

You can do this!

State program encourages adults to start hunting

BY JOHN N. FELSHER

Most hunters probably learned their skills as children following their fathers, other relatives or adult friends on sporting adventures, but not everyone grew up with that experience. Fortunately, the state developed the Alabama Adult Mentored Hunting Program to teach young adults how to hunt.

“Most mentored programs are geared toward kids,” explained Chuck Sykes, the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division director. “If their parents don’t have the time, desire or finances to help them continue to grow as outdoorsmen and women, it’s simply not going to happen. Therefore, we developed the AAMHP because many young adults want to learn how to hunt, but it’s a little intimidating for them to do it alone.”

People at least 19 years old with valid driver’s licenses can sign up for one-day dove or deer hunts, plus three-day deer or turkey hunts with expert mentors. In addition, prospective sportsmen can also sign up for four one-day workshops held at different wildlife management areas. The three-day deer and turkey hunts will take place at either Oak Mountain State Park in Shelby County near Pelham or Portland Landing Special Opportunity Area in Dallas County.

“During the 2018-19 season, we had more than 400 applicants from nine states including Alabama who wanted to participate in our adult mentored hunts,” Sykes recalled. “The average age of applicants was 42 years old. About 24 percent of the applicants were female.”

In a multiple-day mentored deer or turkey hunt held at Portland Landing SOA, participants can stay at the lodge on the property. On the first day, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Re-



Photos courtesy of the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division

Two friends enjoy themselves as they participate in an outing with the Alabama Adult Mentored Hunting Program. Chuck Sykes, the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division director, said 24 percent of the applicants last season were female.