

2025-02-27 Youth Gator Hunt

In the daylight, I asked one of the youth hunters how he had slept, and his answer was classic. I didn't sleep all night because I was thinking about hunting and if I'd be lucky enough to harvest a gator. On Feb 27th, FSCA members hosted the annual youth gator hunt at Dupuis management area, where three lucky young hunters and their parents participated in one of the most exciting hunts in Florida's Youth Hunt program.

Most hunts are three-day events; Friday night is set up, and equipment orientation is held, where the young hunters learn the tools of the trade and even a few secrets from the pros. Hunter & parent teams are partnered with a guide and an assistant to ensure proper technique and safety during the activity.

Saturday morning starts early with breakfast and a truck ride to the hunt location; anticipation is building. As we near the hunt location, our moods are of nervous anticipation, and we wonder if the training was adequate. This hunt allows the youth program to access areas off limits to the general public, which helps increase success rates. Hunters and the party use specifically designed fishing poles to hook the gator. Once hooked, the excitement begins.

After pictures and a few high-fives, the group heads for a well-deserved lunch. After lunch, the party goes to the cleaning station to learn how to clean their catch.

Saturday evening campfire stories are of big alligators and sore muscles.

Sundays are for clean-up and reflection on another successful youth hunting experience for FSCA members and their now-experienced young friends. The event was a success, with all youth harvesting their first gator.

Article by Kerry Garceau