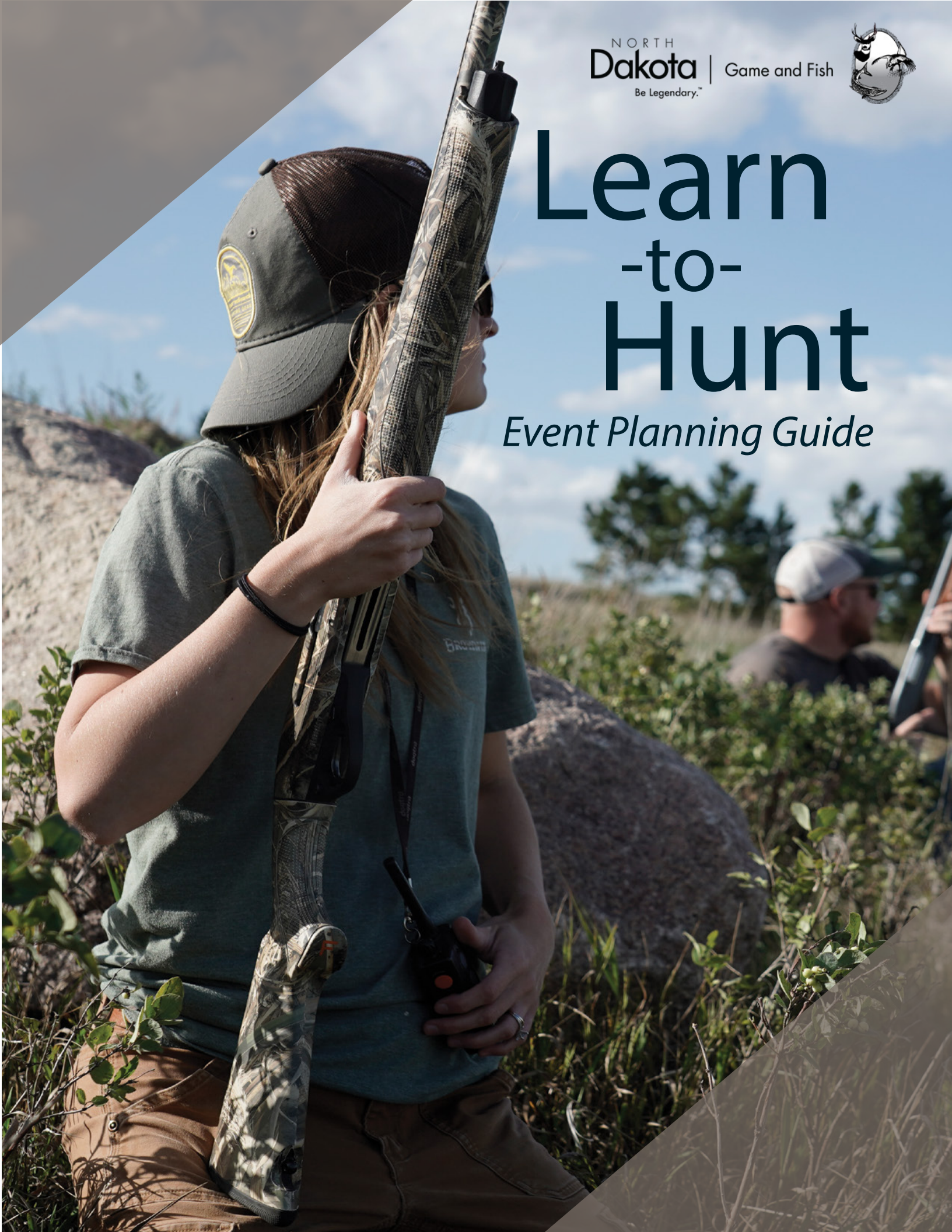




# Learn -to- Hunt

*Event Planning Guide*





## North Dakota Game and Fish Department mission

The mission of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is to protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive use.

## North Dakota Game and Fish Department contacts

**Marty Egeland** | Education Section Supervisor | 701.328.6612

**Cayla Bendel** | R3 Coordinator | 701.220.3461

**Brian Schaffer** | Hunter Education Supervisor | 701.328.6312

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[Contact us form](#)



# Introduction

North Dakota is a beautiful and bountiful state for hunters and anglers, and our strong outdoor heritage is not by accident. Hunting in this country was built upon the principle that wildlife is a public resource owned by all, regulated by law, managed by science and funded by those – hunters and anglers – who hold the resource dearest.

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 – known as the Pittman-Robertson Act – placed an 11% excise tax on firearms and ammunition and allocated those funds to wildlife habitat restoration, improvements and research. The act was shortly followed by a mirrored effort for fisheries management – the Dingell-Johnson Act. Around the same time, state wildlife agencies were formed to carry out these tasks, primarily funded through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, including our very own North Dakota Game and Fish Department founded in 1930.

North Dakota has received millions of dollars from the Pittman-Robertson Act alone, these dollars are directed toward state-owned or managed wildlife management areas, habitat restoration projects, public shooting ranges, our beloved and strong Private Land Open To Sportsmen program, and to fish stocking and boat ramps from Dingell-Johnson dollars.

When a grassland habitat restoration project is complete, it's not just upland game birds that benefit, so do songbirds, pollinators and the adjacent water and soil to name a few.

Thus, hunters, anglers and shooting sport participants primarily fund wildlife conservation in this country, but all those activities are experiencing declines, resulting in a worrisome future for the places and lifestyle we treasure. From 2011-16, we lost 2.2 million hunters nationwide amidst population increases. Here in North Dakota, we were one of four states that did not experience per capita hunting license decreases during that time. However, almost all our hunting and fishing license sales reflect declines in people ages 17-44. Thus, we may not be seeing declines yet, but they're coming if we don't change the tides.

Furthermore, if we want secured advocacy for the things we care about – wildlife conservation, public land access, soil health, this list goes on – we need people on our side from all walks of life. We need natural resource issues to transcend political parties, genders, races and ages. That's why the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is joining the growing effort across the country devoted to R3 – recruiting, retaining and reactivating the next generation of license-buying hunters, anglers and informed conservationists to carry on our legacy.

Join us in our effort by hosting a learn-to-hunt event and use this guide as a resource to planning and implementing a safe, fun and effective event.

# Event Planning

## Questions to consider

- What are your desired outcomes?*
- Who is your target audience?*
- What species are you going to pursue?*
- Where will you hold the event?*
- What time of year is the hunting season of your targeted species?*
- Will participants need to apply for a lottery or obtain a tag?*
- How many volunteers do you have?*
- What safety precautions will you take on and before event day?*
- How will you pay for your event?*
- Do your volunteers have experience in that type of hunting?*
- What gear will participants need to have or you provide?*
- How easy is it for participants to repeat this experience on their own after your event?*

## North Dakota Game and Fish Department priorities

Below are components of the NDGF R3 Strategic Plan that are priorities. Events which implement these will be ranked more favorably in any funding decisions.

- » **NDGF Partner Event Registration:** Events which promote or mandate the use of our partner event registration to better track participants license purchasing behavior long-term.
- » **Underutilized resources:** Increase participation in our identified underutilized resources including; squirrel, rabbit, sharp-tailed grouse, dove, snow goose and fall turkey hunting and furbearer trapping.
- » **North American model:** Messaging and content on wildlife conservation funding and habitat advocacy.
- » **Quality > Quantity:** A focus on events which help create new, self-sustaining license-buyers by providing more than just a trial experience, even if that limits the capacity for participants.
- » **Target audiences:** Engagement with the Department's target audiences including, but not limited to, apprentice license holders, high school clay target league athletes, hunter education graduates, locavores, urban families, adult women, young adults (ages 16-29), nonconsumptive outdoor recreationists and stationed military personnel.
- » **Meat provision:** Promotional or educational content on hunting to obtain locally sourced meat.
- » **ORAM:** Events or series of events designed to fill a need in the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model ([ORAM](#)) and better support an individual's path to becoming a self-sustaining license buyer.
- » **Follow-up:** Events with multiple components, follow up opportunities, or some other form of continuing education that better support an individual's path to becoming a self-sustaining license buyer.



## Before the event

- » **Secure funding:** Grant applications, donations, fundraisers, sponsors etc. (NOTE: [NDGF's Encouraging Tomorrow's Hunters Grant](#) application deadline is the end of April for all events planned for that calendar year).
- » **NDGF Partner Event Registration:** Contact Cayla Bendel, NDGF R3 Coordinator, [cbendel@nd.gov](mailto:cbendel@nd.gov) to setup event registration.
- » **Safety precautions:** Predetermine what safety measures are needed and plan accordingly. This may include firearm storage and transportation, weather-related arrangements, providing protective equipment, requiring hunter safety certification, having age restrictions, limiting the number of participants doing a certain activity at once, etc.
- » **Event logistics:** Source a location for the event and ensure it has the capacity to effectively conduct all components of the event. Be sure to consider safe shooting spaces, bathroom facilities, chairs, tables, AV equipment (e.g. if giving a presentation), food and beverage preparation and service, weather protection and appropriate sleeping accommodations if necessary.
- » **Hunting logistics:** We strongly encourage keeping active participants in small groups for the actual hunting, with no more than six people hunting in a group/area including participants, mentors, dog handlers, photographers, etc. This may require sourcing multiple hunting areas or rotating stations.
- » **Insurance coverage:** Line up the necessary liability coverage for your event.
- » **Solicit volunteers:** This could include mentors, dog handlers, firearm instructors, cooks, photographers and other general volunteers. The number of volunteers needed may depend on the number of participants or vice versa.



## Before the event (continued)

- » **Event promotion:** This may include social media, NDGF event calendar, television stations, direct emails, local radio advertisements, flyers, targeted messaging to desired audiences, community calendars, promotion at prior related event and local newsletters.
- » **Hunter Education:** If needed for your event, be sure to allow time or offer opportunities for participants to complete hunter education or utilize their one-time [apprentice license](#).
- » **Pre and post survey:** If desired, develop pre and post surveys that effectively measure changes in participants knowledge or opinions before and after your event.
- » **Volunteer training:** Ensure your volunteers have the training, tools and direction needed to safely and effectively help with your event. Remind them this is not a guided hunt and success is not the goal, rather safety, education and a fun day spent outdoors.



## Develop event agenda

Below are components of the event we strongly recommend incorporating. *See sample events for agenda layouts.*

- » **Sign in:** Gather a list of participants, sign waivers (including photography permission), check licenses, complete NDGF partner event registration, distribute protective gear and other resources.
- » **Welcome:** Introduce all volunteers and participants. Name tags may be beneficial to help personalize the experience for participants. E.g. "Great shot Jessie."
- » **Safety:** Conduct a safety briefing so that all volunteers or participants are aware of the rules for the day. This should include the 10 commandments of firearms safety [ACHUMSPORT](#) but may also include rules such as no taking shots behind you, mentors retaining and distributing ammunition and pre-determined safety commands.
- » **Logistics and expectations:** Clearly layout logistics and expectations for the day, this could include information about facilities, an agenda, goals for the event and taking any remaining questions.
- » **Pre survey:** Distribute/conduct pre-surveys if desired.
- » **Introduction to your organization:** You have an active audience, take a few moments to talk about your organization, why you are so passionate and volunteer your time, why you are hosting this event and how participants can be involved.



## Develop event agenda (continued)

- » **Conservation education:** Briefly cover the role hunters play in wildlife conservation and how your organization fits into this model. Have volunteers talk about why they hunt.  
Resources:
  - [NPR's "Conservation's Latest Problem"](#) video
  - [Donnie Vincent's "Who We Are"](#) video
  - ["North American Model of Wildlife Conservation"](#) video
- » **Mock hunt or safety demonstration:** Put safety rules into action and walk through a hypothetical field scenario. This could include practicing yelling hen or rooster over a fake dog, taping off shooting zones, sitting up in a layout blind or crossing a fence safely.
- » **The hunt:** Keep active field participants in small groups to ensure safety and a quality experience. Follow all safety rules and protocol established, take photos and have fun. The goal should be for participants to have a quality experience in the North Dakota outdoors and learn how to repeat this on their own whether they harvest any game or not.
- » **Additional activities:** To round out your event, contribute to their understanding of hunting, or to fill time during a rotation consider adding any or all of the following:
  - Wild game processing: clean birds/game at the event.
  - Wild game cooking: demonstrate a way to cook game, serve wild game or share recipes.
  - Share stories: provide time for participants to share their experience on the hunt.
  - Firearm cleaning/maintenance: allow time to talk about properly cleaning firearms after use.
  - Wildlife conservation: discuss and emphasize the importance of wildlife habitat conservation.
  - Sourcing land to hunt: discuss tools and resources for finding places to hunt. Talk about sportsman/landowner relations and consider acting out an "asking permission" scenario.



## Day-of check list

- Required licenses/stamps
- NDGFD partner event registration
- Firearms
- Ammunition
- Insurance
- Ear and eye protection
- Waivers
- Sign-in sheet
- Regulation books
- Other resource materials
- Other gear: hats, vests, extra layers
- Bathroom facilities
- Sunscreen/bug spray
- Cooler(s)
- Water
- Food and other beverages
- Camera
- Knives
- Clorox wipes
- Ziplock bags





## After the event

- » **Thank you:** Send thank you cards and/or gifts to all staff, volunteers, hosts and sponsors involved in the event.
- » **Participant follow-up:** This could be the most important part of the event to ensure participants continue down the [ORAM](#) pathway. This could include any of the below:
  - Post survey: Conduct a post-survey to improve future events and measure changes in participants from pre-survey.
  - Photos: Participants love getting photos of themselves from the event. When they share those photos with others, it provides extra exposure for your organization, too.
  - Next opportunity: Ideally, you would have another opportunity already lined up for participants to stay engaged in hunting or with your organization. This could be another learn-to-hunt event, a simple follow-up event such as a wild game potluck, gear shopping trip, habitat project or a meeting by a local club they can get involved with.
- » **Encouraging Tomorrow's Hunters Grant reimbursement:** Submit all receipts and required materials for Encouraging Tomorrow's Hunter's Grant to Cayla Bendel, NDGF R3 Coordinator, [cbendel@nd.gov](mailto:cbendel@nd.gov) by December 31 of that calendar year.



# Sample Events

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## Sample Event #1: Learn-to-dove hunt

**Target audience:** Urban families.

**Goal participant numbers:** Three families of two to five members.

**Volunteers needed:** Eight to ten (one to two with each family and extra volunteers to help with other activities).

**Date:** First weekend in September.

**Location:** Local gun club, then secure three private land field edges/tree rows.

**Goals:** Teach three families basic wingshooting principles and dove hunting strategy while motivating them to spend time outside together sourcing wild game meat.

**Promotion:** Facebook event with targeted boosting to urban areas, flyers at local co-op, wellness and family centers, NDGF event calendar and reaching out to local high school trap team coach.

### **Timeline:**

March – Apply for Encouraging Tomorrow’s Hunters Grant.

May – Initial planning meeting, consider working with local hunter education instructor to schedule a private class for August.

June – Secure location and hunting spots, begin promotion.

July – Continue promotion, solicit sponsors and secure event insurance.

August – Secure participants, send event details, work with participants to complete hunter education or purchase apprentice license, purchase materials, host volunteer training meeting.

September – Host event and follow-up.

October – Follow-up meeting.





## Sample Agenda

Saturday, September 4

9 a.m. | Sign in at gun club, check licenses, distribute materials including pre-survey.

9:15 a.m. | Welcome and introductions.

9:30 a.m. | Basic firearm safety refresher, fit and provide shotguns.

10:00 a.m. | Stations one family at a time (30 minutes each).

- 1) Wing-shooting basics and practice.
- 2) Wildlife conservation, your organization and why hunt.
- 3) Mock hunt scenario with fake firearms.

11:30 a.m. | Lunch – share stories of hunting.

12 p.m. | Hunting logistics and safety meeting.

12:30 p.m. | Depart to hunting locations.

1 p.m. | Dove hunt.

4 p.m. | Return to gun club, bird cleaning demonstration, share stories, grill dove poppers (procure some dove meat prior to hunt).

5 p.m. | Wrap-up, questions, post-surveys, invite all families to your organization's October meeting to share their experience with the rest of the group and offer continued support.



## Sample Event #2: Women's fall turkey hunt

**Target audience:** Adult women.

**Goal participant numbers:** Six.

**Volunteers needed:** Eight to ten (one to two with each woman, and a few extra to help with other activities).

**Date:** October 6 and October 22-24.

**Location:** Local gun club and then hunting lodge/motel. Reach out to local NDGF staff to get in touch with landowner turkey complaints and scout public land.

**Goals:** Teach six women about wildlife conservation and management and the connections between hunting and food.

**Promotion:** Facebook event with targeted boosting to women, flyers at local co-op, wellness centers, and coffee shops, NDGF event calendar, reach out to local women's groups.

### **Timeline:**

March – Apply for Encouraging Tomorrow's Hunters Grant.

June– Initial planning meeting.

July – Secure location, lodging reservations and hunting spots/areas, begin promotion.

Early-August – Continue promotion, solicit sponsors and secure event insurance.

Mid-August - Secure participants, send event details, work with participants to purchase licenses and apply for fall turkey lottery (Deadline Sept. 1).

September – Organize lodging/room assignments, scout, purchase materials, host volunteer training meeting.

Early-mid October – host weeknight shooting instruction.

October– host event and follow-up.

December – Social event.





## Sample Agenda

Wednesday, October 6

5:30 p.m. | Sign in at local gun club, distribute materials including pre-survey.

5:45 p.m. | Welcome and introductions.

6 p.m. | Basic firearm safety refresher, fit and provide shotguns.

6:30 p.m. | Pattern shotguns and practice shooting scenarios.

7:30 p.m. | Discuss weekend event logistics and wrap-up.

Friday, October 22

7 p.m. | Sign in, check-in to rooms, check licenses/tags, distribute other materials.

8 p.m. | Social time, consider structured discussion topics (e.g. a cup with questions like "what are you most nervous about?")

9 p.m. | Finalize morning plans.

Saturday, October 23

7 a.m. | Breakfast and safety briefing.

8 a.m. | Depart to hunting locations.

12 p.m. | Lunch, stories, bird processing and down time.

2 p.m. | Depart to hunting locations.

7 p.m. | Dinner (wild game dishes brought by volunteers) and bird processing.

8 p.m. | Stories from the day, discuss wildlife conservation and your organization's mission.

Sunday, October 24

7 a.m. | Breakfast for those still hunting.

8 a.m. | Hunters depart and any successful hunters can have down time, join another group, or do feather craft (picture frames, earrings, pelts, etc.)

10 a.m. | Hunters return for wrap-up, remaining bird processing, post-surveys and promote December social event.

*\*Encourage unsuccessful participants to continue to hunt throughout the season or offer follow-up mentor opportunities if available/willing.*

Friday, December 17

7 p.m. | Pre-planned social event to allow women to reconnect, share recipes or other stories from the season.

The NDGFD receives Federal financial assistance from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Coast Guard. In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the NDGFD joins the US Department of the Interior and its Bureaus and the US Department of Homeland Security in prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex (in education programs or activities) and also religion. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or you desire further information, please write to: ND Game and Fish Department, Attn: Chief of Administrative Services, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095 or to: Office of Civil Rights, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240. The TTY/TDD (Relay ND) number for the hearing or speech impaired is 1-800-366-6888.

