Tanglewood Ranch offers family hunting fun

By Dan Wackershauer
Platteville Journal

KENDALL TWP.
— The sky was blue and the temperature was perfect. Adding to the pristine conditions, a group of 11 hunters and their families had an experience of a lifetime on Saturday at the Tanglewood Ranch and Hunt Club located near Mineral Point, Belmont and Darlington.

The Wisconsin River Chapter of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA) hosted a “Dream Hunt” on Saturday, allowing seriously ill children the opportunity to hunt game birds over pointing dogs. This special hunt was held in conjunction with the United Special Sportsman Alliance (USSA), a non-profit organization, which grants outdoor wishes to terminally ill children and adults.

Additional activities offered to the group for the day included fishing in Tanglewood’s pond, trap shooting, a hunting safety refresher course, as well as skits and entertainment put on by members of NAVHDA.

“I’m having a good time,” said Caleb Heisz, 13, Montfort, during Saturday’s activities.

Special sponsors and hosts for the hunt were Kurt and Tammy Wedig, owners of Tanglewood Ranch and Hunt Club. Tanglewood Ranch is a game preserve located on over 750 acres of land in southwest Wisconsin.

The Wedigs donated the exclusive use of all the fields as well as the lodge for lunch and activities. “We’re happy to be a part of such a wonderful experience and help in any way possible,” said Kurt Wedig. His wife and co-owner, Tammy, added, “We have three children of our own so we know how important it is to spend fun, quality time with your children.”

Brothers Alex, nine and Byron Gunn, eight, Marshfield, had the opportunity to hunt and fish on Saturday. George Sauzier, the brothers’ great-uncle, who accompanied them on the trip, along with his wife Kathleen, said the children enjoy getting outdoors to hunt and fish and this was a great experience for them.

“This is great for the kids,” he said.

In addition to this hunt, the brothers have gone deer hunting in the past, as well as fishing on Lake Michigan.

Each of the brothers suffers from a variety of medical problems.

All of the children and their families spent the evening at the House on the Rock Inn and Water Park in Dodgeville.

USSA was founded by Brigid O’Donoghue, who knows first-hand about living with physical challenges; she has suffered from viral encephalitis, brain surgery, and cancer surgery. In 1999, she founded her own business, Bio-Tec Research, Inc., and began donating 50 percent of her profits to help others with disabilities realize their outdoor dreams. Since then, O’Donoghue has facilitated over 2,500 hunts for kids and adults who might otherwise never know the true thrill of an outdoor experience.

The USSA with the help of many donors like land owners, preserve owners, ranchers, outfitters, fishing operators, boat owners, campground owners and restaurants, are able to coordinate a true life outdoor adventure for deserving individuals.

Generous corporate and individual sponsors help pay for expenses incurred by the recipients while attending the dream wish adventure. The Dane County Conservation League is a major contributor to this particular hunt. Some sponsors of USSA include Bio-Tec Research, Inc., Whitetails Unlimited, Bass Pro Shops, and the Brett Favre Foundation. The USSA with their 100 percent volunteer staff has been able to grant over 2,500 dream adventures to special people since September 2000, and the number keeps growing each year.