

MISSION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES NATIONAL ARCHERY IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM (NASP®)

THE MISSION

It started with a simple question. How could we engage a 'lost generation' of young people, who did not grow up in rural America, in wildlife conservation and shooting sports? Most of 'us' grew up in areas near or in the middle of rural communities. We knew how to entertain ourselves with nature. In fact, nature was the focus of our outdoor pastimes including hunting, fishing, hiking, catching frogs, and butterflies, beetles and turtles.

The generation of young people today are more urban and 'city kids.' How could we engage them in outdoor shooting sports, teach outdoor skills and encourage interest in other activities? Roy Grimes and I hit on the idea that was not new. It is old.....archery.

In our public-school days, archery was commonly taught in the physical education classes. Mostly, the boys gravitated to it because of the sheer, brute strength it took to shoot the recurve bow. We started researching ways to assure that every child in school could learn archery. Archery is fun and safe and for many of us and is the first shooting sport we learn.

After much research and discussion with school administrators, teachers, curriculum writers, archery industry leaders and state officials we began a pilot program with a simple 'Mission':

Promote the teaching of target archery as a part of the in-school curriculum to improve educational performance of students and encourage their participation in the shooting sports.

It was from this simple goal that the Kentucky Archery in the Schools Program was born. Because sister agencies in other states agreed with our strategy, within a year KASP became the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP®).

Some basic operating principles were established and implemented in twenty-one pilot middle schools in Kentucky in March, 2002. These same operating principles remain constant today and account for the steady growth and continued interest in 12,000 schools in five countries. More than a million students will learn archery from their teachers this school year.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

First and foremost, in each NASP® school program is Safety. It just so happens that according to the National Safety Council, archery is safer than every ball sport offered in schools except table tennis. Safety and range set up is replete throughout NASP® Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) courses.

NASP® is oriented to 'target archery.' NASP® founders are lifetime hunters, but NASP® is strictly target archery. Archery is a lifetime skill and is safe, wholesome, and non-controversial.

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NATIONAL ARCHERY IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

(NASP®)

The program is designed to reach all students whether rural, urban or special needs. Teaching a lifetime skill will give the individual the ability to choose whether to continue target shooting or try other venues.

The equipment designated for use in NASP® is suited for the typical 4th-12th grade physical education class. No matter the student's size, ability or gender, every archer in NASP® uses an identical bow, identical arrows, and learns to shoot at distances that guarantee immediate success. The lessons are designed for safe shooting indoors, or outside. NASP® courses are presented as a part of the in-school curriculum. The course is designed to be at or above national curriculum standards and must be taught in school during the day as a part of the school curriculum. This assures that archery is offered to all students. This in-school teaching principle is why 77% of NASP graduates report this was their first time to experience archery. Because NASP® isn't an 'after-school-only' effort, we are not simply preaching to the choir.

NASP® training is consistent, comprehensive, and current. Range set up, operation and training methods are standard in each school. Specific training methods assure the proficiency of the teacher and their graduation from Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) class is a prerequisite to offering NASP® courses in schools.

NASP® teaches a lifetime skill. In doing so, we stress the teaching of skills over technology. Each student learns on identical equipment which is safe, universal fit, modern looking, affordable, durable and interesting for the teacher and student to learn. This levels the playing field for all archers and encourages focus on technique and form instead of equipment and technology.

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

NASP® is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization governed by a national board of directors. NASP works with states, provinces, and countries and seeks to establish partnerships with institutional partners on a state or country-wide basis. In doing so, NASP partners are asked to endorse a simple 'Letter of Understanding' which confirms the mutual interest in adhering to the NASP® mission and these operating principles. This also confirms that NASP® is a gateway activity which creates opportunity for state agencies to engage students in afterschool or special events which may include their interest in other outdoor activities.

About a third of the 12,000 NASP schools offer an after-school archery program. NASP® operating principles require that NASP® first be offered in-school to every student before starting an after-school club or activity. This assures that any NASP® activity is conducted fairly and uniformly to assure that it is inclusive and suited for all ability levels.

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NASP® funding partners and sponsors are keys to the growth and stability of the program. Recently, four other organizations were added to the three NASP® mainstays of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Safari Club International, and the Mule Deer Foundation. Those four new partners are the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Quality Deer Management Association, the Pheasants Forever, and Quail Forever. Clearly, these organizations recognize the 'Mission' of NASP® and the opportunity for archery to be a gateway to other outdoor activities.

NASP® is the fastest growing shooting sport in history. It has a spotless safety record and surveys indicate wide spread support from teachers, parents, administrators, and students. We do what we do best - teach the lifetime skill of archery to every child in the school.

We focus on the mission.

NASP IN INDIANA

In Indiana the NASP program is administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division, Outdoor Education Section. The Indiana NASP program adheres to the Mission and Guiding Principles set forth by the national organization. Indiana's Coordinator is Tim Beck, Indiana Hunter Education Coordinator. He can be reached at 317/694-7531 or at tbeck@dnr.in.gov . Additional information can be found at www.indiananasp.com .