

# THE SISTERHOOD OF THE OUTDOORS™

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
AMY RAY, FOUNDER  
OF THE SISTERHOOD  
OF THE OUTDOORS

In 2010, Amy Ray went on her first ever all-ladies duck hunt. It was a gift from her husband for Christmas. That weekend of fellowship and hunting with other like-minded women set her on the path to hunt with the group again.

After a few more hunts with Babes, Bullets, and Broadheads, she

bought the organization. “I purchased the business because I booked many hunts with them and came to realize they had started a very special business for women who wanted to hunt, shoot and fish together,” Ray said. “When they offered to sell it to me, I jumped at the chance and began a new vision for the company’s future.”

Shortly after acquiring Babes, Bullets, and Broadheads, she changed the name to The Sisterhood of the Outdoors (SOTO). “The first year I owned the business, the name remained unchanged, but we used the hashtag #sisterhoodoftheoutdoors. As a brand, that’s truly what we are—a sisterhood,” Ray said. “It’s a calling. With the love

and support of my family, I am afforded the privilege to introduce women to the outdoors, and my reward is the friendships and memories made afield. I never imagined that I could ride a horse and chase elk in the high country or that I’d be thrilled to duck hunt every weekend and become addicted to busting clays. I do it for the blessings.”

Amy said she lives in a “place of gratitude and has become fearless” because of her lifestyle change by getting outdoors to hunt. “The outdoors is what feeds my soul,” she said. “I’ve been through a lot of tragedy in my life, and having the knowledge and skills to go outdoors helps me heal. Sharing the outdoors with others has improved my

Amy Ray goose hunting Maryland.





Amy Ray with Jordan Elledge on a youth pronghorn hunt.

life beyond measure. Creating a business that fits my love of the outdoors seemed like a natural trajectory.”

The success of SOTO does not reside solely with Amy’s efforts. To this date, she’s amassed a talented group of outstanding women who work at hunts and other events on behalf of SOTO. “Many of our staff have been with us since 2010. I can’t say enough about the class, integrity, and staff’s willingness to mentor new hunters and shooters. We have young and old, new hunters and experienced hunters. We have

champion callers, licensed guides, outfitters, and certified instructors. Our goal is to have the most skilled and diverse team in the industry.”

SOTO also hosts an annual youth antelope hunt in Wyoming. “Shantane Stroschein, our Wyoming staff member and owner of Crazy Horn Outfitters, launched the first ladies’ youth antelope hunt in 2017. The program is designed to take young ladies on a spot-and-stalk big game hunt and mentor them in the field. We invite youth to bring a mentor along—either a parent or another adult. In

Amy Ray teaching rifle safety at a youth hunt.



### WOMEN’S OUTDOOR NEWS, THE WON

Women’s Outdoor News, aka The WON, is now in its 16th year of featuring news, reviews and stories surrounding women outdoors in a digital format, promoted through social media outlets and Pinterest. More than 25 women writers and photographers worldwide lend credibility to The WON, not only because of their expertise in their respective fields, but also, because several of their bylines appear in major outdoor publications and on YouTube. They are shooting and hunting instructors, expert anglers, adventuresome types and influencers who are not afraid to try new outdoor activities and share their experiences with The WON’s readers.

Barbara Baird publishes The WON. A freelance writer with bylines in top national hunting, shooting and fishing magazines and former newspaper editor, Baird is an avid hunter of anything in season. Baird lives in the Ozarks of Missouri with her husband, Jason. She is the mom of four and granny to 10 children who are learning all about hunting, fishing and creekin’.



In her spare time, she writes a travel blog, “The Accidental Ozarkian,” and is working on her first book about water mills in the Missouri Ozarks. After all, you can wade and fish at several of these sites.

Last summer, she attended B&C 31st Big Game Awards in Springfield, Missouri, and interviewed several of the youth girls recognized by the Club for their trophies. A series on girls who hunt ran at The WON last fall. Stay tuned for a round up of those interviews in the next issue of *Fair Chase*.

You can read The WON at [womensoutdoornews.com](http://womensoutdoornews.com).



Amy Ray duck hunting.

### SOTO'S MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

“Our members enjoy early bookings and some members-only hunts not advertised to the public,” Ray explained. “We also enjoy having outfitters send us open dates from cancellations and unsold spots. We pass those along to members. Our partners also enjoy direct access to our members for marketing and field testing. Annual membership is \$45. The program is growing, and we are excited to see where it takes us. Our members are serious hunters who share our passion for mentoring others in the field.”

partnership with many outdoor organizations, we bring the best guns and gear to share with the girls. During the hunt, the girls are guided by women guides and mentors. The parents tag along as spectators and cheer their daughters on while they hunt. Watching their daughters hunt with women guides typically brings tears to the parent’s eyes, especially when the girls persevere and are successful. The girls ride together all day in the truck and get to know each other. It is beautiful to hear the giggles and stories, as well as the support if someone misses a shot. They always leave with a new hunting friend, no matter how far away they live from one another.

“We believe in the next-generation lady hunter and want to be there to prepare her. These young ladies

are learning way more than just hunting. The evening is spent with motivational speeches from Ashlee Lundvall, a Wyoming game commissioner, and me.”

Ray said, “We give them the tools to have the courage to chase their dreams. We talk about conservation and hunting ethics. We share with them that social media can be harsh and unrealistic. We encourage them to reach out to us if they need help with how to explain their hunting lifestyle to others in a way that is helpful and factual. Most of all, we do it for ourselves. We are enriched from spending time with the next generation.”

Amy added, “We couldn’t do the youth hunt without our partners. Each year we bring in as many partners as possible to fund the hunt and try to have the best gear for our girls. Many local businesses in Gillette will provide meals, meat processing, and taxidermy. These girls go home ready to share their experiences, share the sisterhood, and continue their journey in the outdoors.

“Our motto is ‘You’ve got to give it away to keep it.’ What we mean by that is a life of service to others in the outdoors allows us to have a future in the outdoors. It is not much different than the R3 initiatives. To us, it is much more personal. When we mentor and interact with new hunters, we are giving it away to keep it. It not only helps us secure the future of the sport we love but also allows us to grow as individuals. It serves as a reminder to keep mentoring and never stop giving.”

Sisterhood of the Outdoors is growing fast and creating a marketplace for hunters and partners alike. “It’s an exciting time for growth in our business, and we are ready,” Ray said. ■

Amy Ray in Colorado with guide Carl Sauerwein with Boulder Basin Outfitters. She shot this elk on her dad’s birthday with her dad’s elk rifle.

