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## MINNESOTA DNR NEWS #8 FEBRUARY 6, 2012

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DNR NEWS – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Media contacts: Patricia Arndt, Division of Parks and Trails communications and outreach manager, 651-259-5578; Amy Barrett, Parks and Trails Division public information officer,*

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**Nonresident Off-Road Vehicle Trail Pass now available**

Trail passes for nonresident off-road vehicles (ORV) are now available, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).   
  
Nonresidents operating an ORV on state or grant-in-aid trails must possess a trail pass and display it on the machine where it can be easily seen. This pass is not required if the machine is registered in Minnesota, or if the ORV is operated on private property that is owned by the operator’s spouse, parent or child.

Nonresident one-year and three-year ORV trail passes are now available for sale through game and fish Electronic Licensing System (ELS) agents. A one-year ORV trail pass is $21 and the three-year ORV trail pass is $31. Duplicates are available for $2.50. ELS has three options for buying passes and duplicates: online, by phone or in person.

For more information or to buy a pass:

* Visit the DNR website at [dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/nonres\_pass\_orv.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/nonres_pass_orv.html).
* Call 888-665-4236 (888-MNLicense) any time, seven days a week. Callers will receive a license identification number that will be valid until they receive the pass in the mail. All purchases must be made by credit card. A $3.50 convenience fee will be charged for each transaction.
* Find game and fish ELS locations at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/nonres\_pass\_orv.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/nonres_pass_orv.html).

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*Media contact: Capt. Mike Hammer, Education Program coordinator, DNR Division of Enforcement, 800-366-8917, ext. 2504.*

**DNR looking for safe and responsible hunter mentors**

People who have paid attention to recent outdoors newspaper, magazine and television stories may have noticed pictures of beaming youths following a successful hunt. What’s often missing from the picture is the young hunter’s mentor who made such a successful experience possible.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is in need of additional mentors to serve as guides for its safety training programs, particularly the “All Day Range and Field Day” portion of the hunter firearms safety course found at [www.HUNTERcourse.com](http://www.HUNTERcourse.com).

“The time shared between a youngster and a mentor is invaluable,” said Capt. Mike Hammer, DNR Enforcement Division safety education coordinator. “There simply is no better way to introduce a young person to safe, ethical and responsible aspects of hunting than with the close supervision of an adult mentor.”

Mentors work for about five hours with a group of three to four students, ages 11-15, facilitating, mentoring and evaluating students as they complete hunter-based scenarios that include big game, small game and turkey hunting, as well as shoot/don't shoot, tree stand safety, outdoor survival, firearms transportation, common firearm action types, blaze orange and more.

Knowledge of various hunting activities and knowledge of the principles of safe, responsible and ethical hunting are required. Mentors also need to understand basic principles of mentorship and facilitation of “Range and Field Day” scenarios taught at instructor certification training sessions. More information is at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/instructors/adrfd/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/instructors/adrfd/index.html).

Mentor applicants must be 18 years or older and pass a background check. Prior to attending an instructor training session, applicants must complete instructor prerequisites listed at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/instructors/adrfd/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/instructors/adrfd/index.html). Certification sessions are conducted by DNR trainers when and where there is a need.

People are encouraged to complete the instructor prerequisites as soon as possible, so they will be prepared when a convenient training session is offered.

More information is available by contacting the DNR Enforcement Education Program staff at Camp Ripley,15011 Highway 115, Little Falls, MN 56345. People also can call 800-366-8917 or send an email to [enforcement.education@state.mn.us](mailto:enforcement.education@state.mn.us).

A list of current instructor training certification sessions, locations and dates is available at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/instructors/training.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/instructors/training.html).

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Media contact: Mike Kurre, DNR mentoring program coordinator, 651-259-5193.

DNR, NWTF mentored youth turkey applications due soon

The application deadline is midnight Monday, Feb. 13 for first-time youth turkey hunters, ages 12 to 17, who are looking to go afield this spring and learn from an experienced National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) volunteer, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Participants will be selected through a random lottery. Applications, maps and general information for the wild turkey hunt are available online at [www.mndnr.gov/youthturkey](http://www.mndnr.gov/youthturkey).

This is the 10th consecutive year DNR and NWTF have cooperated to provide opportunities for first-time youth turkey hunters. More than 1,500 youth have been introduced to this unique hunting experience since spring youth turkey hunts began in 2002.

Most hunts will occur April 21-22, which is the first weekend of the regular wild turkey season. Nearly all youth will hunt on private land thanks to the generosity of private landowners and the NWTF volunteers who obtained permission.

To be eligible, a youth hunter must be age 12 to 17 on or before April 21; have a valid firearms safety certificate; and be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The program is for first-time turkey hunters only. Any youth who has ever purchased or been selected by lottery for a Minnesota turkey license of any type is not eligible.

Hunters and their mentors will be assigned a NWTF volunteer coach, who must accompany both the youth and parent or guardian throughout the entire hunt.

Participation in the hunts is only restricted by the number volunteers and private lands that are available. People who have an interest in providing quality turkey hunting land for the mentored youth hunts should contact a NWTF chapter online at [www.nwtf-mn.org/Home/ChapterListings](http://www.nwtf-mn.org/Home/ChapterListings).

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DNR NEWS – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FEBRUARY 6, 2012

Media contact: Renée Vail, DNR volunteer programs administrator, 651-259-5249.

Volunteers add $8 million in value to DNR

Nearly 26,000 citizens donated services valued at $8 million during 2011 to assist the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in accomplishing its conservation mission through a variety of projects and programs. That’s the equivalent of an extra 179 full-time staff, according to the DNR.

"We're fortunate to have so many dedicated Minnesotans who are willing to donate their time and talents for conservation projects," said Renée Vail, DNR volunteer programs administrator. "We're extremely grateful for their efforts. Many of our projects would not be possible without their help."

DNR managers, professionals and technicians work alongside volunteers to help manage the state's diverse natural resources. Volunteer positions can range from specialist jobs requiring extensive skill and experience to work requiring little or no previous experience.

For example, for several years now Russ Johnsrud, Ron Norenberg, Don Marg, Denny Ernst, Chuck Yliniemi and Steve Maanum have used their woodworking skills to assist staff at the Park Rapids Wildlife office.

Last year, the volunteers built 68 bluebird houses for the DNR Nongame Wildlife Program. They also built 103 Peterson bluebird boxes, 10 mallard nesting boxes, 50 wood duck boxes, and two purple martin houses. Most of these went to the Detroit Lakes Wildlife Management Area. Twenty-five bluebird houses were built for Park Rapids School and 30 bluebird houses were for Bagley School.

**VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE**

Volunteer opportunities are available at state parks, state forest campgrounds, wildlife management areas, fisheries and hatcheries, as well as at DNR area, regional and headquarters offices.

Special event sites offer volunteer experiences, too. More than 500 volunteers assisted the DNR at the Minnesota State Fair last year. They helped at the laser shot booth and archery range, acted as Smokey Bear, and provided entertainment and environmental education presentations on the DNR volunteer outdoor stage.

Elsewhere around the state, volunteers helped with firearms safety instruction, wildlife habitat improvement, river cleanups, state park campground hosting, loon monitoring, trail clearing, precipitation observing, burning permit issuing and wildlife research.

For more information about DNR volunteering opportunities, visit the DNR website at [www.mndnr.gov](http://www.mndnr.gov) and click on the word “volunteering.” Information is also available by contacting the DNR Information Center at 651-296-6157 or toll free at 888-646-6367.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Image available at <ftp://mediaroom.dnr.state.mn.us> in folder named Volunteer image 02-06-12. Caption: L-R Russ Johnsrud, Denny Ernst, Chuck Yliniemi and Don Marg with some of the Peterson bluebird houses they built. Mallard hen houses are stacked in the back of the pickup truck.

# **DNR QUESTION OF THE WEEK**

**Q:**  What is the DNR doing to reverse the decline in the number of youth interested in fishing?

**A:** The DNR has taken a variety of approaches to this societal trend in which children and families are participating at reduced levels in fishing, hunting and many other outdoor pursuits.

The MinnAqua fishing and aquatic education program publishes a state-of-the art guide (Fishing: Get in the Habitat!) for teachers and youth leaders who want to teach angling, aquatic ecology and stewardship to youth. Through educator workshops and mentoring, MinnAqua is developing providers of high quality aquatic education programs throughout Minnesota.

The Fishing in the Neighborhood program in the Twin Cities metropolitan area was developed to increase access by stocking ponds and other small bodies of water fish to create urban angling opportunities that previously did not exist. Additionally, the DNR pushed to reduce barriers to fishing in Minnesota state parks by eliminating the need for a license and offering “I Can Fish!” instructional clinics.

Finally, the agency is working with national and state organizations to encourage families to try fishing as a way to relax and enjoy the out-of-doors.

Minnesotans will have a chance to do just that Feb. 18-20 as part of Take a Kid Ice Fishing Weekend. During that weekend, anglers 16 and older do not need a fishing license if they are accompanied by a child younger than 16 and are actively participating to introduce a kid to fishing.

More about Take a Kid Ice Fishing Weekend is at <http://www.mndnr.gov/takeakidicefishing>.

***-- Roland Sigurdson, DNR MinnAqua education specialist***