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Advanced Hunter Education Sample Curriculum by Subject Area

1) The Big Picture

- Political framework
 - North American Model
 - Montana constitution - game held in the public trust
 - Property rights of private landowners
 - Pittman-Robertson Act (hunting 1937) & Dingell-Johnson Act (fish 1950)
 - Farm Bill – segments relevant to wildlife on farm and ranch lands
- Conservation framework
 - History of wildlife conservation
 - Hunter as conservationist
 - Landowner and sportsmen cooperation (livestock grazing on wildlife management areas, hunter as tool in elk management)
- Legal framework
 - Trespass, shooting from county road, etc.
 - Game laws and why we have them
 - Presentation by game warden
- Hunting culture
 - Hunter as conservationist
 - Trophy hunting, meat hunting, game management
- Social awareness
 - Public perception of hunters and hunting
 - Importance of being positive influence on youth
 - Set the right example as a quality hunter
 - Understand the responsibility hunters have (safety, hunter as tool in game management, developing positive relationships with landowners, etc.)
- Wildlife management
 - Elk, deer, and antelope management (quantity and quality, effect of different season types) -
 - Carrying capacity and population control
 - Carrying capacity of hunters (a pressure point beyond which animals leave, hunting success, safety)
 - Ratio benchmarks (bull-to-cow, buck-to-doe, calves-to-cows, fawns-to-does)
 - Brucellosis and financial risk to rancher

2) Farming and Ranching

- Ranching and farming – macro.
 - Civics lesson (property taxes landowners pay to support schools, roads, etc.)
 - Open space and habitat
 - Competitive global economy
 - Why cattle and wheat (why ranchers and farmers raise what they raise)
 - Importance of agriculture in Montana's economy
- Ranching and farming – micro
 - Economics
 - Seasonal flow (what happens when - haying, calving, fencing, irrigating, harvesting, weaning, shipping, etc.)

- Cost to agricultural operation (landowner's time, impact on forage and livestock carrying capacity, impact on fences, impact of driving on seeded field, etc.)
- Lease or outfit to recover cost of wildlife
- Cost of noxious weeds
- Grazing management and impact elk have
 - Financial cost to landowner
 - Ecological impact and cost (lost productivity, planned rest disrupted)
 - Fencing, problem of elk taking out fences
 - What landowners provide for wildlife

3) Landowner/sportsmen relations

- Landowner relations
 - Hunter perceptions of landowners
 - Landowner perceptions of hunters
 - How landowners perceive elk (A cost? A benefit? A liability? A value to the ranch and to the ranching experience?)
 - The wrong way and the right way to approach landowners
 - Appearance, attitude, timing, manners, etc.
 - Why landowners close their property to public hunting
 - Ask what the rules are if not provided
- Landowner issues - landowner panel
 - Weeds, off-road driving, road maintenance, trespass, etc.
 - Common weed identification
 - Opening and closing gates
- Ethics – do the right thing when no one is looking
 - Case studies - online discussion and class presentation of ethical situation (e.g., What do you do when you wound an animal and it goes onto a neighbor?)
 - If you make a poor choice in an ethical situation there will be consequences – no negative consequences if you make no bad decisions
 - Practice sportsmanship, not greed
- Hunter behavior and etiquette
 - Appearance, conduct, courtesy, attitude
 - Play by the rules, don't impose, report out
 - Know and practice a proper way and time to ask for permission
 - Respect landowners and private property rights
- Respect property rights and landowners
 - Respect that landowner may have outfitter in part to deal with hunter calls and the time demands hunter management takes
 - Understand that to hunt on private property is a privilege

4) Hunting

- Hunting skills and knowledge
 - Wind and scent (human), sound, tracking
 - Behavior of game, game habits
 - Equipment (knife, saw, optics, etc.)
 - Optics, range finders, determining distance
- Map skills and technology
 - Proficiency needed in using online information and smart phone apps (Montana Cadastral onXmaps, U.S. Topo maps, Avenza, etc)
 - Know how to read a topo map
 - Know how to use a GPS –
 - *GPS map and field exercise/test*
- Be prepared
 - Clothing and gear for –various conditions, weather, etc.

- Fire starters (matches/striker, etc.)
- Gear for game treatment and retrieval (ropes, saw, pack frame, etc.)
- Back-up plan if lost
- Learn about the area before hunting it (digital map, Google Earth, talk to hunters who have hunted there, develop realistic expectations, etc.)
- Physical fitness and physical capabilities (match ability to terrain and demands of the hunt)
- Basic survival skills
 - Emergency shelter
 - How to make, start, feed, and extinguish a fire
- Hunter safety
 - Basic first aid
- Biology of major species hunted
 - Diseases
 - Breeding seasons and habits, calving/fawning season
 - Horn and antler growth and shedding
 - Longevity
 - Aging from teeth
- Elk behavior
 - Seasonality – what elk do in different seasons
 - Response to predators
 - Grazing, forage selection and impact
- Tracking – *blood trailing*

5) Making the shot

- Shooting
 - Ballistics, ammunition, caliber, game damage
 - Shot placement
 - Marksmanship, shoot pulse
 - Know your weapon (where it shoots at what distance, what it's capabilities are)
 - Sighting in
 - Know the distance (range finders)
 - Know your capabilities and stay within those (don't take a shot you can't make)
 - Follow up on shot
 - Firearm safety
 - Different field shooting positions

6) After the kill

- Field dressing
 - Field care of the animal
 - Minimize waste
- Game retrieval
 - Quartering
 - Boning out – without field dressing
 - Packing out (pack frame)
 - Dragging (ropes, knots, etc.)
 - Cart, bicycle, four-wheeler, snowmobile
 - Horses/mules
- Follow up with landowner
 - Report out
 - Thank you note, follow up, etc.

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