Strategies for hosting a mentored hunt

NWTF chapters supply social support for new hunters by hosting events that provide a friendly and nurturing environment that welcomes new members and future hunters. Events must go beyond introduction if we are to succeed in recruiting new hunters. Below are steps your chapter can take to plan a mentored hunt.

1. **Determine game to be pursued**
   - Consider resources available in terms of hunting property and current hunting interests in your community

2. **Determine audience**
   - Women in the Outdoors, Wheelin’ Sportsmen, JAKES, collegiate, families, or adults

3. **Determine the number of hunters you can accommodate**

4. **Determine lodging, if applicable**

5. **Secure your hunt location (6 months – 1 year in advance)**
   - Seek landowners, including outfitters, within your area of influence who share the same passion for hunting and our hunting heritage and will provide property for individual or group hunts
   - Your hunt can occur on a single property or multiple properties, depending on resources and how many hunters the property can safely accommodate
   - If public land, check for required permits

6. **Determine who is responsible for any wildlife management practices on the hunt property**
   - Examples include: food plots, dove fields, or waterfowl impoundments

7. **Determine who is responsible for hunting equipment and specific needs for the hunt**
   - Examples include: firearms, deer stands, blinds, ammunition, safety equipment, camo, etc.

8. **Establish your mentor network for the hunt**
   - Schedule a training workshop two months prior to the mentored hunt to communicate NWTF expectations of volunteer mentors
   - Make sure you have a training outline that covers important information
   - Emphasis should be placed on the experience and not the harvest. Ethics, individual considerations (age, limited physical abilities, societal and cultural sensitivities, etc.), privacy issues, woodsmanship and follow-up opportunities should also be emphasized.

9. **Register your mentored hunt with NWTF**

10. **Get the word out! Advertise your mentored hunt at least two months in advance**
    - Work with NWTF staff to create graphic resources (flyers, banners, posters, etc.)
    - Make sure your promotional materials communicate the audience you are looking to target (women, new hunters, youth, collegiate, etc.)
    - Include verbiage targeting new or lapsed hunters
    - Utilize social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter)
Identify committee chairs
- Examples include a mentor coordinator, meal coordinator, transportation coordinator and registration coordinator

Two weeks prior to the mentored hunt
- Line up additional mentors in case of unexpected cancellations
  If possible, connect your hunting audience with appropriate mentors (age, gender, etc.)
- Send agendas to mentors and hunters
  Include information on hunting licenses, tags, what to bring, etc.
- Ask hunters to indicate any dietary needs or physical limitations
- Confirm logistics (equipment, meal(s), transportation, hunting location, etc.)
- Connect mentors to mentees to facilitate the best and most comfortable hunting day possible

Week of the hunt
- Confirm mentors and hunters
- Confirm firearms, ammunition and equipment needs
- Are loaner firearms needed?
- Create a safety plan
- Confirm meal prep/catering
- Identify the hunt master (individual who will oversee the hunt – this person does not mentor)

Day of the hunt
- All hunters and mentors must sign liability/photo release forms upon arrival
- Verify valid hunting license and tags
- Check personal firearms for safety
- Conduct a safety briefing prior to the hunt, which includes hunt rules and regulations
- Pair mentors with hunters
- Provide emergency cell numbers
- Take photos of the hunt – include banners with a group photo
- If needed, provide maps of the hunt areas for hunters
- Provide follow-up opportunities to help encourage continued participation in the outdoors

Don’t forget to check out NWTF’s Resource Library at NWTF.org for additional mentored hunt resources:
- First Deer certificate
- First Turkey certificate
- Hunting Heritage Program/JAKES Take Aim event manual
- Family Hunting Camp model
- Mentor Training PowerPoint
- Turkey Hunting 101 PowerPoint
- Deer Hunting 101 PowerPoint
- Dove Hunting 101 PowerPoint
- NWTF Hunter’s Code of Conduct
- NWTF Hunter’s Safety: Shoot or Don’t Shoot Scenarios video
- Know Your Wild Turkey flyer
- Turkey Nutritional Guide flyer
- Why You Should Hunt Deer/Nutritional Guide flyer
- Turkey Hunter Checklist
- Various hunt-related articles
- Tips for the Hunting Mentor
- How to Shoot a Turkey
- Dove Field Hot Spots
- Hunter Creation Event
- Preserve or Conserve
- Turkey Hunting 101