

Cullman Archery Park Opens



Alabama's second community archery park is now open in Cullman, Ala. It joins the one in Athens, Ala., which opened in 2008. "We're not slowing down," said Stuart Goldsby, Alabama's regional hunter education coordinator for the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF). "We might not be building the biggest facilities in the country, but we're working with our communities to build grassroots archery parks that involve everyone from schools to rec departments to bowhunting clubs."

The Community Archery Program (CAP) in Cullman, Ala., received \$52,000 from the Archery Trade Association (ATA) to fund a local archery park, provide equipment and increase school involvement in the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). "If it weren't for the support of the ATA and the archery industry, none of this would be possible. The people of Alabama value this partnership," Goldsby said.

The \$285,000 project is a collaborative effort between the city of Cullman, the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and the ATA. WFF is building archery parks in Dothan and Demopolis, and will soon break ground in Heflin. The state is also negotiating for an archery park in Huntsville.

The Cullman archery park features 36 targets, including an eight-target beginner's range from 5 to 20 yards; an eight-target

general target range of 15 to 50 yards; a four-target bowhunting range of 10 to 40 yards with a 12-foot platform; and a 16-target walking course with shots out to 70 yards.

The ATA's CAP has been embraced by other state and local government leaders across the country. CAP promotes NASP as a key introduction to archery, works to make the sport available in local community recreation programs and funds the shooting facilities all archers need to participate in shooting year round.

As work on the Cullman Archery Park progressed in 2008, Cullman-area bowhunters formed the Heritage Archery Club, a local chapter of the Bowhunters of Alabama, the state's largest, most active archery association. Within a week, the club became the state's third largest chapter, no doubt evidence of what a local archery park can do for grassroots participation.

The archery park also will help the WFF create school and recreational archery programs in the city of Cullman and surrounding Cullman County. Of the total project amount, \$55,000 funded NASP in the Cullman area. Earlier ATA donations to Alabama included \$15,000 to help the WFF launch the state's NASP. In all, the ATA has provided the WFF more than \$100,000 in grants and equipment to grow archery and expand bowhunting opportunities in the state. In 2008, 147 Alabama schools participated in NASP and, as a result of CAP in Athens, Ala., 15 new schools were added to NASP.

The Archery Trade Association through the Easton Foundation has pledged \$50,000 to build a 30-foot by 50-foot open pavilion on site of the Cullman Community Archery Park.

The pavilion will be located between the 16-target Known Distance Range, which includes a 13-foot platform for elevated shots and the 16-target Walk Through Range.

The pavilion will have modern bathrooms, storage facilities, and a gathering area to accommodate meetings. It will be used as tournament headquarters by the Heritage Archery Club, for events and by the public.

Lighting will also be provided for the Known Distance range for nighttime tournaments and other special events. **DA**

About CAP: The Community Archery Program (CAP), developed in 2005, was designed by the ATA as a four-pronged approach to grow archery and bowhunting participation. CAP promotes the National Archery in the Schools Program as a key introduction to archery, works to make the sport available through the After School Archery Program in local community recreation programs and funds the development of shooting facilities all archers need to participate in shooting year round. The fourth leg of the initiative is a supporting role provided by local archery shops, clubs and organizations. The Archery Trade Association provides funds, expertise, equipment and targets to support state wildlife agencies to lead the CAP initiative and for local communities to develop and manage archery parks and school and after school programs.

For More Information

For more information on Alabama's Community Archery Program, contact Ray Metzler at 1-800-245-2740 or ray.metzler@dcnr.alabama.gov.

For more information about the ATA's efforts to grow archery and bowhunting, please contact Michelle Doerr at michelledoerr@archerytrade.org or call 320-562-2680.