

2006 Alberta FNAWS Youth Hunter Sheep Camp
by Morgan Latimer

On Friday, July 28, my mom, my sister, one of my best friends, and I bundled into our small car (along with three large duffel bags, one big suitcase, and numerous backpacks), and went to the Alford Lake Centre for Conservation Education for a weekend of fun, learning, and excellent food.

After everybody was registered and settled into a cabin, we went into the main building for introductions, rules, and a general idea of what would be going on during the weekend. After finishing supper, we had a demonstration by Kelsey Kure on how to tie different kinds of fly-fishing flies. After he showed us how, he got three kids at a time to make a fly by ourselves.

The next morning, Roland Voghell from Antler Hill Taxidermy did a caping demonstration on a bighorn sheep head. He let the kids help, if they wanted. Lee Hankey, from Fish and Wildlife, then did a presentation on Sheep Hunting Regulations and how to tell if a ram is legal or not. He showed us pictures and we had to decide. It was hard. Following that, there was a scoring clinic so we could learn how to measure trophies properly. That afternoon we went on the survival hike, definitely one of the most exciting and informative aspects of the camp. This was led by Ted Hansen, who runs the Alford Lake facility. When we came back from the hike, supper was waiting, and after we finished, there was a bear awareness video. Then we did work with GPS units, which was very neat because we got to do a scavenger hunt.

After breakfast the next day, we got to pack horses. We split into groups, and after a short demonstration, got to try to tie single diamond and double diamond hitches ourselves in pairs. When we were done, we went to the classroom to talk about gun safety and the rules of the shooting range. We then cleaned out the cabins and proceeded to the shooting range. This is the part of the weekend that most kids look forward to, the shooting. There are three stations; archery, twenty-twos with peep sights, and trap shooting. When we left, everybody got a really nice folding lawn chair.

This year's Sheep camp was very educational, but still extremely fun. It seems like it gets better every year, so I am really looking forward to going next year. Alford Lake is a very good location for this camp, and I hope that we can hold this camp there for many years to come.