

Learning to Hunt

Hosting a hunting-
based outdoor skills
event in your
community



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Credits

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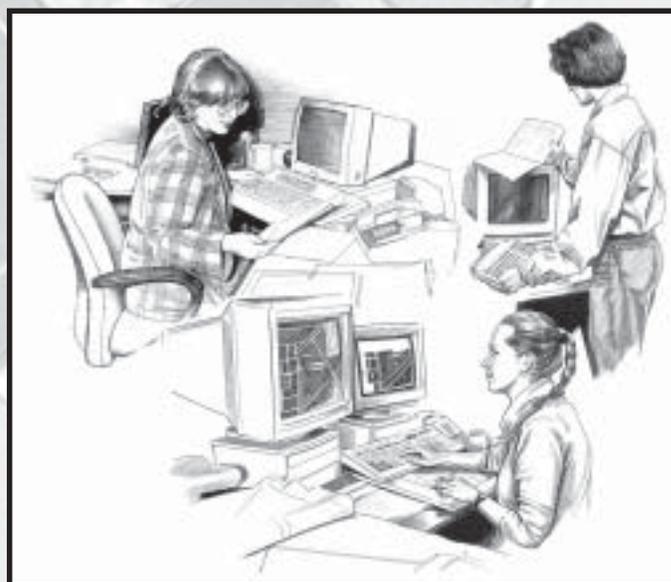
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Appendices

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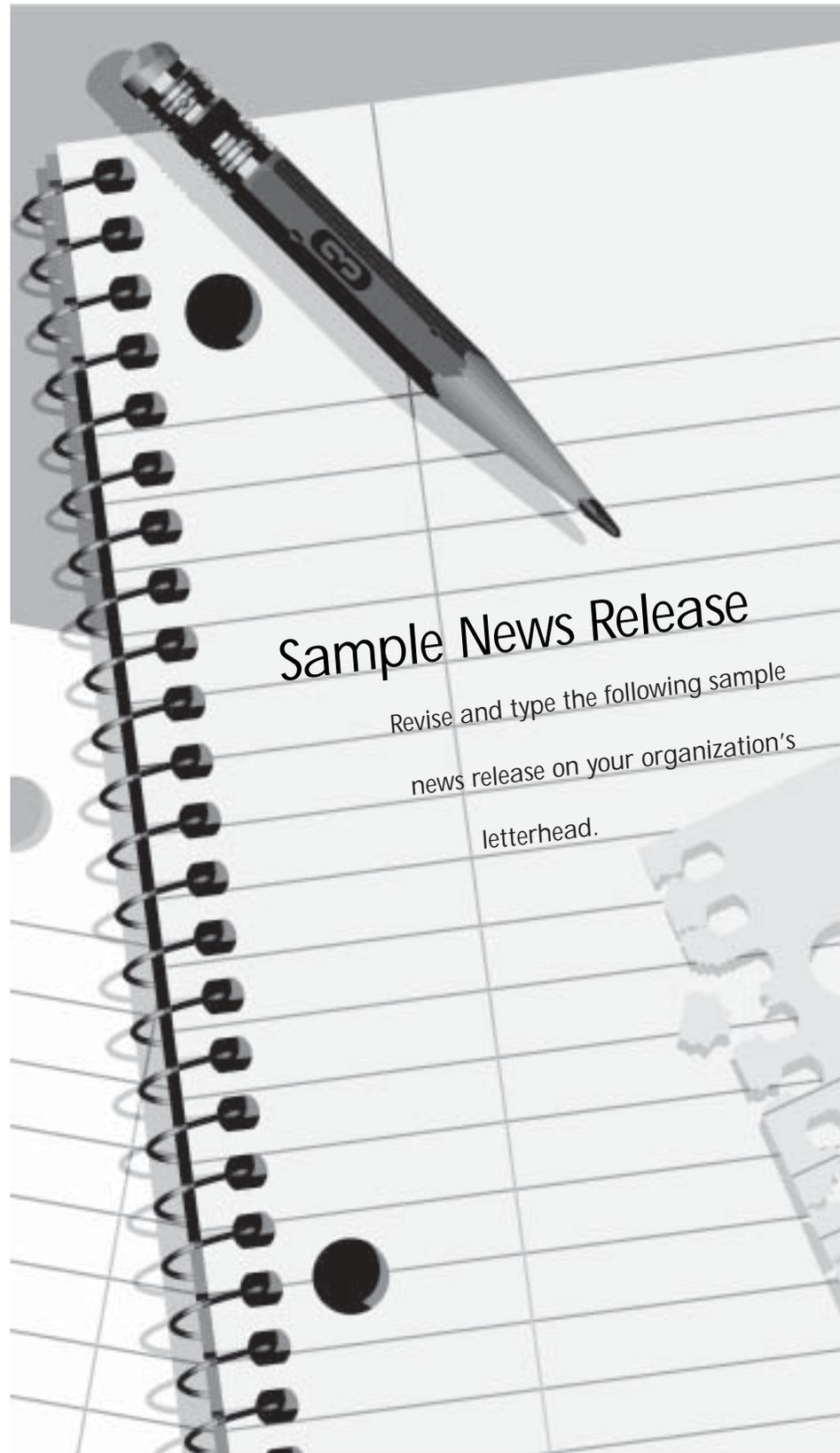
More resources
too good not to
include.





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Appendix I



News Release

For Immediate Release
[date]

For further information, contact:
[name of contact person]
[telephone number including area code]



First Annual “Learn to Hunt Outdoor Skills Clinic” to be Hosted By [Organization’s Name]

Members of [your organization] invite local youths 12 years old and older and their parents to participate in a celebration of Wisconsin’s proud hunting heritage. They are hosting the First Annual Learn to Hunt Outdoor Skills Clinic. This clinic seeks to provide youth and their parents with an introduction to basic hunting skills, shooting sports and wildlife conservation projects. Experienced hunters, certified Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructors and Department of Natural Resources personnel will focus attention on firearm safety and hunter ethics. Activity stations will include target range practice, and many different “how to” lessons on hunting some of Wisconsin’s most popular game animals. Youths and their parents will learn how to [select a list of your activities]

- * set up hunting blinds
- * use decoys and duck calls
- * field dress and prepare wild game for the table
- * practice target shooting with bow and arrow
- * train hunting dogs
- * hunt wild turkeys
- * hunt white-tailed deer
- * start a campfire
- * canoe safely

Hunters have long played a very important role in the conservation of wildlife. Now [your community’s] experienced hunters wish to inspire our youth to help with wildlife conservation as well as to learn the safe, responsible and ethical ways of hunting.

The event will be held at [name of facility] in [name of town], on [day of week, date]. The open-air format runs from [start time] to [end time]. Directions to [facility] are [give specific directions]. For more information, contact [name of contact person] at [area code + phone number].



Appendix II

Dealing with Animal Rights Activists

While hosting a Learn to Hunt Outdoor Skills Clinic, you may encounter animal rights activists who strongly oppose and even picket your event. Reporters may be present, as well as the general public. According to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, animal rights activists hold a set of values about animals and people that the majority of North Americans do not share. Animal rights activists oppose **all** animal use: fishing, hunting, trapping, livestock farming, medical research, and even pet ownership.

However, animal rights activists and hunters **do** agree on one thing: habitat loss is a terrible widespread threat to fish and wildlife. As a member of the hunting community, you may have

to deal with animal rights activists and other extremists. To do your best in explaining your views about hunting and wildlife management, remember the acronym:

M. E. S. S. A. G. E. S.

Memorize: Memorize 2-3 key messages in short, simple, hard-hitting and quotable sentences. See Appendix III for key messages.

Enthusiasm: Enthusiasm is genuine excitement about your message; show enthusiasm, not defensive emotion. In the minds of North Americans, conservation holds the high moral ground on animal rights issues, so you can be enthusiastic and proud in your support of hunting.

Stick to the Facts: Be honest and straightforward. Extremists are allowed to play fast and loose with the truth; do not fall into that trap. Remember that you and the other clinic sponsors represent the hunting community.

Stress Messages: Stay focused. See Appendix III for key messages.





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Admit: Admit if you don't know the answer to a question. Tell the person you'll try to find the answer for them. If you promise a reporter you'll get the answer, be sure to honor that statement before the reporter's deadline.

Gullible: Don't be!!! When dealing with a reporter, remember there is no such thing as making a statement "off the record." Don't say things you don't want repeated. Also, don't overreact. Do not engage in any response that will make animal rights activists appear to be victims of an unreasonable hunter. Activists' concerns should not be given more weight than others just because they are loud opponents. Volume does not equate to widespread public support. Remember, the media and the public are watching how hunters handle this debate, and will ultimately decide the outcome. Act calm, cool and very professional.

Explain: Explain your key messages further when asked, but don't be drawn into talking too much, or stumbling over your own words.

Show Tolerance: The right to disagree, free of fear, is the hallmark of our democracy. Assure activists that you care about their viewpoints, and are willing to listen, even if you don't agree. Activists' arguments are often based on deeply-rooted values that guide their lives. Avoid being provoked into personal verbal combat. You can question activists' actions and their cause, but do not criticize their values. Point out that you, too, care very much about the welfare of wildlife populations and that you agree with those animal rights activists who believe that loss of habitat is a serious threat to the welfare of wildlife.





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Appendix III

Key Messages in Support of Hunting

❑ Individual animals can't alter their genetics and so can't adapt to changes in the environment. Only populations can survive and adapt genetically over the long term. Therefore, from an ecological point of view, individuals of a species are less important than the population of that species.

❑ Most plants and animals and certainly all game species have the tendency to produce more young than their habitats can support over the years. This overproduction ensures the survival of their species. Only the fittest survive.

❑ The natural world uses predators, parasites, viruses, bacteria, starvation, fire, severe cold, severe heat, drought and flooding, cannibalism, territoriality,

fighting and accidents to eliminate plant and animal life every year.

❑ No biological basis exists for opposing regulated hunting.

❑ People are a product and part of the natural world. Human hunters, therefore, are as natural a predator as the wolf or cougar, and more humane. Hunting is not unnatural. By using their intellect and devices to obtain wild meat, hides and furs directly from nature, hunters actively participate in the natural phenomenon of predator versus prey. The hunter thus plays a fundamental role as part of nature. Hunting is a strong, direct link to natural processes of an environment that produces all life.

❑ In contrast to killing by natural predators, hunters operate under many regulations designed to make the way animals are taken as humane as feasible.

❑ How does one equate the suffering of animals that are shot with that of animals being eaten alive or dying of starvation or disease?

❑ Fewer people today understand the values and validity of hunting because so many of them are concentrated in urban and suburban areas, with limited direct exposure to the natural environment.





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❑ People and all living organisms depend on other living and nonliving natural resources to survive. Our use of products of nature is ecologically and socially acceptable and legal in all 50 states, provided we do not harm nature's ability to renew or sustain the resource, and that our extraction of these resources is conducted legally, safely and responsibly.

❑ People have so disrupted and modified the natural world they live in that a desirable harmony between people and wildlife can only be established by actively managing plants and animals.

❑ For an ecosystem to be balanced on a sustained basis, surplus individuals must be cropped each year. In environments modified by people, this cropping is usually done most efficiently and humanely by people. Nature cannot crop surplus animals or maintain healthy populations of wildlife as humanely or efficiently as hunters.

❑ Hunting is a sound, wildlife husbandry practice. It is our most effective tool for removing some of the surplus animals of a population without damaging the breeding stock.

❑ Hunting is a longstanding, legitimate American tradition, part of our national heritage. Hunting is a prominent aspect of Wisconsin culture, especially in rural communities. Many citizens wouldn't be alive today, were it not for the hunting ways of our ancestors. Hunting is a lifestyle...as much a state of mind as an activity. Hunting is an interest and impulse that continue year-round through many related activities and it adds significance even to unrelated experiences.

❑ Legal hunting of game animals is done in accordance with laws and regulations designed to prevent depletion of the resource and to eliminate inhumane treatment of wildlife.

❑ Hunting is as much conservation as it is recreation.

❑ Hunting is a safe, healthy, enjoyable activity and DNR is working to make the activity even safer.

❑ All trophy animals have had ample time to breed and pass on their genetic traits.





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❑ Dramatic modifications of habitats by people led to the decline of wildlife including the wild turkey, wood duck, white-tailed deer and elk. Beginning in the 1800's, hunters were primary initiators and main financial and political supporters of wildlife conservation programs. Hunters remain, today, the largest source of reliable funds and political support for wildlife conservation programs. They, more than any other group, have demonstrated the greatest collective ability to pay for the protection of the world's biodiversity by protecting many different habitats and the plants and animals that inhabit them. Today, the wild turkey, wood duck, white-tailed deer and elk have made dramatic recoveries due to the help of hunters. Therefore, hunting provides substantial benefits to the environment.

❑ Hunting regulations came about because hunters recognized the need to protect mammal and bird game species from market hunters and unrestricted harvesting.

❑ Each year, hunters contribute one half billion dollars through the sales of hunting licenses, stamps, permits, and federal excise taxes on firearms and ammunition. These dollars are used by state agencies to fund programs involving "non-game" animals as well as game animals. Nationally, more than 40% of state agencies

receive the majority of their non-game wildlife management funds directly from hunters. Most of the funds for hiring Wisconsin's wildlife biologists (some of whom are non-hunters themselves) and game wardens also come from hunters who pay both license fees and excise taxes on equipment they use. Therefore, hunting provides substantial benefits to the environment.

❑ Regulated modern hunting in the United States has not caused any wildlife species to become extinct, endangered or threatened. In fact, if the endangered whooping crane had been declared a game animal 50 years ago with hunting season closed until the population recovered, they would be common today.

❑ Large carnivores like mountain lions, bears and wolves are territorial. Hunters help prevent the dispersal of surplus individuals into territories where they could come into conflict with people.

❑ People have a moral obligation to manage nature once they have disrupted it. Therefore, a hunter is morally justified to hunt surplus wildlife that cannot be supported in an environment modified by people.



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❑ In the natural scheme of things, animals are born to be eaten by other animals so why not let the hunters humanely help nature's natural process?

❑ Most animal activist values are not shared by the majority of North Americans. Polls show widespread public support for wildlife management that includes such practices as hunting. However, nearly all people object to the notion of killing animals simply for amusement. Also, both hunters and animal rights activists believe that habitat loss is one of the greatest threat to wildlife populations.

❑ Of more than 1,150 species of birds and mammals in North America, only about 145 (12.5%) are legally sought by hunters.

❑ Hunting provides substantial benefits to the economy. American hunters spend almost \$11 billion dollars annually for equipment, supplies, and services to accommodate their hunting. Hunters spend nearly \$1 billion annually to lease hunting lands.

❑ Hunters privately own or lease 250 million acres of land for the primary purpose of hunting. That's roughly equivalent to the combined area of Texas, New York, Illinois and South Carolina. This acreage includes more than 14 million acres of wetlands.

Extensive wildlife habitat is maintained as a result of these investments, because hunters often implement habitat improvements and resist or minimize habitat-degrading activities. Therefore, hunting provides substantial benefits to the environment.

❑ Hunting involves extensive direct contact with nature and generates first-hand knowledge of wildlife, ecology and environmental issues. It strengthens a hunter's commitment to conservation. Hunting, therefore, provides substantial benefits to the environment.

❑ Studies have shown that youngsters who are exposed to hunting tend to be more knowledgeable, interested in and appreciative of wildlife and wildlife habitats than are youngsters lacking those experiences.

❑ Hunters' interest and involvement in environmental matters extend beyond hunting and huntable wildlife: 89% of hunters participate in wildlife watching, bird feeding and wildlife photography, compared to 73% of non-hunters.





Appendices

References

Appendix II

Encountering Animal Activists: A Pocket Guide, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 1993. (booklet)

Appendix III

Why Hunters are Needed, AWARE, Box 352, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538. The points in this brochure were taken and adapted from a speech given by Dr. Walter E. Howard, Professor Emeritus of Wildlife Biology & Vertebrate Ecology, University of California, Davis. (brochure).