

# *Kansas Hunting:*

## *Carry on the tradition*



## *Ensure the future*



Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks



“Hunting is an important part of our state’s heritage, and it is vitally important to our wildlife management programs, as well as our state economy. But perhaps most important is the value of hunting in our culture and quality of life. Hunting is a wholesome, family activity that creates special bonds, teaches youngsters responsibility and fosters a special appreciation for our natural world. I invite every Kansan with a stake in our hunting heritage to join this program and invest in the future of hunting.”

**Governor Bill Graves**

**Join these wildlife conservation organizations and invest in the future of our hunting heritage.**



**Kansas Chapters of Ducks Unlimited**

**Kansas Muzzleloaders Association**



**Kansas Chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation**

**Kansas Bowhunters Association**



**Kansas Chapters of Pheasants Forever**

**Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation**



**Kansas Chapters of Quail Unlimited**

**Kansas State Rifle Association**



**Kansas Wildlife Federation**

**Becoming An Outdoors-Woman**



**National Rifle Association  
NRA Foundation**

**Geary County Fish & Game Association**



**Outdoor Writers of Kansas**

**Kansas Guides and Outfitters Association**



**The Izaak Walton League of America**

**National Shooting Sports Foundation**



# HUNTING: A KANSAS HERITAGE

**Problem:** Declining participation rates for hunters, anglers, and trappers threaten family traditions, our outdoor heritage and the future of fish and wildlife conservation by reducing social, political, and financial support.

**Goal:** Increase participation rates for hunting by recruiting new and former hunters and retaining current hunters.

**Objectives:**

- 1) increase the recruitment rate of youth
- 2) increase the recruitment rate of adults
- 3) increase the retention rate of current hunters
- 4) reintegrate former hunters
- 5) increase the overall Kansas population hunting participation rate to 15 percent by 2005

## Issues impacting hunting participation rates:

1. Competing interests
2. Lack of opportunity/places/proximity
3. Lack of role models
4. Hunter education requirements
5. Lack of exposure to shooting
6. Lack of hunting success
7. Lack of family participation incentives
8. Urbanization/shift in attitudes about hunting
9. Lack of conservation message in public schools
10. Attitudes toward firearms
11. Regulation complexity
12. Lack of adult/youth skills training programs
13. Cost of participating in hunting

## Action Plan Programs:

- Shooting Opportunities
- Outdoor Mentors
- Hunting Access
- Marketing and Promotion
- Education and Awareness
- Special Hunts
- Department-wide Programs

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## OUTDOOR MENTORS

The Outdoor Mentor Program will counter social issues that negatively influence hunting participation. Mentors are volunteers and department personnel who provide outdoor skills training workshops and take youth and adults into the field for first-time experiences. The program includes recruitment of volunteer mentors, training and background checks for the mentors, outdoor skills/information programs, loaner equipment, as well as organized, high-success special hunts and hunting areas for the participants.

### Issues Addressed:

- competing interests
- lack of hunting opportunities
- lack of role models
- lack of family participation opportunities
- urbanization and shifts in public attitudes about hunting
- lack of youth and adult skill training programs

### ***Key Components:***

- 1 Volunteer mentors are recruited from hunter education and bowhunter education instructors, conservation organizations, shooting range operators, civic and service organizations, law enforcement groups, and controlled shooting area operators. Volunteer mentors are interviewed, background checked for criminal history, and given briefing materials at short training sessions conducted by KDWP staff and select volunteers. A set of strict guidelines governing conduct, message, and procedures is followed by all volunteer mentors.
- 2 An incentive program allows volunteer mentors to accumulate points toward life-time licenses for participation in the program (also offered to other KDWP volunteer instructors). Licenses may be transferred to mentor designees.
- 3 Potential program participants are recruited through hunter education classes, 4-H shooting sports programs, FFA, NWTF's Women in the Outdoors, youth organizations, school bulletin boards, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Becoming an Outdoors Woman classes, hunter information seminars, and new resident mailing lists.
- 4 The National Shooting Sports Foundation's "Step Outside" program will be incorporated as a model to promote mentor participation. Mentors will introduce youth or adults to hunting or shooting sports through organized and coordinated statewide and local programs to link new hunters with mentors.
- 5 Mentors will work with existing youth programs sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), Quail Unlimited (QU), Ducks Unlimited (DU), Pheasants Forever (PF), Kansas Wildlife Federation (NWF), and the National Rifle Association (NRA).
- 6 Public lands and WIHA tracts are designated for special mentor hunts, some during special periods reserved for such hunts.

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- 7 In cooperation with the Kansas Sporthunting Association, vouchers distributed through hunter education instructors allow mentors to take new hunters on quality hunts on cooperating controlled shooting areas. A weekend is set aside for mentor/youth group hunts at the start or end of the CSA season.
- 8 Vouchers distributed through hunter education instructors provide new hunters opportunities to shoot at cooperating rifle and shotgun ranges.
- 9 Some mentors work with entire families, encouraging the parents to become mentors to their children.
- 10 Mentors sponsor middle and high school conservation/hunting/shooting clubs. Brochures and other supporting materials (posters, etc.) distributed to schools outline how student groups can form these clubs.
- 11 Beginner equipment, including clothing, decoys, calls, and other gear is provided by sporting equipment manufacturers and retailers. Used clothing and equipment is donated by hunters.
- 12 Mentors are encouraged to work with and continue to expand existing outdoor programs such as KWF's Hunting, Fishing and Furharvesting School; Outdoor Adventure Camp; Becoming an Outdoors Woman; NWTF's Women in the Outdoors; and 4-H Shooting and Hunting programs. (KDWPs support of these efforts is also increased.)
- 13 Special family license packages are proposed to make family hunting activities more affordable. (For example, \$25.50 for any two direct descending or ascending family members and \$10.50 for each additional family member living in the household under 18 years old.)
- 14 Mentors assist department staff with hunter information programs and outdoor skills workshops.
- 15 A statewide list of mentors is maintained at department regional offices to assist new hunters.



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## HUNTING ACCESS

To increase quality hunting access, the department is focusing on the Walk-In Hunting Area program, land acquisition, and opening public lands not currently open to public hunting.

### **Issues Addressed:**

- lack of hunting access and proximity of public lands to urban areas
- lack of successful hunting experiences
- cost of participating in hunting

### **Key Components:**

- 16 The department will increase WIHA to 1 million acres by 2005. Emphasis is placed on the eastern half of the state, specifically in urban counties. Monetary incentives and flexible lease options will be developed as needed to recruit enrollment in these areas.
- 17 The department is developing habitat improvement procedures such as strip disking in CRP, food plot plantings and species-specific management practices on WIHA tracts to create more high-quality hunting opportunities. Landowner financial incentives encourage habitat development on long-term leases.
- 18 Some department-owned lands currently closed to hunting, including appropriate state park lands, swimming beaches and refuges will be temporarily opened for special hunting opportunities.
- 19 The department will expand existing public areas through land acquisition.



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## SHOOTING OPPORTUNITIES

Hunter recruitment depends on introducing nonhunters and youth to the shooting sports. Sporting clays, rifle shooting and 3-D archery shoots develop hunting skills and may help nonhunters make a natural progression to hunting. Shooting range opportunities are limited in Kansas, especially on public land. While it is important for the department to continue to develop shooting opportunities, it is essential that existing private range operators encourage beginning shooters and host family activities.

### **Issues Addressed:**

- competing interests
- lack of shooting ranges and exposure to shooting sports
- public attitudes towards firearms
- lack of youth and adult skill training programs

### ***Key Components:***

- 20 The department works with range operators to develop a voucher program for rifle ranges, trap, skeet, and sporting clays ranges and archery clubs that will allow new shooters to shoot for free at or a discount. The vouchers are given to hunter and bowhunter education course graduates; Becoming an Outdoors Woman participants; Kansas Wildlife Federation's (KWF) Hunting, Fishing and Furharvesting School participants; National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) Women in the Outdoors participants; Future Farmers of America (FFA); 4-H shooting program sponsors; and volunteer mentors.
- 21 Commercial range owners are encouraged to hold family days and beginning shooter days. To encourage private range participation, volunteer mentors conduct shooting clinics, and corporate partners provide ammunition or loaner guns.
- 22 Rifle, pistol, and archery ranges are developed on department lands wherever possible; and private range operators, including local law enforcement and National Guard units, are contacted for open shooting days.
- 23 Wingshooting clinics are offered on public lands and state parks during the off season. For example, each fall, state parks hold wingshooting days. Portable traps are set up and shooters are given expert instruction, or allowed to improve their skills. To encourage families and youth, vouchers may be accepted in lieu of fees for clay targets.
- 24 The department will assist in expanding shooting events including state air gun competitions, 4-H shooting programs, as well as local events held by Kansas State Trapshooters Association, Kansas Muzzleloaders Association, Kansas State Rifle Association, and the Kansas Bowhunters Association.

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## EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Education and information programs will provide support mechanisms for all of the hunter recruitment and retention efforts, and will be closely tied with the marketing and promotions efforts. All forms of media will be utilized.

### **Issues Addressed:**

- competing interests
- hunter education requirements
- lack of shooting range access and exposure to shooting sports
- lack of successful hunting experiences
- urbanization and shifts in public attitudes about hunting
- lack of conservation/hunting message in schools
- lack of youth and adult skill training programs

### ***Key Components:***

- 25 Hunter Information and Outdoor Skills Training program. The coordinator of this program assembles and coordinates the hunter information/skills training programs. Trainers and presenters of these programs include department staff, as well as volunteer mentors. Programs are held in urban centers including Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita, Pittsburg, Garden City, Hays, Salina, Hutchinson, Manhattan, Lawrence, Independence, Liberal, Dodge City, Colby and other cities. Subjects of these programs and workshops are varied and include, general hunting, species hunting techniques, field care of game and preparation, shooting skills, etc. Programs and workshops target new and beginning, youth and adult hunters, new Kansas residents, as well as former hunters. Emphasis is on family participation whenever possible.
- 26 Support materials for the Hunter Information and Outdoor Skills Training program include a 16- page “field-to-freezer” pamphlet that includes field dressing, and meat care and preparation information; species sheets on game animals that cover basics of natural history, range, habitat, regulations and hunting techniques; pamphlets featuring hunting information for non-traditional or underutilized species such as rabbits, squirrels, and snow geese; a hunting guide pamphlet that highlights all public hunting areas; and WIHA atlases.
- 27 Outdoor skills trainers, both volunteers and department staff, work with existing education programs such as Becoming an Outdoors Woman; FFA; 4-H; KWF’s Outdoor Adventure Camp and Hunting, Fishing and Furharvesting School; KWF’s Women in the Outdoors; and Youth Hunter Education Challenge. The focus of these efforts will be on youth.
- 28 A DART system at the Great Plains Nature Center will be permanently assembled in an accessible area for all visitors to experience. In addition, staff will develop an exhibit and brochures explaining the role of hunters in modern wildlife conservation.

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- 29** A department-produced, monthly television series will be proposed to state public television stations this summer. The goal is to produce a monthly variety program that covers all aspects of outdoor recreation in Kansas, including segments on department lands, facilities and programs.
- 30** Development of the department website will continue, ensuring that it provides users with as much service as budget and technology will allow. On-line license and magazine subscription sales are scheduled to be available by 2000.
- 31** The upland bird hunting forecast, waterfowl reports, and fishing reports will be improved to include more specific and up-to-date information. Department staff will be able to update waterfowl, fishing, and bird hunting success reports in their districts directly on the department website. This will provide more timely information and save time and money.
- 32** A home-study hunter education workbook will allow students to complete a portion of the course on their own time. Once completed, they will be required to attend a class taught by a certified instructor, where key components of the course such as firearms handling, ethics and safe hunting methods are covered. Volunteer instructors will certify all students. A version of this program will eventually be offered over the Internet, and the use of CD-Rom is also being explored.
- 33** Youth Hunter Education Challenge is expanded statewide, providing hunter education graduates an opportunity for advanced outdoor skills training, as well as the motivation of group competition.
- 34** A public school education program teaches hunters and local conservation groups how they can take a positive hunting message to local schools with hunting dog demonstrations, wildlife I.D. programs, and skills training programs.
- 35** A pamphlet is provided to hunter education and BOW graduates outlining opportunities available for hunting, mentor programs, and shooting, as well as continuing education.



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## SPECIAL HUNTS

A variety of special hunting opportunities will be established to complement mentor programs, providing youth and beginning hunters with quality, non-competitive and uncrowded experiences.

### **Issues Addressed:**

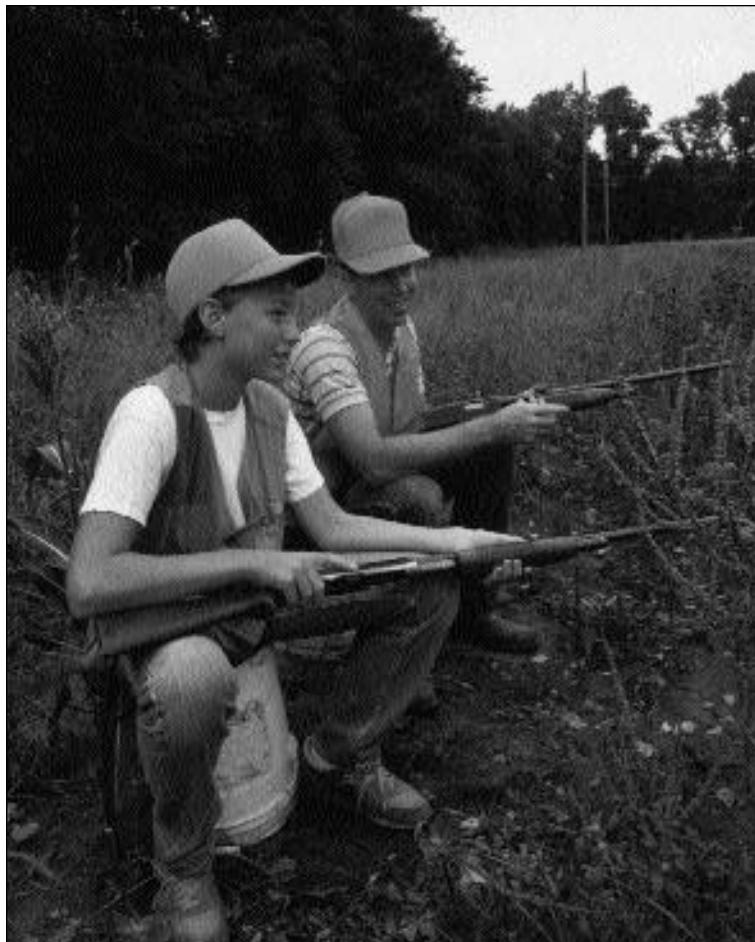
- lack of hunting opportunities
- lack of successful hunting experiences
- lack of family participation opportunities
- lack of youth and adult skill training programs
- cost of participating in hunting

### ***Key Components:***

- 36 Preseason youth hunts on public lands will allow parents and youth (or mentors and youth) to hunt prior the season's traditional opening day. Special pre-season hunts will provide youth with uncrowded, quality experiences for waterfowl, upland birds, and big game, ensuring a positive initiation into hunting.
- 37 Some WIHA tracts will be utilized for special youth pre-season hunts, and some tracts may be set aside specifically for mentors and youth. This may be especially important in urban counties, and may make WIHA more attractive to some landowners who are concerned about high numbers of hunters.
- 38 High quality hunts will be conducted on department lands, including state parks, wildlife areas, and refuges. These hunts will limit the number of participants and ensure a high-quality experience. Adult hunters will be allowed to hunt with youth hunters.
- 39 Specially targeted management practices on wildlife areas and state park lands will provide exceptional hunting opportunities for species such as doves, waterfowl, and upland birds. These efforts are currently being expanded.
- 40 Species-specific hunts are conducted wherever extraordinary opportunities exist, and may include pheasants, quail, waterfowl, doves, squirrels, rabbits, deer and turkey.
- 41 Special hunts will target mentors and youth/women/new hunters, as well as families. Non-competitive, high-quality hunts on small parcels of land appropriate within state park or refuge areas, and pre-season hunts, will be developed to attract families. Promoting family license packages will help reduce costs to participants.
- 42 Waterfowl, deer and prairie chicken blinds and other facilities will be developed for youth and mentors with special needs.

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- 43** Corporate partners will be asked to donate loaner gear (including calls, decoys, waders, camo clothing, guns, blinds, stands, and safety items) to reduce the costs to mentors and youth. Items may be given free to hunt participants or may be loaned out on a daily basis.
- 44** Cooperating controlled shooting areas will provide mentors and youth special hunting opportunities, ensuring that youth enjoy quality, authentic hunting experiences. A voucher system may provide the mechanism for group special hunts, scheduled near the start or end of the CSA season.
- 45** A standard protocol is established for providing youth and new-hunter hunts, mentored hunts, and other special hunts.



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## MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Marketing and Promotion plays a key role in the Hunter Retention and Recruitment effort. The effectiveness of the promotion hinges upon wide media coverage of programs and, importantly, on the use of a popular theme that promotes hunting, ethics, hunting heritage, family values and wildlife conservation. The program also uses a popular and widely known spokesperson, who promotes hunting and exposure for the programs.

### **Issues Addressed:**

- competing interests
- lack of role models
- lack of family participation opportunities
- urbanization and shifts in public attitudes about hunting
- lack of conservation/hunting message in schools

### ***Key Components:***

- 46 A program theme is used in all of the promotions and materials produced; something similar to “I’m a hunter”, “Hunting: It’s my heritage”, “Hunting: A Kansas Heritage”, or “I’m proud to be a hunter.” This theme is used in a variety of agency production, including hunting and fishing regulations, magazine, television and video productions, hunter education materials, how-to materials, bumper stickers, posters and public programs.
- 47 A popular public figure such as Governor Bill Graves, Joe Engle or George Brett, as well as local community leaders and youth, will serve as spokespersons, featured in posters, public service announcements, and other media promoting the selected theme.
- 48 A pro-hunting video, produced in cooperation with private industry, and pamphlet that promote the cultural and social values of hunting, as well as the conservation message is shown at all hunter education classes. The message avoids excessive focus on population control, and instead, focuses on ethics, quality youth and family experiences, closeness to the land, and understanding nature.
- 49 Bumper stickers or decals use the theme slogan or spin-off slogan from the theme. These stickers or decals are distributed at hunter education courses, hunter information programs, and outdoor skills workshops.
- 50 State conservation organizations, including the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), Quail Unlimited (QU), Ducks Unlimited (DU), Pheasants Forever (PF), Kansas Wildlife Federation (KWF), Outdoor Writers of Kansas (OWK), will be asked to provide letters of endorsement for the Hunter Retention and Recruitment program.

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## DEPARTMENT-WIDE PROGRAMS

The following components don't fit into any specific issue, but will effect most or all of the Hunter Retention and Recruitment programs. Staff from all divisions will be involved with these components.

### **Issues Addressed:**

- hunter education requirements
- marketing, promotion, education, and awareness
- hunting regulation complexity
- effective and focused partnerships

### **Key Components:**

- 51** External contacts, including politicians, businessmen, community leaders, industry representatives, and celebrities, will be included in the programs. Participating individuals will help with promotions, program acceptance, mainstream awareness, corporation involvement and legislation. A single, designated department employee will provide department representation to all supporting industries and businesses.
- 52** Hunting regulations will be reviewed and simplified where possible. Specific efforts will include lowering the age limit requirements for turkey and deer hunting, simplification of zones and units, simplification of hunting permits, reducing the cost of big game permits for youth under 16, standardizing public lands regulations statewide, and improving the information included in the hunting regulations summary.
- 53** Department liaisons with state conservation organizations will include these organizations in all Hunter Retention and Recruitment programs. Participation among organization members is critical to the success of these programs. Formal department representation to these organizations will be enhanced.
- 54** Organizations and individuals who participate in Hunter Retention and Recruitment programs will be recognized for their work through publicity and rewards. An awards program will allow individuals who participate in mentoring, skills training programs, and hunter education to accumulate points toward license discounts or life time license purchase.
- 55** Measurable objectives are established for each major program component to track the programs' effectiveness.

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## Members of the External Work Group

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