



One OD hound checks out new territory on the first day of cubbing.

Old Dominion Hounds Expands Hunt Territory

Thousands Of Acres And New Fixtures Added

By Vicki Bendure

Head approximately 25 miles southwest from Middleburg, and, as the Blue Ridge Mountains come into view, the countryside opens up with large expanses of unmanicured land. It is these fields and foothills of the Blue Ridge that the Old Dominion Hounds call home. It may well be the most spectacular territory in the country with its large swaths of untouched land and extensive vistas. While the hunt existed for years as a private pack, it became a recognized hunt in 1925.

The Blue Ridge Mountains form Old Dominion's western boundry with Big Cobbler and Rattlesnake Mountains within Old Dominion territory. It is quite hilly hunt country with many large coverts and rolling pastureland and many coops, rail fences and occasionally a stone wall. Rappahannock Hunt sits to the south of Old Dominion territory with Warrenton Hunt to the southeast and Piedmont Fox Hounds northeast.

This summer, ODH masters Cynthia Brickley, Debbie Welch, Kim Poe and Jack Hutcheson undertook an aggressive plan to open new hunt territory as well as re-open former territory that had been abandoned. From reaching out to landowners, to organizing chain saw meet-ups, trail clearing parties, and coop building competitions, it was an effort that has greatly paid off. It was great to see and hear the excitement from many landowners who had not seen, or heard from, the hunt in a long time.

To date, numerous members and friends have effectively opened up 1,400 acres adjacent to one fixture, "Texas", and tied together 3,000 acres adjacent to Henchmen's Lea, close to the ODH kennels. Outreach and clearing continues. "The ODH rebuilding plan (to create large, contiguous countryside) will lend itself to staying with the hounds," explained Steve Farrin, ODH huntsman. "Reopening unused fixtures and adding additional fixtures will provide a different perspective and view of the country for riders, as well as different fox to keep the hounds sharp."

Throughout the summer, ODH held trail rides open to anyone interested in introducing a new horse to foxhunting or getting out to ride some of the new trails. Feedback from riders from other hunts was extremely positive. They were impressed with the work ODH is doing as well as the friendliness and camaraderie. As is typical, a tailgate was set up after each ride, giving all participants a chance to mingle, meet visitors and greet old friends.

Old Dominion Hounds hunt on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. ODH is known for its three fields that provide options for members and guests. "As long as we have interest we'll have three fields," said MFH Jack Hutcheson. Three fields provide a great introduction to hunting for those who have never hunted and it allows riders to select a suitable field for horses that are green, not quite fit or are coming back from an injury. With permission of the field leader or the master, riders can move between the three fields during the hunt. If a rider feels his or her horse is tired, they can move back to a slower field.