



IKES ON TARGET



PHOTO: JAY CLARK

Start Planning Now for National Shooting Sports Month

Now is a great time to start planning to host a local National Shooting Sports Month event in August 2021 (www.shootingsportsmoonth.org). Keep in mind an important objective of this nationwide effort is to encourage participation by people who are *not* already recreational shooting sports enthusiasts.

As you probably know, the number of first-time gun owners grew dramatically this year. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), an estimated 5 million Americans purchased their first firearm in 2020. This represents a huge new audience that will be interested in training, competition and safe places to enjoy shooting sports. Hosting a National Shooting Sports Month event next August is an ideal opportunity to engage and support new gun owners in your community.

If your chapter has never hosted a shooting sports event especially for the public, the NSSF offers support with its First Shots™ program (www.nssf.org/ranges/first-shots). This educational/promotional program can easily be incorporated into your chapter's National Shooting Sports Month event.

This NSSF resource is adaptable for all shooting ranges and all types of firearms, including handguns, rifles and shotguns and airguns. Also, you will be eligible to receive support in the form of eye and ear protection, targets, ammunition and participant handouts.

In addition, the League can assist your chapter with event marketing and promotion. For more details search online at: www.iwla.org/outdoor-recreation/shooting-sports or email shootingsports@iwla.org.

Generations of Americans have discovered recreational shooting sports at Izaak Walton League chapters. Hosting a National Shooting Sports Month event is a great opportunity to raise public visibility, introduce more people to shooting sports and recruit new chapter members.

We want all chapters with shooting facilities to reap the benefits of National Shooting Sports Month. Use these strategies and they will help your chapter stay “on target!”



On Target: Featured Chapters

In each issue of “Ikes On Target” we highlight chapters that promote shooting sports.

Under 500 Members —

Prince William Chapter (Virginia)

Located in northern Virginia, this chapter is the home of the Prince William Archers. This group of active Ikes maintain an 18-lane indoor archery range and a 28-target outdoor field and 3-D courses.

Throughout the years, this chapter’s facility has attracted various local, state, regional and national archery competitions.



18-Lane Indoor Archery Range

Another group of chapter member volunteers, the Prince William Rifle and Pistol Club, operates the chapter’s modern five-lane indoor shooting range.



Indoor Rifle and Pistol Range

These volunteers offer various hunter skills training sessions including Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources basic hunter education, International Bowhunter Education Program courses and qualifications for the Fairfax County Deer Management Archery Program.

www.iwla.org/princewilliam

Over 500 Members —

Alexandria Chapter (Virginia)

With an annual member count averaging about 800, this suburban Washington, DC chapter offers a wide variety of shooting sports opportunities for its members and guests.

Their multiple ranges and courses include:

- Eight-lane outdoor field archery
- Ten-point 60-yard pistol
- Covered 100-yard (rimfire/centerfire) rifle
- Trap and five-position shotgun

They offer the Civilian Marksmanship Program and America's Rifle Challenge recreational shooter skills training events, as well as sponsor a Scholastic Clay Target Program for local youth.



Covered Pistol House

One of their major fundraisers is the chapter's seasonal turkey shoot. The weekly shoot runs from October through March. This is a fun, family-oriented activity and is open to the public.



The chapter offers other outdoor recreational opportunities, such as camping, fishing on two large, stocked ponds and hunting on their 211-acre property.

www.iwla.us

Photos courtesy Alexandria Chapter IWLA Website



Successful 2020 National Shooting Sports Month Events

Notwithstanding the coronavirus pandemic, several League chapters in Iowa and Virginia hosted National Shooting Sports Month events throughout August.

In Iowa, the Waterloo Chapter is best known locally for its complete trap, skeet and sporting clays facilities and weekly shotgun training program. Even with COVID-19 restrictions in August, a limited number of event attendees were still able to try their hand at shooting sports.

The Dragoon Trail Chapter has some of the most extensive shooting sports facilities of any chapter in Iowa. At their event, guests could choose from many activities, including a five-stand shoot, a friendly trap shooting competition and a practical shooters match.

The Warren County Chapter provided weekly evening opportunities for the public to shoot trap and .22 rimfire rifles under the guidance of experienced mentors. Both events generated interest in joining the chapter from the participants.



In addition, the chapter hosted a weekend 3-D archery shoot event.

In Virginia, the Lynchburg Chapter held a successful National Shooting Sports Month event tied to their annual open house. While some health and safety adjustments were made due to COVID-19, all ranges were open to the public under the supervision of trained range safety officers.

More than 200 visitors, some novice shooting sports participants, completed rounds of trap and were able to shoot rifles. Many families tried their hand at archery under the guidance of experienced archers. This daylong event generated 60 new chapter members.



The Alexandria Chapter opened its ranges for six hours on a Saturday. It was great day with a steady flow of families coming to tour the chapter grounds and try target shooting. These visitors shot more shotgun, rifle and pistol ammunition than planned, almost 2,600 rounds. Five families from the more than 50 guests joined the chapter. As an added bonus, many of the guests returned to the chapter and later took NRA basic pistol training courses.

The Winchester, Virginia Chapter introduced others to sporting clays using their five-stand course and wobble traps. A robust stream of new members was generated from this one-day event.



Also, their guests claimed these new experiences were more fun than they had imagined!

Discount Ammo Offer



Throughout the year, **Federal Premium** offers target ammunition for purchase at a discounted price to eligible non-profit organization's youth programs.

Consistent with its deep commitment to training the next generation of hunters and shooters to be safe and proficient, the **Federal Spring 2021 Shotshell Program** for approved organizations is now open for orders until **January 29, 2021**.

Order form, available products, limitations and ordering details are enclosed with this issue of *Ikes On Target* for your convenience. Please do not alter the order forms in any way, they must receive them *completed* and *signed* in order to process the order.

Izaak Walton League chapter requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. This is for ammo to be used in youth shooting sports programs exclusively, such as marksmanship training and hands-on hunter education, and is *not* for resale.

Interested IWLA chapters meeting these criteria are encouraged to reach out to education@vistaoutdoor.com to be added to their mailing list for these special program offerings. You will then receive any mailings they send out announcing such offers for shotshells, rimfire ammo, and shooting accessories.

Be sure to identify your IWLA chapter's name (include Izaak Walton League in title) and location (city, state), and describe the types of youth shooting sports activities you conduct and the estimated number of young participants in your programs.

A Proactive Shooting Range Protection Plan

By Ernie Padgette, Chairman
IWLA Shooting Sports Conservation
Committee

Some years ago, the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter of Virginia began the process of having its facilities certified by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VA DEQ).

This effort was started for two reasons:

1. As an honest effort to ensure the shooting sports activities of the chapter were not impacting the environment, and
2. To obtain officially documented proof that would help prevent any outside group from making false claims in an effort to restrict the activities of the chapter, particularly its shooting ranges.

Over the years, this Izaak Walton League chapter became the first shooting range operation in Virginia to be certified as being "environmentally friendly."

Later, the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter went on to become part of the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP).

Committed to measures for continuous and sustainable environmental progress and community involvement, the chapter became the first shooting range operation in the Commonwealth to reach the VEEP's E3 recognition level, and is currently awaiting approval of the new VEEP E4 level. To achieve this certification, for example, the chapter used the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's best management practices to mitigate soil pH levels on shotgun ranges, as well as monitored and analyzed surface water on their property.



A Certified Environmentally Friendly Rifle and Pistol Shooting Range

Photo courtesy Arlington-Fairfax Chapter IWLA Website

The VA DEQ has been a partner all the way. Each step was coordinated with them, and they were helpful and supportive since day one.

Please give some serious thought about the impact of a complaint that your chapter's activities may be harming the environment. Whether the complaint is legitimate or not, it would be wise to officially document that your chapter operations are not harming the environment.

For starters, consider the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) as a resource and develop an Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP). According to the NSSF, "An ESP is a legally compliant management plan meant to conserve our natural resources and sustain our environment. It is a 'living document' intended for use as a long-term management tool and should be reviewed, at a minimum, annually and revised as appropriate based on implementation experience. Accordingly, firearms ranges should consider working closely with a qualified ESP services provider to properly execute the range's ESP."

Learn more details at:

www.nssf.org/establishing-an-environmental-stewardship-plan-for-firearms-ranges/.

Regardless of where your chapter is located, consider reaching out to your state's environmental protection agency and start this process.

In addition, the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter has, from the beginning, offered to share with any chapter the process they have followed to be officially certified and meet the environmental standards in Virginia.

Rather than trying on your own to re-invent the process, consider contacting president Tom Ciarula, Arlington-Fairfax Chapter at arlfx.president@gmail.com.

Then find out how you can protect the future of your chapter.



"Ikes On Target" is a publication developed for IWLA chapter presidents and shooting sports coordinators.

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