



Introduction:

As Master National member clubs who host weekend Hunt Tests, and as handlers at weekend Hunt Tests and the annual Master National, you are aware of the significant growth in our sport over the last few years - particularly at the Master level. While other dog venues have been shrinking, the Hunt Test program is clearly successful. This unprecedented growth is challenging for all of us. For example, entries to the Master National have grown from 361 in 2010 to 669 in 2013, roughly an 85% increase over 3 years!

As our numbers grow it becomes more and more difficult to put on the world-class event we all desire.

At our Winter Board meeting In January this year we focused on Strategic Planning for handling growth. Together we reviewed and re-stated the Master National Retriever Club Vision and Mission statement.

Our Vision: Leading the standard for excellence in training and handling of hunting retrievers.

Our Mission: The Master National Retriever Club is committed to testing retrievers annually to a standard of excellence within American Kennel Club guidelines, celebrating the hunting tradition, and educating all those involved.

Then we looked at ways to manage growth with the goal of fulfilling our mission. We explored various strategies together, and continued beyond that meeting with committee assignments for further analysis on what it would take to implement each strategy.

We want to include you in this process by sharing what is being discussed, ask for your opinion on these issues, and ask for your ideas on other strategies that you think should be considered.

This is being sent to all member club delegates and contacts, with the request to share this information widely in your club and encourage discussions on the issues. Our goal is to receive a response from every member club! Additionally this is being included in the Handler's bags to reach all those who participate in the 2014 event.

We are all in this together, and we need your input. Please provide your response/comments no later than December 31, 2014. This will allow us to evaluate this information at our Winter board meeting in February, 2015.

Feedback can be given to any Board Member at the event, or should be emailed or mailed to Club Secretary Elaine Goodner at:

2817 Duell Ave.

Medford, OR 97501

Email: elainegoodner1251@gmail.com.

If you have any questions or comments, please provide them to your regional Director or Vice President, or any other Board Member.

If you would like to submit another strategy for consideration, please put it in same format as the strategies presented here.

Strategy A Overview:

Host a 6 series event in 8 days with 125 dogs per flight with a maximum of 4 flights.

The premise of this strategy is:

- In order to test qualified Master Hunters to the maximum of the standards, a full 6 series is required
- In order to provide adequate time to complete 6 series, flight size must not exceed 125 dogs
- We will use the following rules to implement this strategy:
 - All Master Hunter retrievers that have met the designated qualification criteria shall be allowed to enter the Master National Retriever Hunt Test
 - Handlers will rank their dogs beginning with 1, 2, 3 and so on (the ranking criteria is up to the handler)
 - Only a single handler is listed for a given dog
 - Handlers will also indicate if their dog is on someone else's truck
 - After entries close, the Hunt Test Chair will select the field as follows.
 - All those dogs ranked 1 are taken, then all those ranked 2 and so on until the event is full. If there is not room for an entire cohort, we will select the remainder by random draw.
 - To compensate for scratches, we will admit 20 more dogs than the limit specifies (this is the average number of scratches over the past three Master National Events).
 - At the event a single handler can serve as a substitute handler only one time.
 - If this strategy were applied to the 2011 event, dogs in the 7th rank would get in. Similarly, for the 2012 and 2013 events dogs in the 5th rank would get in.

PROS	CONS
All handlers who enter shall be allowed to participate	Not all dogs who qualified to enter can participate.
All entered MH retrievers will run 6 series	
Participant handlers will enjoy an improved experience with less time between series and reduced demand for volunteer work	
Judges will have greater flexibility in evaluating the dog work	
Many clubs across the country can host this event	

Strategy B Overview:

Host a 6 series event in no more than 10 days with 125 dogs per flight.

The premise of this strategy is:

- All Master Hunter retrievers that have met the designated qualification criteria shall be allowed to enter and participate in the Master National Retriever Hunt Test
- In order to test all entered qualified Master Hunters to the maximum of the standards, a full 6 series is required
- In order to provide adequate time to complete 6 series, flight size must not exceed 125 dogs
- In order to accommodate the increase in the number of flights, the following resource requirements will need to be increased:
 - Land and grounds
 - Judges
 - Stake marshals/committee chairs
 - Workers (paid)
 - Equipment

PROS	CONS
All qualified MH retrievers shall be allowed to participate	Increased resource requirements will increase expenses (therefore entry fees)
All entered MH retrievers will run 6 series	Grounds requirements will limit historically available venues
Participant handlers will enjoy an improved experience with less time between series and reduced demand for volunteer work	Judges selection process (and possibly qualification criteria) will need to be substantially modified.
Judges will have greater flexibility in evaluating the dog work	Will require recruitment of additional stake chairs/committee chairs
Establishes clear guidelines to accommodate growth	

Strategy C Overview:

Create two organizations, an Amateur (MNARC) and an Open (MNRC).

- Designed to recognize the contribution and importance of everybody involved with the growth of our sport; from the amateur, professional, AKC, volunteer, to countless others.
- Creating two organizations does not reinvent the wheel. It is patterned after a successful AKC sport. It asks AKC to create a new title - Master National Amateur Hunter (MNAH) - to give amateur handlers an opportunity to achieve and ensure the longevity of the sport. By creating a new title, it gives the amateurs a chance to run with their peers and allows professionals and handlers to run together at a new standard
- This strategy eliminates the perception of two standards by creating a Master and Master Open standard. Many open level dogs have the ability to train five days a week, while amateur handled dogs may only get an opportunity to train once or twice a week, depending on their work schedule. This strategy recognize the accomplishments of the open dogs, they have raised the bar in the sport and should have the opportunity to test at that level. This allows professionals and handlers to continue to improve the quality of the hunting dog and allows the amateur to have a venue to celebrate their successes.
- The creation of two organizations will achieve lower dog entrees at the national. Looking at the last four years, an amateur national would have had; 2010-169 dogs, 2011-231 dogs, 2012-249 dogs, and 2013-208 dogs. The open nationals would have more than 177, 337, 441, 446 dogs respectively. These smaller numbers would allow more clubs to host an event in more parts for the nation.
- Creating two organizations, an MNRC and MNARC, will allow for the future growth and expansion of the sport without limiting participation or resources. This strategy will adequately test master hunting retrievers, and provide a place for them to run and celebrate their successes.

PROS	CONS
Does not limit entries and allows everyone to participate.	Lots of work to create.
Fewer dogs and fewer flights, per event, creates smaller events to manage.	Will take time to implement.
More clubs can host a national event.	
Does not reinvent the wheel.	

Strategy D Overview:

Host a maximum of five (5) series premier annual event that adequately test master hunting retriever dogs within eight (8) days Saturday to Saturday.

- Assumes we cannot host 6 series and have quality event within 8 days
- Adopts a 5 series event (2 lands, 2 combos and only one water)
- Would put more emphasis on quality of test instead of time of test

PROS	CONS
Easiest to implement	Requires approval of AKC Performance Department (5 quality test setups are better than 6 mediocre test setups)
Better planning and manage of resources	AKC Performance Department may not approve a MN pass equal to 2 qualifying passes for the following year
Opens up more opportunity for setting up test since water usually take the most time	
More acceptance by contestants knowing how many series to plan on.	

Note: The Board also discussed 2 additional Strategies which were not pursued further.

Host Regional events. This has been proposed in various flavors to the membership several times in the past and voted down each time. The logistics, cost and resource constraints would make this very difficult to implement.

Host 2 (East and West) 6 series events in 8 days, with 125 dogs per flight. The logistics, cost and resource constraints would make this very difficult to implement.

Feedback on MN Growth Strategies:

On a scale of 0 to 5 (0 being not at all, and 5 being very much) please indicate by circling the appropriate number, your liking/agreement with each strategy

Strategy A: Host a 6 series event in 8 days with 125 dogs per flight with a maximum of 4 flights

0 1 2 3 4 5

What could improve this strategy? _____

Strategy B: Host a 6 series event in no more than 8 days with 125 dogs per flight

0 1 2 3 4 5

What could improve this strategy? _____

Strategy C: Create two organizations, an Amateur (MNARC) and an Open (MNRC)

0 1 2 3 4 5

What could improve this strategy? _____

Strategy D: Host a maximum of five (5) series premier annual event that adequately test master hunting retriever dogs within eight (8) days Saturday to Saturday.

0 1 2 3 4 5

What could improve this strategy? _____
