



Photo submitted

Arrington Firlle, a student at Eichold Mertz Elementary Magnet School of Math, shows off the buck he bagged, as he poses with Shaun Goolsby of the Forestry Division for Mobile County Public School System.

MENTOR: Organizations team up to lead day in woodlands for Mobile County youth

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Doss said one of the reasons the mentoring program was started was the decrease in the number of new hunters in the state, which resulted in a decrease in revenue.

“Our revenues through the state’s hunting license have been down slightly and some of the issues there is the lack of mentors. We lack the granddaddies and the fathers teaching these kids about the outdoors and about hunting,” Doss said. “So we think that we have found a niche with these mentor hunts. We invite people in but we are very strict about who takes part in the course. We want to bring people in and educate them about firearm safety the right way and we want to take them and enjoy a great day in the outdoors. If that involves being able to shoot a deer that’s fine, and if it doesn’t we still have a good time.”

As with all programs and hunting events, there are expenses and costs associated with them. One of the main contributors to the mentor program is the Wild Turkey Federation.

Rodger Guilian of the Alabama Wild Turkey Federation said his organization supplies much of the money needed for the program through fees received from specialized automobile

license plates and money generated through the purchase of specialized Wild Turkey Federation automobile license plates.

“The federation’s role is to provide funding for seed and fertilizer so the state lands divisions could plant food plots and green fields. We also provided funding for shooting houses and ground blinds, shooting sticks and for firearms as well for the guest and mentored hunters to use,” Guilian said. “We are able to do that (funding) through super funds that we raise at banquets. People commonly refer to them as turkey banquets but the Wild Turkey Federation has groups all over the country and there are several dozen chapters throughout the state of Alabama. We are proud to partner with the other organizations and to be able to provide acreage access to first-time hunters through the mentoring program.”

Guilian said the mentoring program was developed as part of the WTF’s “Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt Initiative.”

Two different hunts were hosted in Citronelle by the organizations and Sheffield said because of the success of the event, plans are in place to host the mentoring hunting program on an annual basis.

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