



Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow

Hunting Awareness & Conservation Education

Hunter Responsibility and Ethics

Goal: To convey the importance and complexity of hunting ethics and hunter responsibilities and their implications for wildlife management and for the future of hunting in the United States.

Objectives: After this block of instruction the participant will be able to:

1. Explain how hunter behavior affects the future of hunting and, by extension, the future of wildlife management.
2. Define ethics and fair chase, and explain their differences in time and by culture, community, and locality.
3. Describe the type of ethical dilemmas hunters may face.
4. Explain that some hunters consider hunting more than sport or recreation—that it is a matter of lifestyle, culture, tradition, and fundamental values.
5. Explain that hunter responsibilities extend to the resource, the landscapes, and its ownerships, to other users, to the quarry, and to hunting.

Why This Is Important for a Natural Resource Professional

While often it is not clear, there are distinct differences between responsible behavior and ethical behavior. Obviously, both are to be encouraged. Agencies often define responsible behavior in laws and regulations. However, agencies also regulate some forms of ethical behavior and may be called upon to regulate other forms. Understanding the differences between responsible and ethical behavior and the role that regulations may play in influencing those behaviors will allow managers to create a regulatory structure that enhances hunter compliance and public acceptance of hunting.

Additional Resources:

Organ, J.F., R.M. Muth, J.E. Dizzard, S.J. Williamson, and T.A. Decker. 1998. Fair chase and humane treatment: balancing the ethics of hunting and trapping. *Transactions of the sixty-third North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference* 63:528-543.

Posewitz, J. 1994. *Beyond Fair Chase*. The Globe Pequot Press, Guilford, Connecticut, USA.