

PASS IT ON

Mentored Youth Hunter Program



Someone took you hunting for the first time. Someone taught you how to carry a gun safely. How to take a good shot. How to appreciate the outdoors and respect the animals you hunt. Now it's your turn to pass it on.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Mentored Youth Hunter Program invites you to share your enthusiasm for the outdoors and your knowledge with an interested young person. Pass it on.



To learn more, visit ODFW's Web site,
www.dfw.state.or.us 

Facts about the Mentored Youth Hunt Program

The tradition of hunting is on the decline in Oregon and nationwide. While Oregon's population has grown, real numbers of hunters have declined. In 1980, there were 392,000 resident license holders in Oregon. By 2005, that number had declined to 260,000 licensed hunters.

Research demonstrates that early exposure is critical to people taking up hunting or other forms of outdoor recreation. But children and their families are busy today and have many more recreational choices. The current requirement for hunters under the age of 18 to take a hunter education class is a significant time commitment that some may perceive as a barrier to hunting.

Based on the recommendations of a hunter recruitment advisory committee, ODFW is introducing a new Mentored Youth Hunt program in an effort to get youngsters interested in the sport at an early age. The program is a "try before you buy" approach that allows youth ages 9 through 13 to hunt without first passing a hunter education class. It gives unlicensed youngsters the opportunity to receive mentored, one-on-one field training on the ethics, safety, responsibility and enjoyment of hunting while being closely supervised by a licensed adult.

Youth that participate in this new program will still be required to take a hunter education class if they want to hunt without supervision and using their own tags/stamps before age 18. The Mentored Youth Hunt program really just defers the hunter education requirement.

How it works: Any hunter over the age of 21 with all appropriate licenses/tags/stamps can serve as a mentor to any youth age 9 through 13 years old. Non-residents can also participate as youth or supervising hunters.

No additional license or fee is required. However, supervising hunters are responsible for training the youth in firearm and hunter safety before engaging in hunting or related activities. Both the mentor and youth must review a Safe Hunting Information section outlining basic safety rules and the youth must keep a signed copy of the form on their person during the hunt. Also, youth that participate must annually complete a program registration form and mail it to ODFW, Information and Education, 3406 Cherry Ave NE, Salem, OR 97302.

Other safety requirements: The program has several safety precautions built into it:

- A supervising hunter can only hunt with one youth at a time.
- Only one legal firearm between the supervisor and youth is allowed while hunting.
- The supervising hunter must remain in immediate control of the youth, meaning the two must stay in close proximity at all times while the youth is in possession of a legal hunting weapon.
- It is strongly recommended that the supervising hunter and mentored youth wear blaze orange during hunting or related activities.

Tagging and preference points: Any game taken by the youth will be counted towards the supervising hunter's limit. A youngster with their own valid license/tag/stamp for a given animal will not be allowed to participate in a mentored hunt for that particular animal. As an incentive to participate, youth will receive one mentored youth preference point for each year they register for the program. When the youth is finally ready to apply for a controlled hunt, all points accrued must be used towards one controlled hunt choice.

