

Youth Hunter Mentorship Program back for 2025



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Youth Hunter Mentorship Program is back again for 2025, according to a press release from Paul Goggan, president of the Bancroft Fish and Game Club. The BFGC hosts the program for youth aged 12 to 14 years old from their community and membership and it will take place July 14 to 18. Goggan comments on this program to Bancroft This Week. For more information, Goggan can be contacted at paul.goggan@hotmail.com or at 905-644-8846.

During the weeklong Youth Hunter Mentorship Program, Goggan reveals that each youth spends two and a half days in the classroom and another two and a half days on the club's ranges.

?By the end of the week, each participant will have their Minors' Licence, have taken the government Hunter Course, and learned how to safely shoot, identify and handle several kinds of firearms,? he says.

Back in 2016, the first program was established, and Goggan says they've tried to improve it so that the youth can learn as much as they can in a week about sports and hunting.

?Our sponsors are what really make this program great each year. They give us the tools and we provide the educational experience for the youth,? he says.

Goggan emphasizes that the program is a great learning experience for the youth and that introducing them to these time-honoured hunting and shooting activities instills valuable life skills, promotes a sense of responsibility in each youth and helps foster a deeper appreciation for nature.

?The Bancroft Fish and Game Club is proud of the fact that for the last three years we have had five boys and five girls take our program. This year we had 21 youths apply but we are restricted to only 10 students. Our program is 100 per cent free and open to youths from our members and the Bancroft community. This year 80 per cent of the kids are from the community and they have no connection to the Bancroft Fish & Game Club at all. The club simply wants to promote shooting sports and hunting,? he says.

Goggan says that this year's 10 participants, five boys and five girls, are as follows; Storm Suleman, Max Stajan, James Fox, Elijah MacDonald, Patrick Humen, Meadow Cook, Chloe Hudder, Cheyenne Pecarski, Riley Wilton, and Addie McEnery. The club instructors for 2025 are Bob Montroy, Carl Ziebarth, Amanda Lundrigan, Goggan, and Vortex Canada representatives Reg Wales and Lisa and Mike Brake.

Goggan says that most of the youth have little or not experience in the safe handling and operation of a firearm, or any hunting knowledge. Therefore, for this year's students, everything is very new to them.

“But they tell me that they are very eager to learn about hunting and really excited about shooting different firearms during this year's program. Prior to us selecting the final 10 students each participant fills out an application and then we hold an in-person meeting with all the youths and their parents. Each student has to commit to arriving each day on time, read the approximately 300 pages of course material and want to learn about hunting and shooting. Each of the students told me that they really want to learn to shoot and learn all the hunting rules so they can go with their family hunting this year,” he says.

Goggan explains that the program is held at no cost to the participants and that the BFGC is immensely grateful to all their members and sponsors who without their support the program would not have been available to the youth.

“A special thanks to our 2025 sponsors: OFAH, Switzer's Auctions & Appraisals, Bancroft Canadian Tire, Vortex Canada, Firearms Outlet, Richard Naranowicz, Ontario Conservation Officers Association, PolyJohn Canada, Bullseye North, MDT, FSESO, Ducks Unlimited and Capstone Precision Group. Also, a big thank you to the following Bancroft Fish & Game Members for their continued support of the program: Sean Davis, Norm Murray, Paul Dempsey, James Wong, John Goguen, Michael Banwell, Cory Coburn, Rick Melnick, Kirk Heckley, Richard Staples, Thomas Armour, Charlie Archdekin, Cameron McKenzie and Barry Wannamaker,” he says.

Goggan told Bancroft This Week that on Friday, July 18 at 3 p.m., they will be holding a graduation for the youth that successfully complete the program. “Everyone is welcome to attend,” he says.

Goggan told Bancroft This Week that the BFGC's mission through this program is to provide a gateway for passing down Canada's shooting sports and hunting traditions to the next generation safely and responsibly.

“While firearms safety is everyone's responsibility, properly teaching shooting sports and hunting to ensure a lifetime of enjoyment is why the Bancroft Fish Game Club instructors go to great lengths to ensure the safety of all our students from what they eat for lunch to being on our shooting ranges. Our instructors all follow strict safety rules that ensure all our students have a fun but safe day on the range. The youths also get to spend a full day on our ranges with three highly professional representatives from Vortex Canada that teach the youths how to shoot better using scopes out to 400 metres with .223 Vortex Scoped Rifles,” he says. “Thanks to our sponsors, these 10 youths get introduced to the benefits of hunting and shooting sports, a lifetime of enjoyment starts with learning, understanding, and practicing the basics of firearms safety.”