



Buckeye Firearms Association

www.BuckeyeFirearms.org

15 West Winter Street
Delaware, Ohio 43015

Mobility Impaired Hunting Access

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for accepting our written testimony supporting the amendment to improve mobility impaired/handicapped hunting access in Ohio.

I authored the resolution, copy attached, for the League of Ohio Sportsmen's February 2007 convention. The resolution was approved by the Board of Directors of the Greene County Fish and Game Association prior to being presented to the League. The resolution was adopted by the League of Ohio Sportsmen at the convention.

Since that time, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife has worked to develop the plan and administrative guidelines needed to implement the mobility impaired access plan. The approach is to designate specific areas within two existing wildlife areas in each of the five districts. The plan is very close to reality. The amendment for consideration is the final piece of the puzzle. This amendment will allow what was once only a dream to take shape in reality for the mobility impaired hunters of Ohio.

I am not certain of the number of mobility impaired hunters in Ohio. I do know that the special hunts offered by several organizations in cooperation with the Division of Wildlife are very popular. One program that supports these hunts is the National Wild Turkey Federation Wheelin' Sportsmen. The available openings fill very quickly. The hunts are limited in location, the number of mobility impaired hunters that can be accepted and in the dates. These issues prevent many mobility impaired hunters from participating. The creation of the special access areas is the next logical step in the process. Please see the attached Wheelin' Sportsmen press release about their grants and efforts to improve some access in Wayne National Forest in Ohio. Their work shows not only the commitment but also the need for greater access.

The ODNR Division of Wildlife is a national leader in promoting hunting opportunities. The Division, along with support from the Ohio General Assembly and the Ohio Wildlife Council, was among the first in the nation to offer special early season hunting opportunities for youth plus the reduced price youth hunting and trapping licenses. Just two years ago, Ohio was the second state in the nation to pass the Apprentice Hunting License (126th General Assembly HB 296) as part of the national Families Afield efforts. Ohio can remain a leader in the outdoors by offering improved access for mobility impaired hunters.

I hope that the Ohio General Assembly will once again support the ODNR Division of Wildlife, the sportsmen and women of Ohio and especially the mobility impaired sportsmen by passing this amendment as introduced.

Respectively submitted,

Larry S. Moore
Buckeye Firearms Volunteer/Regional Leader

LEAGUE OF OHIO SPORTSMEN
2007 ANNUAL CONVENTION

RESOLUTION

IMPROVE HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Whereas, there is an increasing population of handicapped and physically impaired individuals with the desire to hunt, and

Whereas, current programs offered by sportsmen organizations are limited in size, scope, location and dates, and

Whereas, these programs quickly filled to capacity demonstrating the popularity for hunting among the physically impaired population, and

Whereas, opportunities to for the physically impaired to hunt during regular hunting seasons are even more limited, and

Whereas, providing the opportunity for the handicapped to hunt with their friends in their area of the state is desired, therefore be it

Resolved, that the League of Ohio Sportsmen does support and request that the Ohio Division of Wildlife activity pursue options to offer increased hunting opportunities for physically impaired individuals.

Respectively submitted,

Larry S. Moore
Greene County Fish & Game Association
1137 Huron Trail
Jamestown, OH 45335
937-572-1633 cell

In conjunction with my friend and handicapped sportsman,
Bob Harsanje
Oregon, OH

National Wild Turkey Federation Press Release
Source: National Wild Turkey Wheelin' Sportsmen Press Room
(www.wheelinsportsmen.org/wheelin/pressroom.html)

New NWTF Grant Program Helps Sportsmen with Disabilities 05/31/2007
PEDRO, Ohio

Sportsmen with disabilities will have more access to the outdoors thanks to the National Wild Turkey Federation's Wheelin' Sportsmen new matching grants program.

The first grant awarded is for the construction of a new barrier-free archery trail and range in the Ironton District of Wayne National Forest in southern Ohio. The grant of more than \$34,000 will help construct two boardwalks and purchase signs, benches and gravel. Wheelin' Sportsmen has previously partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to hold numerous events in Wayne National Forest with great success.

"Even if people aren't into archery, they can still enjoy the trail," said Gloria Chrismer, District Ranger. "This grant gives people the chance to get outside who otherwise might not be able to. We really appreciate the work of Wheelin' Sportsmen. It's great to have the support of organizations like the National Wild Turkey Federation."

Through the program, projects benefiting individuals with disabilities are eligible for funds through Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF. To be eligible, projects must provide individuals with disabilities opportunities to participate in and enjoy outdoor activities. In addition, they must promote education, good health, good character, sportsmanship, recreation, self-esteem and disability awareness.

"The Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF Matching Grants Program is a great way to help get people with disabilities outdoors," said Illana Burkhart, Wheelin Sportsmen assistant national coordinator. "We think it will encourage projects that provide access for everyone. We've had great success with events in Wayne National Forest, so to have our first project there made sense."

Organizations interested in applying for Wheelin' Sportsmen matching grants should contact Janice Presley at (803) 637-3106 or jpresley@nwtf.net.