Arizona 4-H Shooting Sports Update Summer 2015

The upcoming year will be one of change for the Arizona 4-H Shooting Sports program. This letter is devoted to outlining the changes.

As you know, our state program is volunteer driven. For the last several years, a dedicated but small cadre of 4-H leaders have prepared for and run the state activities: trainings, state matches and supporting the Arizona team at the National Championship. The constraints this group faces with work, family obligations, 4-H community club activities and other things limits the program. Many in this group have been working two leader trainings, the state matches and taking Arizona teams to the National Championship in a year’s time; a level of commitment that is not sustainable. I have been the volunteer state coordinator for the last 5 years, but as our situation has changed, Laurel and I will have less time to devote to the program. It is time for others to join in the running and expansion of the program.

Upcoming Leader trainings.

- **State Trainer Certification**: Our ability to provide 4-H shooting sports leader’s training is limiting the growth, if not the continuation, of the program. We are down to just a few state trainers. There is a great opportunity to send qualified leaders to the next national training for state trainers. It will be held in San Luis Obispo, California September 29 - October 3rd. Please help identify good 4-H leaders who might be willing to attend this training. Without new state instructors our program will perish. The qualifications for taking the training are: 1. Must be 4-H certified in the discipline and 2. Must have been an active 4-H club project leader in the discipline for two years. The deadline for application is August 31st, the cost is $195 which covers training materials, lodging and meals.

- **4-H Shooting Sports Club Leader Certification**: We are planning the next leader training tentatively for November 20-22, Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, at the Pima County Southeast Regional Park Shooting Range in Tucson. More information will become available at https://extension.arizona.edu/4h/shooting-sports-education-instructor-certification-course.

Establishing State Discipline Leaders.

The program will benefit from having a leader identified for each shooting sports discipline. This person will be responsible for running the state match in that discipline, maintaining and updating state rules, maintaining state held equipment, developing county leaders and promoting the discipline around the state. Our disciplines are archery, rifle, pistol, shotgun, muzzleloading, and hunting. Please let me know if you are interested in taking on one of the disciplines or know someone who might.

Changes to the State Match.

The plans for the next state match are on hold until those willing to put it on are identified. A coordinator for scheduling and organizing the entire event, or events, is needed. We will not be coordinating the event this year. After holding the match in Tucson for five of the last seven years it is time to move it to a different location. New approaches to the state matches will be considered including having separate matches for each discipline to be held in different locations and times. Please let us know if anyone is willing to take this on.

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New Qualification Process for Arizona’s 2016 National Championship Team

The 2016 4-H National Championship will be held in Grand Island, Nebraska June 26 – July 1. The process for selecting the teams for next year’s 4-H National Championship will change. To give the teams more time to prepare the team selection will be done before the Arizona 4-H state matches are held. Here is how it will work:

Open Nomination Period: Teams and individuals may self-nominate for the team through August 31st. All applicants must meet eligibility requirements for age, 4-H membership and discipline competence. All teams and individuals must have a qualified 4-H shooting sports instructor coach identified. The applications must be endorsed by the 4-H member’s community club leader, 4-H shooting sports instructor, and the qualified coach. Teams (3 or 4 shooters) will be given preference over individuals.

If more than one team, or more than 4 individuals apply, a method mutually agreed upon by the applicants will be used to select the team or individuals. This may be a shoot-off to be held as soon as possible after the August 31st application deadline.

Teams consisting of individual applicants will be allowed. However it will be up to the individuals, families and leaders to coordinate team practices.

Applications received after August 31st will be considered on a first come first selected basis and must meet the same requirements as those being received before the deadline.

The State Shooting Sports Coordinator will make the decision to approve applications for the National Championship

The purpose of this change is to improve the experience of our 4-H members at the National Championship by allowing more time to prepare for the competition.

Establishing a State Shooting Sports Leadership Council.

A shooting sports leadership council is needed to more effectively plan and support state shooting sports activities. This should consist of the discipline leads and county coordinators. Let me know if you are interested in participating in the development of the council.

I look forward to hearing from everyone on these items.

John Whiteside, State Coordinator
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