

There is little that I can add to the above. I am sure that every state that approaches this subject with a voluntary plan has similar experiences and problems. The success or failure will depend on the attitude, interest, ability and (since much of the instruction is conducted at night, without overtime pay, in Missouri at least) the dedication of the personnel assigned to the project. We feel that our conservation agents, considering their over-all work load, have done an outstanding job.

Hunter Safety may well be one of the most important fields of endeavor in the next few months or years because of the demands for rigid gun controls. Every time a firearms accident occurs, someone wants to pass another law. However, this is not the reason for such training. If we have prevented one serious injury or saved one life through our efforts, then we have been successful regardless of how good or how bad the over-all program may appear on paper.

We would certainly like to express our appreciation and thanks to the NRA and especially to Mr. Mate for the cooperation, understanding and assistance given us through the first ten years of our efforts in the Hunter Safety field.

If you have questions about our program, I will be happy to attempt to answer them.

HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION

*By Cliff Morrow Director of Hunting and Conservation
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Of all the challenges facing conservationists today none are greater than the challenge of developing a line of communication which will arouse the public from an apathetic unconcern for the natural world in which they live to an active role in the preservation and wise use of their environment. If words would do the job this would be an entirely different world. Streams would flow pure and unspoiled, forests and farm lands would be in a state of unparalleled production of items of commerce and wildlife. Conservationists of every denomination could concentrate on discovering, developing, safe guarding, producing and administrating in their chosen field assured that their efforts would accomplish their aims.

Unfortunately words alone, regardless of how well used, will not do the job. What we write or speak is heeded only by those who wish to listen, who are already convinced and are seeking reinforcement of their views. This convention is an excellent example of our closed circuit propaganda mill. On the rare occasion the "word" does leave the pristine society of true believers in the holy words of conservation, ecology, ethology, wildlife management, pollution abatement and all the rest, it falls on the unhearing ears of an adult society whose attitudes have been formed, thoughts crystallized and goals established. What pliability remains is constantly battered by the sights and sounds of an advertising industry which shrewdly exploits every media for attention in search of the almighty dollar. In this arena the conservationist is just another huckster, his ideals and goals maybe lofty but his aims by no means grant him special compensation for public attention.

Lets change the approach and escape this treadmill and see what can be done to reach an audience which will listen and develop a means of communication which is understood. The audience we seek is the youth of the country and the means of communication is involvement. Sight and hearing as learning senses serve as introducers, only the lesson is retained through the exercise of doing. How often when a youngster is introduced to a new object he says "show me" and reaches out his hands? This simply is involvement. Hunter Safety Training is an excellent tool to begin the involvement of youth in conservation activities. Frequently we're inclined to place all our emphasis on the mechanical techniques of gun handling and safety precautions. As a matter of fact the four hours covered in the basic hunter safety course is barely adequate as an introduction to the "How" of hunting. To stop at this stage is a disservice to the student whose appetite has been whetted with the meat of the meal no where in sight.

To put a youngster in the field with only the knowledge of how to safely handle a gun makes no more sense than permitting a teenager to drive a car without common sense, knowledge of traffic laws, rules of the road and everyday courtesy. Still to come is the main course of what to hunt or not to hunt and why.

We know from studies of the Uniform Hunter Casualty Report that hunter safety training requires added emphasis in gun handling and practical training to recognize unsafe hunting situations. Nearly two-thirds of all hunting accidents result either from a lack of familiarity with the gun or the hunting field.

What better way is there to develop both a safe hunter and a dedicated and conscientious conservationist than to teach hunter safety in the field? Here in a natural setting is the opportunity to place the whole conservation objective firmly in youngsters hands. Here is the opportunity to let young curiosity examine the hunting ethic from all angles. Here is the opportunity to pass on an appreciation of the outdoors to the next generation.

This is the real value of hunter safety training to conservation education. This is the opportunity to step outside of the circle of the convinced and carry a missionary message of conservation into a group that is eagerly awaiting its content. Hunter Safety Training is the first step to relating youngsters to the place hunting holds in game management, the place game management holds in conservation and the place conservation holds in Ecology. This then is the beginning. This in the vernacular of today is the opportunity to tell it as it really is.

HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING A REVIEW OF METHODS AND PROGRESS

*By Warren L. Cheek, Director
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Formal Hunter Safety training has been done for nineteen years and it is even more important now than it was when the program began. It's important to the NRA and certainly to each of us interested in the sport of hunting. It has been a significant factor in the reduction of injuries and loss of life. It has helped to reduce vandalism and property damage and has also helped to improve good sportsmanship and the relationship between hunter and landowner.

We are very fortunate in this country to have available to us so many hunting privileges. Many other countries have restrictions which make it almost impossible to participate in the sport. Let me read you some present day requirements for a hunter:

The minimum age to qualify for a hunting license is 18 and the young hunter must successfully complete a six month course on hunting laws, customs, study and identification of game and non-game species, and some fundamentals of game management. Completing this, the new hunter is examined by a board of qualified hunters. If he passes his examination, the young hunter is entitled to purchase his license — \$12 — but cannot go afield until he has also purchased hunting insurance — \$35,000 personal liability, \$3,500 property liability. Now, finally is the hunter on his own? No, first he must secure permission to hunt on the land, hire a guide and look to the guide for an O.K. to shoot whatever game is seen. These are the requirements in Bavaria, Germany.

I know that most of you realize how these requirements contrast to those in this country where the privilege of public hunting has developed so differently.

The NRA became involved in Hunter Safety in 1949. The State Legislature in New York passed a law which required all potential hunters under 16 years of age who had not hunted in a previous year to attend a course in safe gun handling. The