

UNITED BLOOD TRACKERS, INC.

Trackfest 2011 Pocahontas, AR

Trackfest 2011 was held in the Warm Springs community near Pocahontas, Arkansas, at the 2,600 acre Buck Hollow Ranch owned by Tom and Ronda Baker, and managed by Keith Futrell. The Ranch provided great meeting space, and ample land for training and evaluations.

Bavarian Mountain Bloodhound owners met for a presentation by Jim Smyth on Friday, and also enjoyed the hospitality and facilities at the Ranch.

A total of forty participants registered for the event. Trackers came from near (Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Missouri, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee) and far (Iowa, Pennsylvania, Michigan, New York, and New Jersey).

UBT President, Andy Bensing (Pennsylvania), UBT Vice-President and author of *Tracking Dogs for Finding Wounded Deer*, John Jeanneney (New York), UBT Secretary, Cheri Faust (Wisconsin), UBT Treasurer and Director of Testing, Larry Gohlke (Wisconsin), and UBT Directors, Susanne Hamilton (Maine), Jolanta Jeanneney (New York), Ken Parker (Georgia) and Alan Wade (Louisiana), served as instructors for the event.

During the classroom portions of the event, UBT instructors spoke and gave demonstrations on topics, such as Blood Tracking as a Team, How to Lay Artificial Bloodlines, Working with Puppies and Adolescent Dogs, Training Techniques, and Weapons and Techniques for Putting Down Wounded Deer. The program included additional presentations and a show-and-tell of tracking lights, leads, and collars.

Eighteen dogs of 7 different breeds or varieties (Bavarian Mountain Hound, Dachshund, Texas Blue Lacy, Deutscher Wachtelhund, Labrador Retriever, Jagd Terrier, and Corgi/Shepherd mixed breed) received individual and group training during the field work sessions.

The weather varied over the course of the weekend, and was at times warm and humid, but manageable. The heavy rain on Sunday night made tracking the overnight evaluation lines a challenge on Monday, and just when we thought that was our biggest problem, a rather exciting storm blew in. Everyone made the best of it!

The evaluations conducted on Monday included 14 dogs. Evaluations are "pass/fail", with the criteria for passing being that the judge would, based on the performance that day, recommend the tracking team to their friends or family members if they needed help in finding a wounded deer.

The UBT 1 evaluation is a 400 yard artificial trail with two turns and one wound bed. The track is aged at least 2 hours. Seven dogs were evaluated on UBT 1 tracks – and all seven "passed"!

The UBT 2 evaluation is an 800 yard artificial blood trail with three turns and two wound beds. The track is aged overnight, or at least 8 hours. Seven dogs were evaluated on UBT 2 tracks, with two passing. The heavy rain on Sunday night was thought to have a tremendous influence on the difficulty of the tracks and the low pass rate.

Feedback on both the training/seminar days and the evaluations on Monday were enthusiastic and much appreciated by those in attendance. United Blood Trackers thanks one and all for their assistance, participation, and support. Plans are underway for 2012!