



A group takes part in a hunt at Portland Landing as part of the Alabama Adult Mentored Hunting Program.

## MENTORED: State program helps adults get started

### FROM PAGE 15

sources representatives will provide firearms familiarization and safety training. Then, everyone goes to the range to shoot. Mentors will also teach the participants about wildlife habitats and tree stand safety. That eve-

ning, everyone will enjoy a good meal and fellowship at the lodge.

"People can bring their own firearms and ammunition, but someone new to the sport might not have the necessary equipment," said Justin Grider, program manager. "In that case, we

can provide them with what they need. We don't want to deny anyone an opportunity to participate because that person doesn't have a firearm or other equipment. We'll have a trailer equipped with anything someone might need to go hunting. We plan to use rifles for the deer hunts, but if someone wants to bring a crossbow or archery equipment, we'll have options for them to use that if they wish."

After dinner, the hunting host will pair each participant with a mentor. In the morning, those two will hunt their designated area together. Participants and mentors will return to the lodge for lunch. They'll hunt again that afternoon and the following day.

"At the lodge, we'll be cooking and fellowshiping just like many hunters grew up doing," Sykes added. "It's the overall experiences that make hunters, not just harvesting an animal. It's about learning about the animal and its biology, how it lives and sharing that hunt with likeminded people. Ideally, some people will bag a few deer and we can spend some time teaching the participants how to process those animals."

For one day workshops, participants will arrive that morning for firearms safety

training, shooting and other instruction. After lunch, they will head out with their mentors to hunt. As the program grows, the state will invite more participants and that also means program administrators will need more mentors volunteering to help. Keep watching [outdooralabama.com](http://outdooralabama.com) for announcements about new hunts added to the schedule.

The first of four one-day workshops will take place Oct. 26 on William R. Ireland-Cahaba River WMA in Shelby County near West Blocton. Two workshops will be held on Nov. 2 in different parts of the state. One will be held in the Upper Delta WMA in Baldwin County. The other one will take place on Swan Creek WMA in Madison County near Decatur. The final workshop will be held Nov. 9 at Barbour WMA in Barbour County near Clayton.

People pay a \$20 registration fee for every one-day workshop and a \$100 fee for each three-day hunt. See [www.outdooralabama.com/hunting/adult-mentored-hunting-program](http://www.outdooralabama.com/hunting/adult-mentored-hunting-program) for more dates and details on how to register. Also contact Grider at 205-339-5716 or send an email to Justin. [Grider@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:Grider@dcnr.alabama.gov) for more information.

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