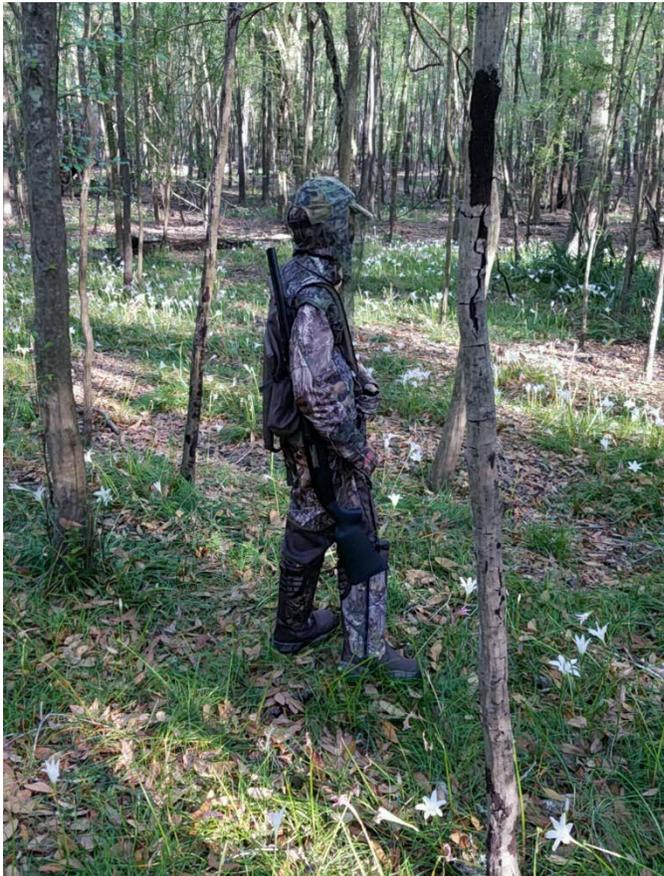


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three local youth received the opportunity to explore the outdoors and hunt Peacock Slough Tract for an early hunting weekend.

District Partners With Local Group To Get Youth Outside

LIVE OAK, FLA., Mar. 16, 2017 – Local youth saw first-hand the importance of land conservation this month through a youth turkey hunt sponsored by the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) and Suwannee River Strutters in Live Oak, FL, a local chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Hosted on the District's publicly-managed Peacock Slough tract, the hunt encouraged youth to spend time outdoors and gain a greater understanding of the need for land management to ensure the longevity of wildlife and the habitats on which they depend.

"Instilling an early appreciation and love for our natural resources and wildlife is vital to ensuring the sustainability of our environment. The youth of today are the decision-makers and voters of tomorrow," said Noah Valenstein, executive director for the District. "Creating opportunities for

exposure to all that the outdoors can offer is key to accomplishing our mission."

Three local youth were selected to attend the three-day hunt, accompanied by their parent or guardian. Suwannee River Strutters sponsored 100% of the hunt including volunteers, meals, lodging, equipment, and supplies.

"Hosting youth turkey hunts and getting kids outdoors is part of the core mission of Suwannee River Strutters and the National Wild Turkey Federation," said Jerry Owens of the Suwannee River Strutters. "Our ability to hunt on public lands shows youth the importance of conservation – we believe if you can 'save the habitat', we can 'save the hunt.'"

The youth hunt was hosted as part of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioner's Youth Spring Turkey Hunt Weekend which opens private and public lands one weekend prior to spring turkey season for youth turkey hunting. Only youth 15 years or younger can participate and a youth must be the one to harvest the bird.

While on the hunt, the youth are exposed to the importance of land management and conservation for the long-term preservation of turkey and other wildlife. At Peacock Slough tract, the youth participated in additional outdoor recreation activities such as hiking.

Peacock Slough tract consists of 1,174 acres and is part of the almost 160,000 publicly-managed acres owned by the District. For more information on hunting and recreation on District lands, visit www.mysuwanneeriver.com and find "Recreation" under the tab "District Lands."

The mission of the Suwannee River Water Management District is to protect and manage water resources using science-based solutions to support natural systems and the needs of the public. The District holds true to the belief of water for nature, water for people. Headquartered in Live Oak, Florida, the District serves 15 surrounding north-central Florida counties.

For more information about the District, visit www.mysuwanneeriver.com or follow us on Facebook and Twitter, search @SRWMD.

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