

Love of teaching helps inspire sporting club's outdoor director

By Christian Giggenbach
REGISTER-HERALD REPORTER

Some may call it a "dream job," but for Alan Williamson — the director of outdoor pursuits for The Greenbrier Sporting Club — it's the love of teaching and meeting new people he appreciates most.

Williamson entertains members and prospective buyers of homes for the billion-dollar housing development created by The Greenbrier.

In the posh setting of more than 6,500 acres of mountains and streams, his day is filled with the pursuits of fly fishing, grouse hunts and skeet shooting.

"I do just about everything other than golf and tennis," he said from the comforts of the "Hunt Cabin" — originally built in 1932 for The Greenbrier's skeet and trap shooting club.

"This is not your typical golf and tennis club. We have a very active outdoor lifestyle," Williamson said.

And for those who can afford this luxurious lifestyle — a small lot begins at \$400,000 and homes can range up to \$10 million — Williamson will be there to introduce you to the finer arts of pheasant hunting or perhaps fishing from one of the seven managed ponds on the club's property.

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If the trout fishing is a little slow on Howard's Creek, which runs through the property, Williamson takes his guests onto the members-only golf course called "The Snead," named aptly for the late golfing legend Sam Snead.

The ponds — if you're golfing they are called water hazards, where golf balls disappear — have artificial reefs inside as cover for the largemouth bass, catfish, crappie and yellow perch which are just waiting to be caught.

"Early in the morning we may go on the back side and fish and then in the afternoon fish on the front side of the golf course," Williamson, a native North Carolinian, said. "All the ponds are different, but they are all catch and release. We even fly fish on the ponds."



Tourism & Transportation



CHRISTIAN GIGGENBACH/THE REGISTER-HERALD

Alan Williamson, director of outdoor pursuits for The Greenbrier Sporting Club, chats from the "Hunt Club" on the exclusive grounds of the resort property. Williamson entertains members and prospective home buyers and teaches them to hunt and fish.

Although no hunting with high-powered rifles is allowed on the grounds, there is limited hunting of deer with traditional long bows and muzzleloaders.

But Williamson said that many of his members prefer the "social hunts."

"With the natural forest area we promote waterfowl, grouse and wild bird hunts," he said.

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Alan Williamson said his favorite part of the job is teaching about the outdoors to people who otherwise may never be introduced to this lifestyle. One program allows kids ages 8-14 the opportunity to camp outside, float down the Greenbrier River and shoot an air rifle.

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For a kid who has only lived in the concrete-laden surrounding of New York City, it's a big deal.

"For many of these kids, this is their first opportunity to be out in the woods and they love it,"

he said. "I really have a passion for teaching them."

Williamson, a nationally certified fly-fishing instructor, said the novice can begin casting on his own after about an hour of work.

Williamson is also a certified shooting instructor and trained in

swiftwater rescue.



Other activities for the members include nature hikes, skeet shooting and skiing at nearby resorts.

For most of the home buyers, this is a second or third home and they don't live on the property year-round.

But the exclusivity of The Greenbrier Sporting Club and all the amenities of The Greenbrier are attractions that are selling like hotcakes.

"I show them the lifestyle and share with them the type of lifestyle they can have here," he said.

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