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8529 Woodland Manor Drive
Laurel, MD 20724
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Wounded Warrior Outdoors
ATTN: Ron Raboud
1041 Crown Park Circle
Winter Garden, FL 34787

Dear Supporters of Wounded Warrior Outdoors,

As a physical therapist who has worked to rehabilitate Servicemembers injured in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom for over five years, I have seen the physical and mental challenges these patients must overcome during their recovery. Besides the day to day formal therapies they receive in the hospital, trips with programs such as Wounded Warrior Outdoors (WWO) offer unique experiences to complement medical interventions.

Trips into the outdoors offer a variety of challenges to our Wounded Warriors, and with each challenge, comes the opportunity to overcome and gain confidence. Many of our Soldiers, Marines, Sailors and Airmen have amputations and other severe orthopaedic injuries. Trips into the outdoors offer them a chance to work on walking over uneven terrain, inducing challenges to their balance and walking skills. Hiking up and down hills, over grass, rocks, and dirt offers real challenges to these Wounded Warriors that are difficult to replicate in a hospital setting. Fishing, casting and reeling in their catch also challenges their standing balance. In addition, sequential tasks can be cognitive therapy for Servicemembers with traumatic brain injury (examples can include cooking a meal or assembling a weapon following cleaning). For those with vision problems, scanning the terrain for game can help with head and eye movements. And for Servicemembers that suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, WWO offers trips into the serenity of the wilderness. The supportive community of WWO and the peace of the outdoors can help these Wounded Warriors to heal mentally and emotionally. Each trip is structured to provide experiences tailored to the individual needs of each recovering Servicemember.

The Wounded Warriors that participate with WWO are challenged to be as independent as possible - WWO guides wait before 'helping' or doing things for the Servicemember, but are always nearby and ready to assist as needed. This promotes independence in the "real world" found outside the walls of the hospital. Participating in daily camp activities and sharing tasks and chores brings a sense of normalcy and camaraderie to a daily routine that on most days is full of medical appointments.

Wounded Warrior Outdoors offers unique therapeutic opportunities outside of the hospital at no cost to the Servicemember. Trips like these normally cost sportsmen thousands of dollars and are a rare pleasure. WWO facilitates these opportunities for combat-wounded Veterans and directly, positively impact their recovery with incredible guided hunting and fishing trips. The chance to go hunting and fishing allows Wounded Warriors to return to activities they enjoyed before they were injured. They gain confidence and an improved self-image when they can do things like hike, camp, hunt, and fish. As a licensed physical therapist, and an Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran, I can personally attest to the therapeutic benefit of the outdoors and the difference Wounded Warrior Outdoors makes in the lives of our disabled veterans. Wounded Warrior Outdoors rewards combat-wounded veterans with an outdoor trip of a lifetime - a small way of thanking them for the unselfish personal sacrifices they made in helping preserve our freedom.

Sincerely,



Carrie W. Hoppes, PT, DPT, OCS, ATC, CSCS

Physical Therapist