

First Hunt

1<sup>st</sup>

Foundation

Mentor

Guide



# Welcome to the First Hunt Foundation Family



*Thanks for volunteering your time and experience to help the First Hunt Foundation (FHF). I'm Rick Brazell, hunter, founder and President of the Foundation. Hopefully you feel the same way I do about hunting. FHF believes the heritage of hunting in the United States is a vital part of the culture and the American experience. We recognize that many have no desire or interest to hunt, but we feel strongly that even those folks need to understand the important role hunting plays in the lives of millions of their fellow citizens. Oftentimes misunderstanding or simple lack of knowledge about hunting causes some to find fault with hunters and the agencies managing wildlife and regulating hunting activities. Our mission is to keep the hunting heritage alive in America.*

*For many of us, hunting is a natural part of our lives. We enjoy spending time in the woods pursuing game, hanging out with family and friends and more importantly passing those unique skills on to the next generation. Unfortunately, there are thousands of people of all ages who would love to learn hunting skills, but literally have no opportunity. They have no support group, no family members or friends that can help them have that first hunting experience. That's where FHF comes in. We hope to provide qualified, background checked mentors so all who have a desire to learn about hunting can have that opportunity. We believe a mentor-based program can reach 1,000's each year across the nation. We are so grateful that you chose to be a part of this important effort. The difference you will make in a new hunter's life will create memories for a lifetime and shore up the support for hunting for future generations. Happy Hunting!*

**~Rick Brazell**

# Mentor's Creed

**As a mentor for the First Hunt Foundation, I will follow and teach all appropriate State Fish and Game regulations regarding the species hunted. I will practice fair chase and teach clean kill techniques and will teach subsistence principles for harvested animals to be consumed. I will hold myself to the highest ethical standards while hunting and avoid any practices that might appear unusual or offensive to other hunters or the non-hunting public. I will strive to make the First Hunt experience for those I mentor fun and enjoyable and will do everything within my power to make the experience safe so they may strive to return to the field for additional hunting opportunities.**

**I will accept no compensation from mentees or their parents or guardians.**

## First Hunt Foundation Mentored Hunting Program

The purpose of the FHF mentored hunting program is to increase the number of active, ethical hunters, not simply to take more people hunting. The goal is to introduce new hunters to the sport in hopes that they will go on to develop a life-long passion for the outdoors. It also builds the foundation for these new hunters to become better stewards of our natural resources and better ambassadors for hunting. The program is centered on long-term relationships between mentors and mentees, incorporating multiple steps over a period of time, often weeks or months, and is therefore expected to be far more effective than traditional "one-and-done" events designed to expose newcomers to hunting. Not only does this program teach mentees about the importance of hunting, it also provides a greater understanding of a hunter's role in sustainable management of our natural resources. The program includes the following steps:

1. Introduce the mentee (and parents/guardians) to the program, provide background information on FHF and begins the mentor/mentee bonding process.
2. Develop basic woodsmanship skills, while building a framework to become a successful, knowledgeable, and ethical hunter.
3. Teach hunter ethics and assist with any state required hunter education.
4. Teach basic firearms safety and proficiency
5. Teach basic animal biology, behavior, anatomy, shot placement, and field dressing. (Dependent on species to be hunted)
6. GO HUNTING!!! (Mentor's primary duty is to reinforce safety & ethics and make hunting fun)
7. What to do after the hunt? (Animal recovery to meal preparation)
8. Celebrate the hunt and recognize the mentee's successes. (Even if no animal is harvested)

## Table of Contents

### Contents

Being a Successful Mentor .....	5
What is a Mentor?.....	5
What is a Mentee?.....	5
How to find Mentees?.....	5
What is The Role of a Mentor?.....	5
Best Practices for Mentors of Youth Mentees .....	6
STEP ONE.....	7
Program Introduction & Bonding.....	7
Introduce Mentee and Parents/Guardian to FHF .....	7
Plan and Take Part in Bonding/Learning Activities .....	7
STEP TWO.....	7
Develop Basic Woodsmanship Skills .....	7
What is Woodsmanship?.....	7
Teach Wildlife & Plant Species Identification .....	7
Proper preparedness for outdoor activities .....	8
Take mentee to the field.....	8
Basic scouting principals .....	8
STEP THREE .....	9
Hunter Ethics & Education .....	9
STEP FOUR.....	10
Basic weapon safety and proficiency.....	10
STEP FIVE .....	11
Basic animal biology, behavior, anatomy, shot placement, and field dressing. ....	11
STEP SIX.....	11
GO HUNTING!!!.....	11
STEP SEVEN .....	12
What to do after the shot? .....	12
STEP EIGHT .....	13
Celebrate the hunt and recognize the mentee’s successes. ....	13
MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION .....	14

Insurance and Waivers ..... 14  
Hats and Vests..... 14  
Thank You Notes ..... 14

# Being a Successful Mentor

## What is a Mentor?

Merriam-Webster defines a mentor as “someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person.” Most of us can recall who taught us to hunt, most likely it was a family member, typically a parent or guardian, but it may have been a sibling, an uncle or aunt, or maybe even a grandparent. When it comes to hunting, that person was our mentor. FHF’s volunteer mentors fulfil that role for people who do not have a friend or family member to teach them the necessary skills to become hunters. Our volunteers help the new hunter experience new activities and opportunities they may not have encountered previously.

For the purposes of FHF programs, a mentor is a person who helps a first-time hunter (Mentee) develop into a knowledgeable and competent hunter. The mentor also helps the mentee understand and appreciate the role of hunters and hunting in conservation and wildlife management to build the foundation for these hunters to become better stewards of our natural resources and better ambassadors for hunting. Additionally, a mentee could also be an experienced hunter who is learning a new skillset to pursue a species they have never hunted before. For example, a big game hunter, learning to hunt waterfowl or turkey for the first time.

## What is a Mentee?

A mentee is any new, inexperienced hunter, regardless of age who has had little or no opportunity to be taught about hunting. Quite simply, a mentee is a student who wishes to learn to hunt. A mentee may also be a person who has some level of skill in one aspect of hunting but is seeking skills in another unfamiliar one. For example, an experienced rifle hunter may need mentoring in how to use blackpowder or archery equipment. They may also wish to learn to hunt a new species such as bear, turkey or waterfowl.

## How to find Mentees?

Find people in your local community who do not have someone in their social circle able to introduce them to hunting and/or shooting sports. Good sources of information include, but are not limited to:

- Members of your social circle, church, school, community groups, etc.
- Local Hunters’ Education programs and instructors
- Local fish and wildlife departments
- Middle and High School teachers and administrators
- Local shooting range

## What is The Role of a Mentor?

A Good Mentor:

- Acts as advisor & coach, providing advice, leadership, guidance, and feedback
- Is a positive role model
- Always respects the mentee’s limits
- Communicates on the mentee’s level
- Communicates with a youth mentee’s parents or guardians on their progress and how they can help
- Is an active listener

- Understands the mentees current skillset and adapts their mentorship to focus on filling the gaps
- Is committed and willing to face unexpected hurdles
- Provides frank, honest, and constructive feedback
- Is a champion and cheerleader, always reinforcing the successes of the mentee
- Makes the mentoring events all about the mentee's experience vs their own
- **Has FUN!**

### **Best Practices for Mentors of Youth Mentees**

- Always obtain written permission from the mentee's parent/guardian.
  - Ensure the parent/legal guardian has signed the liability waiver
  - Inform the parent/legal guardian of the Foundation's liability insurance coverage
- Do not rely on the mentee to communicate your plans to their parent/guardian. Always be sure you have heard verbal approval of your plans and always confirm your plan a day in advance as a reminder to the mentee and their parent/guardian.
- Seek to have multiple mentors or adults present when working with minors or mentees of opposite sex.
- Always remember to have honest communication with parents/guardians about activities. Always tell the parent or guardian when you will be picking up and dropping off the mentee.
- When picking up the mentee for an event, always remember to pick them up at the door. When dropping the student off after an event, walk them to the door and make sure the parent/guardian is home.
- In case of a medical emergency, take the mentee directly to the hospital. Call the parent/guardian as soon as possible.

## STEP ONE

### Program Introduction & Bonding

This step introduces the mentee and their parents/guardian if a youth to the Foundation and the mentorship program. It defines what their obligations are and what they can expect from the program. It also allows the mentor to get a good feel for the student's level of interest, knowledge and past outdoor experience.

Introduce Mentee and Parents/Guardian to FHF

<https://firsthuntfoundation.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1GrZDrnjA&t=2s>

Plan and Take Part in Bonding/Learning Activities

**Activities can include but are not limited to:**

- Attending sportsmen's shows
- Sharing magazine articles
- Visiting sporting goods stores
- Watching hunting or outdoor TV shows or DVD's
- Visiting environmental education centers
- Tour hunting property(s)
- Talk to land owner
- Visiting Rifle & Archery ranges
- Attend FHF events

## STEP TWO

### Develop Basic Woodsmanship Skills

This step is extremely important as it provides the knowledge and skills most lacking by many of today's new/beginning hunters. This step teaches the skills that provide the framework to be successful as a new hunter and to develop an appreciation and understanding of hunting.

What is Woodsmanship?

Woodsmanship is basically defined as the essential skillset of the outdoorsman, especially as it applies to hunting. The best hunters/woodsmen have extensive knowledge of their targeted species. They are also intimately familiar with the regions in which they hunt and they understand which plants are preferred foods and recognize how animals utilize terrain to their advantage. They understand that wind is their ally and stay sharply attuned to nature's sounds. The journey to expertise in woodsmanship is long and demanding, but its payoff is well worth the challenge.

Teach Wildlife & Plant Species Identification

Check with your state's fish and game department for resources specific to your local area

<https://assets.kalkomey.com/bowhunter/pdfs/todays-bowhunter-wildlife-identification-guide.pdf>

## Proper preparedness for outdoor activities

- Pack appropriately for the activity and if venturing into the backcountry, ensure mentor and mentee have the ten (10) essential survival items
  - Navigation
  - Light
  - Sun Protection
  - First Aid
  - Knife or Multi-tool
  - Fire Starters
  - Shelter
  - Extra Food
  - Extra Water
  - Extra Clothes
- Ensure mentee has proper and adequate outdoor attire, appropriate to the region and current weather patterns (i.e., you wouldn't take someone out in the snow in light tennis shoes or in potential rain without a rain coat. **BE PREPARED!**)

## Take mentee to the field

Teach basic woodsmanship skills utilizing low-pressure learning activities centered around:

- Hiking
- Scouting
- Shed antler hunting
- Animal viewing/behavior

## Basic scouting principals

Teach mentee how to prepare for scouting activities in the field by introducing them to e-scouting and map reconnaissance to identify potential hunting areas. Things to identify include sources of water, road access, historic wildfires, etc. Tools to use include but are not limited to:

- BaseMap (App and Web)
- Forest Service Maps
- State Fish and Game website

Locate and identify animal sign and discuss the significance of items identified based on behavior of the species to be hunted

- Deer scrapes and rubs
- Turkey scratching
- Animal beds and trails
- Scat
- Tracks
- Nests

Locate and Identify vegetation that provide food and cover for wildlife

## STEP THREE

### Hunter Ethics & Education

The focus of this step is on teaching basic hunter ethics and helping the new hunter prepare for their hunter education course.

Help the mentee find and take a hunter education course if they are eligible. We encourage you to take the course with the student to facilitate follow-up discussions and reinforce covered materials.

<https://www.ihea-usa.org/find-a-course/>

Share educational tools with your mentee to help them prepare such as:

<https://www.huntercourse.com/hetools/>

If the mentee is too young to take a hunter education course, teach hunter, treestand and sporting arm safety and basic hunter ethics.

If the mentee has already completed a hunter education course, review hunter, treestand and sporting arm safety and hunter ethics.

Introduce mentee to landowners and explain the importance of maintaining positive relationships.

Prior to introduction, coach mentee on key points to discuss:

- Offer their hand and a smile during introduction
- Share their name and where they are from
- Tell the landowner what and when they would like to hunt
- Tell the landowner if they will be hunting alone or with others
- Ask about livestock, field entrances or other concerns on the property
- Ask the landowner if they have any suggestions on where to go
- Ask landowner about their expectations on field dressing. (Some don't want gut piles in their fields while others don't care.)
- Offer to share any game taken
- Properly thank the landowner

## STEP FOUR

### Basic weapon safety and proficiency

Four primary rules of firearm/weapon safety (<https://www.nssf.org/articles/4-primary-rules-of-firearm-safety/>):

#### 1. Always Keep Firearm Pointed in a Safe direction

- Never point your gun at anything you do not intend to shoot. This is particularly important when loading or unloading a firearm. In the event of an accidental discharge, no injury can occur as long as the muzzle is pointing in a safe direction.
- A safe direction means a direction in which a bullet cannot possibly strike anyone, taking into account possible ricochets and the fact that bullets can penetrate walls and ceilings. The safe direction may be “up” on some occasions or “down” on others, but never at anything not intended as a target. Even when “dry firing” with an unloaded gun, you should never point the gun at an unsafe target.
- Make it a habit to know exactly where the muzzle of your gun is pointing at all times, and be sure that you are in control of the direction the muzzle is pointing, even if you fall or stumble. This is your responsibility, and only you can control it.

#### 2. Treat All Guns as Though They are Loaded

- By treating every firearm as if it is loaded, a habit of safety is developed. Firearms should be loaded only when you are in the field or on the target range or shooting area, ready to shoot. Whenever you handle a firearm, or hand it to someone, always open the action immediately, and visually check the chamber, receiver and magazine to be certain they do not contain any ammunition. Always keep actions open when not in use. Never assume a gun is unloaded — check for yourself! This is considered a mark of an experienced gun handler!

#### 3. Keep Your Finger Off the Trigger until You are Ready to Shoot

- Never touch the trigger on a firearm until you actually intend to shoot. Keep your fingers away from the trigger while loading or unloading. Never pull the trigger on any firearm with the safety on the “safe” position or anywhere in between “safe” and “fire.” It is possible that the gun can fire at any time, or even later when you release the safety, without you ever touching the trigger again.

#### 4. Always Be Sure of Your Target and What’s Beyond It

- Don’t shoot unless you know exactly what your shot is going to strike. Be sure that your bullet will not injure anyone or anything beyond your target.
- Be aware that even a .22 short bullet can travel over 1 1/4 miles and a high velocity cartridge, such as a .30-06, can send its bullet more than three miles. Shotgun pellets can travel 500 yards, and shotgun slugs have a range of over half a mile.
- You should keep in mind how far a bullet will travel if it misses your intended target or ricochets in another direction.

Begin with unloaded weapons in a safe environment. Depending on availability and mentee experience, progress to bb/pellet followed by rimfire, and then hunting caliber weapons.

Always ensure ear and eye protection is utilized. Provide for the mentee if they do not have any.

## STEP FIVE

### **Basic animal biology, behavior, anatomy, shot placement, and field dressing.**

Check with your state's fish and game department for resources specific to your local area.

There are numerous online sources of information as well as the Hunter Education Tools linked above that provides excellent educational information for shooting positions, shot placement, anatomy, and a multitude of other great tools.

<https://www.huntercourse.com/hetools/>

## STEP SIX

### **GO HUNTING!!!**

**(Mentor's primary duty is to reinforce safety & ethics and make hunting fun)**

The emphasis of the hunt should be on animal identification, reading sign and other skills learned during previous steps. If the mentee harvests an animal, handle the situation with sensitivity and respect for the animal. Take a camera and document all aspects of the experience such as sitting in the blind or on the stand or the mentee in the field. Please submit photos and documentation to the mentor portal at [www.firsthuntfoundation.org](http://www.firsthuntfoundation.org). If conducting a practice hunt, utilize a camera to capture photos of the animals as if they were being harvested with a weapon.

The hunt should have as high of a probability of success as possible. The mentee should have the opportunity to harvest an animal.

Pre-hunt Review:

- Weapon Safety
- Species & Sex ID
- Animal behavior & hunting techniques

**Stay within arm's reach of the mentee at all times where practical, based on their skill level and ability to safely handle weapons. (i.e., inexperienced youth vs. experienced adult)**

This allows the mentor to:

- Correct any unsafe action
- Answer questions
- Assist with animal identification
- Assist with animal location after a shot is fired

Go out as many times as possible during the hunting season.

## **STEP SEVEN**

### **What to do after the shot?**

**(Trigger to table)**

#### **Tracking/Recovery**

How to locate an animal that did not drop immediately after being shot. Blood trails, tracks, broken brush, etc.

#### **Photographs**

Ensure photos present a respectful image of the animal and provide a positive view of hunting to the general public. Clean blood from the animal as much as possible and move the carcass away from or cover blood pools.

#### **Field Dress**

Proper techniques to prepare an animal for transport from the field. This must be done in accordance with local game regulations and landowner preferences. Retain proof of sex, identify location of kill, CWD requirements, etc.

#### **Transport**

How best to safely, legally, and ethically transport your animal carcass from the field to point of processing. Keep in mind public opinion of bloody carcasses.

#### **Aging**

If not taking to a processing facility, determine the safest way to age the meat prior to final processing.

#### **Processing**

Teach your mentee how to process the animal out into useable meat portions based on species. If the mentee does not wish to learn this step, ensure you have recommendations for reputable meat processors for them to take their animal to.

#### **Storing**

How best to store cuts of meat? Butcher paper, vacuum sealed, etc.

#### **Preparation**

Share favorite recipes for preparing wild game.

<http://www.wildliferecipes.net/>

#### **Donations?**

Make sure mentee and their family are aware of game donation programs in case they want to donate a portion of their hunt to help others.

- Local food banks
- Venison donation coalitions
- Families in need, etc.

<https://www.fhfh.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/vetmeatlocker/>

## **STEP EIGHT**

### **Celebrate the hunt and recognize the mentee's successes.**

This step celebrates the hunt(s), recognizes the student as a “hunter” and serves as his/her rite of passage into the hunting community.

### **Publicly acknowledge the hunt.**

If possible, have the local paper publish a short story with photos from the hunt.

Provide photos to the mentee to share with friends and family.

Publish story and photos to FHF Facebook, Instagram and website

### **Submit information to FHF Hunter Appreciation Program**

<https://firsthuntfoundation.org/hunter-appreciation-program/>

## **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

### **Insurance and Waivers**

First Hunt Foundation maintains a general liability policy for all mentors in good standing for activities and work within the scope of the foundation mission.

All mentees are required to sign the FHF Participant Agreement, Release & Assumption of Risk form. If mentee is a minor, parent or guardian must also sign the form.

<https://firsthuntfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/FHF-Waiver-3.pdf>

### **Hats and Vests**

Mentor and mentee should always wear FHF branded hats while participating in activities. When Blaze/Hunter Orange is a requirement, the FHF Blaze Orange hats should be used. Where possible, FHF branded Blaze Orange hunting vest should also be worn.

### **Thank You Notes**

Participating in a mentor hunt and hunting on private land is a privilege the mentees should be thankful for. It is a good idea to have them write “thank you” notes to landowners, and sponsors for their hard work and support of the program. Encourage them to include stories or thoughts and photos to make it more personal.



**The First Hunt Foundation Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to keeping the hunting heritage alive in America. The Foundation works primarily with youth who desire to have a hunting experience, but do not have the experienced support structure in their home or extended family to help them. The Foundation is organizing a cadre of experienced hunters who will serve as mentors for these individuals. Our vision is to create thousands of first hunts each year that will create future hunters, community leaders, voters and elected officials that support hunting as a valid part of the American culture.**

### **Contact Us**

First Hunt Foundation Inc.  
2965 Hwy 162  
Kamiah, ID 83536

Phone: 208-917-9700  
Email: [info@firsthuntfoundation.org](mailto:info@firsthuntfoundation.org)  
Web: [firsthuntfoundation.org](http://firsthuntfoundation.org)  
Facebook: First Hunt Foundation