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## LINES FROM LINDA

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# DOUG LJUNDREN, AKC EXECUTIVE VP OF SPORTS & EVENTS SHARES EXCITING NEWS

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BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



**F**estivities continue with family and friends as we continue to fill our agendas for 2024. Wondrous emotions fill our hearts and minds as we reflect on old and new traditions. Doug Ljungren, AKC VP of Sports and Events, has outdone himself again, teaming up with the Westminster Kennel Club to host a new sporting event at his Oak Hill Farm in Oxford, North Carolina.

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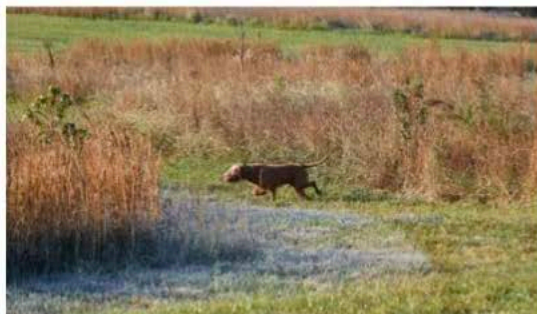
Doug Ljungren, AKC VP Sports & Events, and Gloria Askins, Greenville KC AKC Delegate & AKC Hunt & Field Committee Member



Amy Hagy and Georgie - Wirehaired Pointing Griffon



Qualifying Ribbons



Wirehaired Vizsla on point - frosty morning

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**POINTING BREED HUNTING TESTS  
SEEK EXCELLENCE**

It has been 38 years since the AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Test program was launched. There have been clarifications and refinements, but the test has essentially remained unchanged. That will change in 2024—the AKC is introducing a new, higher level class called Master Hunter Excellent (MHX). The purpose is to acknowledge dogs that consistently demonstrate their ability to intelligently hunt and provide a finished performance when handling birds. A dog must have already earned its Master Hunter title to be eligible to enter the MHX test. The MHX test will retain the most experienced owners and dogs, helping clubs and new participants who can benefit from their knowledge.

The AKC Performance Events Department took the unusual approach of teaming up with the Westminster Kennel Club to host the first MHX test on November 4-5, 2023. The event was licensed and will appear on a dog's record, but it was also meant to test out the Regulations before opening the MHX test up to all clubs. Following the event, the judges and participants were surveyed to obtain their feedback and suggestions. Participants were excited to be part of the first MHX test. The weather was perfect for enjoying a day in the field with your dog. Pass or not, people had a good time.

"The MHX test places more emphasis on a dog's hunting desire and hunting intelligence than the Master Hunter test," says Tom Maneely, Field Director for Pointing Breeds. Maneely believes judging a dog's desire and intelligence is difficult because a judge must constantly be focused on the dog's hunt. Judging a dog's bird work is very visible and occurs at discreet moments during the test. The dog's hunt needs to be evaluated during the entire test. A judge must stay focused.

The MHX test will not work for every club, either because their grounds may not be adequate or the added testing level doesn't fit within a club's existing hunting test. However, with the flexibility that AKC is allowing clubs to host the MHX test, there will be enough MHX tests to keep the experienced dogs involved. AKC Master



Gathering to celebrate the first MHX test



Michael Lis and his GSP Frankie with a nice find



Doug and gallery watching the action



Richard Osborne and his GSP Thor with a nice find 3



Wonderful weather - beautiful grounds

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Hunter dogs are thought of as being outstanding hunting companions. The MHX test is a step toward furthering this reputation.

The MHX Regulations can be found at: <https://www.akc.org/sports/pointing-breeds/hunt-tests/mhx/>

An announcement will be made to all Pointing Breed Hunting Test clubs when the AKC is ready to start accepting MHX test applications. Keep those MH dogs tuned up and in shape!!

—AKC Performance Events Department ■



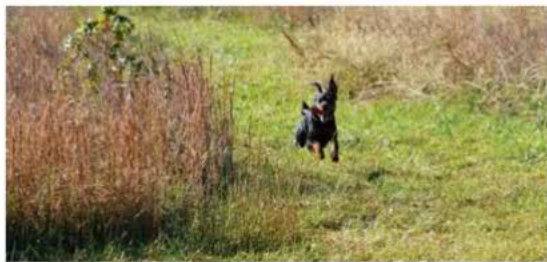
Happy Workers. Kassi McCombe - Jackie Fisher - Judy Cheshire



Melody Clarke and her Wirehaired Vizsla Melody Clarke and her Wirehaired Vizsla Ezra



From left to right Avery Boutke, Westminster KC; Doug Ljungren, AKC; Florence Duggen, judge; Linda Pruitt and Csako; Richard Osborne and Thor; Michael Lis and Frankie; Steve Kreuser, judge; Phil Bogdanovitch, Westminster KC



Gordon Setters Can Fly



Mari-Beth O'Neill - Kassi McCombe - Guy Fisher



Brian Hedrick and his Brittany Miller

Our American Kennel Club offers an endless array of exciting sports and events for every family member! I wish you good health, happiness, and new AKC titles and ribbons to celebrate with your dogs!