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Welcome to UHF Mark McNichols

I would like to start out by thanking all members, new and old for joining and for helping to keep hunting strong in Florida. It will take all of us to hold this heritage together for our future!

This is our first official newsletter, so I would like to take this time to look back at one of this year's major events: the **Future of Hunting Summit!**

First off, it saddens me to

find out that the number of hunters in Florida is dwindling. But the official number is 150,000 purchased hunting licenses in Florida last year, down by 100,000 just a few short years ago. What does this mean for hunting in Florida? Probably the biggest thing it will do is cost us hunting land in some fashion. Now, that could be the loss of land previously earmarked for hunting or

the cancellation of land purchases that the state had planned for hunting.

Second it could mean an avenue for anti-hunters to move in. Strength is in numbers and if we show signs of weakening, it may show antis we are losing ground!

Where are we losing our hunters? To other states, due to lack of hunting areas? Quality of game? (Continued on page 3)

All Hunting Stopped in 12 Florida Counties Kevin Gaynor

What if you opened your daily paper and read that headline? Most likely it would be too late for you to do anything about it. You would also be asking yourself "How did this happen?" As hard as it is to believe, could this happen in our lifetime, what about our children's or grandchildren's lifetime?

We all need to be involved in what is happening within our government and the political arena. I am not saying go to Tallahassee or all the

FFWCC meetings. They hold their meetings during the week while most of us are working. What all of us need to do is be aware of the issues and support the organizations that are fighting for your rights and heritage.

Did you know there are twelve pages of proposed changes for the up coming 2006-2007 hunting season affecting every type of hunter? There are changes from WMA rules and policies to eliminate certain type of hunting. We all know once

something is taken away it is nearly impossible to get it back.

There's also the other side of this topic, the decline in hunting in Florida. Since 1980 there has been a 40% drop in hunting licenses purchased. What does that mean to you? It means that the strength and voice of the Florida hunter is not as strong as it once was. Florida Hunters represent less than 2% of the population, which is less than 150,000, (Continued on page 4)

Youth Hunting Jim Cassellman



"The youth are our Future. We cannot let them down."

When we first got together and decided to form the UHF from the remnants of the Florida Hunters Coalition (FHC), we knew that our youth was the key to carrying on our hunting heritage. Introducing kids into the hunting way of life has been a core part of the UHF. To date, we have taken kids on 3 youth hunts at Camp Blanding and have greatly enjoyed doing it. It's great

to see them learning what you and I take as second nature. They're amazed at every track, rub and scrape they see. To them, every track was made by a big buck, just waiting for them around the next Palmetto or Scrub Oak. If you teach a kid to hunt, you're making a mark that will be remembered for life. Stories will be told about you and they'll in turn, reciprocate by

teaching a friend, or maybe their sons and daughters and so continues our heritage.

Since attending the Hunting Summit it makes me very proud to say we were amongst the first to recognize that our youth is the answer to maintaining and furthering our hunting heritage. Now everyone is saying the same thing and the popular push is to get (Continued on page 4)

Hunt Winners!

Thanks to all who entered our hunt drawings and more importantly, thanks to all for supporting United Hunters of Florida and your hunting heritage!

The winner of our first hunt is **Victor Richburg**. Victor will enjoy a great hog hunt, compliments of *Game Time Outfitters* through the Florida Sportsmen Conservation Assn. out of Okeechobee. The trip includes: buggy

ride and dogs!

The winner of our second hunt is **Tommy Barrett**. Tommy will enjoy a turkey hunt for one adult and one child (1 bird) in the 2006 gobbler season compliments of *Bill Marvin*, President of the FL chapter NWTf. The hunt will take place on a private Georgia plantation north of Tallahassee.

Enjoy your hunts and

send us some pictures for our next newsletter!

Keep an eye out for our future hunt drawings!



Proposed Rule Changes Casey Elkins

Welcome to all new UHF members! Back on October 11th, 2005, I sent out an e-mail concerning the *Proposed Rule Changes* for next year. I'd like to apologize for not sending from the UHF e-mail address, for only a

few of you opened the mail from my own e-mail address. It's not too late to read the proposed changes. We need your feedback in order to represent you at the meeting. You can read them at

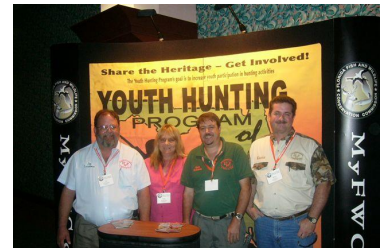
<http://myfwc.com/commission/2005/Sep/index.html>. Also please join us on the web forum; let us know how your hunting season is going.

Hunting Tip –Leave a Hunt Plan Jay Martin

You may have recently read about the discovery of a hunter's remains scattered about with animal remains. Unfortunately, he died while trying to carry his kill out of the woods. This is why it's important to let someone know where you plan to hunt and when.

Boaters have a boating plan (or Float plan), pilots have a flight plan. So it makes good sense to have a hunt plan. At the very minimum, you should let someone responsible know:

- Where you are hunting. The more detailed, the better.
- When you're going to arrive and what time you should return.
- Emergency contact numbers. If you have contact numbers for the Rangers of the land you are hunting, they will be a great aid in finding you since they know the property.
- Any medical conditions that rescuers should be aware of.



Future of Hunting Summit

Welcome to UHF Continued

Many things are to blame.

The big question I want to ask: *"How do we, as a group, as an organization that has established itself as hunter-friendly, bring hunters back to Florida?"*

We have to find a way or we all will lose our hunting heritage. I'm not ready for this to happen, are you?

The UHF has been working with the FFWCC and other associations and organizations to find ways to combat this hunter decline. Youth

involvement, more opportunities and more land to hunt are just a few options we have discussed.

What can we do as individuals? Buy a hunting license for your spouse even if he or she doesn't hunt; talk with your neighbors and friends and let them know what's happening; urge them to buy a hunting license. It will take all of us to stop the decline otherwise, we risk losing our heritage and the future of hunting!

One last thing: keep us informed of what's going on in your area. We need to know in order to fight for you and your rights!

"How do we, as a group, as an organization that has established itself as hunter-friendly, bring hunters back to Florida?"

All Hunting Stopped in 12 Florida Counties Continued

*“United we stand,
divided we fall.”*

while the Florida angler is 1.3 million strong. Who do you think Tallahassee and the FFWCC are listening too?

We all need to pull together with solidarity. It doesn't matter if you dog hunt, coon hunt, bow hunt, gun hunt or even hunt with a crossbow. We can be our worst enemy if we don't stand together. It was said to me by the president of the United Hunters of Florida, *“We all have the same last name- Hunter.”* So just because you don't like a certain type of hunting, you may need that hunter to support and stand by you when your style of hunting is being attacked. Strength is in the numbers.

Take the time to get on the internet and go to the FFWCC web site. Get on the UHF forum and voice your opinion and take control of your rights and heritage. Support the UHF by joining and if you are already a member get your hunting buddies to join. This is the time of the season when all of you will be getting together on your hunts and in camp discussing *“How it use to be”*. Don't let anything else get away from us.

The UHF is heavily involved with the FFWCC and the Tallahassee Caucus, attending the meetings and speaking for the Florida Hunter. We attended the Hunting Summit this August and are partnering with the

FFWCC to increase Your Hunts in Florida. We also communicate issues and ask for feedback from our membership and the Florida Hunter. Our membership is strong but strength is in the numbers.

Youth Hunting Continued

our youth in the outdoors.

Not only grass roots organizations such as the UHF, but national organizations like the National Wild Turkey Foundation, the Rocky Mountain Elks Club, Safari International and governmental agencies like our own Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission all have programs for our youth.

While I was at the Summit, Nick Wiley with the Wildlife Division and Dennis David, Director of the Northeast region both pulled me aside and told me there was someone they wanted me to meet. The gentleman was Bill Cline with Hunter Safety and Ranges. He was hired on to head up the new Youth Hunt Program of Florida. These guys knew Bill was in need of people

and organizations to work with them to get this newly adopted program off the ground. Since we are very vocal about kids and hunting they've asked the UHF to help head up this program in the Northeast Region.

Bill has provided me with this gigantic notebook to read which is the Draft Copy of the Youth Hunting Program of Florida (Continued on page 5)

“Since we are very vocal about kids and hunting they've asked the UHF to help head up this program in the Northeast Region.”

Youth Hunting Continued

guidelines. I'm about half way through it and will recommend some changes be made, but so far I believe this will be a great opportunity for not only the UHF to show our true colors, but for the youth hunters and their guardians in Florida. These hunts will be on private land donated by the landowners and will give the kids the opportunity for some great quality hunts for hogs and deer. Landowners who are doing Quality Deer Management programs are donating hunts to "thin" out does and maybe a few cull hunts for bucks and hogs. Needless to say

I am looking forward to becoming involved in this program.

Soon enough we will be turning to our membership for help in these areas. We will need volunteers to make these hunts a success. Help like hunt guides, camp cooks, when the hunts involve camping, hunt masters to coordinate all aspects of the hunt. I hope we can count on everyone to jump in and volunteer for hunts that may be in your area. Believe me it is very rewarding to know you are out there making the difference.

Remember to get out there and put in for the new Family Hunts that are coming to a WMA near you. The UHF suggested these styles of hunts. We worked with the FFWCC staff and this season Matanzas Family Hunt is the first to take place with several more upcoming for next season.

We'll keep you posted and I hope everyone has a great 2005-2006 hunting season!



Our President's son, Nick "Nature boy" Casselman

UHF Staff

Jim Casselman – President

Mark McNichols – Vice President

Secretary/Treasurer – Casey Elkins

Kevin Gaynor – Director

Jay Martin - Director

"Bull Creek closed to hog hunting. Log onto our web site for the news."

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.unitedhunters.org

Looking For Stories

Do you have a great story of a past hunt? Have you learned important or worthy things in your hunting endeavors? We would love for you to share them with the UHF community.

Submit your story or article in Word format or text document to the

address in this newsletter. Or if you prefer, send it to our email address. We may do a bit of editing but authors will be given full credit for their works.

About Our Organization..

The United Hunters of Florida (UHF) is an organization of Florida hunters dedicated to the protection, promotion and enhancement of hunting in the state of Florida and to uniting hunters of all kinds, work together towards that end. Regardless of our individual hunting interests, we stand united

to protect and strengthen all forms of hunting in the state of Florida and to safely introduce youngsters to wildlife conservation, hunting and outdoorsmanship, teaching them to cherish and protect our Florida hunting heritage. We are looking out for *your* hunting interests by staying informed and involved in legislative and

policy discussions pertaining to hunting in Florida. We participate in statewide meetings that may impact our hunting heritage and voice our opinions and concerns.

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OUR FRIENDS