

Web Based Hunting Permit Program for Lavon Lake Office Wylie, Texas

USACE/Civil Works Gulf Coast (GC) Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU)
Cooperative Agreement Number: W912HZ-10-2-0039

Final Report

Project Summary

Texas A&M University (TAMU) designed and implemented a web based hunting permit program for Lavon Lake Office, Wylie, Texas. The COE at Lavon Lake manages an approximately 6500 acre public hunting program as part of the overall natural resource management plan. The public hunting program is utilized by almost 2000 participants yearly. In an effort to improve the resource management value of the public hunting program and improve the recreation experience of the user, a web based hunting information, permit, and harvest survey is essential.

Task 1: Information and Permit

A. General Information

Any member of the public may enter the site and print/download a hunting area map and hunting regulations. All site visitors may also view and print hunter success reports, see photos of the area or harvested game, and contact the Lavon Lake Office hunting coordinator via e-mail.

B. Returning Hunters

Returning registered hunters are directed through a step by step process to enter information and to generate a permit. Data that would be required is to electronically acknowledge a liability waiver, electronic acknowledgement and acceptance of hunting regulations and all applicable state/federal laws. Also input last year's permit number and first and last name as it appears on the permit. The personal information must match the information in the data base or the hunter will not be allowed to self-issue a permit.

TAMU received Excel sheet of past hunters and imported them into the database. Last season's permit numbers were unavailable, so they were generated on import and hunters will call the lake office for their permit number when generating their 2010-11 permits online (per suggestion of Heath McLane).

Only one permit number per year may be issued to the same driver's license, regardless of variation of name. The permit number is a six digit number with the first two digits being the year and the next four digits being the order of issue. The permit will be valid for all

Lavon Lake hunting zones and will run the same as a Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept hunting license period, Sept 1 to Aug 31.

C. First Time Hunters

First time hunters are allowed to print maps and regulations but cannot self-issue permits. They are referred to the Lavon Lake Office for permit assistance. New hunters or any hunter that has not hunted in the last five years that are referred to the Lavon Lake office will verify with Corps staff their hunter safety, their hunting license number, and driver's license or ID card number. Once they have been verified, the Lavon Lake office can add the name to the database allowing the Lavon lake office to print the permit and vehicle tag. They are not required to complete a hunter survey for the past year in which they held no permit.

D. Minors Seeking Hunting Permits

The date of birth will be verified by lake office staff and a check box in the administrative interface is used to identify minors and they will be instructed to have their legal guardian complete the permit process for them. DOB will not be stored online. Minors are not allowed to acknowledge the waiver and regulations. The acknowledgements must be done by the legal guardian with the guardian's identifying information entered also.

Children under 12 are permitted to accompany a hunting adult, but will not be eligible for a permit themselves. Hunter ages 12 to 17 may be issued a permit, but it will state on the permit that it is only valid if they hunt in the company and direct supervision of a permitted adult with the approval of their legal guardian.

Task 2: Survey/Harvest Report

All returning hunters are required to complete a hunter activity report from last season. All hunter activity reports are programmatically combined and then compiled into a hunter success report that can be viewed and printed. If a hunter was issued a permit last year, no permit will be issued unless a hunter activity report is completed. Hunter activity report include what game was hunted, seen, killed, specific dates hunted, number of days and hours spent hunting, and areas in which hunting was performed. Hunter success report also states how many permits were issued last year and how many respondents have completed report for a percent reporting.

A. Wildlife/Game Tracking and Reporting

The website allows the entering of wildlife survey information. Information was not given by COE to track population trends from success forms as well as survey information to create a wildlife trend report, nor to track public satisfaction parameters, such as overcrowding issues, game observed, and overall hunting experience. This feature was not defined by COE during initial meetings but the website is built to be expanded if needed at a future date.

B. System Efficiency Tracking Research

The website tracks the cumulative numbers of permit holders and COE may compare them each year of the project to evaluate the efficiency of the web-based permit system. The website can report usage statistics and other data as needed to help COE determine if the web-based system allows for better promotion of public benefits, better protection of environmental resources at Lavon Lake through increased access to hunter regulations and keeping hunters informed of special methods and special use hunts via the website.

A Google Analytics account has been set up to track site visitor statistics.

Task 3: Limited Numbers of Permits and Task 4: Random Selection Permits

These features can be implemented on request if needed, but were not requested during time of development.

Task 5: COE Administration

The website contains an administrative section unavailable to the public. It allows the COE to update regulations, correct the map, change permit date range and appearance, etc. It also allows the COE to block issuance of permits to violators of hunting regulations by entering a name, permit number or driver license number. The administration section allows the COE to query and print a list of hunters by alphabetical last name or permit number, to query and view the hunter activity reports and success report, and lists of hunters or potential hunters blocked and a comment section for why they are blocked. The administration section also allows the COE to post or change general hunting information such as small pamphlets regarding game processing, or migratory waterfowl shot requirements, etc that can be accessed by hunters.

An administrative user guide was emailed to the Lavon Lake manager, Heath McLane. The guide is also available online in the administrative section.

Program Operation

TAMU shall operate and maintain system for a period of 5 years beginning August 15, 2010 and running through September of 2014 as funding is available. TAMU will provide yearly data analysis and reports including: Cumulative Hunter Registration Form and Accumulated Harvest Report. Maintenance and storage costs will include monthly website traffic statistics, server hardware/software updates when necessary, as well as yearly web application maintenance to ensure the web site security and code is up to date with current web standards. Any major change or redesign of the web site will need to be further negotiated or discussed at the appropriate time.