

UNIT V:

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES



SUMMARY — The League’s mission states that we should: “promote means and opportunities for the education of the public with respect to such resources and the *enjoyment and wholesome utilization* thereof.” Our founders knew that people who enjoyed outdoor recreation would be more likely to take up the cause of conservation. Today, our chapters continue that tradition, providing people with a variety of ways to enjoy the outdoors.

This unit offers ideas and management guidance for outdoor recreation activities. At the end of this unit, there is a “how-to” outdoor activities section. Each two-page description presents an actual outdoor activity successfully conducted by League chapters that advances our dual mission of conservation and outdoor recreation.

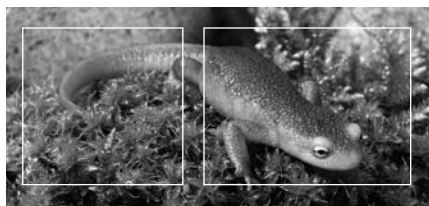
Chapter Grounds

Our chapters provide opportunities for friends, families, and neighbors to participate in a wide range of outdoor recreational activities. Over one-half of League chapters own or lease facilities with chapter houses, fishing ponds, shooting ranges, nature trails, or other outdoor attractions. Nearly 70 percent of these chapters have maintained membership, experienced growth in member participation, and continued to serve our conservation mission.

When seeking land or adding acreage to an existing property, chapters should consider whether or not the land is suitable for a variety of recreational activities. For example, most chapters find a site on or adjacent to water highly desirable. Chapters should also decide in advance whether they want to add shooting ranges, picnic tables, and other outdoor facilities for use by members, other groups, or the public. Of course, convenience and accessibility to the community and the members are also important in choosing land to purchase.

Owned — Owning the property gives a chapter a great deal of flexibility in providing outdoor recreation activities for members and the community. The best way to acquire land is through a gift as a tax-deductible donation. This requires that a chapter either have its own 501(c)(3) determination from the IRS, or that it operates under the National Office’s 501(c)(3) umbrella. The

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owner of the land may make a direct donation to your chapter or sell the property at a reduced rate so that he or she can still take a tax deduction.

Purchasing property and building a chapter house is one of the biggest single undertakings a chapter can take. To do both jobs right requires cooperation from all of the members. But if you can harness your members' enthusiasm for the project, you will find your chapter has a new home and property much sooner than you thought possible.

Leased — Given the price of land today, acquiring property outright may not be a viable option. Although leasing may limit chapter activities and property improvements, it can provide many of the same membership and public benefits as fee-title ownership. Many chapters have benefited from lease-to-buy options.

Facilities

A chapter house and property provides a central point for the League's programs in the community, attracts members, and serves as a binding force for holding the organization together. Chapters should find ways to use their properties to expose members and the public to the outdoors, teach outdoor recreational skills, instill a conservation ethic, and recruit new members and supporters. Here are a few suggestions on how to use your chapter's property to involve more people in outdoor recreation and conservation.

Nature — Nationwide, wildlife viewing has far more participants than hunting and fishing. Chapter nature trails with interpretive signs are popular wildlife viewing stations, particularly in mixed habitats such as forests, open fields, along streams, wetlands, and beside open water. Marked trails may also be used for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. In addition, many League chapters have forest arboretums with tree identification signs and nature and native grassland preserves. These facilities can be used year-round for nature tours, bird watching, school field trips, college-level field course work, and other activities.

Camping — Campers enjoy spending time in nature and away from civilization. While some people will head for the backcountry of national parks or other public lands, others will frequent publicly owned natural areas and privately owned campgrounds, such as those owned and run by a League chapter.

Camping may involve the use of a tent, a primitive structure, or no shelter at all. Simple day camp sites may include a parking pad, picnic table, and fire ring or elevated grill, or a pavilion for group outings. Overnight camp sites may range from fairly primitive sites to ones that provide electrical, septic, and water accommodations for recreational vehicles or camper trailers.

A chapter's camping facilities may be used for members' family outings, organized trips for Boy and Girl Scout units, or as outdoors training for youth, women, and citizens with special needs. Camp sites also are an inexpensive form of accommodation for members and visitors attending a chapter's event, such as a sporting meeting, open house, or festival.

Aquatic Activities — Many chapters use water resources — man-made ponds and lakes, streams, lakeside frontage, and river access — for fishing, swimming, ice skating, nature observation, and boating. But with open bodies of water come special safety and environmental considerations. For example, the need to regulate access by unsupervised minors, to place lifesaving equipment in convenient areas, and require use of personal flotation devices (PFDs) in boats of all types. Chapters that own land on the water must also make sure they comply with all local, state, and federal regulations governing construction and use of inland water bodies, including wetlands.

Shooting Sports — A large number of League chapters own and operate shooting ranges across the country, including archery, rifle and pistol, skeet, sporting clays, and trap ranges. These facilities are also used for firearms safety training, hunter education courses, pre-season hunter sight-day, and youth shooting activities.

Range ownership, however, also conveys heightened responsibility for safety concerns and environmental stewardship. Chapters with shooting ranges can tap into a technical support network to help them address these issues. For example, groups like the National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, American Archery Council, and Amateur Trapshooting Association all provide advice and support. In addition, the League has adopted a set of nonbinding, recommended guidelines and minimum safety standards for chapter shooting ranges.

The League also has an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Association of Shooting Ranges to promote the development and implementation of environmental stewardship plans at our chapter shooting ranges.

But it is up to each chapter to take whatever steps it deems necessary and appropriate to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, protect the natural environment, and ensure the safety of its members and guests.



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Local circumstances and chapter needs will often dictate how you manage your chapter's property and assets.

Property and Assets Management

Operations

Local circumstances and chapter needs will often dictate how you manage your chapter's property and assets. Nevertheless, here are a few important considerations.

Best Management Practices — Chapter grounds and facilities should be maintained and operated using best management practices. This means using the most effective structural or nonstructural methods for operating grounds and facilities in a safe and environmentally sound manner. In defining what this means for your chapter, seek advice from the leaders at other League chapters who have similar facilities, as well as from outside experts. Remember to put those best management practices in writing so that future chapter leaders can monitor and evaluate compliance.

Planning and Construction — Facility improvements can take years to initiate and complete. Work with your members now to develop a list of needed improvements. Once you have a list of priorities, develop a long-term plan with monthly or quarterly milestones that allows you to measure your progress and proceed in increments.

As you plan, be aware of local zoning ordinances, building codes, construction permits and other requirements. Your local government is usually the place to start when constructing a building and sewer system or road, or drilling a well. However, state and federal regulatory statutes may also apply, depending on the nature of the project, such as a man-made pond.

Financing — Your long-term outdoor recreation facility plan should also have a budget detailing costs for the project. Do not overlook the value of using your volunteers' time and skills as well as donations of materials or equipment. Among your members you may find experienced carpenters and other skilled tradesmen like electricians, masons, and plumbers.

In the absence of member expertise, the building job should be left to an experienced contractor with excellent credentials and recommendations. It's a good idea to obtain several bids from different contractors before awarding a contract. Your contractor should provide you with a signed contract and performance bond; also make sure he or she is fully licensed and insured.

You can finance your proposed improvements in several ways, including increasing annual dues, requiring new member initiation fees, selling lifetime chapter memberships, seeking donations, holding fund raisers, or applying for a loan. Seeking appropriate in-kind donations of work and materials from contractors or building supply retailers is also a common practice of chapters.

Other Considerations — In planning your project, don't forget to consider using "green building" materials and products. Properly installed, these materials can save energy and serve as an educational tool or demonstration site for members and the community. You will want to review the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards as guidance for meeting sustainability goals. Visit www.usgbc.org for more details.

As you design or update your facilities, don't forget to provide access for handicapped or disabled members and guests. Review the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards for legal guidance and recommendations.

No chapter should acquire and maintain real property, whether land, buildings, boats, or other equipment, without first incorporating. And you should plan on maintaining that corporate status. Your chapter should also secure liability and loss protection by carrying adequate insurance coverage on property owned, leased, rented, or used by the chapter. Consult a local attorney and insurance agent regarding the type and amount of insurance you need, taking into consideration the inherent risks posed by activities at your chapter.

As you map out your plan and budget, you should also anticipate increases in your property taxes as a result of any land improvements. Property taxes vary from state to state, and some may provide a tax exemption, so you will need to contact the appropriate government office for details.

Maintenance — Operations and maintenance often receive little attention while construction is underway. To protect the chapter's investment, maintenance should begin almost immediately. Be sure to add the costs for routine items like cleaning products, light bulbs, paint, gravel for road and parking lot, and gas and oil for lawn mowers in your budget, as well as more expensive items like painting. Recreation sites also require routine maintenance and equipment, such as brush cutting tools for trails and lumber for replacement target holders on the rifle range. With aging or over use, also comes the need to replace more major items like appliances, roofs, and boat docks to maintain optimum performance and ensure member safety.

To help offset these costs, chapters may decide to establish workday obligations for members. Special work days should be organized to make meeting this obligation fun for members.

Note: Unit II — Finance, Legal, and Fund Raising provides guidance on legal, financial, tax, fund-raising, and insurance issues associated with chapter property ownership and management.



To assist the chapter in monitoring, maintaining and improving recreational facilities, consider setting up subcommittees or special committees for each.

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Recreational Subcommittees

To assist the chapter in monitoring, maintaining and improving recreational facilities, you may want to consider setting up subcommittees or special committees for each such facility. These committees may report to an existing standing committee or to a specific officer or director. Examples might include:

- Pond
- Nature Trails
- Campsites
- Rifle Range
- Chapter House
- Archery Course
- Trap and Skeet

Before you begin your project, you will need to recruit, train, and motivate your volunteers on the committee so they are ready to tackle and complete your new recreational project. Always try to provide an encouraging environment that offers volunteers opportunities to meet their expectations. Volunteers will devote many hours if properly motivated and feel their time and talents are well used.

Note: You can find more information on leadership development and volunteer recruitment and motivation in Unit IV — Conservation Programs and Projects (see “Chapter Conservation Projects” heading).

Chapter Outdoor Activities

Regardless of whether a chapter has its own grounds or not, every chapter should offer a variety of activities that introduce the public to the outdoors. In addition to teaching new outdoor skills and having fun, these activities:

- Educate the public on conservation issues;
- Promote responsible use of natural resources;
- Enlist the public’s support on specific measures and projects;
- Benefit members of the local community, including youth;
- Build awareness of the League and help generate new members;
- Engage your members and help develop new volunteer leaders.

Education — In many cases, practical learning goals can be worked into chapter outdoor activities. For example, a fishing day can be turned into an opportunity to discuss fish habitat needs and threats posed by dams, land management practices, invasive species, and overfishing. In short, try and use fun and engaging outdoor activities to develop peoples' awareness and appreciation for the natural world.

Conservation — Organizing and tackling a natural resource problem in your community can be hard work, but promoting it is easier when it is combined with an outdoor activity. A canoe trip along a local river threatened by non-point source pollution presents an opportunity to educate the public, persuade them to change their own behaviors, and enlist their support in cleanup efforts.

Community — Another way to approach outdoor activities is to identify activities that will directly benefit less fortunate members of your local community. For example, organize an outing on your chapter grounds for disabled veterans from your local Veterans Administration hospital or for economically disadvantaged youth.

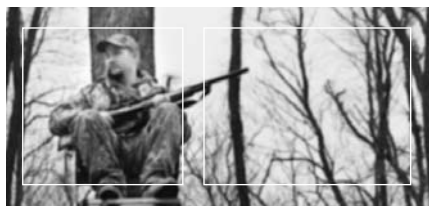
Youth — Hosting activities for “kids and the outdoors” has a positive ring to it. Any activity involving youth, whether you are teaching them about nature or outdoors skills, is likely to generate members' enthusiasm and participation. For example, you can sponsor a scout troop on your chapter grounds or provide an archery day for local school children. You may consider organizing youth activities that include the parents, so that the whole family can learn together.

Recruit and Engage Volunteers — Outdoor activities also provide opportunities to raise public awareness of your chapter, recruit new members, and promote volunteer leadership. By vigorously promoting these activities in your local community, you are educating others on the broader mission of the League and the benefits of membership. Planning and implementing these activities provides an excellent opportunity to develop future chapter leaders among your members.

Committee Structure — Some chapters may wish to set up subcommittees or special committees to deal specifically with outdoor activities and events. These subcommittees are tasked with the ongoing development, promotion, implementation, completion, assessment, and improvement of a chapter's outdoor activities and may report to an existing committee or to a specific officer or director. The committee's first job will be to prepare an operating plan that describes what they hope to accomplish during the year and how they will execute it, taking into account volunteer interests, chapter resources, and other sources of financial and technical support.



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Sample Outdoor Recreation and Activities

Many chapters have years of experience in planning and developing outdoor recreation and activities. For a list of examples conducted by League chapters, please refer to Appendix K.

The following Sample Outdoor Recreation and Activities provide descriptions of a variety of outdoor activities undertaken by League chapters nationwide. They are based on information that individual chapters submitted for inclusion in this manual. At the end of each, you'll find a list of known chapters that have conducted the activity, so you can contact them and exchange ideas or ask questions.

Each description includes:

- Activity Title
- Description
- Benefits (for both chapter and community)
- Key Steps (to organize, implement and complete)
- Who Can Help (volunteers, partners and sponsors, technical and other support)
- Dollars and Cents (budget considerations, such as expenses and revenues)
- Getting the Word Out (publicity and advertising)
- Other Chapters (who have succeeded in similar activities)

Note: It is up to each chapter to decide what outdoor recreation activities best meet its needs and to ensure that any activity is carried out safely, in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and permits.

Examples of steps chapters can take to help ensure the safety of all participants and protect the chapter from future liability, include providing appropriate equipment and training, monitoring the work closely and following all safety precautions, and carrying adequate liability insurance and securing liability release forms from participants, regardless of their age.

You will find the activities organized under one of four activity categories:

- Community Education and Outreach
- Family and Youth Involvement
- Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Viewing
- Shooting Sports

Please refer to and utilize the separate sample sheets as you organize and implement your chapter's outdoor recreation or activities.

We will continue to keep this manual updated with fresh ideas, so we encourage you to send us a description of your best activity. You'll find a blank "Chapter Outdoor Recreation and Activity Description Worksheet" in Appendix L for this purpose. Please feel free to make photocopies of this two-page form for all outdoor activities you might want to highlight and submit.

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SAMPLE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ACTIVITY

CATEGORY: **COMMUNITY EDUCATION
AND OUTREACH**

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

ACTIVITY — DISABLED CITIZEN OUTDOOR EVENT

Description —

Several chapters host an outing for disabled and other special needs citizens as a way to introduce or reengage them with the outdoors, often through a recreational activity. Chapters may host two or more specialized events per year, such as a fall deer hunt, and in the spring or summer, a fishing event. Chapter members provide instruction, equipment, and volunteer time to work with and assist disabled citizens.

Benefits —

These one-day events reach people who may never have had access to such outdoor activities. They also help highlight the conservation and community service work of the League.

Key Steps —

- Decide what kind of event your chapter will host and solicit members to volunteer their time and skills. Volunteers will need to spend one-on-one time helping participants.
- Select the location of your event: for example, your chapter, a local park, or a waterway.
- Plan an all-day clinic and provide at least two different outdoor activities that invitees can participate in.
- Inventory equipment needs related to the outdoor activities you've chosen.
- Determine how you will create a special needs or handicap-accessible environment. Contact area rehabilitation centers and other special citizens groups to seek advice and engage co-sponsorship.
- Consider providing meals or selling concessions, snacks, and beverages.
- Let participants know ahead of time what gear may be required, such as rain gear, insect repellent, sunglasses, sunscreen, and water bottles.
- Have adequate handicap-accessible restrooms and vehicles on site.
- If you plan to live-fire firearms and archery gear, have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available, along with shooting vests, shooting gloves, and protective ear and eyewear.
- Have first aid kits on hand, and, depending on the medical needs of the participants, consider on-site medical or emergency technicians.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Provide one volunteer for each active special needs participant. Add additional volunteers to help out with meals and refreshments as well as other logistics. If the activity involves shooting,

some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, and at least one range safety officer in control of live-firing at all times.

Partners/Sponsors: Local businesses, homeowners associations, National Rifle Association, and various conservation organizations, such as Whitetails Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, and National Wild Turkey Federation's Wheeling Sportsmen. Also consider involving area hospitals and rehabilitation centers, local (town, city, township, county) governments, and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Technical and Other Support: Local (town, city, county) governments special services staff, state fish and wildlife agencies, and county parks and recreation departments.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: On an average, each event costs about \$1,000. Expect to spend \$200 for meals and the remainder for equipment.

Revenue: To offset expenses, ask area businesses for in-kind food and beverage donations; approach Wal-Mart about a community service grant; and seek member donations.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through your chapter newsletter and Web site. Send a pre-event news release to local newspaper events or calendar sections. Follow up with a post-event release with photos of participants engaging in recreational activities. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending the event by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful DISABLED CITIZEN OUTDOOR EVENT Activities —

Brown County, WI
Silverton, OR
Traveller, WY

Wayne County, OH
Des Moines, IA
Wayne, NE

Rockville, MD
Cortland, NY

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

ACTIVITY — NATIONAL HUNTING AND FISHING DAY

Description —

Many chapters host an educational or hands-on event to introduce the public to hunting and fishing. The event is often planned in conjunction with National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD), celebrated the fourth Saturday of each September. The event encourages a better understanding of hunters and anglers and their contributions to conservation and to wildlife and fisheries management.

Benefits —

National Hunting and Fishing Day events highlight the tremendous contribution hunting and fishing make to our economy and fish and wildlife management through fishing and hunting license sales and excise taxes on boating, fishing supplies, firearms, and ammunition. Such events publicly promote the positive contribution that hunters and anglers make to conservation and the League's mission. In addition, they offer opportunities for member recruitment.

Key Steps —

- Plan your local Hunting and Fishing Day celebration to coincide with the National Hunting and Fishing Day. This one-day event is held annually on the fourth Saturday in September.
- Plan your day's activities and decide on an appropriate staging location. You can organize the event as part of an open house on chapter grounds using outdoor recreational and educational activities. For example, you may organize hunter education skills workshops, hunting dog training and field trials, wildlife calling, muzzleloader shooting, and fly fishing demonstrations.
- If you decide to hold the event at a public place such as a park or shopping mall, reserve the area and coordinate with the mall owner or appropriate government agency on what activities are allowed.
- Recruit volunteers based on activities offered and the number of participants you expect.
- If you are conducting hands-on activities, coordinate with area sporting goods stores to obtain any necessary equipment for the event.
- Construct an informational display featuring some of the modern wildlife management success stories and accomplishments produced by hunter-angler involvement.
- Promote the event to the public and members.
- Have chapter provide food and refreshments.
- If you choose to include live-firing firearms and archery gear, have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available, along with shooting vests, shooting gloves, protective ear and eyewear, as well as first aid kits on site.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: The number of volunteers will depend on the location of the event, the types of activities offered, and the number of anticipated participants. If the activity involves shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, and at least one range officer in control of live-firing at all times.

Partners/Sponsors: Local (town, city, township, county) governments and state fish and wildlife agencies, other chapters, and local conservation organizations (such as Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation), and area sporting goods stores.

Technical and Other Support: Wonders of Wildlife (National Hunting and Fishing Day clearinghouse: www.nhfd.org), National Shooting Sports Foundation (NHFDF founder), National Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (promoters of “Take Me Fishing”), and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: The event could cost very little or as much as \$1,000, depending on advertisements, promotional materials, hands-on outdoor activities, snacks, and beverages.

Revenue: Local businesses may contribute supplies and food for the day’s events.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through your chapter newsletter and Web site and through the state fish and wildlife agency’s public relations department. Post fliers at local sporting goods retailers and send a pre-event news release to local media. Advertise in local newspaper calendar or events sections. If you co-sponsor with other conservation organizations, coordinate outreach with their staff. Provide guests with information about the League’s mission, your chapter’s accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful NATIONAL HUNTING AND FISHING DAY Activities —

Rockville, MD
Orange, CA
Silverton, OR

Washington County, MD
Waterloo, IA
Argos, IN

Winchester, VA
Hamilton, OH
Evansville, IN

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

ACTIVITY — OUTDOOR RECREATION BENEFIT

Description —

Organize and conduct an outdoor recreational activity — shooting, archery, derby fishing — where chapter members and the public participate to raise funds for a local or national charitable cause. Community leaders, citizens, and League members come together for a day of outdoor recreation with the understanding that a portion of the registration proceeds will go to a pre-determined charity. For example, some chapters have held benefits like: “Shoot for a Miracle” to benefit the St. Jude’s cancer research; “Breakin’ Clay to Save the Bay” for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation; and “Hooked on Fishing, not on Drugs” in support of local youth addiction prevention. Some chapters go a step further and combine this event with a fund-raising auction (refer to this manual’s Unit II – Finance, Legal, and Fund Raising for further information).

Benefits —

The chapter receives recognition from the community, helps raise funds for charity, and helps to attract new members from among the participants.

Key Steps —

- Determine whether to hold the event on chapter property, or at an area park, a local lake or pond, or shooting range.
- Arrange for participants to receive event tee shirts or other novelty gifts. These items will serve as an outreach and marketing tool long after the event is over.
- Organize lunch or refreshments; either ask members to prepare food, or hire a caterer.
- Depending on the outdoor recreational activity, supply fishing gear or ammunition.
- Refer to several sample outdoor recreation and activities, such as **Shooting Sports Events**, **Archery**, and **Youth Fishing Events** for more helpful details.
- Ask a representative of the benefit charity to attend to present the charity’s mission, answer questions, and help rally the participants.
- If live-firing firearms or archery gear, have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available, along with shooting vests, shooting gloves, and protective ear and eyewear.
- Remember to have first aid kits available and plenty of sunscreen, insect repellent, and drinks on hand.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: If the activity involves shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, at least one range safety officer in control of live-firing at all times, and two volunteers to help out with registration and refreshments. Recruit numerous additional volunteers to handle other duties and tasks as they arise, such as directing parking, handling trash and cleanup, welcoming participants, and answering questions.

Partners/Sponsors: Local businesses, various cause-focused organizations, local radio stations and newspapers.

Technical and Other Support: State natural resources or fish and wildlife agencies, National Rifle Association, National Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, other conservation organizations, and the benefiting charity.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Assuming the chapter has grounds, facilities, and equipment to hold the event (such as a shooting range for a shooting benefit or a fishing pond for a fishing event), the cost of the event should not exceed \$1,200 (snacks, drinks, chapter gift giveaways). If your chapter needs to purchase equipment, the cost of the event may increase by \$500 to \$1,000.

Revenue: Seek special donations from your chapter members to cover the costs. Consider adding a flat rate to the event registration fee to cover chapter overhead costs, and adding a food concession stand. These strategies have generated close to \$5,000 for similar charitable events.

Getting the Word Out —

Send a pre-event media release to local radio stations and newspaper outlets; then follow up with local newspapers by sending a post-event release with photos. Promote your event in your chapter newsletter and on your Web site. Coordinate with the benefit charity to advertise to their donors and members. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful CAUSE-DRIVEN OUTDOOR BENEFIT Activities —

Arlington Fairfax, VA
Wadsworth, OH

Wildlife Achievement, MD
Mountaineer, WV

Beloit, WI

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

ACTIVITY — SEASONAL FESTIVAL

Description —

Changes in the seasons offer opportunities for chapters to organize and host seasonal themed events. Open to the public, these events feature outdoor recreational activities specific to the season, such as cross country skiing in the winter or foliage hikes in the fall. These events provide participants with a means for enjoying the outdoors in any season.

Benefits —

Seasonal festivals are excellent opportunities to introduce the public to your chapter's conservation activities and attract new outdoor-oriented members. These events not only focus on what nature has to offer during specific seasons, they demonstrate that the League is instrumental in protecting America's outdoors and connecting communities to the outdoors year-round.

Key Steps —

- Plan a one-day event featuring season-specific activities. Emphasize that each season offers a variety of outdoor activities.
- Choose a location that best suits the activity, such as chapter grounds or an area park.
- Depending on the season, you can offer any number of activities at various locations or times:
- **Winter** activities may include ice-fishing, snow-shoeing, cross country skiing, wildlife track identification, building bird feeders, candle-dipping, snow-flake studies, winter wilderness survival.
- **Spring** activities may include nature walks, bird watching, field work to study stream ecology, building bird houses, fish stocking, wildlife habitat plantings, and fishing.
- **Summer** activities may include building a bat box or a rain barrel, creating a butterfly or rain garden, or a "river-fest."
- **Fall** activities may include foliage hikes, hayrides, pumpkin carving, and wildlife viewing.
- Recruit volunteers for the day's events, focusing on members who have a particular skill pertaining to the seasonal activity.
- Plan for food and refreshments.
- Advertise the event to the public.
- Clean up the property or facility and properly dispose of food and waste from the event.
- Remember safety considerations, which will vary depending on the time of year and the type of activity. Maintain a manned and well-equipped first aid station during your public event.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: You can operate a small seasonal festival with 5 to 10 volunteers. For a large event, you'll need 20 to 30 volunteers.

Partners/Sponsors: Local (town, city, township, county) governments and county parks and recreation departments, area businesses, homeowners associations, outdoor or environmental clubs at local colleges, and civic organizations such as the local Rotary club or the chamber of commerce.

Technical and Other Support: Local parks and recreation departments' nature center staff, and state fish and wildlife agency outdoor education and biology staff.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: The cost will depend on the size of festival and the planned activities. Smaller outings may incur only minimal costs if members supply food and refreshments. Larger events may require \$1,000 or more for advertisements, food and beverages, supplies, and equipment.

Revenue: Ask chapter members to donate food and drinks. Consider asking partners or sponsors to donate funds or in-kind items. Solicit door prizes from local businesses.

Getting the Word Out—

Distribute a pre-event media release to community newspapers and radio stations. Advertise locally, if needed. If the event is being held on chapter grounds, post a large roadside sign or banner (if allowed) two to three weeks before the event. Send a post-event news release to media outlets with pictures of attendees enjoying the festival. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending by recruiting them as new members.

Chapters with Successful SEASONAL FESTIVAL Activities —

Dwight Lydell, MI
Brown County, WI

Dubuque, IA

Peoria, IL

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

ACTIVITY — VETERANS APPRECIATION DAY

Description —

Your chapter can host a family day or outing for recovering/rehabilitating servicemen and women. The event usually involves an outdoor recreational activity or a recognition event to honor veterans within the chapter or community for their service to our country. Many veterans have incurred debilitating injuries that impede their participation in outdoor activities they once enjoyed or may have wanted to try. One way to help is by creating a handicap-accessible setting that allows wounded soldiers and sailors and their families to enjoy nature, and by providing equipment and instruction in outdoor recreational activities.

Benefits —

Veterans appreciation days show appreciation to wounded or recovering military men and women. In addition, they serve to demonstrate the chapter's compassion and patriotism to the larger community.

Key Steps —

- Select the date for your veterans appreciation day event. Recruit members to serve on the event committee and to volunteer as nature guides or outdoor skills instructors.
- Contact the regional office of U.S. Veterans Affairs for possible co-sponsorship interest, advertising the event, or to seek advice about special needs. Also ask your state fish and wildlife agency if they would like to partner or co-sponsor such an activity.
- Provide at least two outdoor activities veterans can participate in; ensure that facilities are handicap accessible.
- Promote and advertise the event.
- Provide recreational equipment and instructors, and a picnic lunch and drinks for participants.
- Be sure to determine in advance whether participants are required to secure fishing licenses from the state. Some states offer them free to disabled veterans and/or active duty military.
- If live-firing firearms and archery gear, have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available, along with shooting vests, gloves, and protective ear and eye wear.
- Depending on the medical conditions of participating veterans, you may be required to have medical or emergency technicians, first aid kits, handicap-accessible vehicles and portable restrooms.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: If hosting an event with wounded or disabled veterans, plan on having one volunteer for every two participants. You may need additional volunteers to help with logistics and create a positive and enjoyable experience. If the activity involves shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, and at least one range safety officer in control of live-firing at all times.

Partners/Sponsors: Local businesses, local government and U.S. Veterans Affairs hospitals, U.S. Army's veteran appreciation program (www.freedomteamsalute.com), military veterans' fraternal organizations (such as Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, American Veterans), county parks and recreation departments, other chapters, and other conservation organizations (such as Trout Unlimited's Project Healing Waters, National Wild Turkey Federation's Wheeling Sportsmen).

Technical and Other Support: U.S. Veterans Affairs, area hospitals and rehabilitation centers, local (town, city, county) governments, and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Expenses will vary greatly, depending on the number of attendees, activities, equipment, and the meals and drinks provided. You may also want to consider have gift giveaways for participants.

Revenue: Consider asking area businesses to donate giveaways, meals, or gift certificates. Ask chapter members to serve as instructors and to provide equipment. Some of the expenses may be covered by the Veterans Affairs office and donations from local recreational outfitters. Your state division and other conservation groups may be willing to provide additional funds to implement the program.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through the IWLA newsletter and Web site. Send a pre-event news release to media contacts with a special invitation for a reporter/photographer to attend the event. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members. Send a post-event news release with photos of veterans participating in events.

Chapters With Successful VETERANS APPRECIATION DAY Activities —

Rockville, MD

Wildlife Achievement, MD

Franklin County, PA

Fredricksburg-Rappahanock, VA

Geneseo, IL

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

SAMPLE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ACTIVITY

CATEGORY: FAMILY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

CATEGORY: FAMILY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITY – ANNUAL MEAL FUNCTION

Description –

By combining their annual meeting with a dinner, chapters can turn it into a social event to attract new members, increase community visibility, and raise funds. The evening's program can include a special guest speaker on a topic of interest, and the chapter's "year-in-review," highlighting its conservation work and major accomplishments throughout the year. Given League members' interest in hunting and fishing, these events also lend themselves to serving up wild game. Some chapters host shrimp boils, oyster and bull feasts, fish fries, corn roasts, and even Super Bowl parties with great success.

Benefits –

League chapters with access to a kitchen or an outdoor barbeque pavilion on their property can host an annual meal, such as a banquet or wild game dinner for members, their families, and invited guests to raise funds and attract new members. When combined with a chapter's annual meeting, a dinner, roast, or barbeque attracts a lot of attention throughout the community and provides an ideal forum to highlight the work of your chapter.

Key Steps –

- Obtain a venue or facilities to host a meal function that could accommodate 50 to 100 people, or more.
- Consider the timing of your event to coincide with special state or federally designated weeks, like National Hunting and Fishing Day. This may provide some media opportunities.
- Check to see if there are state or county restrictions on selling wild game for consumption or on serving alcohol; research the need for a temporary event permit.
- Determine whether you want to use a caterer or volunteer members to cook and serve for the event.
- Ensure that food handling complies with health regulations.
- Invite a speaker who can provide an informative, educational presentation and attract non-members. You may want to use this opportunity to honor a person who is well known in your community.
- If the event is open to the public, designate a chapter spokesperson to provide an update on current chapter activities
- Promote the event to members and encourage them to bring guests. Make clear that proceeds will be used to help support the chapter's conservation projects.

- If applicable, monitor those consuming alcohol. Have adequate first aid kits readily available.
- Clean up the property or facility and properly dispose of food and waste from the event.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: You will want your full chapter to participate in this event, if possible. The actual preparing and serving of the food will require 5 to 10 people.

Partners/Sponsors: Local businesses, other chapters, and the IWLA state division.

Technical and Other Support: To secure an interesting speaker, look to state natural resources and fish and wildlife agencies.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: A dinner should cost between \$500 and \$1,000, depending on the number of people attending. The budget should cover a basic meal, plus supplies such as plates, utensils, serving plates, and beverages. If you hire a caterer, expect to increase the amount by about 30 percent.

Revenue: To offset expenses, consider asking chapter members to donate supplies, drinks, and food, such wild game from a recent hunt. Solicit local businesses for sponsorships or in-kind donations of food, door prizes, or items that could be raffled off at the event. Use the raffle proceeds to reduce overhead. Consider charging an admission fee of \$5 to \$10 over the cost of the food. Any profits can be added to the chapter's budget for future projects and activities.

Getting the Word Out —

Send a pre-event media advisory to local newspapers' calendar and events sections. Also make sure to post information in your chapter newsletter and on your Web site. If a company is sponsoring the event, ask them to invite their employees and customers. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending the event by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful ANNUAL MEAL FUNCTION Activities —

Mary Peak, OR
East Fork, IA
Rockville, MD

Red Cedar, IA
Fremont, NE
Central New York, NY

Okaloosa, IA
Wayne County, OH
Evansville, IN

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: FAMILY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITY — FAMILY DAY OUTINGS

Description —

Organize and host an all-day event that provides opportunities for families to spend time together while learning a new outdoor activity. You can host the event for chapter members, or you can open it up to the community.

Benefits —

Family day outings are a great way for chapter members to meet each other. These events also provide an excellent low-key way to attract new members.

Key Steps —

- Decide what your day's activities will be and select your date.
- Family outings can be centered around a specific calendar date (such as Father's Day, Mother's Day, or a local historically important date) or to draw attention to a specific activity (such as a family trap shoot or youth fishing event).
- Host the event on chapter property or in an area park.
- Recruit your volunteers for the day's events.
- If the event is open to the public, designate a chapter spokesperson to provide an update to guests and visitors from the community on current chapter activities.
- Plan for and provide free food and refreshments. Remember to handle food in accord with local health regulations.
- Clean up the property or facility and properly dispose of food and waste from the event. If you plan to be live-firing firearms and archery gear, make sure adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers are available, along with shooting vests, gloves, and protective ear and eyewear.
- Remember to have on hand first aid kits, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Depending on the size of the event, you can operate a small outing with a picnic meal with five volunteers. Large events will require most or all chapter members to participate. If the activity involves shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, and at least one range officer in control of live-firing at all times.

Partners/Sponsors: Local (town, city, township, county) governments and county parks and recreation departments, local businesses, and homeowners associations.

Technical and Other Support: County parks and recreation departments, local outdoor recreation businesses.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Smaller outings can be relatively inexpensive, relying, for example, on donated food. Larger events may require \$1,000 to \$1,500 for advertisements, food, and beverages. If the day's events focus on a particular theme, consider the cost to supply accompanying materials. For example, if the day is a picnic meal and trap shoot, factor in costs for clay targets. In addition, include the cost to purchase door prizes from local businesses.

Revenue: Ask chapter members to donate food and drinks (each family brings a covered dish). Consider asking partners or sponsors to donate funds or serving equipment. Ask local businesses to provide door prizes.

Getting the Word Out —

If your event is open to the public, send a pre-event news release to local media outlets. Advertise by posting fliers in local businesses. Promote the event in your chapter newsletter and on your Web site. Be sure to have information on the League and membership applications available at the event. Take advantage of non-members participating in this activity by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With SUCCESSFUL FAMILY OUTING Activities —

Argos, IN
Medina, OH
Hamilton, OH

Jefferson County, WV
Frederick, MD

Beloit, WI
Arlington-Fairfax, VA

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: FAMILY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITY — PADDLE SPORTS DAY

Description —

If you have easy access to water, organize and host an event that teaches individuals about canoe and kayak safety, paddling techniques, and the simple fun of this form of recreation. After your initial event, you may decide to bring participants together again for a float-trip to test their new skills.

Benefits —

Paddle Sports Day allows members and non-members to acquaint themselves with these sports and increase their appreciation of the outdoors from a different vantage point — the water. The event can educate participants about the value of clean water and healthy waterways, and how each person's actions affect water quality. Participants who are not members will also learn about the League's conservation mission and your chapter's accomplishments and its role in the community. With the proper encouragement, you may even recruit new members.

Key Steps —

- Locate an appropriate body of water for your event, such as a pond or lake on chapter grounds or in a public park.
- Secure enough canoes or kayaks with associated gear such as paddles and personal flotation devices (PFDs). Consider using members' equipment, if available, or renting equipment from a local outdoor recreation business.
- Recruit volunteers to your activity committee. Make sure that you have enough people with the knowledge and skills associated with this sport to serve as instructors.
- Pick a date (and if needed, a rain date) and promote your outdoor event as a day of instruction and hands-on learning.
- Plan your food and refreshments, or ask participants to bring a snack or bag lunch.
- Put together a packet of information related to your activity, such as information on water safety or paddling techniques.
- Consider organizing an event for youth groups, or as part of a family day, or for women.
- Organize an off-site float trip for the participants after they have learned about safety, paddling techniques, and maintaining equipment.
- Along with PFDs for each paddler, have a designated lifeguard equipped with a water rescue flotation device. In addition, have available a first aid kit, sunscreen, insect repellent and drinking water.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Participation is limited by availability of equipment. Identify and recruit event leaders with paddling experience; consider additional training for new leaders. Start with at least three to four experienced paddlers for a small group of participants. In addition, include a first aid volunteer, a lifeguard, and two more volunteers to help out with registration and other logistical needs.

Partners/Sponsors: State natural resources or fish and wildlife agencies, state and local parks, local recreation and recreational gear businesses.

Technical and Other Support: American Canoe Association, National Boating and Fishing Foundation, American Red Cross, and the Boy Scouts of America.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: If you have to rent canoes or kayaks along with paddles and PFDs, the cost may range from \$250 to \$500, depending on the number of participants. If your chapter owns canoes or kayaks, the starting cost for additional equipment begins at \$300.

Revenue: Consider asking your chapter members if they can loan out their personal canoes, kayaks, paddles, PFDs, and safety equipment.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through your chapter newsletter and Web site and with other area chapters. Send a pre-event media release to local newspapers' events or calendar sections, and consider advertising locally. Post fliers in outdoor gear stores and on their Web sites, if they have open events calendars. Highlight the League's conservation mission, chapter accomplishments in the community, and how people can join. Send a post-event release with photos of participants in canoes or kayaks on the water to local newspapers. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful PADDLE SPORTS DAY Activities —

Rockville, MD

Loudoun County, VA

Cincinnati, OH

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: FAMILY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITY — SCOUTING

Description —

A chapter sponsors local Cub Scout, Boy Scout, or Venturer units, or offers its facilities for meetings, trainings, and outings. Scouting is a worldwide youth movement that supports young people in their physical, mental, and spiritual development. The Scout movement employs a program of informal education with an emphasis on practical outdoor activities, including camping, woodcraft, aquatics, hiking, backpacking, and sports. Conservation education and outdoor ethics play a big role in this youth program, making it a valuable potential partner with League chapters.

Benefits —

Scouting offers an array of training programs that include outdoor experiences and values. Your chapter will benefit by engaging well-educated youth who are eager to complete conservation projects. By sponsoring and mentoring a Scout group, your chapter will provide a community service and will receive community recognition.

Key Steps —

- To organize and sponsor a Scouting unit or to locate already established units in your community, contact your nearest Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Council office. The Scouting system is based on an established leadership and skills development curriculum supplied by BSA. Your chapter will need to recruit volunteers to serve as adult leaders.
- Plan for the Scouts to use your grounds for meetings, camping, and other outdoor skills development. Your chapter can offer a few evenings a month, a week, or a year (for day camps), or two weekends a month (for campouts and merit badge training).
- Support or host advanced leadership training, such as an Order of the Arrow work weekend.
- Offer Eagle Scout project sponsorship and guidance, if requested.
- Advise Scouts pursuing the prestigious William T. Hornaday Conservation Award.
- Integrate Scouts into other chapter youth-oriented outdoor activities, such as fishing events, youth hunts, shooting sports events, and hunter education courses. Also involve them in your litter cleanup, stream restoration, and wildlife habitat improvement conservation projects.
- Host additional adult training sessions.
- The BSA provides its own insurance and liability protection for its Scouts, adult leaders, and unit sponsors.
- When live-firing firearms and archery gear, have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available at all times, along with shooting vests and gloves, and protective ear and eyewear.

- Maintain first aid kits in the chapter house or meeting site and throughout the chapter grounds.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Start with six to ten adult volunteers for a single Scout unit, and recruit additional volunteers for multiple units. Additional volunteers are needed for events, outings, and skills training sessions. If the activities involve shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, and at least one range officer in control of live-firing at all times. Consider designating a chapter leader or member as a liaison between the Scouts and chapter board and officers.

Partners/sponsors: Local businesses and retailers may support the Scouts with in-kind donations for specific projects and activities.

Technical and other support: The Boys Scouts of America has its own national organization with established regional, state, and local management structures. For added support for conservation-related projects, seek collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and state fish and wildlife, natural resources, and forestry agencies.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: The cost to purchase group camping gear may range from \$250 to \$1,000 for the first year. Additional costs may be incurred for underwriting Eagle Scout projects or for renovating campsites and trails for Scout use.

Revenue: Seek contributions from businesses, local conservation groups, and members. BSA has its own registration fee and dues structure and system of innovative fund raisers. Contact the BSA for more details and advice.

Getting the Word Out —

BSA will advertise on its community listserve and Web site; you may also want to post information in your chapter newsletter and on your Web site. Distribute fliers at local schools and businesses. Provide parents and adult leaders with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members participants by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters with Successful SCOUTING Activities —

Linn County, IA	Potomac, MD	Berkeley County, WV
Arlington-Fairfax, VA	Elgin, IL	Southern Maryland, MD
Wildlife Achievement, MD	McCook Lake, SD	Seven Mile, OH
St. John #1, ND	Waterloo, IA	Fullerton, CA
Ames, IA	Crete, NE	Loudoun County, VA

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: FAMILY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITY — WOMEN IN NATURE/ OUTDOORS SKILLS

Description —

Host a fun, hands-on event that introduces women of all ages to nature and the outdoors. The event provides an organized training session to introduce and teach the basic principles of outdoor recreational sports and skills such as shooting, archery, camping, fishing, orienteering, hunting, wildlife viewing, outdoor photography, and survival skills. An all-day clinic might consist of two four-hour classes that encourage and motivate women to engage in the outdoors through hands-on experiences.

Benefits —

By hosting women in an outdoors skills activity, you will offer new experiences and opportunities for women from your chapter and community to enjoy the outdoors. Hosting this event will generate new conservation and outdoor recreation advocates and increase the potential for new members.

Key Steps —

- Determine what activities you want to include, your equipment needs, and select a location with classroom accommodations. For example, your chapter house and grounds or a community park might work well. Reserve your facilities for the event date.
- Recruit members who are willing to volunteer on the event committee and as nature guides, or outdoor skills instructors, or hunter education instructors in your area.
- Contact your state fish and wildlife agency's outdoor education program to see if they would like to co-sponsor this activity or provide supplies, equipment, and other services.
- Consider providing meals or selling concessions, snacks, and beverages.
- Promote and advertise the event.
- If you choose to include live-firing firearms and archery gear, have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available, along with shooting vests, shooting gloves, protective ear and eyewear, as well as first aid kits on site.
- Ensure that class size does not exceed building capacity. Remind participants to bring outdoor gear and attire, such as rain gear, insect repellent, sunglasses, sunscreen, and water bottles.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: The number of volunteer instructors will vary based on the particular skill being taught and the number of participants. If the activity involves shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants,

and at least one range officer in control of live-firing at all times. Additional volunteers will be needed to handle course logistics, such as registration and meals.

Partners/Sponsors: A number of outdoor programs targeting women already exist, such as Women in the Outdoors, an outreach project of the National Wild Turkey Federation. Women on Target is a program affiliated with the National Rifle Association. Becoming an Outdoor Woman originated with University of Wisconsin University–Stevens Point, and has expanded nationwide; it now has cooperative relationships with most state fish and wildlife agencies’ outdoor education programs.

Technical and Other Support: Look to local outdoor businesses for supplies and/or grants to obtain supplies. Area outdoor instructors, food markets, sportsmen’s federations, and regional conservation organizations may also provide support.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: A women in nature/outdoor skills program requires a skills course, instructors, equipment, lodging, and meals. Volunteer instructors set up the courses and typically provide the equipment. If you need to purchase equipment, the cost can exceed \$1,000, depending on the number of participants.

Revenue: To offset expenses, seek donations from local recreational outfitters, your IWLA state division, and other conservation groups. In addition, consider charging a registration fee to cover any meals and lodging.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through your newsletter and Web site. Send a pre-event media release to local newspapers’ events or calendar sections. Distribute fliers at local sporting goods retailers and other local businesses frequented by women. Also promote the course at other chapters and public libraries. Send a post-event release with photos of area women participating in outdoor events. Provide guests with information about the League’s mission, your chapter’s accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of non-members participating by promoting the League and recruiting them, their spouses, or their families as new members.

Chapters With Successful WOMEN IN NATURE/OUTDOOR SKILLS Activities —

Central New York, NY
Winchester, VA
St. Joseph County, IN

Greater Seattle, WA
Mountaineer, WV
Red Cedar, IA

Loudoun County, VA
Lincoln, NE
York, PA

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: FAMILY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITY — YOUTH CONSERVATION CAMP/ OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Description —

Organize and host a youth camp. The camp will allow children to spend time with Izaak Walton League members, naturalists, and other experts in the field of natural resources, learning about conservation issues, problems, and solutions.

Benefits —

Investing in chapter youth programs reaps generational benefits. These are our nation's future conservationists who will also preserve our outdoor recreation traditions. By organizing a youth camp, you will increase interest and understanding of conservation-related issues among the youth in your chapter and community. A camp also provides an added, valued benefit to your members, should their children opt to participate.

Key Steps —

- Select your date and location. You can host the event on chapter grounds or at a local park with a nature center or outdoor pavilion. The time of year you choose may help determine the length of the camp/classroom program (day, weekend, week-long). Be sure to avoid conflicts with the school year and major holidays.
- Determine the camp or class agenda. The variety of classes offered depends on your instructors' expertise and the age group you want to attract. Courses could include stream sampling, insect and reptile studies, forest management, and wildlife identification.
- Recruit instructors and additional volunteers for the camp committee.
- Determine equipment needs for classroom instruction and recreational activities.
- Plan for food and refreshments.
- Have adequate restrooms and a first aid kit.
- Check with local authorities on regulations and permit requirements.
- Provide parents with a list for what children should bring and wear, such as rain gear and sunscreen, and identify any special needs.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Start with two to six volunteers; larger events may require up to 25 volunteers per day.

Partners/sponsors: Local businesses, outdoor retailers, homeowners associations, watershed groups, various conservation organizations, and state fish and wildlife, natural resources, or forestry agencies.

Technical and other support: Local board of education, state fish and wildlife agencies, U.S. Forest Service, state and county parks and recreation departments, and local nature centers.

Dollar and Cents —

Expenses: Costs for 20 participants begin at \$800 to \$1,000 for six days. Be sure to include the cost of materials, equipment, snacks, drinks, and meals for youth participants.

Revenue: Business contributions, local and regional conservation group donations, and grants and member contributions may help to cover costs. Consider charging a nominal registration fee. Requiring pre-registrations will assist in planning and budgeting. Cut costs by requiring participants to bring their own bag lunches or snacks.

Getting the Word Out —

Contact your area public school system, local board of education, and community events programs. Advertise through your chapter newsletter and Web site. Send a pre-event news release to media contacts with a special invitation to a reporter/photographer to attend. Send a post-event news release with photos of youth participating in the camp or outdoor classroom. You will need to obtain parents' permission for any photographs of children that you use for promotional purposes. Provide youth and their parents with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending the camp or class by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters with Successful YOUTH CONSERVATION CAMP/OUTDOOR CLASSROOM Activities —

Mountaineer, WV

Northwest Ohio Yikes, OH

St. Joseph County, IN

Argos, IN

Central NY, NY

Wabash, IN

McCook Lake, SD

Oil City, PA

Orange, CA

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

SAMPLE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ACTIVITY

**CATEGORY: FISHING, HUNTING, AND
WILDLIFE VIEWING**

CATEGORY: FISHING, HUNTING, AND WILDLIFE VIEWING

ACTIVITY — FISHING CLINIC

Description —

Angling, or fishing, involves catching fish using a rod and reel. Fishing is the most popular outdoor recreational activity in America today. A number of chapters host informative, hands-on events to introduce members of the public to fishing and improve the skills of experienced anglers.

Benefits —

Fishing clinics expand the participants' knowledge of fish and other aquatic life, fisheries biology and management, and increase their awareness of safety and ethics. In addition, fishing clinics are excellent opportunities for the public to learn about the League's mission, your chapter's conservation activities, and attract new outdoor-oriented members.

Key Steps —

- Determine the appropriate skill level and techniques to be offered, taking into account your location and who you want to attract to the clinic. For example, you may decide to offer your clinic at a local pond, stream, or river, or to use live-bait, artificial lures, or flies. More advanced sessions might include fishing from boats, canoes, tubes, and fly-tying and fly-fishing.
- Set a date for your clinic and determine the agenda. For example, it might include a combination of classroom lectures, casting demonstrations, and actual fishing on a local pond or waterway.
- Recruit experienced member anglers to share their passion for fishing with interested students. Engage local angling experts who may not be League members.
- Arrange to secure chapter-owned or loaner fishing gear.
- Determine whether food and refreshments are needed.
- Promote and advertise the event.
- Be sure participants secure required fishing licenses from the state. Consider scheduling a clinic during a state's free fishing day(s).
- Have first aid kits, sunscreen, insect repellent, and lifejackets available.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: For small clinics, start with two to four volunteers; for larger events, perhaps twice as many. For demonstrations with hands-on participation, aim to have one instructor per 12 participants.

Partners/Sponsors: Local businesses who cater to anglers (such as Orvis, Bass Pro Shops, Cabela's, L.L. Bean), watershed groups, state fish and wildlife agencies' outdoor education departments and/or fisheries

management units, other chapters, local fishing clubs, and various conservation organizations (such as Trout Unlimited, Federation of Fly Fishers, B.A.S.S).

Technical and Other Support: National Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, local (town, city, township, county) governments, state fish and wildlife agencies (some have angler education curriculums), U.S. Forest Service and county parks and recreation departments. Refer to the sample **Youth Fishing Event** outdoor recreation and activity for additional ideas and suggestions on working with young anglers.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Provided no new equipment needs to be purchased, costs may be as low as \$65 for bait and other out-of-pocket expenses like snacks and beverages. If you need to purchase equipment, initial costs may be considerably higher.

Revenue: Ask participants to bring their own rods and reels or provide loaner fishing gear from members or the chapter. Ask area businesses for in-kind donations (such as food, snacks, equipment, door prizes). Seek member donations to offset out-of-pocket expenses, including snacks and beverages.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through your chapter newsletter and Web site. Send a pre-event news release to newspaper events or calendar sections. Send a post-event news release with photos of area citizens participating in the fishing clinic. Distribute and post fliers at area businesses, such as bait shops and sporting goods retailers, and at the regional office of your state fish and wildlife agency. Provide participants with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending the clinic by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful FISHING CLINIC Activities —

Wisner, NE

Floyd County, IA

Izaak Walton Cottage, UK

Berks County, PA

Dwight Lydell, MI

Winchester, VA

Delta, OH

Havana, IL

Rice Lake, IA

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: FISHING, HUNTING AND WILDLIFE VIEWING

ACTIVITY — HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE

Description —

Many states require first-time hunters to take a hunter education or safety course before purchasing a hunting license. These courses teach hunting techniques, firearm and hunter safety, survival, first aid, and ethical behavior. They equip members and local citizens with practical basic hunter skills training and information on responsible hunting.

Benefits —

Chapters can provide a public service by offering hunter education and safety course several times a year to the community and chapter members. Hunter education courses typically attract non-members (for example, hunting families with younger novice hunters), and provide a great tool for member recruitment. Hunting courses also reinforce the connection between hunting and wildlife management and conservation.

Key Steps —

- Contact your state fish and wildlife agency for certified, trained hunter education instructors in your area, or recruit members who are willing to volunteer and receive hunter education instructor certification from the state.
- Select your classroom accommodations, such as your chapter house or a local fire hall, community center, or police station. Set up dates and reserve instructors.
- Inventory your gear and supplies. Ask the state fish and wildlife agency's outdoor/hunter education program if they can provide additional materials, instructors, and other services.
- Promote and advertise the course.
- Notify the agency's outdoor/hunter education staff of course details so that they can promote and certify it.
- If you intend to provide an *optional* live-fire component to the class, arrange to secure adequate shooting ranges.
- Consider providing meals, or selling concessions, snacks, and beverages.
- A youth hunt could be organized to reward recent hunter education course graduates. Refer to the **Youth Hunt** outdoor recreation activity description.
- If you will be handling firearms in the classroom, closely monitor their use. Be sure that no live ammunition is accessible; consider using de-activated (firing pins removed) firearms.
- If you plan to live-fire firearms and archery gear, have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available, along with shooting vests, shooting gloves, and protective ear and eyewear.

- Ensure that the class size does not exceed the capacity of your facility. Have a first aid kit on hand.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: All volunteer instructors must be certified hunter education instructors by your state agency. A course typically requires one instructor for every 10 to 15 participants. If the activity involves shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, and at least one range safety officer in control of live-firing at all times. Certain state agencies may limit live-firing during hunter education courses. Consider adding two more member volunteers to handle administrative tasks, such as registration and meals.

Partners/Sponsors: State fish and wildlife agency outdoor/hunter education departments, shooting retailers, and area sporting goods businesses.

Technical and Other Support: State fish and wildlife agencies' volunteer hunter education instructors, conservation officers and wildlife biologists, and NRA-certified firearms instructors.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Expenses are typically low. Primary expenses include food and ammunition for the live-fire option.

Revenue: Your state fish and wildlife agency will cover the cost of the curriculum and supply volunteer instructors with audio visuals, student training manuals, and graduate certificates and cards. Consider contacting area retailers for donations such as food, or ammunition, if a live-fire component is offered. In most states, you cannot charge the students for hunter education courses beyond the expense of facility rentals. Check with your own state. Even if your state allows you to charge for facility rental, try to host the course at a free facility to keep student costs at a minimum.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise this event through your state agency and chapter bulletin boards, newsletter, and Web sites, as well as through other area League chapters. Consider posting fliers in local shooting retailer and sporting goods stores. Send a pre-event media release to local newspapers' events or calendar sections; then, send a post-event release with photos of citizens participating in the course. Provide students with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending this educational event by promoting the League and recruiting them or their parents as new members.

Chapters With Successful HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE Activities —

Rockville, MD	Delta, OH	Michigan City, IN
North Manchester, IN	Loudoun County, VA	York, PA
Greater Seattle, WA	Mahaska County, IA	Beloit, WI

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: FISHING, HUNTING AND WILDLIFE VIEWING

ACTIVITY — WILDLIFE AND BIRD WATCHING TOUR

Description —

Wildlife and bird watching tours can be conducted on chapter grounds, on other private property, or area parklands. This activity provides people with the opportunity to observe and study wildlife in a natural setting with the naked eye or through binoculars or scopes. Bird watching also often involves studying bird songs and calls, since many species are more readily detected and identified by ear than by eye.

Benefits —

Nationwide, wildlife viewing and bird watching engages far more participants than hunting and fishing combined. Introducing people young and old to the fun of observing nature cultivates advocates for sound conservation policy. Using your chapter grounds for this activity can showcase the League in the community and attract potential members. If you use an accessible local park, you may be able to engage more people, and in the process, acquaint them with the League.

Key Steps —

- Become knowledgeable about the wildlife and bird species found locally. Know what you might see in different locations and habitats.
- When you plan your event, select a location that holds the best opportunities for participants to observe wildlife and birds. For example, you could use areas that are wild and undeveloped, established forest arboretums, or nature and native grassland preserves. You will also want to consider the time of day; early morning and dusk tend to be the best viewing times.
- Consider starting with an introductory presentation (if facilities are available, use a slide show) on what participants may see and hear when you take them on the walking tour. Or, you can choose to focus your walking tour on a particular species that is often seen and then use this opportunity to discuss the species' habitat needs, behavior, and role in the ecosystem. Be sure to tailor your presentation to the age group.
- Determine what equipment you will need for the walking tour (such as binoculars or scopes, identification guides, or flash cards). Ask participants to bring their own equipment and resource guides.
- If you have property and existing trails, establish viewing stations in mixed habitat settings that would facilitate holding wildlife watching tours. Try to include a variety of habitats such as forests, open fields, streambanks, wetlands, and open water.
- Put together a point to point species list and guide for walking tours. This can be done at your property or at another location. Or, make use of public trails that already offer self-guided tour materials.

- If you are taking a group on a walking tour, bring a portable first aid kit, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: If your tour is focused on bird watching, make sure your volunteers are avid birders who can quickly identify species. If the walking tour is focused on wildlife, your volunteers should be knowledgeable about the types of wildlife they may see, as well as scat, tracks, and other animal signs. Every volunteer should be able to identify poison ivy. (“Leaf of three, let it be.”) Remember to break up the tour group into smaller units so you do not disturb the wildlife.

Partners/Sponsors: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state natural resources or fish and wildlife agencies, local businesses, homeowners associations, watershed groups, and various conservation organizations, such as the Audubon Society and Ducks Unlimited.

Technical and Other Support: Federal and state fish and wildlife agencies, local (town, city, township, county) governments, U.S. Forest Service, and area parks and recreation departments.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: If you plan to hold a tour on your chapter grounds, you’ll want to provide drinks and snacks for the participants. If your tour is at another location, consider purchasing IWLA giveaways. Either way, plan on spending \$200 to \$300 on supplies. You will need to budget more to purchase loaner optical equipment and resource books.

Revenue: Include your event in your chapter’s annual budget and secure donations from members. Seek donations from other area businesses and in-kind donations of optical equipment or books. Ask area nurseries to provide donations for enhancing habitat with native plants.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through the chapter’s newsletter and Web site. Send a pre-event media release to local newspapers’ events or calendar sections. Send a post-event news release with photos of area citizens participating in the tours. Provide guests with information about the League’s mission, your chapter’s accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members participating in this activity by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful WILDLIFE AND BIRD WATCHING TOUR Activities —

Delta, OH	Mahaska, IA	Rockville, MD
Owatonna, MN	Bethesda-Chevy Chase, MD	Maine, ME
Red Cedar, IA	Prairie Woods, MN	Fullerton, CA

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: FISHING, HUNTING AND WILDLIFE VIEWING

ACTIVITY — YOUTH FISHING EVENT

Description —

Many chapters host fun, hands-on events to introduce novices or youth to the art of angling. Angling, or fishing, is the most popular outdoor recreational activity in America today.

Benefits —

Youth fishing events are excellent opportunities for the public to learn about your chapter's conservation activities. These events attract outdoor-oriented people who may become members; provide a forum to teach citizens about ethical fishing techniques; and introduce children to the joy of outdoor recreation. The League's conservation message is also passed on by educating participants about pollution in area waterways and the effects that it can have on the activity and their communities.

Key Steps —

- Organize and host a weekend event (or weekday if affiliated with a school group) to take children fishing. Select your location, which could be on chapter grounds, or at a local park or waterway.
- Inventory your loaner gear and decide what food and refreshments you will provide.
- Consider having giveaway items such as tee shirts or fishing-related gear.
- Recruit experienced member anglers to share their love of fishing with participants. Be sure to have sufficient volunteers to work one-on-one with the participants for at least part of the time.
- Decide on the conservation message that you incorporate into the day's event. Use the water body to educate participants about your local watershed and their role in keeping it healthy.
- Teach participants proper and ethical fishing techniques, adding in the message of keeping their gear clean to reduce the introduction of invasive species.
- Be sure participants secure any required fishing licenses from the state.
- Be prepared for rainy weather by having access to nearby shelter or by providing rain gear. You can also give participants a suggested gear list for the day.
- Have first aid kits on hand, and depending on the location, consider lifejackets for safety.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Youth fishing events will vary in size. A small chapter can accommodate 12 participants, while larger chapters may accommodate 100 participants. Depending on the number of participants, you may need as few as two volunteers per session or as many as 20.

Partners/Sponsors: National Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, local (town, city, township, county) governments, school groups, sporting goods stores, bait and tackle shops, other chapters, and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Technical and Other Support: Local (town, city, township, county) governments, state fish and wildlife agencies, U.S. Forest Service, and area parks and recreation departments.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Smaller events may cost \$100 to \$500 (for snacks, night crawlers, and giveaways); larger events could reach \$1,000 or more for canoe rentals, night crawlers, equipment rental, giveaways, and food and beverages for volunteers.

Revenue: To offset expenses, consider requesting business contributions of cash or in-kind services, such as items for door prizes or grants. Or, consider charging a small registration fee.

Getting the Word Out —

Send a pre-event news release to local media outlets, and a post-event release with photos of area youth fishing. Advertise through your chapter newsletter and Web site. Post stories and pictures at area outdoor recreation stores that sponsored the event. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With YOUTH FISHING EVENT Activities —

Central New York, NY
Wayne County, OH
Martin L. Davey, OH

Fullerton, CA
Dwight Lydell, MI
Mahaska County, IA

Jefferson County, WV
Travelle, WY
Alexandria, VA

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CATEGORY: FISHING, HUNTING AND WILDLIFE VIEWING

ACTIVITY — YOUTH HUNT

Description —

In a highly controlled environment, some chapters host fun, hands-on events to introduce novices or youth to sport hunting — the practice of pursuing wild animals with modern firearms. A very popular form of outdoor recreation, hunting is regulated by state and federal fish and wildlife agencies as a necessary component of modern wildlife management.

Benefits —

Youth hunting events are excellent opportunities for the public to learn about your chapter's conservation work, attract potential members, introduce children to the joy of outdoor recreation, and teach participants safe and responsible hunting techniques. Through this one-day event, your chapter will also educate participants about managing wildlife populations and the role hunters play in promoting conservation practices. Organized youth hunts may also be used to reward recently successful hunter education course graduates.

Key Steps —

- Select your date and set up a structured, guided hunt on chapter property or on other private or public lands that allow first-time hunters to experience hunting in a controlled, supervised environment.
- Make a hunter education course a prerequisite of the hunt. Refer to the sample **Hunter Education Course** outdoor recreation and activity sheet.
- Ensure that hunters have any required licenses, and that they bring their own firearms and ammunition whenever possible.
- Consider additional safety instruction and hands-on training on the day of the event to test and refine shotgun skills. Refer to the sample **Firearms Education and Training** outdoor recreation and activity sheet.
- Recruit volunteers with safe shooting and hunting experience for the event. League members can serve as instructors, trap or skeet station attendants, and live-bird hunt mentors or coaches.
- Arrange for stocking of live game birds (such as pheasants, quail, chukars, huns) for the event from a private propagator, your state fish and wildlife agency, or from your chapter's own rearing operation.
- Your chapter should consider providing meals, snacks, and beverages.
- *Closely* monitor firearms handling and use.
- On the hunt, it is best to have a one-to-one ratio of young hunters to hunt mentors at all times. Require the use of safety orange hunting apparel (vest and cap), and protective ear and eyewear.

- If you plan additional live-firing of firearms, have adequate shotgun shooting ranges and range safety officers available along with shooting vests, shooting gloves, and protective ear and eyewear.
- Be sure to have a first aid kit on hand.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: If the event involves pre-hunt shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, and at least one range safety officer in control of live-firing at all times. For the hunt, you should begin with 25 volunteers. They will serve as instructors, shooting coaches, hunt mentors, first aid station monitors, hunt registration administrators, guides, helpers, and other positions as needed.

Partners/Sponsors: Local (town, city, township, county) governments and state fish and wildlife agencies, local sporting goods retailers, other chapters, and local conservation organizations (such as Pheasants Forever and Quail Unlimited).

Technical and Other Support: State fish and wildlife agency game bird biologists.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Youth hunts can start with a budget of \$1,000. Depending on the state-controlled hunting regulations, this amount can cover live birds, promotional materials, meals, snacks, beverages, and additional literature. Participants should bring their own equipment.

Revenue: To offset expenses, your chapter may become a state hunting/fishing license sales agent. Additional fees can then be added to license fees that will generate revenue for a youth hunt. Grant funding may also be available, or you can charge a nominal registration fee.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through the chapter newsletter and Web site and with your state's fish and wildlife agency outdoor/hunter education program. Circulate fliers at local sporting goods retailers and send a pre-event news release to local media. Send a post-event news release to local media with photos of youth participating in the hunt. You will need to obtain parents' permission to use photos of children in your public relations efforts. Provide youth and their parents with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful YOUTH HUNT Activities —

Martin L. Davey, OH
Cortland, NY
McCook Lake, SD

Lancaster Red Rose, PA
Boone Valley, IA
North Manchester, IN

Cass County, MN
Michigan City, IN
Mahaska County, IA

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SAMPLE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ACTIVITY

CATEGORY: SHOOTING SPORTS

CATEGORY: SHOOTING SPORTS

ACTIVITY — ARCHERY

Description —

Historically used in both combat and hunting, archery — using a bow or crossbow to shoot arrows — has become an ever-popular precision sport. Many chapters designate an area of their property for recreational archery. This provides an opportunity for the chapter to organize and conduct an event or series of educational events introducing basic archery skills to other members and the public.

Benefits —

When you host an archery event or activity, you are introducing novice archers to a sport that can engage them in the outdoors and conservation. By creating an archery program for youth, you often engage parents, too, as both participants and new members.

Key Steps —

- Decide what age group you want to introduce to archery.
- Set up field archery targets with that age group in mind.
- If your event is for youth, focus the day's theme on the benefits of outdoor activities, using archery as a place to start.
- To encourage family participation, design your event so that the parents can learn archery alongside their children. Experience indicates that as children become more involved, so do their parents.
- Consider hosting a special women-only outdoor skills event that features archery.
- Make your event a family day and hold a barbeque. Such an event can attract people from the community who may later join as members.
- Make sure archery gear is in working order. Remember to apply range safety rules when live-firing bow and arrows. Always retrieve errant or fly-away arrows.
- When live-firing, have an adequate shooting range and range safety officers available, including one who is not giving instructions, but observing the firing line at all times.
- Have a first aid kit on hand, especially to administer aid to cuts. Depending on the season, make sure to have plenty of sunscreen, water, and weather-appropriate clothing.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: The total number of volunteers will depend on the size of the event. Always try to have one volunteer member instructor per two shooting participants. Once you have obtained instructors, add

four additional volunteers: one or two to act as range safety officers, and another two or three to handle administration matters such as registration, meals, and other duties.

Partners/Sponsors: Area sporting goods stores, National Archery in the Schools Program, state fish and wildlife agencies, and other nearby IWLA chapters.

Technical and Other Support: State fish and wildlife agencies (outdoor or hunter education programs), National Bowhunter Education Foundation, and National Archery in the Schools Program.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Assuming that your chapter has an archery range, you can start a basic program with complete junior archery equipment for \$2,500 to \$3,000. This covers about ten bows, five dozen arrows, three targets, and a bow tree (rack). Encourage participants to purchase their own arm guards and shooting gloves, but have some available for participants to use on loan. If you use National Archery in the Schools Program instructors, factor in \$35 per instructor for an eight-hour session. If you do not have a range, factor in archery range rentals; rates will vary by region.

Revenue: To offset expenses, consider asking for donated archery gear. If the gear is not available by donation, your chapter will need to make the initial investment, which can generally be offset after the second season. Consider asking local businesses, such as sporting goods stores, to make a contribution to underwrite the program. In return, you can direct new archery students to the sponsor's sporting goods store for added expert advice and future purchases. Charge a nominal fee for a basic education event.

With upgraded targets and an expanded archery course, you can also host adult and youth tournaments and three-dimensional animal target shoots for bow hunters. After their initial investment, some chapters have generated \$2,000 to \$4,000 per year, which can be reinvested in future chapter programs.

Getting the Word Out —

Send a pre-event media release and a post-event release with photos of your archery activity to local outlets. Advertise with state fish and wildlife agencies; in your chapter newsletter and on your Web site; and post fliers in area sporting goods businesses and at other nearby chapters to attract archers. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members participating in this activity by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters with Successful ARCHERY Activities —

Rockville, MD
Loudoun County, VA
Mountaineer, WV

Cortland, NY
Arlington-Fairfax, VA
Mary's Peak, OR

McCabe, MN
Prince William, VA
Hamilton, OH

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CATEGORY: SHOOTING SPORTS

ACTIVITY — FIREARMS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Description —

Firearms education and training provides a valuable community service. It engages law-abiding gun owners and area law enforcement in the proper and safe handling and use of firearms. Training can be offered at several levels (such as beginner, intermediate, and advanced), and can include specialized firearm instruction for hunters, as a means of encouraging responsible outdoor behavior.

Benefits —

Finding proper training can be difficult for gun owners. By offering firearms education, chapters can offer an important community service and play a key role in making participants responsible gun owners. Chapters that conduct these courses can also bring in new members each year and earn a modest, yet steady, income for the chapter.

Key Steps —

- Obtain the National Rifle Association (NRA) curriculum as a framework for the course.
- Find an appropriate classroom setting with a chalk or white board, flip charts, and audio visual equipment.
- If you plan to live-fire firearms, identify a fully operational shooting range on chapter grounds or elsewhere. Be certain that the range is designed for the type of shooting required by course topic (such as handgun, rifle, or shotgun training).
- Recruit chapter members who are certified firearms instructors to lead the training.
- If the course is designed specifically for hunters, recruit specialists from your state the fish and wildlife agency's outdoor/hunter education staff. Refer to sample **Hunter Education Course** outdoor recreation and activity sheet.
- Consider hosting specialized courses that are open to area police and/or fish and wildlife agency game wardens or conservation officers.
- If live-firing firearms, have adequate shooting ranges and sufficient range safety officers available, along with shooting vests, shooting gloves, and protective ear and eyewear.
- As an added precaution, make sure loaner firearms are in working order. Have a first aid kit on hand.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Your chapter will need one volunteer instructor per two students. You will also need separate volunteers to operate as range safety officers and to oversee the activities. Each firearms discipline should have one lead instructor.

Partners/Sponsors: The National Rifle Association, area gun clubs, other chapters, local law enforcement departments, and sporting goods stores.

Technical and Other Support: The National Rifle Association, local law enforcement departments, state fish and wildlife agencies, and local parks and recreation departments.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Average annual cost begins at \$1,500 to host a course, advertise, and purchase training materials, cleaning supplies, and ammunition. If you must purchase firearms for training purposes, include that as an extra expense in your calculations. If you intend to offer or sell snacks or beverages, add \$100 to the expenses.

Revenue: The National Rifle Association provides standard training materials at cost for such courses. Consider asking sporting goods stores for material donations. The NRA Foundation is a potential source of grant funding. Due to the nature of the program, hosting this event can potentially generate close to \$200 in revenue for each class of 10 students.

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through your chapter's newsletter and Web site. Send a pre-event news release to local paper events or calendar sections. Ask area gun dealers and sporting good stores to post fliers. If you are working with area law enforcement, allow them to advertise the event as a public service. Follow up with a post-event release with photos of area citizens participating in the classroom or on the shooting range. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending this educational event by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful FIREARMS EDUCATION AND TRAINING Activities —

Boone Valley, IA
Arlington-Fairfax, VA
Lincoln, NE

Delta, OH
Loudoun County, VA
Greater Seattle, WA

Rockville, MD
Oil City, PA
Michigan City, IN

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: SHOOTING SPORTS

ACTIVITY — SHOOTING SPORTS EVENTS

Description —

This activity allows chapter members, area gun owners and outdoors people to engage in shooting sports events, including informal and sanctioned competitions, and fun and historical era shoots (involving cowboy action, muzzle loading, and vintage military weapons). Competitive shooting sports include tests of proficiency (for accuracy and speed) and using various types of firearms (rifles, trap, skeet, action pistol, handguns, and air and BB-guns).

Benefits —

These events typically attract shooting sports enthusiasts, who then invite friends and families. Since shooting sports events test individual skill levels and emphasize firearm safety and proficiency, the community is exposed to a positive use of firearms as part of a wholesome, recreational past time. In addition, events open to the public can attract new members, particularly when chapters take the time to inform attendees about the chapter's full range of conservation projects and outdoor activities.

Key Steps —

- Locate and secure a fully operational shooting range, preferably a chapter-owned facility that can provide a safe and fun environment for shooting sporting arms.
- Solicit chapter volunteers with firearms experience for your event committee.
- Determine whether your volunteers need additional firearms instruction and competitive shooting organizer training. Advanced courses may be held in your region in conjunction with the National Rifle Association (NRA).
- Decide how you will handle food and drinks. Hire a concessionaire, or manage refreshments using volunteers.
- Advertise the event.
- Notify chapter members of the scheduled event so that non-competitors/event participants know ahead of time that they won't have access to the shooting facilities on that date.
- Open your event to public, including adults and children accompanied by adults.
- Have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available, along with requiring protective ear and eyewear.
- Have a first aid kit on hand, and if the event is outdoors, have plenty of sunscreen and drinks.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Key volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors and/or range safety officers. Plan to have one volunteer for every two shooting participants and one range safety officer in control of the shooting line at all times. If you host a youth event, enlist the help of volunteer members to provide activities for the children while they are not shooting. Also consider engaging several volunteers to handle the registration and food concession tables.

Partners/Sponsors: National Rifle Association and Boy Scouts of America. Also, Reserve Officer Training Corps, National Guard units, area military academies or schools, and high school varsity and collegiate rifle or shotgun teams

Technical and Other Support: National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, and state and local law enforcement agencies.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: If your chapter has a shooting range and shooters provide their own equipment, the program can cost as little as \$200 for the purchase of food and beverages for resale. If you are holding your event at another location, you may have rental and equipment (such as trap machine) fees.

Revenue: If you plan carefully, your registration fees can generate \$200 or more. The NRA Foundation provides grants to purchase new equipment.

Getting the Word Out —

Send a pre-event news release to local media and newspaper events or calendar sections. Advertise the event through your chapter newsletter and Web site, on chapter bulletin boards, and through fliers posted in area gun shops, gun clubs, sporting goods retailers, and other chapters. Send a post-event media release with photos of citizens participating in shooting events and/or holding trophies and prizes. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members participating by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful SHOOTING SPORTS Activities —

Winchester, VA
Rockville, MD
Lincoln, NE

Boone Valley, IA
Arlington-Fairfax, VA
Cass County, IA

Wisner, NE
Wildlife Achievement, MD
Wabash, IN

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).

CATEGORY: SHOOTING SPORTS

ACTIVITY — SIGHT-IN DAYS

Description —

Through this activity, chapters organize and conduct a series of day-long events where area hunters, mostly non-members, have limited, controlled access to the chapter's shooting range to prepare their firearms for hunting season.

Benefits —

Hunters using properly sighted-in firearms are more likely to make clean, lethal kills, reducing the chance of an errant shot or a wounded animal during the hunt. By encouraging hunters to use their firearms safely and proficiently, chapters can help improve the image of hunters and hunting in the local community. Because sight-in days are open to the public, these events also offer non-members a chance to discover the benefits of membership, including outdoor recreational facilities, and chapter-sponsored activities and conservation projects.

Key Steps —

- Secure the use of a fully operational shooting range, preferably a chapter-owned facility. The goal is to provide a safe environment to sight-in hunters' sporting arms.
- Sight-in days generally precede deer or other big game hunting seasons, so you can expect modern center-fire and muzzleloader rifles and shotguns using slugs or buckshot. Types of firearms and ammunition will also vary depending on state or regional hunting regulations. Make sure your range can accommodate all types of firearms and ammunition.
- Recruit chapter volunteers with firearms and hunting experience for the event committee.
- Provide additional hunter education and firearms instructor and gunsmithing training for your volunteers, as needed, in advance of the event. Contact the National Rifle Association (NRA) and your state fish and wildlife agency for assistance.
- Advertise your event to the public. Be sure to notify members of the scheduled day event, since the event would limit non-participants' access to the shooting facilities.
- Require shooters to sign in at a registration desk and pay entrance fees. Offer a friendly welcome and inform them of range rules. Provide sandbags, shooting scopes, and paper targets.
- As an option, have a trained gunsmith available to inspect and tag firearms before participants enter the range area. The gunsmith can also help with malfunctions or with minor repairs.
- Require shooters to proceed from registration area to the shooting range with firearms cased or uncased with actions left open (unloaded).

- Generally allow two shooters per shooting bench observer; limit the number of rounds each shooter may fire per gun.
- Closely monitor and enforce compliance with range safety rules when live-firing.
- Consider selling food and beverages and other commonly used items such as ammunition, disposable ear plugs, and inexpensive eye protection.
- Have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available and require protective ear and eyewear.
- Have first aid kit, sunscreen, and drinks on hand.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Key volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors and/or range safety officers. Plan to have one volunteer per two shooters (bench observers) one range safety officer in control of the firing line at all times, and gunsmith on site (optional). Also, consider having two volunteers for the registration and food concession stands or tables.

Partners/Sponsors: Local gun shop or sporting goods retailers and gunsmiths.

Technical and Other Support: National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, local gunsmiths and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: If the chapter has a shooting range and shooters provide their own equipment, the program will cost about \$100 to \$150, which goes toward the purchase of food and beverages for resale. Add \$150 or more to advertise locally.

Revenue: Registration fees can generate \$200 or more, depending on the fee per gun and the number of participants. The NRA Foundation may provide grants to purchase shooting equipment (such as sandbags and spotting scopes).

Getting the Word Out —

Advertise through the chapter newsletter, Web site, and bulletin boards. Distribute event fliers in area gunsmith and gun shops, sporting goods retailers, and the local office of your state fish and wildlife agency. Send a pre-event news release to media and local newspapers' events or calendar sections. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of non-members attending this event by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With Successful SIGHT-IN DAYS Activities —

Oil City, PA
Cortland, NY

Wildlife Achievement, MD
Boone River, IA

Delta, OH
Lincoln, NE

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).