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Dear Learn to Hunt Groups,

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recently postponed all Department sponsored R3 events through at least Labor Day weekend in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Now we regret to inform you that we must postpone these activities through the remainder of the calendar year. These events include all educational outdoor skills activities administered through the R3 program, such as Learn to Hunt (LTH) events; as well as Hunt for Food, Fishing for Dinner, and Mentor/Instructor Trainings.

The Department understands the importance of hunting and fishing in Wisconsin and the great interest in participating in these seasons and preparatory events such as LTH. We strongly support Learn to Hunt and other programs dedicated to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and anglers, to keep our connection to wildlife and the outdoors strong in future generations. However, the DNR always places as the top priority the safety and the well-being of our participants, mentors, instructors, and staff, along with the people who live in the home communities.

This decision was made following the re-opening of in-person Hunter/Safety Education classes that hold a certification requirement. Safety certification is required by law to obtain a hunting license and participate in the statewide hunting seasons. Learn to Hunt and other educational outdoors skills events are not a pre-requisite for either youth or adults to participate in the variety of hunting opportunities Wisconsin offers. In addition, because Learn to Hunt events require that mentors and novices remain no further than arm's length apart, these events inherently do not allow for social distancing. The logistics of Learn to Hunt events has the potential to put both mentors and new hunters at risk. The DNR's top priority is protecting the health and safety of our event participants and volunteers.

We hope that families and members of the same household will take advantage of the Mentored Hunting Program during the regular seasons this fall. This law allows a novice hunter to purchase a hunting license and harvest authorization without hunter safety certification if they are within arm's reach of an experienced, licensed hunter over the age of 18. While we may not be able to link up novice hunters with mentors outside of their household through the LTH program this year, it remains important that hunters continue to pass on their skills and passion to those close to them. We encourage all to take this time to share a sunrise or cool autumn afternoon bonding with your children or adult novice hunters in your household.

We continue to receive the most up-to-date information, including guidance from DHS which recommends cancelling or postponing non-essential gatherings of people to help protect Wisconsinites from the spread of COVID-19. The Department will continue to assess the situation and will resume hosting Learn to Hunt events when it is safe to do so.

For specific information regarding COVID-19 we encourage the public to frequently monitor the [DHS website](#) for updates, and to follow @DHSWI on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or dhs.wi on [Instagram](#). Additional information can be found on the [CDC website](#).\*

For any additional questions or concerns feel free to contact me. Thank you for your continued dedication to passing on a conservation ethic to our future generations.

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