

## Of The Outdoors

# Youth make outdoors more enjoyable

**BY GARY HOWEY**  
Hartington, Neb.

Over the years, I've found that spending time in the outdoors has become much more precious to me.

It may be that it's the fact that I'm away from the office and the racket that's associated with it.

To me, it's my escape from the everyday doldrums and a chance to get back to my roots.

While growing up, I was fortunate to have mentors to teach me about the outdoors. My father Cal liked to hunt and fish when he had time; it was my Grandma & Grandpa Menkveld that did a lot of fishing and some hunting.

Then there was Glen Matteson, our neighbor across the street, to us kids he was an outdoor guru as there wasn't anything in the outdoors that he didn't know about.

Because of these influences on our young lives, we were bitten by the outdoor bug and spent as much time as we could get away with, wandering along the Sioux River or exploring the shores of Pelican Lake.

I can honestly say that there wasn't much in the outdoors that we didn't try! From fishing to hunting and everything in between, we did all the things kids could do in the outdoors.

We were truly fortunate to have adults that influenced us, getting us interested in the outdoors.

Things have changed considerably in today's world! Back while I was growing up, it seemed like most people hunted and fished as it was just part of growing up in the upper Midwest.

It always seemed that

people living in the rural areas were closer to the land; they knew that hamburger came from a cow and pork came from a hog, not from McDonalds.

They knew hunting and fishing was part of our American Heritage and a huge part of the wildlife management program.

Sadly, today those who hunt and fish are the minority and as the minority we need to get our behinds off the couch and start promoting our sports.

There are getting to be fewer and fewer folks, who will take or have the time to introduce a youngster to the outdoors.

We can no longer sit by, believing our sports are gaining members and there are people out there that will teach others about the outdoors.

It's up to individuals like us and other members of the hunting and fishing fraternity to show youngsters all the great things that the outdoors has to offer.

How about pitching in by volunteering to help with youth programs run by our Game, Fish & Parks Dept.

You're not expected to

know everything there is to know about the outdoors, you're going to be talking with youngsters that are eager to learn about the outdoors and looking for every little piece of information on the outdoors they can find.

No one knows everything about the outdoors and those that think they do aren't the type of individuals you want to have as teachers any way!

All you need to do is to get a kid out and show him how to catch a fish, camp or hunt.

They don't need to catch a monster fish, tag a trophy buck or camp in the Rockies, they just need to get off the couch and away from the computer and television. In fact, it's best if you start kids out slow, showing them how to catch bullheads or bluegill, to plink at targets and perhaps do a backyard campout.

Watching a youngster that you introduced to the sport just enjoying a few of the many things the outdoors has to offer is one of the finest feelings in the world.

You've not only made yourself feel better, you made some youngsters' day and helped introduce

another to the outdoors!

Kids are looking for something to do and because there are so many things they can get into that aren't good for them, they need an alternative so they aren't out getting in trouble or spending all of their time parked in front of a TV or playing video games on the computer.

I really enjoy seeing a new angler catching a fish or a young hunter tagging his first turkey, because I know that we've added another outdoorsmen or women to our sport.

Another way to support the outdoors is to support the many conservation organizations that we have.

Pheasants Forever, Whitetails Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation as well as local sportsmen's organizations are all tremendous conservation groups, doing an excellent job of promoting the outdoors while working to increase habitat and

wildlife populations.

These groups all have mentor programs where: outdoors skills and the love of the outdoors can be passed along to the younger generation.

It's up to you and me, the outdoorsmen and women to help promote the outdoors and to introduce someone new to all Mother Nature has to offer as these are the

future of our sport!

You may be surprised as the kids may not be the only ones to learn something!

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, hunting and fishing guide. If you'd like more information on the outdoors go to [www.outdoorsmenadventures.com](http://www.outdoorsmenadventures.com).

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