



## Welcoming wildHERness with Tanna Fanshier

Founded in May of this year by Jess Rice, wildHERness hit the ground running amidst a global pandemic, and has quickly become one of the fastest-growing women's outdoor groups in the state. As president of the group, Rice is joined by vice president and director of Risk Management, Jess Banes, treasurer and resource manager, Alex Moisman, and secretary and director of Community Affairs, Sharenda Birts. The impressive all-women crew cited a January doe hunt as the starting point of the group's formation.

"We looked at our diverse backgrounds, realizing that none of us were 'normal' in terms of the typical hunter or angler," recalls Rice. "That pushed us to consider that we had a strong platform from which to engage other women and young girls in outdoor pursuits."

The "Core Four" as they often refer to themselves, also share a love of giving back, and emphasize the importance of serving the communities and organizations that support the wildHERness mission.

That mission is no small feat, boasting a goal that goes beyond getting women into the outdoors.

"We want to create authentic sportswomen," Rice insists. "Those who know how conservation departments are funded, but also where and how that funding is acquired, how the spaces they love and the game



animals they pursue are managed... We teach skills to empower women - providing the experience they need to recreate, hunt, fish and feed their families without having to rely on the help of anyone else!"

This powerful mission has guided the group to great success, filling each of their varied courses to-date with newcomers and loyalists alike. Supported solely through donations and merchandise sales, wildHERness employs the help of diverse partners to back their mission, provide instruction, and outfit participants with the necessary equipment to participate at any experience or skill level. The adventurous group is always open to new event suggestions and welcomes input from participants.

"We run the gamut of outdoor activities," Rice explains. "With four strong women who love the outdoors, there's not much that's off limits."

Exemplifying their no-limits attitude, the group looks forward to hosting their upcoming Advanced Furharvesting course Dec. 4-6 in Ottawa, where participants will learn how to set a trap line, handle furs, and experience hunting raccoons with hounds.

Extending a warm invite to readers, Rice stresses, "We are a diverse and welcoming group of women. Your background, ethnicity, skill level, lifestyle and past don't matter to us—we are here to bond over mutual enjoyment of the outdoors."

Interested in joining wildHERness at their next event? Follow the group at [Wildherness.org](http://Wildherness.org) or on Facebook and Instagram @\_wildherness\_.

