

On Wisconsin Outdoors

With the Dick Ellis Experts

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County by county, so much to do

NATALIE BEACOM

HUNTERS HELPING HUNTERS

Accessibility



Mirrored walls aren't just for the dance clubs of Milwaukee anymore. The unique design of a GhostBlind ground blind gives hunters with physical disabilities the freedom to hunt nearly anywhere.

As hunters, we are often keenly aware—even relish—those seemingly inconsequential physical moments in the field. We plod carefully through the sorghum, the damp reeds hitting our legs as we ready to flush a ringneck, or we suspend from a white pine having climbed up in stand for an aerial view of the field.

Even more simply, we are aware of the physical needs of the sport when we trip and are lucky enough to catch ourselves before notifying every animal in the forest of our whereabouts, or curse as we adjust our legs when they've fallen asleep from the knees down. It's easy to take advantage of these moments that require any level of physical agility.

But for some hunters, those physical moments in the field are earned.

Quietly maneuvering a wheelchair down a path to a hunt site, or managing a crossbow with limited upper mobility as that trophy buck appears, are moments no less visceral for people who are disabled, but can offer an additional set of challenges.

Fortunately, physical ability does not preclude outdoor lovers from enjoying our state's natural resources. A whole population of disabled hunters enjoys hunting experiences and is not excluded from Wisconsin hunting opportunities. Physical disability has a very broad spectrum from type and severity to those disabilities that may be temporary or permanent. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offers

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guided hunts with local guides.

More and more, companies that outfit hunters with supplies and gear are receptive to the needs of their disabled customers by making adaptations to their products. GhostBlind Industries, Inc., located in Marietta, Ohio, manufactures mirrored ground blinds. They recognized how a simple adaption to their product's engineering would afford wheelchair-bound hunters the

freedom of mobility when drawing their bow.

GhostBlind's Chet Burdette explained that the shoot-through ports between the main panels of the blind's design allows for additional independence and freedom in the field. The GhostBlind products also take into account other factors involving the disabled hunter including, portability, weight and ease of setup.

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As general awareness of the disabled outdoor enthusiast grows the term "accessibility" is a word that our disabled hunting peers can use equally from wooded forests to parking lots. ^(W)

permits for Class A, B and C hunters, and sets guidelines to be inclusive for those with disabilities—from wheelchair-bound to the visually impaired.

NO HUNTER LEFT BEHIND

Spring turkey and autumn deer seasons are popular hunts for disabled hunters, and Wisconsin provides ample opportunities to permit hunters within disabled hunting zones as well as access to public and private land throughout the year. Equally as ample are opportunities to join mentored disabled hunts with the DNR or

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