

New AKC Master National Hunter (MNH) Title



The Master National Retriever Club (MNRC) and the American Kennel Club (AKC) have been collaborating on a new title to be awarded to dogs successfully performing at the Master National Hunt Test level. The MNRC Board of Directors approved a proposal presented by the AKC in August 2010. The AKC Board of Directors subsequently approved this title in their November 2010 meeting. The title consists of awarding a Master National Hunter, “MNH” suffix title to dogs passing three or more Master National Events (the current MNRC Hall of Fame requirements). The title is retroactive so it will be awarded to all dogs currently meeting the criteria. The 2010 MNRC President, Janet Peters commented that “This is a meaningful piece of the history in the retriever hunting test program and a wonderful benefit to the retriever sport! It also shows the commitment and partnership between the MNRC and the AKC”. MNRC Vision/Strategic Planning Committee Chair, Bill Teague, commented “we are deeply grateful to the AKC leadership, especially Doug Ljungren, for their support and guidance.”

This development is the culmination of the work and passion of numerous people at both the MNRC and AKC over many years but here is the recent history and further details on the title. At the MNRC’s winter Board meeting in 2009, the Board approved renewed efforts to work more closely with AKC and the first meeting of representatives from both organizations was held in St. Louis, MO in May 2009. Representing MNRC were Dave Kress (Chairman, Vision/Strategic Planning Committee), Janet Peters (incoming MNRC President) and Bill Teague (current President). The idea was to have the top two MNRC officers and the Chairman of the Vision/Strategic Planning Committee represent MNRC each year to provide continuity and institutional memory. They would work with the AKC on issues facing both organizations. Representing the AKC were Doug Ljungren (Assistant Vice President, Performance Events) & Jerry Mann (Field Director, Sporting Breeds). Multiple topics were discussed, including AKC operations with emphasis on the retriever-hunting test and field trial programs, adding flights to the MNRHT (which was also approved and implemented in 2010), possible new titles, quality of testing the dogs, consistency of judges’ scoring of dogs’ performance, etc. The importance of

having a “Master National based” title to represent and reward the achievements of these fine dogs and their handlers was noted in this meeting as one of the top desires of the hunt test community. Both organizations were pleased with the results and committed to continuing discussions. Since the May 2009 meeting, the dialogue has continued and one of the most significant results being the approval of the new MNH title.

The new title administration will be simple and effective. Each year, the MNRC will advise the AKC of dogs completing the requirements for the title and pay a \$20 processing fee. The AKC will add the MNH suffix title to the dog’s record. To recognize the dogs already meeting the criteria (i.e., the MNRC Hall of Fame dogs), the MNRC will provide the AKC information on all these dogs (about 160 in total) and MNRC will pay the processing fee. This is expected to happen around the end of January.

As a dog continues to pass multiple MNRHT’s, a new title reflecting the dog’s achievement will be awarded. For example, a dog that passes four MNRHT’s will earn “MNH4”, which supersedes the MNH. A dog that passes a fifth event will be earning MNH5, and so on.

If the owner wishes to have a title certificate reflecting the new title on the dog, they will simply complete a form provided by the AKC, and submit the completed form with a payment of \$30. The title certificate and pedigree order form can be found at www.akc.org/pdfs/events/hunting_tests/retrievers/MNH_Title_Order_Form.pdf. The dog’s record and pedigree will contain the title whether or not the owner requests a certificate.

“The AKC Performance Events Department feels it is an outstanding dog that can pass the Master National Retriever Hunting Test three times. This dog has demonstrated its ability to perform at a high level over a period of time. It is a significant accomplishment for both dog and owner. We are very pleased to offer a title acknowledging this level of achievement,” said Doug Ljungren, AKC’s Assistant Vice President for Performance Events.

The Master National will continue with its other *internal* award programs including recognizing dogs passing 2 MNHTs with a *Master National Retriever (MNR)* title (this “club title” was changed from the previous MNH to avoid confusion with the new AKC title) and the Women’s Challenge Trophy Program. For more on these awards or the MNRC see the Master National Website at www.masternational.com. Congratulations to all those deserving dogs that now possess the MNH title!

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