

Outdoor Rec / Sports

NRA competition

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The location of the event alternates in even and odd years between New Mexico and Pennsylvania. The facility in Pennsylvania is near the New York boarder and the participants settle in at nearby Mansfield College where they stay in the college dorms and eat in the cafeteria.

Individuals and teams from all over the United States compete at these National events.

To participate in the challenge the participants must first complete hunter education at the state level. The YHEC participants get hands-on training giving them different areas expertise.

There are several categories of competition including shooting categories like rifle, bow and muzzleloader, shooting at life-sized targets and choosing the best option (type of weapon to use) for the shot, wildlife identification and map-and-compass orienteering.

The YHEC challenge is hosted by volunteer instructors and is estimated to draw approximately 10,000 youths each year. The YHEC Challenge began in 1985 and it is estimated that YHEC has reached more than a million young sportsmen and women.

This year youth from around Oregon came together to form one team, both with junior level and senior level participants that represented the entire state. The team consisted of five on the junior team,

ages 14 and under and five on the senior team, ages 15-18.

In total three were from Baker City, Gauge Bloomer on the Junior Team and Braden Staebler-Siewell and Ben Spough on the Senior Team.

Other members of the team were juniors Kristy Morris of Coburg, Austin McCurdy of Roseburg, Emily Leavitt of Redmond, Logan Francis of Dexter and seniors Justin Smith of Prineville, Karinda Pierin of Prineville and Christopher Leavitt of Redmond.

The competition consisted not only of shooting events but “our responsibility events,” said Buckner.

Participants must complete a written exam on the NRA hunters guide, “It is about an inch and a half thick and covers everything from overseeing an event to wildlife identification. It involves hunting ethics and sportsmanship to principals of wildlife management including identification,” said Buckner.

The wildlife identification may contain pelts, skulls, tracks, scat or any combination and consists of 30 specimens. For Identification of water fowl, wings must be identified by species.

Orienteering is another one of the events. Learning to read topographical maps and reading a compass including written and practical exam learning to help get your bearings and step off distances.

“It’s practical information that can help you from

getting lost and help you find your way out if you do get misguided,” Buckner said.

The hunter’s safety trail event is one in which they carry a gun loaded with prime shells (blanks). The participants have to decide their best course of action and they are judged on the scenario and choices they make. This event takes the better part of an hour to complete with the judges going along the course with them. They encounter 3D targets and they have to decide whether the season is open on that animal according to a simulated big game regulation book provided. They have they decide whether it is a safe shot to take based on background, if it is a shoot or don’t shoot situation and demonstrate safe gun handling including whether it was a good shot technically as far as type of weapon used and placement of a shot.

“You don’t want to shoot a deer in the chest with an arrow for example, too much bone, etc.,” Buckner explained.

“It’s very detailed information, the regular hunter’s education courses they go through isn’t even a primer for this really,” he added.

The team saw an individual win from junior team captain Emily Leavitt who was awarded 2nd place in the muzzle loading event and the team earned 2nd in archery.

The senior’s team saw individual wins by Christopher Leavitt with 1st in the .22 rifle event and 2nd

in the hunter responsibility exam.

The team as a whole was 1st in the muzzle loading event, 1st in Orienteering, 2nd in Wildlife Identification, 2nd in .22 rifle and 3rd in the hunter responsibility exam. The Oregon team placed 2nd overall. 1st place went to a team from North Carolina and 3rd to a team from Pennsylvania.

Buckner said, “We started the program in Oregon 16 years ago, I try to promote other local groups and this is primarily an educational program. To do well they really have to study and there is no different ion between the boys and girls, they compete on the same level.”

Buckner says he has groups in Ontario, Prineville, Redmond, Springfield, Roseburg and is trying to get a dormant group in Klamath Falls restarted.

“It takes parents and those that really have some authority in some of these fields to teach, instruct these kids,” he said.

Buckner often travels within the state of Oregon to any group that wants a special presentation on the program or expresses interest in getting one started. “It’s an ideal youth program because it is so well rounded and teaches kids so much.”

Buckner was assisted at the event by additional coaches Angela Slabaugh of Dexter and Carl Shaver of Prineville.

Funding for the program is made possible from a friends of NRA grant.

Shrine game



Submitted Photo.

Pine-Eagle Spartan Ray Denig, number 41, follows a long family tradition of participating the Shrine East West Football Game. His grandfather played the first Shrine summertime classic back in 1952.

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All joking aside, Cook explained a team that became very solid in a short amount of time.

“We became a very good football team in a short amount of time because we came together and because we were so well prepared and targeted by the coaching staff. We worked well together as a unit. Our coaches prepared us and they knew exactly what the West was going to do. We only ran 10 plays on offense,” said Cook.

Cook credited offensive line coach Steve Turner from Cascade for helping prepare an impressive steel wall offensive line. “I’ve played against him before and he always has a good defensive line.”

The potent East offense was led by the one-two punch of Austin Feist who played his high school schedule for the Burns Highlanders (home of another pretty good quarterback, NFL player Kellen Clemens who today plays for the San Diego Chargers) and Jackson Cross from Toledo. Feist posed a dual threat through his ability to rush and thrown well, and Cross, who Cook referred to as the prototypical quarterback, stayed patient in the pocket and picked the defense apart with his accurate passing.

Other local participants included Ray Denig from Pine-Eagle High School and Baker High School cheerleaders Taite Mendenhall and Caroline Dudley.

The victory by the East team brings even, 30-30-3, the overall record between the East-West summertime Shrine football all-stars. The annual contest, held in the Baker Memorial Stadium, raises funds to benefit the Portland Shriners Hospital for Children.

The traditional halftime steer auction raised \$15,250, the Haines Stampede Association presented the Shriners a check for \$1,500 raised during the rodeo’s July 3rd Shriener’s night, and another \$1,150 was raised auctioning off two footballs signed by every member of the two teams.

West Queen Skylar Mooneyham from Portland and East Queen Cymbrie Lagoa from Sisters seemed to become fast friends as each cheered on their teams. Both Queens were joined by last years’ East Queen Mackenzie Gray from Enterprise.

All three Shrine Game Queens received treatment from the Shriners Hospital.

“I definitely benefited from the treatment I received from the Shriners Hospital,” said West Queen Mooneyham. “I received orthopedic surgery that enables me to stand and to walk without pain and fatigue.”

East Queen Lagoa credits the Shriners Hospital for enabling her to write again.

Last years’ East Queen Gray thanks the Shriners for a spinal fusion procedure to correct a case of scoliosis so severe that it was closing off her lungs and affected her ability to breathe.

Public use restrictions increase

Forest officials implemented Phase B public use restrictions on the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests due to extreme fire danger, the potential for human caused fires, and concern for public safety. The increased restrictions pertain to the use of campfires, smoking, chainsaws, internal combustion engines, and generators.

“The forest vegetation has cured to a highly flammable condition and our

upper elevations are much drier than usual due to the lack of a winter snowpack. Recent fires in the area have spread rapidly and are requiring considerable effort to contain.” said Brian Goff, Fire Staff Officer on the Umatilla National Forest. Roy Walker, Fire Staff Officer on the Malheur National Forest added, “We all enjoy and appreciate our forests and we need to minimize the chance of an accidental human-caused fire. It’s only early August

and we have several weeks of fire season ahead of us. We all need to be aware of these conditions, be cautious when recreating in the forest, and think about fire prevention.”

Beginning Thursday, campfires will only be allowed in designated campgrounds and recreation sites. Liquefied or bottled gas stoves and heaters are allowed for cooking and heating.

Operating an internal combustion engine, such

as a chainsaw, is prohibited. Firewood cutting is not allowed. This restriction applies to all internal combustion engines except motor vehicles.

Generators will only be allowed in the center of an area at least 10 feet in diameter that is cleared of all flammable material, or; when fully contained within a pickup truck bed that is devoid of all flammable material, or; when factory installed in a recreational vehicle and the generator exhaust discharge is located in the center of an area at least 10 feet in diameter that is cleared of all flammable material.

Smoking is only allowed within enclosed vehicles, buildings, and developed recreation sites or when stopped in an area cleared of all flammable material.

As a reminder, travel restrictions prohibit motor vehicles traveling off of designated Forest roads and trails, except for the purposes of going to or from campsites located within 300 feet of an open road. Motorized travel on segments of road where access is blocked by gate, barricade, log, boulder or earthen berm is also prohibited. Vehicles must still abide by all laws and regulations pertaining to the area of travel.

Regulated closures are in effect on State and private lands protected by Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) in north-east and central Oregon. Please check with your local Oregon Department of Forestry office for public use restrictions on lands protected by ODF.

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