

Project Portfolio

United States of America



Disabled Veterans Outreach Initiative

Grant Source: Disabled American Veterans Charitable Trust

BACKGROUND

Military bases offer ideal locations to conduct activities for disabled veterans to enjoy hunting, fishing, and other therapeutic outdoor excursions. The Department of Defense (DoD) manages nearly 25 million acres of land, containing every conceivable landform and type of habitat. These well-managed lands provide environments in which fish and game animals flourish. State National Guard bases and training centers also provide additional locations to conduct disabled veteran outdoor programs. Many military installations offer numerous outdoor recreation programs (fishing, hunting, trap/skeet, boating, camping, wildlife viewing, etc.), which provide outstanding opportunities for both military and civilian sportsmen. The Disabled Sportsmen's Access Act of 1998 establishes *"A mechanism by which outdoor recreation programs on military installations will be accessible to disabled veterans, dependents with disabilities, and all others with disabilities."* These outdoor recreational opportunities will allow access to nearly 30 million acres of military lands for such sports as *"fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, boating, and camping"*

LOCATION

Eight (8) military institutions across the United States.

ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED

Wheelin' Sportsmen personnel have established partnerships and planned events in Michigan, forming the base model for a national outreach effort to join forces with Disabled American Veterans to provide outdoor opportunities for America's disabled veterans. Partnerships have been formalized and events established with Fort Custer, the Grand Rapids Veterans Home, and Legends Ranch to provide 18 outdoor opportunity events for disabled veterans in Michigan over the next two years. These events include fishing outings, turkey and deer hunts, and outdoor sports introductory events covering

a wide variety of outdoor sports. Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF will duplicate these efforts to merge the therapeutic aspects of its program with the outdoor recreational opportunities of DoD, using Disabled American Veterans and various veteran homes as a base for participants. The proposed project will establish eight outdoor events for disabled veterans at eight different military institutions across the United States.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the project is to utilize the eight Wheelin' Sportsmen Regional Event Coordinators to plan, coordinate, and participate in a disabled veterans-only event at a DoD or state national guard military installation in their service area. The planned activity may be a hunting event, fishing roundup, or a shooting event. The events will be free to all disabled veterans. Volunteers from local NWTF chapters and Service men/women from each military installation will be paired with each disabled participants. Assuming a combination of different types of events, we estimate that 240 or more disabled veterans will benefit from the DAV/Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF events. It is our belief that each participant that attends the Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF events will leave with a sense of accomplishment and self-worth, thereby improving their overall quality of life.

PARTNERS

NWTF
DOD Military Installation

FUTURE PLANS

Identification of event locations is underway.

TIMEFRAME

Project Start Date: July 2006
Project End Date: November 2008