
Tallahassee Democrat

April 9, 2010

Young outdoorsman gets break from hospital bed

Tucker Hudson goes on turkey hunt with top hunters

Eight-year-old Tucker Hudson is already an avid outdoorsman. He's equally comfortable with a gun or a fishing rod. That's why it's so unfair that he's spent most of his short life in hospital beds recovering from one surgery or another. He's had two heart and a liver surgery, and is now waiting for a liver transplant. But thanks to the generosity of Kevin's Sporting Goods, the **Beau Turner Youth Conservation Center**, and H2Outdoors, a nonprofit organization, young Hudson got the chance to experience turkey hunting on one of the most productive areas in the country, and with some of the best turkey hunters in the state.

Hudson's hunting adventure began last year at the RedTrout Shootout's banquet and auction. Todd Vause won a youth turkey hunt, but all his kids are grown. Vause contacted tournament founder Brian Hurley to find a child to donate the trip to. Hurley contacted the Outdoor Dream Foundation, a group that pairs very ill and terminal children with outstanding hunting and fishing opportunities. They came up with Tucker Hudson of South Carolina.

Young Hudson's first stop in Tallahassee was at Kevin's Sporting Goods. Owner Kevin Kelly made sure he was outfitted from head to toe with new hunting gear. "He told me to bring Tucker there before we took him hunting," Hurley said. "It was like Disney World to him."

Then it was off to lunch at Ted's Montana Grill for his first taste of bison. There he met **Beau Turner** and Kenny Barker. Next stop was **Turner's Youth Conservation Center**, just outside of Monticello. There young Tucker got to shoot rifles, shotguns, use the 3D archery range, and check out the fishing pond. "This place is awesome," Hudson said. "Why can't I live here"?

Tucker didn't stop smiling for the entire hunt. And although he didn't get a turkey, he came away with a lifetime of memories. "He got an opportunity to forget all that he was going through and he had the chance to just enjoy himself," Hurley said. "It was a great weekend for him, but it was probably just as great for me, Kevin, Kenny and **Beau** for getting the chance to help someone like Tucker."
