

Beginning January 1 and continuing through February 15, 2012, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will be accepting enrollment applications for its Master Hunter Permit program.

To qualify for the program, applicants must demonstrate a high level of skill and be committed to lawful and ethical hunting practices, said Sergeant Carl Klein, manager of the WDFW Hunter Education Division. WDFW uses master hunters to participate in controlled hunts to remove problem animals that damage property or threaten public safety, especially where special skills are required and sensitive issues may exist. Master Hunters also engage in volunteer projects to address critical issues facing hunting and wildlife such as access to private lands, habitat enhancement, and landowner relations.

Hunters enrolling in the program must: pay a non-refundable \$50 application fee via a check or money order made out to WDFW Master Hunter program, pass a criminal background check, take a Crime Observation and Reporting Training (CORT) class, sign a Master Hunter Code of Ethics form, submit at least one notarized shooting proficiency form, provide at least 20 hours of volunteer service, and pass an extensive written exam based upon the program's curriculum--all by November 15, 2012.

Entry into the Master Hunter Permit program will be denied for applicants who have within the last ten years: paid the required fine or been convicted of a Chapter 77.15 RCW offense, or paid the required fine or been convicted of criminal trespass, reckless endangerment, criminal conspiracy, or making a false statement to law enforcement while hunting, fishing, or engaged in any activity regulated by WDFW. Entry will also be denied to those who are prohibited from possessing firearms under RCW 9.41.040 (unless rights have been restored); or who have current hunting or fishing license revocations or a current suspension of hunting or fishing license privileges in Washington or in another state.

Sergeant Klein encourages hunters who enroll in the program to study the materials thoroughly to prepare for the 100 question test, because applicants are allowed only one chance to re-take the exam. Those that successfully complete the enrollment process will receive a master hunter patch and identification card, and will be eligible to participate in depredation hunts.

For more information about the Master Hunter Permit program call Tracy Loveless at (360) 902-8412, Mike Kuttel at (360) 902-8413, or Sergeant Carl Klein at (360) 902-2346.