

Prepare now for fall hunters

FORT COLLINS, — Landowners should plan now for hunters who will be requesting access to their land this fall and winter.

"It is inevitable that hunters will ask for permission to access private land. Thinking about it ahead of time will enable landowners to avoid most conflicts and promote positive feelings between them and hunters," said Del Benson, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service wildlife specialist.

Benson advised landowners to include hunting management in their normal agricultural operation. He reminded landowners that they are in control but that hunters can and often are willing to share the responsibility of the land.

Most hunters respect the privilege to hunt on private lands, but some misbehave, said Benson. When that happens, landowners often deny access to everyone. He said, "That doesn't have to happen."

Benson said visitors should be

told the rules, where they can hunt and the period of time that permission is granted (only that day, throughout the season, etc.). Landowners should get the hunter's name, address, car license number and a signature. Any special rules should be emphasized.

"An arrowhead may be picked up with great excitement and pride. The person may not think that the landowner wouldn't approve," said Benson. That type of incident could lead to conflict, when a simple comment ahead of time would have prevented any misunderstanding.

Hunters also can be an asset to landowners, added Benson.

Visitors can become additional eyes and ears for the landowner, finding lost cattle and trespassers. Some even may help mend a piece of fence.

"Good hunters care about the land and usually are willing to help," said Benson.

The goal for both landowner and hunter should be to have respectful, responsible people on private property. "Good outdoor users want the bad apples tossed out as much as landowners do," said Benson.

There are laws against trespassing, damaging property, littering and game violations. Violators should be removed and/or turned in to authorities,

said Benson.

"Personal bonds between hunters and landowners can become quite strong," he added.

"Many landowners look forward to opening day because friends arrive."

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