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By [kathymfoster](#) March 1, 2014

Northwest Florida Water Management District Hosts Hunt for Wounded Veterans

HAVANA – The Northwest Florida Water Management District recently hosted its second Operation Outdoor Freedom hunt. Six wounded veterans spent a productive weekend deer hunting on District land. The hunt took place February 7-9 in the Econfina Creek Water Management Area in Bay and Washington counties and was hosted with support from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (DACCS), Florida Forest Service, Friends of Florida State Forests and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Operation Outdoor Freedom is an endeavor of the Florida Forest Service that offers recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing, to wounded veterans on state forests and other public and agricultural lands. Through the program, designated areas are equipped to accommodate the special needs of wounded veterans, providing an opportunity for recreation and rehabilitation that is not available through any other state program.

Thanks to donations and support from individuals and local businesses, the District was able to provide meals for all participants, along with volunteers, primitive camping accommodations and equipment for the hunt.

Donors included:

Preble-Rish
North Florida Dental Care
F4 Tech
Destin Water Users
Gus Andrews
Stephanie Bloyd
Nick Patronis
Bill Hunkapiller
Michael Edgar
Derek Fussell, Camo Dreams, Inc.
Kevin's Fine Outdoor Gear & Apparel

The District owns more than 212,000 acres across northwest Florida, protecting river corridors, springs, streams, lakes and wetlands. The Econfina Creek Water Management Area (WMA) consists of

approximately 41,000 acres surrounding the Econfina Creek Corridor, including steephead ravines, sandhill lakes and notable springs like Williford, Sylvan, and Pitt. Hunting is allowed throughout much of the area, which the District partners with FWC to manage. The WMA also features a specified hunting area and campsite for mobility-impaired hunters.