

## **Thank you for your interest in the Kansas Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) Instructor Pathway!**

We're thrilled you're here. Whether you're a longtime outdoor enthusiast or passionate about helping others gain confidence in new skills, your interest in BOW supports our mission of creating safe, inclusive, and empowering opportunities for women to explore outdoor recreation. Instructors are essential to the success of our events, and we're grateful for the time, energy, and commitment to helping participants discover the outdoors in meaningful ways.

### **The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) Agency Mission**

To conserve and enhance Kansas' wildlife and its habitats, ensuring current and future generations appreciate and enjoy these living resources and associated recreation, while informing the public of the status of Kansas' natural resources, gaining understanding and support in achieving this mission.

### **BOW Mission and Scope**

The Kansas Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program aims to inspire outdoor learning, participation, and advocacy in women through hands-on educational opportunities provided by enthusiastic volunteer instructors in a supportive, low-pressure environment.

BOW is a KDWP mission-driven program and operates within the scope of introducing women to outdoor recreation, focusing on core activities like archery or fishing, and natural next steps such as cleaning or cooking fish for immediate consumption, for example—rather than adjacent crafts or skills that fall outside that scope, like flint knapping arrows, crafting, homesteading, etc.

### **Teaching at BOW Means Leading, Not Attending**

As our instructor pool continues to grow, the number of instructors we can accommodate at main BOW events remains the same. Instructors are selected based on teaching need and event capacity. We rely on instructors to *teach*, not to attend as participants. While we love that so many of you want to stay involved, instructing is not an alternative way to attend BOW without registering as a participant. If you're no longer interested in teaching or just want to come back and enjoy the BOW experience as a participant, we encourage you to apply through the regular registration process — we'd love to have you again!

### **Instructor Commitment**

If invited to instruct at a main BOW event, instructors are expected to teach a minimum of two sessions during the weekend-long event and may be asked to assist with an additional class if

needed. Instructors are also expected to help with general event support when not actively teaching and to remain engaged with participants throughout the weekend — during meals, transitions, and evening activities.

If one of your scheduled classes is canceled due to low participant enrollment, you are not required to make up a replacement session. Your original commitment still fulfills the instructor expectations for that event. However, you may be asked to assist with additional classes.

At some point, you may be invited to lead a class on your own; however, you will never be required to unless you feel comfortable doing so.

Fresh perspectives are valuable to the program. It may be determined by the BOW coordination team to replace an instructor or remove an activity to support the continued growth and improvement of the program. Instructors are encouraged to view these decisions as part of the program's evolution and not as a reflection of individual contributions.

### **Stay Involved Year-Round: Host a Mini-BOW!**

We highly encourage all instructors to stay engaged by hosting Mini-BOW events throughout the year. This can include leading a mini-BOW, serve as an assistant instructor, or helping coordinate or supply resources to the event. These smaller, one-day events are a great way to reach new audiences, keep the BOW momentum going, and share your skills in a more flexible format. Mini-BOWs are wonderful opportunities to host additional core activities and expand on those activities: i.e. fly-tying classes, animal processing workshops, taxidermy, orienteering, etc. This would not include things like beekeeping or learning to drive stick-shift which are outside of KDWP's mission scope.

If you have an idea for a class—or are ready to get something on the calendar—reach out to a member of the coordination team (contact info below). We'll help you:

- Secure a location
- Set up and advertise registration
- Access any gear or equipment needed for your activity

Your enthusiasm and initiative are what keep BOW strong all year long!

### **Core Expectations**

- Serve as a positive ambassador for BOW and KDWP at all times
- Model inclusive, respectful, and supportive behavior to all participants and fellow instructors
- Promote a safe and welcoming environment, especially for those trying something new or outside their comfort zone.
- Open to receiving feedback and making improvements to instruction or delivery

### **Instructor Duties**

- Lead teach or assistant-teach a class or activity within the scope of BOW's mission
- Ensure safety protocols are followed at all times, especially when handling firearms, archery equipment, watercraft, or sharp tools, etc.
- Communicate any conflicts, emergencies, or concerns with BOW coordination team as soon as possible.

- Help train the next “generation” of instructors
- Encourage participants to explore outdoor recreation beyond BOW events

### **Code of Conduct**

As an instructor, you play a vital role in shaping the BOW experience. This Code of Conduct is designed to ensure a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for all participants. By following these guidelines, you help maintain the spirit and mission of BOW.

- Represent BOW and KDWP in a positive, professional manner
- Act as a role model for participants through behavior, attitude, and communication
- Use appropriate and respectful language
- Treat all participants, volunteers, staff, and instructors with dignity, respect, and fairness
- Create a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for individuals of all backgrounds and skill levels
- Listen actively and encourage questions without judgment
- Prioritize participant and event safety above all else
- Refrain from consuming alcohol during active event hours – during class time, meals, and evening activities
- No instructors shall represent a personal opinion as the opinion or position of KDWP
- Demonstrate personal integrity and ethical behavior while representing KDWP and the BOW program
- Display good stewardship of public resources, both physical and financial resources
- Instructors shall not use or allow the use of Department equipment, materials or supplies for non-department purposes
- Work cooperatively with other instructors, staff, and volunteers
- Be flexible and willing to assist with event needs beyond your assigned class(es)
- Do not promote personal or outside businesses, services, or products during BOW orientation, classes or events without prior approval
- Avoid behavior that could be interpreted as harassment, discrimination, or favoritism

### **Termination**

Volunteer instructors serve at the discretion of the BOW coordination team. Dismissal may occur at any time if it is determined to be in the best interest of the program, participants, or event safety. The following list is not exhaustive but provides general guidance on potential grounds for dismissal:

1. Going against the Code of Conduct (e.g., disrespectful, discriminatory, or inappropriate behavior, etc.)
2. Repeated safety violations
3. Neglect of instructor duties
4. Unprofessional behavior
5. Failure to adequately communicate or coordinate with event staff
  - a. As instructors, we expect timely replies to all BOW related correspondence, regardless of how often you're able to participate in the events.

## Steps to become an instructor

1. [Fill out an instructor application](#)
2. Consent to a national background and wildlife violations check (we take care of this for you; no cost associated with it)
3. Assist-teach at least once – this requirement may be bypassed at the discretion of the coordination team based on applicant experience
4. Lead teach (if comfortable doing so)

As an instructor, you'll be subject to yearly, national background and wildlife violation checks. If something were to come back on those checks, that does not automatically disqualify you from being an instructor as each case will be evaluated individually to determine eligibility.

## Coordination Team Contact Information

### **Chelsea Hofmeier**

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