurance, background checks for volunteers, membership, branded hats and vests, and best practices so more of these rewarding hunts can take place across the country.



2018 NATIONAL YOUTH HUNT NOMINATIONS

QDMA will hold its 14th annual National Hunt in October 2018. The nomination period is currently open and will run until May 31, 2018, with the names of selected attendees announced in summer 2018.

Nomination forms are available online at www.qdma.com/youth/national-youth-hunt and can also be obtained by e-mailing Hank Forester at hforester@qdma.com. Instructions are included on the form for submitting the completed nomination.

IMPORTANT DETAILS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU PREPARE YOUR NOMINATION:

- Nominations must be submitted by a QDMA member or Branch.
- Nominees MUST be between the ages of 12-17 by October 2018.
- QDMA will pay travel expenses for each youngster. A parent/guardian may accompany the youth hunter, but their travel expenses will be their own responsibility (unless driving is a reasonable option and arranged by QDMA).
- QDMA will not be able to accommodate additional parents/adults for youngsters. The property used for the hunt has wonderful facilities, but only enough to accommodate the hunters and one parent/guardian for each.
- The attendees will need to miss two days of school to participate. Please clear this BEFORE you file nominations.
- All nominations MUST BE RECEIVED at the QDMA Office by the last day of the nomination period.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR YOUR NOMINATION:

To be consistent with the spirit and intent of the QDMA National Youth Hunt, please do your best to nominate a youngster who is NEW to hunting, interested in hunting, and, preferably, who would otherwise not have the opportunity to participate in the outdoor sports. Please nominate those youngsters you believe will benefit the most from participating in the National Youth Hunt.

Please keep in mind that the youth hunter will be hunting with a property guide. Although we try to involve the guardian in as much of the deer harvesting process as possible, in most cases, the parents/guardians will not accompany the youngster while hunting.

SPONSOR NEXT YEAR'S HUNT:

Support for QDMA's annual National Youth Hunt is greatly appreciated. Any individuals, Branches or companies that would like to help sponsor the 2018 hunt should contact QDMA's Hunting Heritage Programs Manager Hank Forester by calling 800-209-3337 or by e-mailing hforester@qdma.com.