

October 12, 2008

**Osceola Rod and Gun Club  
First Annual Youth Deer Hunt**

When have you heard of a 12 year old getting out of bed at 5:00 AM full of excitement? When it is opening day of the Youth Deer Hunting Season in Wisconsin! With that vision of excitement in mind, the members of the *Osceola Rod and Gun Club* sponsored their 1st Annual Youth Deer Hunt.

After months of planning and several youth hunter applications, Ben Eastman's name was drawn to be our first participant. I could hear the excitement in Ben's voice as we made plans to scout and practice shooting. Saturday, October 11th could not come quick enough as we set out on our first trip into the woods. Although we spotted a few deer that day, unseasonably warm weather and an afternoon thunder shower put a damper on the first day of our hunt.

Despite any luck on day one, when the sun rose on Sunday morning, Ben was ready for another full day in the woods. The day started out with little activity but as the afternoon approached and as the Packers were putting the finishing touches to a victory over the Seahawks, we started seeing deer, a lot of deer!

Within a few minutes we had 9 deer grazing on our Whitetail Institute clover and chicory food plot. We watched the deer, whispered about shot placement, and took in the scene of nature unfolding in front of us. We held out as long as we could for a chance at a buck, but when the wind started to swirl, Ben put a marksman's shot on his first deer and we shared a high five.

Taking a youth like Ben hunting is a perfect opportunity to teach not just how to shoot a deer, but about safety and the whole culture and tradition of hunting. It is a tradition which teaches youth the ethical use of renewable and natural resources such as White-tailed Deer. Hunting is also an amazing place to gain respect for all living things and to introduce youth to the natural world.

Pro-hunting organizations like the *Osceola Rod and Gun Club* are battling the declining number of hunters through the active promotion of youth hunting. You can do your part to preserve hunting by taking a young person out with you this fall. Their excitement and enthusiasm will be all the reward you will need. White-tailed Deer hunting has a long, proud tradition and it is up to the hunters of today to ensure that this tradition is carried on by generations to come.

The *Osceola Rod and Gun Club* supports the youth of our community through programs like Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Hunters Safety, Kids Are First Fishing, Scholastics Clay Target Program, NRA Shooting Sports Camp, and Student Scholarships.