

Wildlife Management Associations & Youth Hunting

Passing on the Hunting Heritage



Where Can I Find More Information?

To learn more about wildlife management associations (co-ops), contact your local biologist or visit the TPWD Web site at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landowner/

For more information on the Texas Youth Hunting Program, call (800) 460-5494, or visit <http://texasyouthhunting.com>

Hunter education is required of all Texas hunters born on or after Sept. 2, 1971. For course information, please visit the TPWD Web site at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntered/ or call (800) 792-1112 ext. 62.



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Wildlife Management Associations are Key in Providing Youth with Hunting Opportunities

Wildlife management associations, or co-ops, play an important role in conserving wildlife habitat and reversing the adverse effects of habitat fragmentation. These landowner-driven cooperatives also play an increasingly important role in providing youth hunting opportunities and in passing on the heritage of hunting and wildlife management to the next generation.

Wildlife management associations in Texas vary widely in game abundance, management focus and land ownership patterns. Some consist of small acreage landowners working together to achieve common goals, such as controlling hunting pressure or managing nongame wildlife. Others encompass larger individual acreages with landowners cooperating in a management program designed to produce higher quality deer.

Regardless of the size of the individual tracts, landowners who work together can provide quality hunting experiences for youth.

That's where the Texas Youth Hunting Program can help. The co-op provides a place to hunt and TYHP volunteers handle the logistics and ensure youth have a safe and educational experience.

It is important to pass down the hunting heritage we value in Texas. Youth hunting teaches young people about the outdoors and helps them understand the importance of conserving wildlife and habitat.

Partnering with TYHP to share hunting with the next generation helps keep youth involved in the outdoors.

Pass on the hunting heritage.



Partnerships Make it Easy to Pass on the Hunting Heritage

Winner of the 2001 Lone Star Land Steward Award in the Co-op Category, the **Harveys Creek Wildlife Management Association**, located in Colorado County, has been working with the Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) for several years. All hunters, guides and parents stay at one location and hunt on several ranches, allowing landowners to share in providing the harvest and the hospitality.

Interested young hunters are selected from the TYHP membership and from local schools with agriculture or natural resource programs. Youth who have not had the opportunity to hunt are given first preference. These hunts provide opportunities for young hunters and their parents to learn about wildlife management and habitat conservation while contributing to the harvest goals of landowners in the association.

Goliad County Wildlife Management Association, winner of the 2000 Lone Star Land Steward Award, consists of 166 members managing 87,513 acres. The association sponsors youth hunts for low income families, offering the opportunity for kids to experience the outdoors and gain an understanding of nature that will stay with them into adulthood.

Cave Creek Wildlife Management Association, winners of the 2005 Lone Star Land Steward Award, organize the largest TYHP youth hunt of the year. The annual Cave Creek SuperHunt provides opportunities for about 50 youth to experience the outdoors and enjoy some great hunting in one super weekend.

Partnering with the Austin Woods and Waters Club and the TYHP, association members provide the places to hunt and help cook, guide, teach and mentor the young people involved.

Cave Creek landowners are working together to control deer numbers and improve the quality of animals harvested. Youth hunting helps landowners manage their deer and exotics while providing hunting opportunities for youth who might otherwise not have them.

As a result of the success achieved by neighboring Cave Creek, the **Cherry Spring Wildlife Management Association**, also a Lone Star Land Steward winner (2007), has been conducting youth hunts since 2005. These associations in Gillespie County have found youth hunting to be extremely rewarding for their members and has assisted in bringing people together in a common effort.



Oakridge Ranch Wildlife Management Association has been following a plan to improve the quality of wildlife habitat for over seven years. The association's aggressive land management program helped them win the 2004 Lone Star Land Steward Award.

Many of the landowners in the association are not hunters, so youth hunting is a good way to harvest excess animals while providing outdoor experiences for youngsters. The association partnered with the Christian Outdoor Alliance (COA) to take kids between the ages of eight and 15 hunting. Besides providing the places to hunt, association members helped prepare lunch and provide transportation to and from hunt locations.



While some co-ops manage and run their own youth hunts, others such as Cave Creek have partnered with the TYHP and local sportsman clubs to help with organization, labor, insurance and other logistics required for a successful youth hunt.

All a co-op needs to do is provide the places to hunt. Volunteers of TYHP and partner organizations will do the rest.

Lodges and fancy facilities are not needed; in fact, modest accommodations or a place to camp is all that is required. The TYHP provides liability insurance and well-trained Huntmaster volunteers to run a safe, mentored and educational youth hunt.

The TYHP trains hundreds of volunteers to:

- Become Huntmasters capable of organizing, coordinating and managing youth hunts
- Oversee firearms instruction and supervise ranges
- Conduct hunter safety skills trails and other outdoor training
- Serve as guides and mentors
- Provide medical expertise
- Cook

If desired, the TYHP can also provide the training to co-ops and other organizations to start their own youth hunting programs.