

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES FOR THE LEARN TO BEAR HUNT PROGRAM:**

These guidelines have been developed to achieve the goals of the program, ensure consistent implementation of the Learn to Bear Hunt program across the state, and provide for a safe and enjoyable LTBH experience for all involved.

### **CLASS A LEARN TO BEAR HUNT PROGRAM**

#### **The Number of Tags Allocated to the LTBH Program**

The number of tags is determined based on workload, interest and ability of DNR Conservation Wardens and Wildlife Biologists to conduct the hunts, but will not exceed 70. The tags will be allocated by a centralized application process and subsequent random drawing.

Up to four (4) of the tags will be allocated through the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, and the Conservation Congress. The participants for these tags will be selected by the respective organization by a DNR approved selection process. Once selected, the participant will then be coupled with a mentor and sponsoring warden/wildlife manager. Two (2) tags will be allocated to aid in DNR sponsored disabled and terminally ill hunt.

#### **Selection of Participants**

- Interested and qualified candidates must submit an application to the Bureau of Law Enforcement post marked by May 30. Applications will be available on the DNR LTH webpage or at DNR Service Centers starting April 1. Novice hunters age 10 and older are encouraged to apply. Prior to June 10 the random drawing of qualified applicants will be completed.
- Only “novice hunters” are eligible to be selected as a participant in the Learn to Bear Hunt Program. A “novice hunter” for the purpose of the Learn to Bear Hunt Program is:
  - Someone who has not participated in a Learn to Bear Hunt in the past.
  - A person age 10 and older with less than two years of any hunting experience.
- Participants and mentors will be matched based on preferred hunting methods (i.e. bait or hounds). In an effort to reduce travel costs and to the extent possible, participants will also be paired by expressed geographic preference to mentors and sponsoring wardens/wildlife managers.

#### **Mentor selection and expectations**

- Mentors who are selected for all LTH programs need to understand the importance of leading by example by conducting hunts in a safe, legal, ethical and responsible manner projecting a positive image of hunters and the sport of hunting.

- The size of the group of mentors should be limited to number that aids in coordinating and managing the events. Demonstrating that hunting is an inclusive sport, LTBH groups are encouraged to have a combination of male and female adult mentors. If there are multiple mentors involved in an event, one mentor must be designated as the lead mentor. There is no limit to the number of mentors that can assist in a LTBH, however only six (6) mentors may be allowed at the point of kill.
- For participants 17 and younger, up to two legal guardians and any siblings of the participant may also go along on a hunt.
- To allow mentors, participants and immediate family members to understand the program and become comfortable with the each other lead mentors must attend the LTBH training day and all mentors are encouraged to attend the training day.
- Mentor applications are available on the DNR LTH website and are accepted all year. A background check is conducted prior to a mentor being approved in the LTBH program.
- If there are multiple mentors participating in an event, all mentors must be listed on the back side of the Mentor application form.

### **Learn to Hunt Event Requirements**

- A Conservation Warden or Wildlife Biologist will be act as a field liaison for all Learn To Bear Hunt events, acting as the primary contact and must be present at all LTBH events.
- A Wildlife Staff or a person designated and authorized by the Wildlife program, will participate in the training date, presenting on bear life history and management practices. Conservation Wardens will cover bear hunting ethics, firearm safety, rules and regulations.
- Only firearms should be used for Learn to Bear Hunt events. The training day will have a live fire component to ensure that participants are familiar and proficient with the firearm they'll be using.
- Either the sponsoring Conservation Warden or Wildlife Staff, or a designated mentor should be in possession of a firearm to help ensure the safety of the participants.
- Only tags distributed by the Department for use in the Learn to Bear Hunt Program are authorized for use. Tags transferred to youth through the license transfer system may not to be used for the Learn to Bear Hunt Program.
- It is encouraged that LTBH programs are in conjunction with a partner conservation organization. Using this approach increases the capacity of the program to hold more hunts, aids in providing the additional resources for a LTBH program, creates relationships between the participant, the DNR and the

organization, and contributes to the future vitality of conservation organizations that are critical to future conservation efforts in the state.

- All LTBH program participants and mentors shall comply with all hunting regulations associated with bear hunting and the LTBH program.
- The hunt portion of the program should not take place prior to the third weekend in August.

### **Class B Learn to Bear Hunt Program**

- The Class B LTBH program is the same as the Class A program, with the exception that a bear is not harvested.
- The Class B program allows for a novice hunter to participate with a LTBH using dogs or observing a bait station.
- The Class B LTBH program provides for a waiver of the Class B Bear License for the novice participant.
- All aspects of these programs are planned, organized and held locally. There is no central selection process of participants or mentors for Class B LTBH programs.
- The following elements apply to a Class B LTBH Program:
  - Mentors must have a background suitable for being a mentor.
  - There must be a training day associated with the event that follows the Class A training day lesson plan, with the exception that a firearms session is not mandatory.
- Class B participants are eligible to apply for future Class A LTBH events.

*Disclaimer:* This document is intended solely as guidance and does not contain any mandatory requirements except where requirements found in statute or administrative rule are referenced. This guidance does not establish or affect legal rights or obligations and is not finally determinative of any of the issues addressed. This guidance does not create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the State of Wisconsin or the Department of Natural Resources. Any regulatory decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources in any matter addressed by this guidance will be made by applying the governing statutes and administrative rules to the relevant facts.

