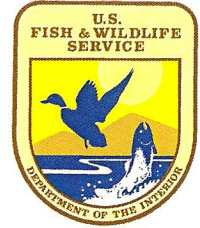




United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
La Crosse National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, Wisconsin 54650

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/La Crosse FWCO
Heidi Keuler
heidi_keuler@fws.gov
608-783-8417

Aug 9, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of Chaseburg Rod & Gun Club's pistol/trap range expansion project. The project will provide families from the Greater La Crosse Area an opportunity to connect with our natural resources plus give them a greater chance to step away from video games, computer and television screens. The connection to nature is so important to not only my agency, but also to our legacy of fishing and hunting.

Our agency is always working to instill a sense of wonder and place in children and is encouraging them to become the next generation of explorers. For that reason we initiated Youth Outdoor Fest with La Crosse Parks, Recreation, & Forestry about six years ago and invited Chaseburg Rod & Gun Club to come and run an archery 3-D target range. It is one of the most popular activities at the Fest. Chaseburg R&G has been assisting thousands of kids over the years in our event that now draws in over 2,500 people annually.

Chaseburg also hosts their own Youth Day at their grounds every September for kids in the La Crosse Area. Children can shoot bow, .22 rifle, muzzleloader, and trap at no charge. This is a great opportunity for kids that don't have the equipment at home or have never shot a bow or gun. The smiles on kids' faces make all the work worthwhile. Often the club brings in fish or wildlife conservation professionals to talk about why conserving our natural resources is so important which I have been involved with.

My humble beginning as a mentor for kids started when I assisted Chaseburg Rod and Gun club with their Gun Safety Program. Seeing a young adult grow with confidence and learn new skills that teach life lessons is so rewarding. I have also observed many of the adult members and programs in action for over thirty years and watched the Club grow. I don't think that members even realize how much they touch the lives of the youth around them, but I do first hand. In many ways they are the reason I chose my career and am now conserving, protecting, and enhancing our natural resources.

If you have questions or need further information, don't hesitate to contact me at Heidi_Keuler@fws.gov or (608)783-8417.

Sincerely,

Heidi Keuler
Fish Biologist