

Winter 2018



Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association

Conservation Education

The Voice of Conservation Education in Alberta

Magazine



AHEIA's Mission is to Make Wildlife and Fish Part of the Value System of Every Albertan

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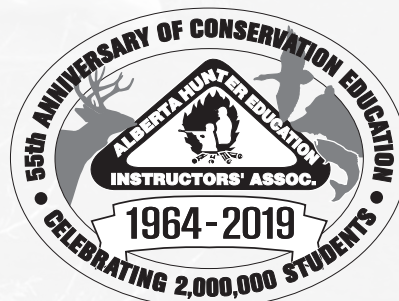


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Calgary, AB



Colin Fegan
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**All the very best for a
happy and healthy New Year
from the
Staff & Directors of AHEIA**



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Safety First!

No experience in the field is more important than the safety of the person you are mentoring, your safety and that of those around you.

You are creating life long memories and setting a standard for future performance.

Be Safe and accept nothing less!





President's Message

“ AHEIA's legacy of passing on Alberta's valuable resources of nature and wildlife ... is taken extremely seriously. ”

By Bob Gruszecki



Bob Gruszecki
President - AHEIA

Moving into our 55th Anniversary year, we approach the future of Conservation Education with perseverance and conviction, determined to further the important mission of making wildlife and fish part of the value system of every Albertan. It is due to the continued support of

our devoted volunteers and staff, along with our partners at Alberta Environment and Parks, that the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association remains a viable leader in Conservation Education programming. We extend our sincere thanks to all of those who have given their time and talent towards making our goals achievable.

It is interesting to note that on a per capita basis, over a 10-year average, the participation in hunting in every other jurisdiction is losing hunters, especially youth. However, Alberta is the only jurisdiction in North America that has shown an increase! This is a significant achievement indeed and is one of many achievements this past year.

Despite the continued economic downturn and uncertainty, we have not only maintained our extensive program delivery but are continuing to develop outstanding educational offerings. AHEIA's legacy of passing on Alberta's valuable resources of nature and wildlife to the next generation is taken extremely seriously. Our far-reaching vision is balanced with solid business practices and thorough business-style due diligence, which has served us well in the past and will continue to compliment our objectives in the years ahead.

In 2018 our association offered a multitude of programs in all areas of the province. Camps,

courses and seminars in the Calgary, Edmonton and Alford Lake Conservation Education Centres for Excellence continued to sell out quickly, emphasizing the great demand for additional programming in all centres. Requests from community groups and public service agencies looked to AHEIA to assist with skill development and training, so that they could effectively pass on the information to their members, cultivating more outdoor enthusiasts. This year we will once again train over 100,000 students. By the end of this year it is anticipated we will have graduated over 2.2 million students from our inventory of available programs.

At Alford Lake we made many upgrades to the infrastructure of the property which increased our ability to house more participants at camps and seminars. It was there that we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of AHEIA's Outdoor Women's Program, including special activities and festivities, adding to this extremely popular annual event. In total we served over 10,000 men, women and children at this facility. Similarly, at the Calgary and Edmonton Conservation Centres for Excellence, over \$100,000.00 in capital improvements were required, and the unexpected but necessary expenditures ensure safe and comfortable facilities for students and staff.

The Calgary Firearms Centre continued to see an increase in first-time and novice shooters, thanks in part to clinics and novice events as well as our Women's and Youth shooting leagues where dedicated volunteers coach skill development and sportsmanship in a safe and controlled environment. We hosted numerous registered and private shoots, along with an increasing number of private and corporate functions. Certification training such as Shotgun Coaching and Range Safety Officers was also offered at the facility and ongoing improvements to the grounds and trap and skeet fields ensured visitors of all levels and abilities an enjoyable visit.



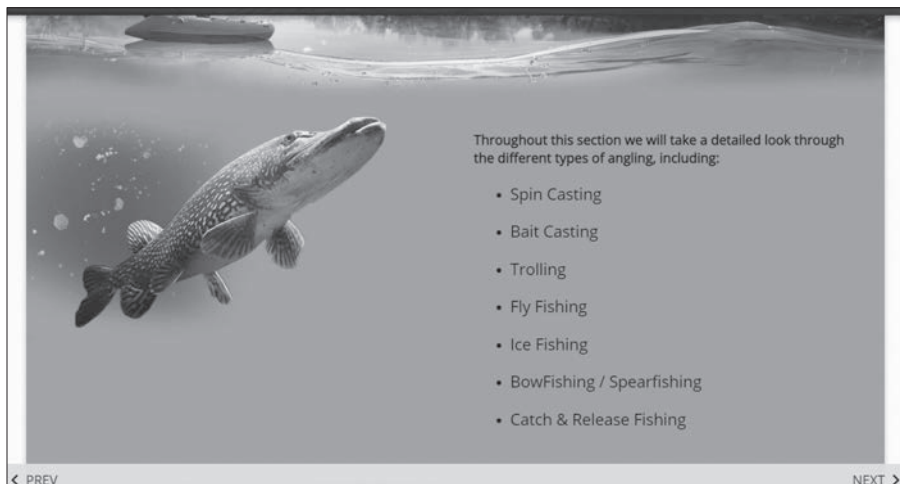
AHEIA's Canadian Firearms Safety Courses for Non-restricted and Restricted firearms use certified approximately 32,000 people in the safe and responsible use of firearms in Alberta. These safety-focused and legally mandated courses are provided on behalf of the Federal Department of Justice.

The National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) continues to be the fastest growing element of Conservation Education, being fully absorbed into many Alberta schools. Although the rural schools continue to be the strength of the program, inroads have been made in urban centres and increasingly the larger school districts are introducing this inclusive sport to their teachers with the support and training of our program delivery staff. We now have 1781 teachers delivering the program, reaching over 28,000 students in 401 schools across the province. As the success of the program continues to spread from district to district, these numbers will surely continue to rise.

Extensive effort was directed to further developing our home study programs in 2018. With growing numbers of Albertans looking to become educated and certified through the popular venue of online training, particularly the younger generations, enrollment numbers in our courses continued to climb. Our online Pleasure Craft Operator Training Course (PCOT) was approved by Transport Canada and launched through our website www.albertaboatsafety.com, allowing us to certify students across Canada. To compliment this online course, a new manual was designed and is available to all students taking the program. The Fishing Education Program was extensively overhauled and, endorsed by the both government and private sector groups, will be available in class and online in 2019. Heralded



Continued ➤



as the best of its kind, we are excited to see the far-reaching effect it will have on educating anglers and impact on sustaining the delicate fishery resource in the province. Adding to our "Essentials" series of courses, the Sheep Essentials training program was designed to assist sheep hunters in their understanding of how to manage the resource. Of course, by offering these electronic programs we are required to invest in updated delivery options and the development of new applications. This, coupled with increasing our social media presence and current development of new websites, keeps us not only technologically current but a leader in the delivery of this format of conservation education.

Putting learned skills into practice is an important part of the education process, and our Outdoor Bound Mentorship Program creates opportunities for novice hunters and experienced mentors to connect and create a greater understanding and respect for wildlife and wild places. Through sharing of wisdom and experience, coaching and role modeling, this approach perfectly complements our successful online and in classroom work. The benefits of this program are widely known, and the demand for mentors is ever increasing. It is our hope that, as graduates of the program gain experience and confidence, they assume the role of mentors and perpetuate the cycle of these important partnerships.

One of our key partners, Alberta Environment Protection, has once again worked with us to grow our programs. Clearly the support shown

to us by our Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks, Shannon Phillips, and our Premier Rachel Notley, is both encouraging and humbling. In recent correspondence received from our Premier, she stated: "I can think of no other organization in this province that has done more to promote an ethical and sustainable approach to wildlife conservation than the Alberta Hunting Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA). For more than 25 years, comprehensive educational programs have taught students to develop profound respect for the natural world. The overwhelming success of the AHEIA's programs is in no small part due to the passionate dedication of instructors and volunteers, who provide students with an excellent example to follow." I couldn't agree more and am very appreciative of the support we receive from the Alberta Government and the work our volunteers do!

In 2018 the struggling economy did not recover as anticipated, and the significant funding cuts, continued job losses and increasing cost of living resulted in charitable giving being a low priority for individuals and corporations. The competition for both financial support and volunteers is fierce, but the dedication and generosity of many who believe in our cause continues to propel us through these difficult times. I am very humbled and proud to be associated with a determined, skilled, hard-working and enterprising group of staff and volunteers; without your enduring faith and strength, this organization could not survive. Challenges aside, we look forward to the coming year with goals to broaden our scope of quality programming, improving our facilities and service the increased demand for conservation education. Public awareness is key to promoting safe and responsible use of our resources, and we will continue to focus on bringing our message to all Albertans.

Thank you to our volunteers, our staff and our supporters for all you do for the cause of Conservation Education. Your efforts, dedication and leadership are needed now more than ever! It continues to be an honour to work with you as together we make wildlife and fish part of the value system of all Albertans.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Gruszecki
President, AHEIA



Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association

Conservation Education Magazine

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Front Cover Photo:

Courtesy Don Kesler Nature Photography



JOIN US!

for an evening of
great food and camaraderie
with like-minded individuals
while helping
to raise funds for
Conservation
Education.

The Conservation Education W.I.S.E. Foundation and
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association are pleased to announce the

Sixth Annual Spring Fling Banquet

Thursday, June 6, 2019 • Silvermoon Banquets, 3223 Parsons Road (99 Street), Edmonton, Alberta

Tickets \$70.00 each or \$630.00 for a table of 10.

Silent Auction & Cocktails 5:00 pm • Deluxe Buffet Dinner 6:30 pm • Live Auction to follow • Casual Attire

For additional
information or to
purchase tickets
please contact:



Edmonton Conservation Education Centre for Excellence
#88, 4003 - 98 Street, Edmonton, AB T6E 6M8
Phone 780.466.6682 or Toll Free 1.866.282.4342
edmontoninfo@aheia.com

Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence
911 Sylvester Crescent SW, Calgary, AB T2W 0R8
Phone 403.252.8474 or Toll Free 1.866.852.4342
info@aheia.com

AHEIA's Mission is to Make Wildlife and Fish Part of the Value System of Every Albertan

Photo of owl courtesy of Don Kesler Nature Photography.



AHEIA Partners

AHEIA members are entitled to discounts at the following partner companies:

Mark's will give our members a 10% discount when they show their Mark's card in store. *Some exclusions apply.*

Camper's Village is also offering a 10% discount on regular priced merchandise when a valid AHEIA membership card is shown.

U-Haul Centres are offering savings to AHEIA members for hitch sales.

Temple Fork Outfitters Canada will give our members a 10% discount for online purchases.

CTOMS (Canadian Tactical & Operational Medical Solutions) offers a 60% discount to all AHEIA members for its online Police Officer Down (POD) Survival Course.

William Evans English Country Clothing is offering a 10% discount on regular priced items, in-store, to our members.

Please see our website for discount policies and conditions: www.aheia.com

If you know of a company willing to offer discounts to our valued members and the hardest working volunteers around, please let us know!





Edmonton Report

“ Your continued commitment is very much prized. Volunteers are the focus of everything we do. ”

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

Things in Edmonton are as busy as they have ever been. Instructors are ordering Hunter Education and Canadian Firearms Program materials at a constant rate. Resource kits are also in high demand. We would ask all instructors who borrow resource kits that they be returned in a timely manner. When they are not returned on time it can mean

that some instructors will not be able to get the kits they requested when they need them. We appreciate your co-operation.

The Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Show is coming to the Edmonton Expo Centre March 14-17, 2019. Once again, we will have a big

presence and we will need all the help we can get. We will need assistance with our raffle ticket sales, shooting and fishing simulators, pellet gun and archery trailers, plus we will also have our AHEIA store set up. We will also be holding the 2019 NASP Provincial Championships during the show. As you might imagine, it takes a lot of volunteers to make this event happen. If you are interested in lending a hand please contact me directly at len@aheia.com. I will be sending out emails requesting your assistance shortly.

Please mark June 6, 2019 on your calendar! That is the date of our sixth annual Spring Fling Banquet. For more information, or to purchase tickets, please call the Edmonton office at 780-466-6682 or toll free at 1-866-282-4342. See you there!

Keep an eye on our website for some upcoming workshops in the New Year. We will be holding the following: Range Officer Certification, Shot-

gun Coaching, Firearms Maintenance, Metallic Rifle Reloading and Fishing Lure Crafting. There will be additional workshops coming so check our website www.aheia.com frequently.

We continue to look for assistance with teaching and testing for our upcoming in-house firearms courses. If you are able to assist in any way it would be much appreciated indeed. If you are interested, please contact me directly and we can discuss the options available to you.

Thanks to everyone who continues to volunteer. Your continued commitment is very much prized. Volunteers are the focus of everything we do.

Until next time.

Take care and enjoy the Great Outdoors.



AHEIA - Alberta National Archery in the Schools Program 2019 Provincial Archery Tournament

March 14-16, 2019 • Edmonton Expo Centre

This tournament is open to all NASP schools for archers in grades 3 to 12. Schools can bring individual student archers or teams of 12-24 archers.

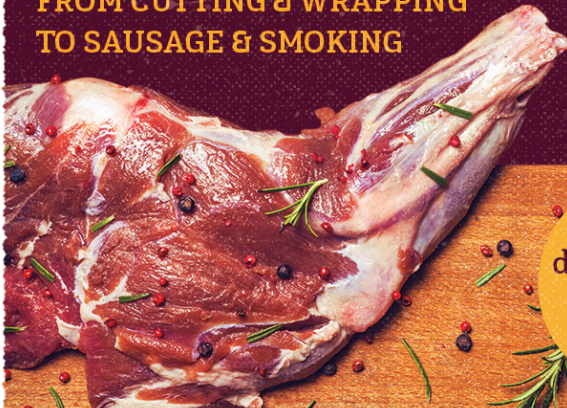
Cost: \$25.00/student

Awards will be presented to the top teams, as well as individual female and male archers.

There will also be lots of draw prizes and a ticket for all participants into the Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Show.

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**Hunter Education
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(Edmonton)**



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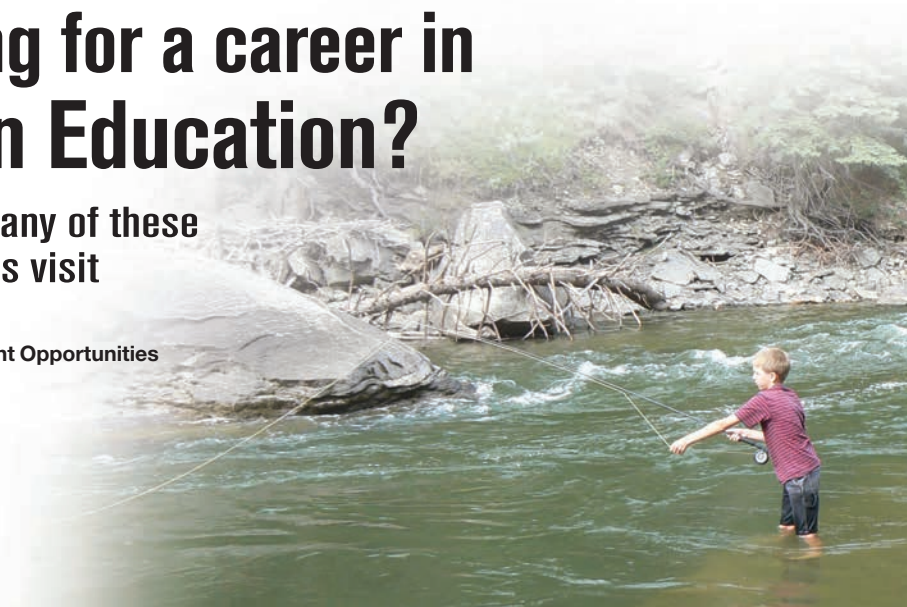


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Firearms Education Report

“ You, the instructors, are truly the embodiment of the Canadian Firearms Safety Program and its goal of safer communities. ”

By John Morrissey



John Morrissey
Firearms Education
Coordinator
AHEIA

All the best to all our volunteers and members in the New Year.

Hopefully your time spent with family and friends over the holiday season afforded the opportunity for a bit of a rest and recharge going into the New Year.

In my last report it was noted the numbers of students that completed the CFSC/CRFSC were down for 2018,

at 19,489 students certified. Since that last report another 7,916 students have successfully completed the program, and as of November 30, 2018 we have certified 27,405 students in the Province. For those who like statistics, the breakdown is 18,269 students certified in the CFSC and 8,205 students certified in the CRFSC. All instructors should give themselves a pat on the back for the continued support of the program, and the interaction it provides in your community. You, the instructors, are truly the embodiment of the Canadian Firearms Safety Program and its goal of safer communities.

As far as training new CFSC instructors, the CFO has maintained the policy to only train instructors to replace those instructors who leave the program, thus maintaining a workable number of instructors in the Province.

You may have noticed that the Course Reports have been updated to include a check box for “retest only”. The older course reports are still valid, and we will continue to send them out until our stock is exhausted.

At the time of this writing, Bill C-71 is in the Senate and, by all accounts from the media, it may pass in the early spring. Once passed by the Senate the Bill would have to receive Royal Assent before becoming law. As noted in my prior article, if this Bill should pass it will likely have little to no effect on the CFSC program.

A question was asked this fall as to why a club membership was not required at time of purchase of a restricted firearm? Here is the answer from the CFO office:

“Section 28(b) of the Firearms Act requires the CFO Office to confirm purpose on a transfer of a restricted firearm or prohibited handgun. As per 28(b) (i) & (ii) permitted purposes are for target shooting OR to form part of a gun collection. In

the past, for the ‘CFO to be satisfied’ we were obtaining proof of range/club memberships for individuals acquiring firearms for target shooting. January 1, 2018, the federal CFO’s agreed to eliminate the requirement of proof of membership at time of purchase. The question for purpose is still asked when a transfer is initiated but no membership proof is obtained (a collector’s application would need to be completed if the buyer indicated they were obtaining the firearm as part of a collection).”

Section 67(2) of the Firearms Act requires the CFO to determine if the licence holder (on renewal) is using the firearms he/she possesses for the purpose indicated in section 28. On renewals, licence holders in possession of restricted firearm or prohibited handguns must still provide a valid range/club membership or submit a collector’s application.

In closing, many thanks to the instructors and proctors who are making the program a continuing success. As always, should you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact me at the Calgary office or email john@acheia.com.



A Call For Your
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Membership: \$35.00/year

“... a reminder to all Albertans of our hunting heritage, and of the importance of securing a future for wildlife and wild places, especially within our province.”

Provincial Hunting Day

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

The fourth Saturday of every September has become a special date within Alberta. The Alberta Government declared this day each year to be Provincial Hunting Day. The first Provincial Hunting Day event was held in 2007. This year's Provincial Hunting Day occurred on September 22, 2018 and AHEIA hosted our event at our Alford Lake facility. It marked

our 11th annual event and is a reminder to all Albertans of our hunting heritage, and of the importance of securing a future for wildlife and wild places, especially within our province.

Once again the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association and Hunting for Tomorrow offered daylong events for those who wanted to ex-

plore the outdoors and expand their shooting and hunting knowledge on Provincial Hunting Day.

All sessions are hands-on and provide the opportunity to learn by doing. Our volunteers and staff provided expert instruction, making for a safe, fun and educational day. This yearly event is completely free and is fun for the whole family!

Response for this event has always been very strong. This year we had 124 participants registered to attend, as well as 30 volunteers and five staff members lending a hand. I would like to thank all those who helped make this event a huge success. Without your selfless dedication we would be hard pressed to deliver the quality programing that we have become known for.

This year the sessions we provided were: rimfire rifle shooting, centerfire rifle shooting, crossbow basics, introduction to shotgun shooting, archery basics, predator awareness, making paracord survival bracelets and making your own antler rattling bags.

Someone once said, "The best laid plans of mice and men." This all came into focus as the event approached. Mother Nature decided to become part of the event and she "blessed" us



with some typical Alberta weather. A storm front moved in with lots of snow, cold temperatures and blowing wind. There were winter advisory reports and road conditions were poor. That being said, there were 45 participants who braved everything to attend. It seemed that Mother Nature was impressed by the dedication of the attendees and volunteers so she backed off on the weather. The snow stopped and the wind died off, but it was still fairly cold.

Those that chose to come out had a great time and enjoyed the complimentary lunch. Especially the hot beverages. Thanks to all of you!

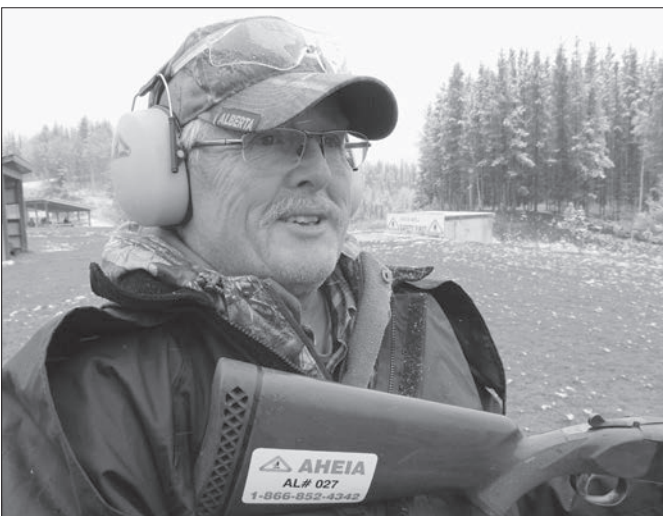


Mark your calendars
for the
**12th Annual
Provincial
Hunting Day**
September 21, 2019





“ All sessions are hands-on and provide the opportunity to learn by doing. Our volunteers and staff provided expert instruction making for a safe, fun and educational day. ”



SURVIVAL IS IN OUR CROSSHAIRS



CON CAPIT

DID YOU KNOW:

- that it takes an annual operating budget of approximately \$4.3 million to deliver all facets of Conservation Education to approximately 100,000 Albertans annually?
- that every cent of every dollar that is donated goes into Conservation Education program delivery?
- that the annual printing budget of AHEIA for all program areas, including manuals, tests, certificates, etc. represents in excess of \$400,000?
- the annual premiums to secure liability insurance of \$10,000,000 and all other necessary insurance for equipment, facilities and vehicles for AHEIA and every instructor and participant exceeds \$150,000.
- the annual cost of correspondence to members of AHEIA is approximately \$150,000.
- the annual cost for the purchase and repair of training aids and equipment is approximately \$400,000.
- the cost of the one week long Outdoor Women's Program, including three meals and one snack per day, is approximately \$130,000 or \$550 per participant.
- the cost of running one of our Youth Seminars for 150 youths exceeds \$70,000.
- the cost of running one of our Youth Camps for 50 youths for five days, including three meals and one snack per day, is approximately \$1000 per participant or \$50,000.
- the cost of running a one day Outdoor Wildlife Learning (O.W.L. Days) program for 150 youths is approximately \$120 per child or \$18,000.
- the cost of one instructional techniques workshop for 20 instructors for 20 hours is approximately \$1,500 per participant or \$30,000.
- AHEIA does not charge fees on a cost recovery basis for their programs, and survives by donations!

PLEASE CONSIDER

CONSERVATION EDUCATION FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

FACT:

Our programs survive by donation.

FACT:

Economic woes affect us all, especially the charities.

FACT:

Incomes are down nearly 50%
and operating costs are increasing.

FACT:

Our goal is to continue excellent program delivery,
not to cut services or courses.

FACT:

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In 2018 our programs will reach over 100,000 men, women, and children
of all ages and our projections for 2019 are to reach an even larger audience.

Our fundraising efforts are being supplemented with a new
fundraising campaign to appeal to those we serve.

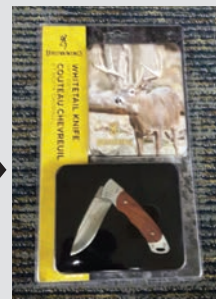
DONATIONS OF \$25-100

will receive an AHEIA gun sleeve.



DONATIONS OF \$101-999

will receive an
AHEIA hitch cover
and license plate holder.



DONATIONS OVER \$1000

will receive
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A voucher for each of the above award levels will be mailed
along with the tax receipt to the donor who can then make
arrangements to pick up the prize, minimizing costs to our
Association which ultimately allows AHEIA to utilize the ma-
jority of funds for program delivery.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount of Donation: _____

☐ Check here if you prefer not to receive a funding incen-
tive, and would prefer we allocated all proceeds of your
donation to necessary program delivery.

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or contact our office in Calgary and we can process
your credit card donation over the phone:
Telephone 403.252.8474 or Toll Free 1.866.852.4342

A FULLY TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO OUR CAUSE.

“Designed for young outdoor enthusiasts and their parent(s) or guardian(s), the seminar is a two-day event filled with fun and learning activities.”

Outdoor Youth Seminar

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

To increase awareness of outdoor recreational opportunities, the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA) held their 16th Annual Outdoor Youth Seminar in August. Designed for young outdoor enthusiasts (ages 7 and up) and their parent(s) or guardian(s), the seminar is a two-day event filled with fun and learning activities. Numerous experts shared information and instruction in various outdoor pursuits.

The seminar was held at our Alford Lake Conservation Education Centre for Excellence. Participants arrived on Friday, August 24, with activities starting Saturday, August 25 and ending on August 26 around 1:00 pm.

We supplied Saturday breakfast, lunch and supper as well as Sunday breakfast. All participants also received a commemorative t-shirt.

We had 105 participants join us for this fun event. We also had 36 volunteers helping to make this a safe and fun event. Thanks to all those who attended as well as all the volunteers who, once again, gave back.

This year the participants were able to choose the four events they were most interested in. This year's sessions included: introduction to centerfire rifle shooting, upgraded centerfire rifle shooting, crossbow basics, archery, practical rimfire, beginner's shotgun, intermediate shotgun, fishing basics, fly fishing basics, trapping, survival walk, waterfowl calling basics, blood trailing, GPS and geocaching, waterfowl hunting basics and whitetail techniques.

We also held some special sessions on Saturday after supper. The offerings were: making moose calls, wildlife identification, making rattling antlers, making survival kits, paracord survival bracelets, knife sharpening and firearms maintenance.

Our 2019 Outdoor Youth Seminar will run again August 23-25, 2019. If you would like to be placed on our email notification list please email edmonton-info@ahcia.com with your request.

Hope to see you there!





IT'S TIME YOU JOINED THE ARMY CADETS



Here's why! Army Cadets means adventure, leadership, survival training, comradeship, and character building for a lifetime of success.

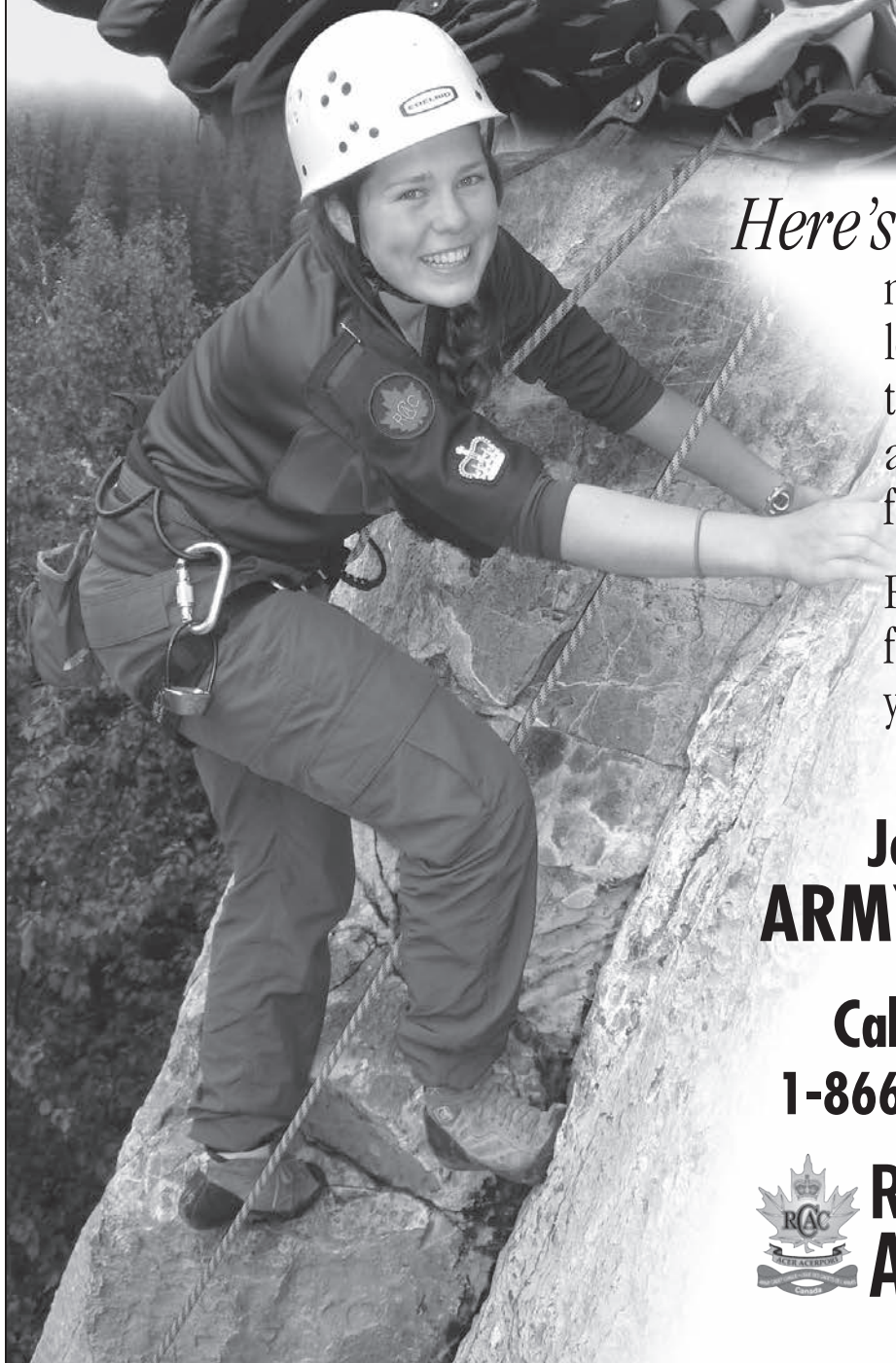
Registration is free for youths 12 to 18 years of age.

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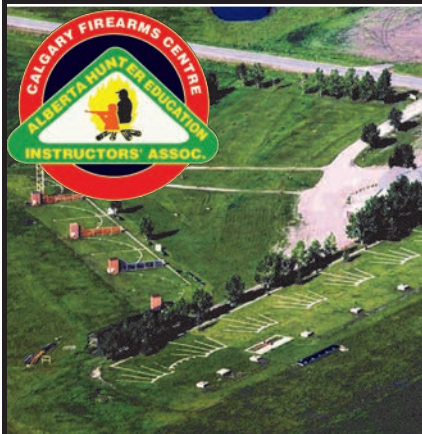
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Alberta Hunting Addicts Donates Again to AHEIA's Youth Hunter Education Camps



For the second year in a row The Alberta Hunting Addicts, Alberta's largest hunting Facebook group with 15,000+ members, donated the proceeds of their 2018 calendar sales to AHEIA to be applied towards the AHEIA Youth Hunter Education Camps, to be held in July 2019. Alberta Hunting Addicts' donation was gratefully accepted and will benefit nearly 250 youth in this year's Youth Hunter Education Camp program.

Joey Wolfman created Alberta Hunting Addicts on March 30, 2015 and, along with several co-administrators, manages the Facebook group made up of members from Alberta's hunting community. They are a group which, among a number of things, raises funds for organizations that represent what Alberta Hunting Addicts are about. Alberta Hunting Addicts strongly encourages kids to become involved in outdoor activities and have had members donate items to create "outdoor prize packages" which are then given to youth to instill a love of the outdoors.

AHEIA would like to thank Alberta Hunting Addicts again for their efforts and contribution towards helping to create an ethical, humane and educated Alberta youth who value wildlife and the environment.

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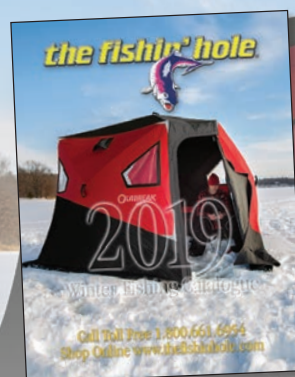
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Drawn December 11, 2018. Licence #505425.



Markos Hanes

is the winner of a Browning A-Bolt 6.5 Creedmoor Rifle.
(Ticket #373)

Dani Dickson

is the winner of a
Winchester XPR 6.5 Creedmoor "Muddy Girl" Rifle.
(Ticket #2220)

2018 AHEIA Specialty Field Shotgun Raffle II

Drawn August 31, 2018. Licence #475912.

Ian Sterling

is the winner of a Benelli 828 U 12ga Shotgun.
(Ticket #0160)

Praise for Mentored Hunt



By Kristi Wollman

Thank you to all the staff at Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA), Big Country Rod and Gun Club, the dog handlers with their dogs and the volunteer mentors for their expertise, guidance, and support during the Mentored Bird Hunt in Oyen, Alberta this past October.

I've always been interested in learning to hunt, and was excited when I heard about your program, which seemed to cover everything I wanted to learn.

Just getting to talk to all the people who came out for the weekend was a big help. We all appreciated their willingness to share their knowledge and experience, as well as some great stories. Also, watching the dogs work was fascinating. Watching them flush the birds up that would otherwise hide down in the brush was another new experience for me.

I left the weekend more knowledgeable and confident as a hunter. Thanks to all the mentors and organizers. Your program is one-of-a-kind.



To register as a mentor or mentorship participant, please visit the Hunting for Tomorrow website at www.huntingfortomorrow.ca or www.aheia.com for more information.



**“For many people, when they try to sharpen a knife, the knife actually gets duller!
If it’s any consolation, I was in the same boat at one time.”**

Knife Sharpening

By Chuck Strong



Chuck Strong
Assistant
Program Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A. - Edmonton

*A*s counterintuitive as it sounds, sharp knives are actually safer to use than dull ones. Dull knives force you to apply more pressure to achieve the cut you want, and pressing down harder can cause the knife to slip. So not only do you cut yourself, but you cut yourself worse because you were applying more force to the knife. A

sharp knife is also less tiring to use than a dull knife and makes cleaner, more accurate cuts.

I’ve found that the best way of sharpening a knife is with a whetstone. There are other methods and devices available for knife sharpening, but most of them tend to grind away too much of your knife’s blade.

Learning the right way to use a whetstone may take a bit of practice, but once you get the hang of it, you’ll be able to keep knives razor sharp while saving time and money. For many people, when they try to sharpen a knife, the knife actually gets duller! If it’s any consolation, I was in the same boat at one time.

Equipment

Two-sided Whetstone

Although there are a lot of sharpening systems on the market, I prefer to use the old tried-and-true two-sided whetstone, with a coarse grit on one side and a fine grit on the other.

Basically, a stone needs to cut metal off the edge. For most of us, our time would be best spent actually learning how to sharpen than worrying too much about the minor advantages of one stone vs. another.

The next question that often arises is should you use oil or water on your stone? The answer is what does the manufacturer recommend? If it is

a true whetstone neither oil or water is required. However, I do use water as it helps to lift the steel particles up out of the pores of the stone as well as lubricate and cools. If you use oil you will need to continue to use oil, and only oil that is recommended by the manufacturer. NOTE: Do not use vegetable oil!

Steel

The sharpening steel should be an important part of your knife maintenance strategy and is maybe the most misunderstood part.

Fundamentals of Sharpening

Angle

Different knives require the edge of the knife to be applied to the stone at a different angle, depending on the manufacturing specs. In general, for most knives it’s somewhere between 15 and 22 degrees. The smaller the angle, the sharper your knife will feel. But remember the smaller the angle, the less metal that’s behind the edge, and thus the weaker the edge. So your sharpening angle will depend on your usage. A surgeon’s blade will have a very thin, very low-angle edge. Your axe will have a strong, thick, high-angle edge.

Stone Grit

The finer the stone, the more polished your edge will become. The rougher the stone, the more the scratches in the edge function as “micro-serra-

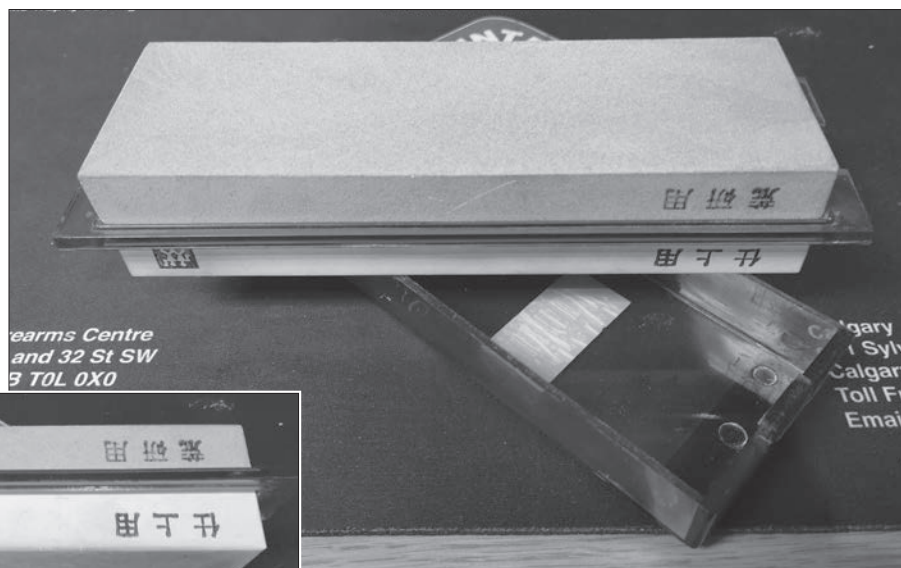
tions”. The more polished the edge, the better your edge will work for doing push-cut applications like shaving, whittling, peeling an apple, skinning a deer. Your cut will be cleaner and more precise with the polished edge. A rougher, more micro-serrated edge, will work better for slicing-type applications like cutting through coarse rope, wood, etc. The serrations present more edge surface area, and tend to “bite” into the work.

With practice it is possible to get an edge that will shave hair with a medium (300-400 grit) stone. It won’t shave great, but it does a pretty good job on cutting coarse materials.

You should be able to get an edge that shaves hair easily with a fine (600 grit) stone. I find this to be a pretty useful finishing stone, leaving enough micro-serrations for general utility work, but still being hair-shaving sharp. An extra fine stone (1200 grit) should start polishing the edge, and you should end up with a very sharp edge. This is also a good choice for a general utility finish.

Getting a Sharp Edge

Starting with the coarsest stone needed for your knife, you will progress through each finer stone until you have reached the desired level of sharpness. Rest your knife on the stone at your chosen angle. An easy method for determining the angle by eye is to visualize a 45 degree angle and then take half that amount. That will give you a



ballpark estimate of the angle and then you can adjust accordingly, up or down. With a slicing action bring the length of the knife across the stone with a motion that starts with the heel of the knife on the stone and ends with the point of the knife. The motion should resemble a sweeping arc pattern across your stone. Be very careful to maintain the angle of the knife on the stone. Longer curved knives provide additional challenges but as long as you can maintain the angle you will be sharpening very effectively. You grind one edge along the stone edge-first until a burr (aka "wire") is formed along the entire length of the opposite side of the edge. You can feel the burr with your thumb, on the side of the edge opposite the stone. The burr is hard to see but is easy to feel. Very carefully feel for the burr by gently running your hand from the spine to the edge. (Do not run your finger along the knife edge from heel to tip, that's only asking for trouble!) The presence of the burr means that the steel is thin enough at the top that it is folding over slightly, because the bevel you've just ground has reached the edge tip. If you stop before the burr is formed along the complete edge, then you have not ground all the way to the edge tip, and your knife will not be as sharp as it should be. The forming of the burr is critically important as it is the only way to know for sure that you have sharpened far enough on that side. Once the burr is formed on one side,

turn the knife over and repeat the process. Having raised a burr, progress to finer stones in order to make the edge smoother and remove the burr. As you progress to the finer grits it will become more and more difficult to feel the burr, once this happens you should test your sharpness. Testing the knife sharpness will tell you when you're done.

Test for Sharpness

There are a number of ways to test for sharpness, the most common is to use paper, the thinner the better. If you can slice paper effortlessly with your knife and it doesn't catch and tear then your knife is reasonably sharp and ready to work. This trick can also be used to see if there are any hidden dull/damaged sections of your edge. Another method to check sharpness is to see if it your knife can shave arm hair. My favourite method to check sharpness is to gently lay the edge of your knife on your fingernail so the knife is perpendicular to your finger. If the knife bites into your fingernail with ABSOLUTELY NO PRESSURE, and doesn't slide around, then your knife is reasonably sharp.

Using the Steel

The steel is used to re-align the edge on the knife, when you use a knife for a while, especially a knife with a soft, thin edge like that found on a kitchen knife, the edge tends to turn a bit

and come out of alignment. Note that the edge is still reasonably sharp, but it won't feel or act very sharp because the edge may not point straight down anymore. At this point, many people sharpen their knives, but sharpening is not necessary and of course decreases the life of the knife as you sharpen the knife away. Re-aligning the edge is all the steel needs to do. It does not need to remove any metal. Since the steel's only function is to re-align, the sharpening steel can be perfectly smooth and still do its job.

To use the steel, run the knife along the steel on one side using light pressure—no more pressure than the actual weight of the knife is required! Then switch to the other side and do it again. Repeat a number of times until your edge feels sharp and nice again. I hold the steel in my left hand, the blade in my right, and lightly run the blade along the steel while keeping the steel stationary, but it's perfectly fine to move both steel and knife past each other at the same time, or whatever works for you.

Most people run the knife down the steel edge first, the same direction you use when sharpening. This yields good results. If you steel your knife every time you use it, you will significantly lengthen the time between sharpening.



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Great Meals

from the

Harvest

with Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

Slow Cooker Apple Venison

3 pounds boneless venison roast	4 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon olive oil	2 small onions, sliced
1 cup boiling water	1 cube beef bouillon
Salt and pepper to taste	1 small bay leaf
2 large Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and quartered	

Spread the olive oil evenly on the inside of the slow cooker.

Place venison roast inside cooker and cover with garlic, onions and apples. Add salt, pepper and bay leaf. Turn to low and cook until the roast is tender, about 6 to 8 hours, depending on your cooker.

When the roast is cooked, remove from cooker and place on a serving platter. Tent with aluminum foil to keep warm. Carve when ready to serve.

Discard the apples and bay leaf. Stir the boiling water and bouillon cube into the cooker, making sure the bouillon is dissolved. Adjust seasoning as required and serve as a sauce on the side with the roast. Creamy mashed potatoes are a perfect vehicle for the sauce.

I like asparagus with this meal, when in season. Second choice is brussel sprouts. Who knew?

Sloppy Jane Casserole

1 pound ground wild game	1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 small onion, chopped	1 teaspoon French's yellow mustard
1 green bell pepper, chopped	1 red bell pepper, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste	2 cups frozen whole-kernel corn
1 clove garlic, chopped	1 package penne paste (one pound)
1 can diced tomatoes (14-16 ounces)	1 1/2 cups Colby-Jack cheese, shredded
1 cup ketchup	1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 cup parsley, chopped	Red pepper flakes to taste

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add olive oil and cook the ground meat, onion, green and red peppers and garlic in the hot skillet until meat is browned and crumbly. Drain and discard grease.

Stir tomatoes, ketchup, brown sugar, mustard, corn, salt and pepper into ground meat mixture. Reduce heat and simmer until heated through.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the penne and cook using the manufacturer's directions.

Mix penne, pepper flakes and cheese into ground meat mixture. Pour into a greased 9x13" baking dish. Bake until heated through and cheese is melted. Top with chopped parsley.

Serve with garlic toast and your favourite red wine.



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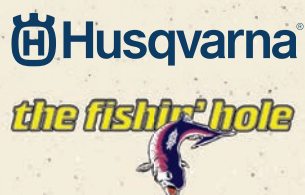
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