



## OUTDOORS

# Inner City Sportsmen Club helps broaden horizons

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There are four primary reasons people don't participate in traditional outdoor activities: no one to go with, no place to go, no experience or no fish and game.

Reggie Hayes, 49, of Milwaukee is a veteran hunter and angler with more than 20 years of success in Wisconsin's waters and woods. He knows how and where to go.

But a few years ago, he found himself staring squarely at limitation No. 1.

Relatives who traditionally joined him each November for the Wisconsin gun deer hunt were not expected to make the trip from Louisiana.

"There was a letdown," Hayes said. "For the first time, I didn't have anyone lined up to go with. It wasn't good."

There are plenty of excellent reasons to go hunting and fishing with a partner or group. There's the safety angle, of course. And the opportunity to learn from others. And the camaraderie.

Hayes didn't plan on going alone. He turned the adversity into an opportunity.

He started by asking people in Milwaukee if they knew any deer hunters.



season.

One thing became clear to Hayes and the others: Milwaukee lacked a club or organization to help people in his situation.

"There had been some informal attempts at it," Hayes said. "So we decided to get something going so others wouldn't face the same problem."

Hayes and a group of others, including Ken Baker of Milwaukee, decided to form an organization to help.

It's called the Inner City Sportsmen Club. Now about three years old, the club has 50 members, Hayes said.

Members' ages range from 12 to 87. There is no membership fee.

The club meets once a month in Milwaukee, holds periodic fishing and hunting outings and has an annual fish fry and an annual fishing trip to northern Wisconsin.

It also serves as a resource for city residents looking for outdoor opportunities.

Hayes serves as president, Baker as vice president.

"That means I get to less fishing and hunting than everybody else," Hayes said.

Hayes was born in Louisiana but moved to Milwaukee with his parents in the 1970s and graduated from Custer High School. He went back to Louisiana for college, then returned to Wisconsin to work as a computer engineer.

He lives in Milwaukee with his wife and two sons, ages 11 and 13.

Against a backdrop of economic hardships, poor school performance and high crime rates, Hayes sees great value in helping city residents connect



"Cities can put a different mindset on people," Hayes said. "If you're stuck in a rat race, rushing or fighting, you can lose sight of what's outside."

Hayes said he routinely finds peace when he's able to get away for a hunting or fishing trip.

The club is looking to grow. More people, more connections, more possibilities, more outdoor experiences.

Hayes stressed the club is open to anyone with an interest in the outdoors.

"We welcome everybody," Hayes said. "One of the things we emphasize is learning from others. New members can help in a big way."

The Inner City Sportsmen Club meets the second Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at the DNR service center, 2300 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (corner of 3rd and North), Milwaukee.

The September meeting will be held Monday.

For more information, send an email to [icscmke@gmail.com](mailto:icscmke@gmail.com) or call (414) 502-7025.

There's a well-used adage: "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach him to fish, feed him for a lifetime."

For an urban dweller in 2014, the significance of learning to hunt, fish or otherwise connect with nature is even greater.

"There's more out there than what many of our city residents live with every day," Hayes said. "A whole lot more."

**Support for LWCF:** Nineteen of the nation's leading hunting, fishing and conservation organizations on Tuesday called for Congress to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a critical tool for conserving fish and wildlife habitat and improving public access for hunting and fishing.

Created in 1964 through a bipartisan act of Congress, the federal LWCF is supported through royalties paid by energy companies drilling for oil and