

Good Things...Good People

My high school football coach and friend, Don Baldini, often told us that “good things happen to good people.” I believed this the first time he uttered the words and continue to believe the same today. This could not have been more evident than over the last full weekend in Sept. which we hunters otherwise recognize as the “youth deer season.”

Last weekend, along side the north bank of the Eel River near Hoover, IN, several young men and women and their families and friends attended the 2012 Freedom Hunt. Freedom Hunt is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide positive outdoor experiences for young kids, both male and female, who have special needs including, but not limited to, severe ADHD, Autism, birth defects, cancer survivors, and in some cases, paralysis.

This year, 17 youngsters and their families from around the state participated in our annual deer hunt. Many of these youngsters had hunted with us in the past and others were rookies. For those youngsters that participated last year, let there be no doubt that the “soaked” memories of Freedom Hunt 2011 were still lingering. Unfortunately, last year’s hunt was all but washed out by torrential downpours, thunder, lightning and mud, ankle deep in some spots.

In the closing days before this year’s hunt, I began to think about all the hard work and effort put forth by our volunteers, more than 30 in number, and the prospect of another sloppy weekend, like the last. Then, I remembered, “good things happen to good people.”

Mother Nature delivered mild temperatures and light breezes the first night in camp. As the hunters and their families rolled throughout the late afternoon, things were shaping up nicely. The Saturday morning bugle call (at 5am) quickly brought the camp to life as our young hunters and their hunting guides began their journey from sleeping bag, to food tent, to transport vehicles, to 17 deer blinds strategically placed throughout several properties in the Adamsboro and Hoover areas.

The kids hunted Saturday morning, Saturday evening and Sunday morning before closing ceremonies were underway. Weather was a non-factor as Mother Nature served up a main course of light fog rising from the Eel River both morning and night with a side dish of the full moon reflecting off the calm waters. We were also blessed with mild temperatures. The hunt ended with 17 smiling faces and nine harvested deer, at least two of which were bucks. Of greatest importance was the fact that 17 special young men and women had the opportunity to forget about their daily struggles, build friendships with each other, and enjoy the fruits of Mother Nature. I am thankful to have been able to watch it all unfold.

Finally, just like any successful non-profit, it is only prudent to recognize those who have supported us. Unquestionably, the volunteer list is too long to publish, but much thanks to a few that come to mind: Rural King, Young's Culligan, Army Nat'l Guard (Lafayette), Simpson's Deer Processing (Young America), Holland's Deer Processing (Peru), Jim Rogers Family, Hartley Family, Scott Family Farms, Shafer family, Morrow Family, Graves family, John Allen, Toots Flory, Randy and Jill Rife, Sixby family, Brenda Louthain, Packard Farms, and other landowners, Russiaville IGA, Central Paving, Downham's Gun shop, Campbell's firearms, Keith Kesling, and many many others. All good people, who do good things.

Brad Rozzi

Freedom Hunt 2012