



## *The Voice of Outdoor Kansas*

January-  
February 2013

P.O. Box 771282  
Wichita, KS 67277-1282

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Go to our Web site,  
[www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org),  
for additional KWF information

## **Farm Bill extension falls short**

Cutting, delaying key conservation programs puts native grasslands and other vital habitat at risk

After failing to pass a five year Farm Bill this past year, Congress has extended the 2008 Farm Bill for nine months as part of the fiscal crisis deal. In addition to preventing new farmers from enrolling in the Conservation Stewardship Program, the extension lacks funding for critical renewable energy programs and delays the implementation of sodsaver, a policy that would reduce federal subsidies for farmers who convert native grassland into cropland.

Julie Sibbing, Director of Agriculture and Forestry Programs for the National Wildlife Federation, had this to say in response:

“It is disappointing that Congress was unable to pass a five year Farm Bill in time. Passing a nine-month extension delays much needed reforms and cuts a key incentive program for farmers wanting to implement conservation measures on their land. America’s farmers, taxpayers and wildlife deserve more than this Band-Aid fix.

“By delaying the implementation of sodsaver, Congress is allowing thousands more grassland acres to be converted for short term gain, destroying vital habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife.

“We hope the new Congress is able to come together later this year to pass a Farm Bill that meets the needs of farmers, is fair to all taxpayers, and provides protections for soil, water, wildlife and habitat for the benefit of all Americans.”

The last minute fiscal cliff deal includes an extension of the Farm Bill, which had officially expired at the end of September. Here is a rundown of the basics of what is included in this extension. Please note that this is still an initial analysis, as we are still trying to understand all of the details:

Overall: Farm bill programs are extended for 9 months (until September

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## **Protecting the Land... Passing on Our Traditions**

KANSAS WILDLIFE  
**FEDERATION**  
*The voice of outdoor Kansas*



# KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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# President's Message

## By Troy Schroeder

We survived the election, the Mayan apocalypse and the fiscal cliff. Now there are no more excuses to put off things we need to do. My to-do list seems especially long this year and KWF has an ambitious agenda.

One of the first things on our agenda is the annual meeting scheduled for February 23 in Emporia. I would like to encourage all KWF members to attend the annual meeting, especially those that live in the region. This is your opportunity to meet our Board of Directors, find out first hand what we are doing and provide your input. We will have a short business meeting where we will elect board members and officers followed by a panel of interesting speakers. The highlight will be the evening Conservation Achievement Program awards banquet, where several Kansans that have made exceptional contributions to the natural resources of the state will be recognized for their efforts. Information on the schedule and reg-

istration is located in this newsletter.

Congress passed an eleventh-hour, 9-month extension of the 2008 bill which means that the new 5-year bill will have to be addressed again this year. We will be following that process. Some of the conservation programs may not be funded under this extension and there is no sodbuster provision to discourage farmers from breaking out virgin prairie. The good news is that the Conservation Reserve Program, which provides over 2 million acres of habitat in Kansas, will be continued. The farm bill is important to us because most all of Kansas land is privately owned and in agricultural production. The farm bill determines to a large extent how that land is managed. If we are to impact wildlife habitat and populations in Kansas it must be done on private land and the best tools to accomplish that are in the farm bill.

Please keep up with us between newsletters by checking our web site [www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org).

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## FARM BILL

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30, 2013). This includes an extension of direct payments as well as \$160 million for disaster assistance. Additionally, the bill includes an extension of dairy policy, which means that the so called "dairy cliff" is avoided.

Conservation programs: Conservation programs are extended, so there can be new sign-ups for programs like the Conservation Reserve Program, the Grassland Reserve Program, and the Wetland Reserve Program. However, due to a budget problem that was not corrected in this extension, there will be no new sign-ups for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). CSP is one of the largest conservation programs in the farm bill. By not including a budget fix for this program, farmers will not be able to enroll new acres in this important conservation program over the next 9 months.

Additionally, the extension does not include any mandatory funding for the Voluntary Public Access Program, although \$10 million is authorized for appropriations.

Energy programs: No mandatory funding is included for energy title programs such as the Biomass Crop Assistance Program and the Rural Energy for America Program. These valuable and popular programs are needed to improve energy efficiency and deployment of alternative energy on farms as well as to advance bioenergy technologies and biomass supply for the next generation of biomass based heat, power, fuels and biobased products.

Grasslands at risk: The bill does not include a sodsaver provision as part of the extension. This means that over the next nine months, thousands more of our remaining grassland acres are at risk to be converted due to high commodity prices combined with incentives for breaking out new land.

# 2013 KWF Annual Meeting set for Emporia

The Kansas Wildlife Federation's 2013 Annual Meeting is set for Friday and Saturday, February 22 and 23, at the Best Western at 3021 W. Highway 50 in Emporia. The 2012 Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) awards banquet will be held Saturday night at the same location.

Friday night we will convene a meeting to review pending Kansas legislation dealing with wildlife issues and discuss any resolutions to be brought before the membership

at the meeting Saturday morning. Come participate in this important process.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the special rate of \$70 per night and will be held until February 1. Call the Best Western at 620-342-7587 to make reservations. Be sure to tell them that you are with the Kansas Wildlife Federation to receive the special room rate. Call soon before the rooms run out.

See you in Emporia.

## 2013 Annual Meeting Registration Form

Yes – I am registering for the KWF Annual Meeting to be held February 22 & 23 at the Best Western at 3021 W. Highway 50 in Emporia.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Registration (includes lunch): \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15 (before 2-15-13)  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25 (after 2-15-13)

Conservation Achievement Banquet: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25 (before 2-15-13)  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$35 (after 2-15-13)

Total Sent: \_\_\_\_\_

I will bring an item to be auctioned for KWF's education programs.  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to Kansas Wildlife Federation**

**MAIL TO:  
KWF Annual Meeting  
Kansas Wildlife Federation  
P. O. Box 771282  
Wichita, KS 67277-1282**

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**Troy Schroeder**

##### **2013 NWF Alternate**

**Representative:**

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# KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

## Officers and Board of Directors

**The Kansas Wildlife Federation promotes hunting and fishing opportunities and associated recreation for the benefit of all hunters and anglers. KWF supports the sustainable use and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats through education, partnerships, outreach and policy oversight.**

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Please send your mailing label and new address, clearly printed. Allow 2 to 6 weeks for the change to be made. Send to:

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## A call for 2013 resolutions

Resolutions adopted at the annual meeting of the Kansas Wildlife Federation are an opportunity for the membership to guide the future direction of the Federation's activities. The following is an example of a previous KWF resolution you can use as a guide to develop your proposed resolution. Utilize a Whereas to explain the facts involved in the resolution. The Resolves are used to state actions called for by the resolution.

If you have an issue you would like to see addressed by KWF

members at the 2013 Annual Meeting February 23 in Emporia, please send the proposed resolution to KWF by February 8, 2013 at KWF Resolutions P.O. Box 771282 Wichita, KS 67277-1282 or e-mail it to [info@kswildlife.org](mailto:info@kswildlife.org).

The proposed resolution will be reviewed Friday night, February 22, and presented to the membership for adoption at the annual meeting. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact Steve Sorensen, Conservation Vice President, at 316-214-3001.

## Supporting water quality protection of Kansas streams

Whereas, the mission and policy of the State of Kansas is to protect the environment for existing and future generations of Kansans along with the wildlife resources of our rivers; and,

Whereas, it is the purpose of the Kansas Wildlife Federation to support sound conservation measures in support of the same purposes; and,

Whereas, clean water is a precious resource in short supply in Kansas which without adequate protection will limit economic growth; and,

Whereas, current legislation is designed to dismantle water quality protection criteria in Kansas and will do great harm to the maintenance of healthy stream systems for wildlife and people by requiring adequate water quality standards on only the largest of our Kansas rivers; and,

Whereas, current legislation will result in a bypass of any public involvement in the water quality criteria setting process, violating provisions of the Clean Water Act and lead to extensive litigation and loss of state authority over water quality protection in Kansas; and,

Whereas, current legislation requires the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to assess the social, economic, and regulatory impacts of each stream prior to clas-

sification which is beyond their capabilities and will subject all streams to a state of no classification if this legislation is passed; and,

Whereas, requirements of any legislation that only endangered species considerations are relevant for streams that don't meet the 7Q10 flow criteria do not address the significant sport fish and wildlife use and needs of our streams and rivers.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Kansas Wildlife Federation at its Annual Meeting on Feb. 17, 2001, in Salina, Kansas, opposes any legislation which reduces water quality protection for Kansas streams; and,

Be It Further Resolved that the Kansas Wildlife Federation urges the State Legislature and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to uphold the water quality standards of Kansas and provide protection of rivers and lakes from degrading pollution so as to prevent any necessity of the Environmental Protection Agency from assuming regulatory authority over Kansas's water quality enforcement; and,

Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be supplied to the Governor, appropriate state agencies, and key members of the Kansas Legislature.

# Kansas high school teams match knowledge of wildlife

More than 100 Kansas students compete in state ECO-Meet

The 14th Annual Kansas State ECO-Meet Finals competition was held at Camp Webster Conference Center in Salina on Thursday, November 1. It was a perfect weather day for early November, and the competition proved to be an exciting, hard-fought contest. ECO-Meets pit teams of high school students in a competition to see which can score the highest on quizzes about wildlife habitat, knowledge of wildlife, and interpretation/communication of ideas.

In the overall team event, St. Mary's-Colgan High School (Pittsburg) Team A placed first and won \$300 student scholarships. Members included Hannah Maus, C.J. Russell, Ben Cortes, Nathan Flood and team coach Donna Maus. The Shawnee Mission South High School team consisting of members Lauren Brannan, Teagan Fitzpatrick, Joshua Ford, Neil Johnson and team coach P.J. Born placed second and won \$200 student scholarships. Third Place went to Blue Valley CAPS team members Piper Bold, Madison Crawl, Dani Roberts, Melissa Parcell and team coach Eric Kessler who

won \$100 student scholarships.

In the individual Ornithology event, Stephen DeHart, who attends Olathe South High School, placed first and won a \$200 scholarship. Mary Freelove from Salina Central High School won a \$100 scholarship for second place.

In the individual Shortgrass Prairie event, Ben Cortes of St. Mary's-Colgan High School placed first and won a \$200 scholarship. Kris Super from Maize High School took second and received a \$100 scholarship.

Twenty-six teams consisting of 100 students from 23 high schools competed at this year's event. An additional ten students qualified as individuals from nine other schools in the two test events. Nine regional qualifying competitions were held to see who got the honor of representing their location at state. Those regional locations were: Wilson Lake; the Sternberg Museum, Hays; Milford Nature Center, Junction City; Lakewood Discovery Center, Salina; Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita; Dillon Nature Center, Hutchinson; Prairie Park Nature Center, Lawrence; the Southeast Kansas Educa-

tion Service Center at Greenbush; and Ernie Miller Nature Center, Olathe. The Kansas ECO-meet committee is considering at least two new locations for 2013 to host regionals, so there is potential for continued growth of this program.

The Kansas ECO-Meet wouldn't take place without sponsors. They include the Kansas Wildscape Foundation, the Kansas Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Simpson Farm Enterprises of Ransom, Barton Community College, Salina Convention and Visitor Center, Kansas Wesleyan University, Lakewood Discovery Center, Friends of Cheyenne Bottoms, Camp Wood YMCA, Friends of Milford Nature Center, Mid-America Awards, Goodwin Sporting Goods, and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism' Education Section in Pratt.

If you wish to view the results from all regional events and the state competition or have questions about Kansas ECO-Meets, visit the web site: [www.kansasecomeet.org](http://www.kansasecomeet.org) or contact Mike Rader of KDWP: [mike.rader@ksoutdoors.com](mailto:mike.rader@ksoutdoors.com) or (620) 672-0708.

## New hunting/fishing license required for 2013

Hunting and fishing license exemption age changed to 75

Beginning January 1, 2013, Kansas resident hunters and anglers age 65-74 will be required to purchase hunting and fishing licenses. Before this law changed, residents 65 and older were exempt from fishing and hunting license requirements. However, hunters and anglers 65 and older are our fastest growing age group, and changes were necessary to ensure federal aid is not lost and to avoid

future budget shortfalls.

Legislation that abolished the exemption provides bargain licenses for seniors. In fact, the best bargain is the Senior Lifetime Pass, a hunting/fishing combination license good for the rest of the holder's life that will cost \$42.50, including vendor and issuance fees. Residents 65 and older can also opt for an annual fishing or hunting license at half the regular price,

\$11.50, or an annual hunting/fishing combination license for \$20.50. Residents 75 and older are still exempt.

The new senior licenses, along with all the 2013 licenses and permits will go on sale Dec. 14, and they are valid for the remainder of 2012 and all of 2013. They can be purchased at more than 600 vendors across the state or online at [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com).

# CALENDAR of EVENTS

- Jan. 5-6** Clint Bowyer youth non-antlered deer management hunt. Emporia Area
- Jan. 12** 6th Annual KS State Chapter NWTf Awards Banquet Concordia 785-243-7798
- Jan. 11-13** Hunt 4 Hunger deer management hunts and banquets. Emporia and Ft. Scott  
Contact Chuck Gardner...620-343-0225
- Jan. 19** KWF Board of Directors mtg. Wichita
- Jan. 24-25** Kansas Natural Resource Conference Invasive Species in KS Airport Hilton, Wichita
1. Great Plains Society of American Forestry
  2. Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams
  3. Kansas Chapter: American Fisheries Society
  4. Kansas Chapter: Soil and Water Conservation Society
  5. Kansas Chapter: The Wildlife Society
  6. Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition
  7. Kansas Section: Society for Range Management
- Jan. 25-27** 2013 Monster Buck Classic We Are Kansas event KS ExpoCentre Topeka
- Feb. 15-18** 16th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)
- Feb. 15-18** Wichita Sport, Boat and Travel Show Wichita
- Feb. 22-23** KWF Annual Meeting and CAP Banquet Best Western Hotel, Emporia
- Mar 2-3** Southeast Kansas Hunting and Fishing Expo. Flint Hills Mall, Emporia Contact Tonya Carson  
785-366-3565
- Mar 18-24** National Wildlife Week
- Mar 18-24** Spring Break for KS Regents Schools
- Mar 30** NWTf turkey hunting clinic, Free, Camp Alexander RSVP by March 9th, to Gib Rhodes 620-437-2012
- Apr 15-19** 26th Annual EEE Days at Geary CF&GA Sportsman's Acres Suspended Wings & Wetlands Great Bend due to drought conditions
- June 2-7** KWF Outdoor Adventure Camp Rock Springs 4H Ranch [www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org)
- June 15** Symphony in the Flint Hills, TBA
- June 22** Great American Backyard Campout

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## Trail camera captures mountain lion in Stafford County

Ninth Kansas mountain lion confirmed in modern times

A deer hunter who was using a remote trail camera to scout for deer in Stafford County was surprised recently when he plugged the SD card in and found the image of a mountain lion. He hadn't checked the camera for several weeks, and the photo was taken in October, but there was no doubt about the identification. A Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism wildlife biologist visited the site Nov. 16 and confirmed the photo's validity. This is the first report documented in Kansas since last January when tracks of a

mountain lion were found in Washington County.

The Stafford County lion is the ninth to be officially confirmed in Kansas since 2007. While there have been many sightings reported, KDWPT staff investigate if evidence, such as tracks, a photo, or cached kill, is present. According to ongoing research by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, dispersing mountain lions, which are primarily young males, feed mostly on medium-sized animals such as raccoons, raptors, coyotes, and turkeys. They feed

on deer less frequently, which take days to consume and likely hinder their movement across the landscape as they search of the opposite sex and an area in which to establish a permanent home range. There is no evidence of a resident population of mountain lions in Kansas.

The use of remote, motion-triggered cameras by deer hunters to monitor deer in their hunting areas has become common in recent years. These cameras have been responsible for five of the nine Kansas mountain lion confirmations.

# Missouri bowhunter may have shot wolf

**By J.R. Absher**  
**The Archery Wire**

A central Missouri bowhunter who thought he was shooting a coyote below his treestand last week contacted the Department of Conservation after he realized the animal could be a wolf or a wolf-hybrid. The agency says it may take several months before DNA testing can conclusively determine the animal's exact genetics and origin.

The bowhunter, who asked the department not to disclose his name to the public, was hunting deer in Howard County, about halfway between Kansas City and St. Louis, on Oct. 30 at the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) Franklin Island Conservation Area, not far from the Missouri River. According to MDC, the hunter thought the animal was a coyote, which are currently in season and for which he had the appropriate license to shoot.

"The reason he shot this animal was that he thought it was an above-average size coyote that would make a good mount," said Cooper County conservation agent Mike Abdon, who was the first to respond to the hunter's call to the agency.

According to a report in the Colum-

bia Tribune newspaper, when Abdon arrived in Boonville - the hunter called to report the kill about 10:30 a.m. - there was already a crowd milling around the hunter's pickup truck.

"I wasn't quite for sure what it was," Abdon told the paper. "It looked like a coyote, but it didn't."

Indeed, the animal in the back of the hunter's pickup truck (pictured here) weighed in excess of 80 pounds, about twice the weight of an average coyote.

"My first thoughts of it was just the sheer size of its feet," said Abdon. "Its overall size was also a determining factor."

Early tests and observation of the carcass at the Department of Conservation's regional office in Columbia indicated that the animal was not fully mature.

According to MDC Resource Scientist Jeff Beringer, the animal was male and weighed 81 pounds. It did not have ear tags, tattoos, other identification or physical signs that would indicate it was a captive-bred or raised as a pet. Beringer collected tissue samples and the animal's DNA will be used to confirm the species and possible origin of the animal.

In Missouri, a Carroll County land-

owner killed a confirmed wolf in 2010, and another was shot in 2002 in Grundy County. In neighboring Illinois there have been multiple wolves identified in the past decade in the far northern part of the state-and all were thought to have originated in Wisconsin and were part of the Great Lakes pack. In 2005, a wild wolf was killed by a car in Lake County, north of Chicago, near the Chain O'Lakes State Park. The same year, one was shot by a Pike County coyote hunter. In 2008 a hunter's trail camera captured photos of what appear to be a wolf weighing about 140 pounds near Oregon, Ill.

Missouri wildlife authorities say there is no evidence of a breeding population in the state, and wolves are currently listed as a protected species there. For that reason, if genetic testing confirms the animal killed by the bowhunter on October 30 is a wolf, the carcass will be retained by the state.

"He had the right permits that he needed to hunt coyotes," conservation agent Mike Abdon said of the Howard County incident. "It was certainly legal for him to be doing what he was doing the morning he was out there hunting. If it turns out to be a coyote, he can have it back."

## A new wildlife magazine aimed at the very young

**By Gregory Schmidt**

After 50 years of guiding children through wildlife and ecology on his own, Ranger Rick is getting a helping hand in the form of a younger sibling.

The National Wildlife Federation, the publisher of the Ranger Rick magazine, which is intended for children ages 7 to 12, is starting a counterpart for younger readers. The new magazine, called Ranger Rick Jr., will feature Ricky Raccoon, who will serve as a mascot for children ages 4 to 7.

As interest in ecology has grown, the editors at the wildlife federation said now was a good time to engage beginning readers who are curious about

animals.

"We are reaching out to them with content they want to know," said Lori Collins, the editor of Ranger Rick Jr. "It's not like this is an easier version of the content. It's totally different content."

The magazine will feature age-appropriate facts and photography about wildlife around the world and include activities intended to inspire children to explore wildlife in their own neighborhoods.

Unlike Ranger Rick, who serves as an educator, Ricky is more eager and curious, Ms. Collins said. "Ricky is just as amazed and awed by these animals as our readers are," she said.

The first issue of Ranger Rick Jr. came out Nov. 15. As with its sister publication, it will be published 10 times a year and will be free of advertising. Newsstand price is \$3.99, and annual subscriptions are \$19.95.

Circulation for Ranger Rick is about 400,000, said Mary Dalheim, editorial director for children's publications at the National Wildlife Federation, and she expects a similar circulation for Ranger Rick Jr.

Of course, children have grown smarter about technology, and Ranger Rick has kept pace. His publication, already available in digital form, has

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# Great Backyard Bird Count goes global in 2013

After 15 years of success in North America, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will open up to the entire world for the first time in 2013. Anyone, from anywhere on earth, can participate by visiting [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) and reporting the kinds and numbers of birds they see during the 16th annual count, February 15-18, 2013.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with partner Bird Studies Canada, the four-day count typically receives sightings from tens of thousands of people reporting more than 600 bird species in the United States and Canada alone.

"This year's count will give us a whole new perspective as sightings pour in from around the globe in real time," said Marshall Iliff at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "Millions of people encounter birds every day all over the world. Imagine what scientists will learn if each one of us shares observations from our own area!"

During the 2012 count, participants

reported 17.4 million bird observations on 104,000 checklists. Snowy Owls thrilled many participants when these striking birds-of-prey ventured south from the Arctic in record numbers. In 2013, scientists predict that U.S. and Canadian bird watchers will see an influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches and winter finches (such as Pine Siskins) because of scarce food supplies on their northern wintering grounds.

"The GBBC is an ideal opportunity for young and old to connect with nature by discovering birds and to participate in a huge science project," said Gary Langham, Audubon's Chief Scientist. "This year, we hope people on all seven continents, oceans, and islands, will head out into their neighborhoods, rural areas, parks, and wilderness to further our understanding of birds across the hemispheres."

Participating is easy. Simply watch birds for at least 15 minutes at the location of your choice on one or more of the count days. Estimate the number of birds you see for each species you

can identify. You'll select your location on a map, answer a few questions, enter your tallies, and then submit your data to share your sightings with others around the world.

The global capacity for the count will be powered by eBird, an online checklist program for all of the world's 10,240 bird species. Participants will be able to view what others are seeing on interactive maps, keep their own records, and have their tallies recorded for perpetuity.

"The popularity of the Great Backyard Bird Count grows each year," said Dick Cannings, Senior Projects Officer at Bird Studies Canada, "and with the new features, participation will be even more exciting."

The Great Backyard Bird Count is sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited.

Visit the GBBC News Room for high-resolution images and your state's top-10 lists from the 2012 count. You can also read a summary of the 2012 GBBC.

## The best playground is the one nature provided

New studies find that the more close to nature a playground is, the more kids like it and the healthier it is for kids. Time to throw out that jungle gym.

You can take homo sapiens out of the wilderness, but not the wilderness out of humans it appears. For decades, scientists have reported our species exhibits a consistent, if not quite understood, response to spending time around nature: it boosts our mental and physical well being.

The scattering of findings have held in hospital beds, public housing, and Japanese forests. A 2001 study of public housing found the mere presence of trees and grass reduced reported aggression and violence. Another showed people shown a stressful movie recovered to a normal state--as measured by metrics such as heart rate, muscle tension, and blood pressure--"faster and more complete[ly]"

when exposed to natural rather than urban environments.

Those studies are now moving out into everyday life. One of the most recent in the area by the University of Tennessee looked at the way natural playgrounds--built from wooden structures, gardens, and other natural features--affected children's behavior compared to conventional plastic, metal and "artificial" playscapes.

Dawn Coe, an assistant professor in the Department of kinesiology, recreation, and sport studies at the University of Tennessee spent time observing the behavior and time children spent playing on a local playground. After playground renovations added a gazebo, slides, trees, a creek, and a natural landscape of rocks, flowers and logs, Coe returned a year later to observe differences. Working with a statistician, Coe found children spent twice as much time playing in the natural

landscape, and were less sedentary after the renovation and more active.

"Natural playscapes appear to be a viable alternative to traditional playgrounds for school and community settings," said Coe in a university statement. "Future studies should look at these changes long-term as well as the nature of the children's play."

The key word here is "appear." The findings are preliminary (Coe is preparing to submit the findings to a peer-reviewed journal), so it's too early to draw any conclusions. But the correlation poses an interesting hypothesis as the US wrestles with an obesity epidemic and what some are calling "nature deficit disorder."

Cities aren't waiting for definitive studies. Natural playscapes are part of a growing trend appearing in cities across the US including Boston, Phoenix, Chicago, New York, Auburn and others.



# Discount Kansas state parks passport to debut in 2013

Passport available to residents registering their vehicles

Kansans who enjoy visiting the state parks can count on at least two annual rituals – renewing their vehicle registrations and buying their annual park permits. Currently, these tasks must be completed on separate occasions, at different buildings or online locations, and using separate transactions. That’s about to change, thanks to a partnership between the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) and the Kansas Department of Revenue (KDOR).

Beginning in 2013, Kansas motor vehicle owners will be able to buy an annual park vehicle permit as part of their vehicle registration process. The permit – called a Kansas State Parks Passport – will cost \$15.00 (county treasurers can elect to add a \$0.50 service fee). This lower-price, non-transferable permit will be available only during the vehicle registration process at a motor vehicle registration office, through the online vehicle registration site ([www.kswebtags.org](http://www.kswebtags.org)), or when registering by mail. The Kansas State Parks Passport will expire when the vehicle registration expires a year later.

During 2013, persons who would like to purchase an annual park permit before they register their vehicles can do so at any KDWPT office, KDWPT license vendor or through the KDWPT website, ([www.ksoutdoors.com/License-Permits](http://www.ksoutdoors.com/License-Permits)), and then request a pro-rated

refund for the difference in cost. Refund forms will be available from KDWPT state park offices or through the KDWPT website at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com). Only Kansas State Park Passports purchased between January 1, 2013 and June 30, 2013 will be eligible for refund.

Kansas residents (except seniors and persons with disabilities) and owners of vehicles not registered in Kansas who buy their park vehicle permits at a KDWPT office or vendor will have to pay the regular price for annual and daily permits. The regular annual park vehicle permit will cost \$25.00, and the daily vehicle permit fee will be \$5.00, including processing fees.

To save even more starting in 2013, residents 65 years of age or older or persons with disabilities who display a special license plate or placard issued pursuant to state law can buy a park vehicle permit directly from a KDWPT office or vendor. Including processing fees, the cost will be \$13.75 for annual vehicle park permits or \$3.25 for regular daily permits. These lower-priced permits will not be available as part of the vehicle registration process.

KDWPT pushed for the new passport in the 2012 legislative session. Kansas state parks receive modest funding from the state general fund but the amount has dwindled in recent years, resulting in significant challenges for park operations and maintenance.

Robin Jennison, KDWPT Secretary, explained that the agency is striving to be less reliant on state general funds. “The new annual permit will provide a lower cost way for families and young people to visit our state parks. It also will help expand our customer base, and provide a more reliable, consistent revenue stream to stabilize the funding pool so we can more effectively operate our state parks. We deeply appreciate the help of the Department of Revenue to make this happen,” he said.

Linda Craghead, Assistant Secretary for Parks and Tourism, added, “The Kansas State Parks Passport will make it more convenient and affordable for Kansans to enjoy our 25 state parks. It will be a great way for families to reconnect with nature and each other, and help preserve the parks for future generations. Families can enjoy a whole year of adventure and outdoor activities for less than the cost of treating the family to a night at the movies.”

“We are pleased to partner with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to offer this customer service feature which will make it easier for all Kansans to visit our state parks,” said KDOR Vehicles Director Donna Shelite.

Information about the new Kansas State Parks Passport will be included in the registration renewal notice sent to vehicle owners each year.

## Reserve your camping spot for 2013

Online reservation system allows reservations up to a year in advance

If you’re making plans for next year’s state park fun, you can reserve your favorite campsite or cabin up to a year in advance, beginning at 12:01 a.m., Dec. 15. You can also purchase your 2013 permits and licenses beginning Friday, December 14, 2012, and all issuances will be valid through the rest of 2012 and all of 2013.

Camping and cabin reservations guarantee the holder their spot will be

open and ready when they arrive at the park. All Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism’s (KDWPT) 121 cabins can be reserved year-round. About half of each individual park’s sites may be reserved for the camping season which is April 1-Sept. 30, 2013.

It’s never been easier to reserve a cabin or campsite. Last spring, KDWPT unveiled its Outdoor Recreation Management System (ORMS), which

provides reservation services and much more.

In addition to allowing customers to make reservations from the comfort of home, photos of each campsite and whether it’s available will be hosted online. In most cases, ORMS will save park users money through reduced service fees and more efficient management.

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# Reward for information on Golden eagle shooting

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is investigating the shooting of a Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) near Tipton, Kan. The Golden eagle was found on Monday, October 29, 2012 in a pasture located on the east side of highway 181, approximately 5 miles south of Tipton, Kansas.

The eagle was found on top of the rocks on Williams Butte, close to where two other pastures adjoin the property, and captured by an officer with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. The eagle is being treated for its injuries, but it is unclear if it will be able to be released after it heals. The small Golden eagle may have been mistaken for a hawk.

Golden eagles are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The shooting of any eagle is considered a

violation of those acts.

The Golden eagle may have been shot over the prior weekend and anyone with information regarding the shooting is asked to contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement in Washington, Kansas at (402) 419-4855. The Service may pay up to \$2,500 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible. Anyone contributing that information to authorities can remain anonymous. Information can also be reported to the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's Operation Game Thief hotline at 1-877-426-3843.

Golden eagles can be found from the tundra, through grasslands, forested habitat and woodland-brushlands, south to arid deserts, including Death Valley, California. They are aerial predators and eat small to mid-sized reptiles, birds, and

mammals up to the size of mule deer fawns and coyote pups. They also are known to scavenge and utilize carrion.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

For more information on their work, visit <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/>

Connect with their Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/USFWS-MountainPrairie>

Follow their tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSMtnPrairie>

## Thank a landowner today

If you're a hunter, angler or wildlife watcher, the holiday season is an important time to extend thanks to landowners who share access to their land, says Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President.

"Access to private land is a privilege provided to us through the generosity of the landowner," says Schroeder. "And with more than 95% of Kansas in private ownership, we need to make sure that these landowners really know how much you appreciate them allowing you access to hunt, fish or watch wildlife on their property."

A few ways to say thanks to landowners:

- \* Visit the landowner to express your appreciation, and, if possible, share some of your harvest or a favorite wildlife photograph from your time on their property.

- \* Send a personal note or holiday card to the landowner, thanking them for sharing their land.

- \* Send a gift basket or gift certificate to a local restaurant.

- \* Help them protect their property by documenting and reporting suspicious activities to Operation Game Thief at 877-426-3843.

- \* Offer to help with outdoor tasks, or to clean up and properly dispose of illegally dumped materials left on their property.

If you are mentoring a young hunter or angler, be sure to include them in thanking the landowner - it's a great lesson for them to learn!

Remember - the tradition of hunting in Kansas will only continue if we all follow the basic principle of landowner relations: Treat the landowner as you would like to be treated and treat their land as you would like yours to be treated.

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## CAMPING

*Continued from Page 9*

The system also will allow staff to mark sites with problems — such as broken hydrants or electrical issues — until these issues can be fixed. ORMS data will show which sites are used the most, making management planning more efficient. ORMS will allow park staff to

look within the system to see what sites are full and who is on that site, making emergency notifications much faster.

For those who still prefer using a phone, park staff can use ORMS to help callers with reservations.

Payment in full is required at the time a reservation is made. Reserving a cabin requires a non-refundable \$14 reservation fee. Reserving a campsite requires a non-refundable \$3 reservation fee per campsite.

And remember the \$15 Kansas State Parks Passport annual vehicle permit will be available during your vehicle registration process in 2013. It saves money and is convenient. Regular annual state parks vehicle permits for \$25 are still available at KDWPPT offices, and daily vehicle entrance permits are \$5. Annual vehicle permits for seniors and persons with disabilities are still available through department offices for \$13.75.

# Report poachers toll-free and remain anonymous

Operation Game Thief provides safe, fast way for citizens to help catch poachers

You see a blatant wildlife law violation and it makes you angry, but what can you do? You assume the local game warden is miles away and couldn't get here in time. What can you do? You follow the laws and regulations and hunting ethics are important to you, but what can you do? The answer is Operation Game Thief.

Operation Game Thief (OGT), 1-877-426-3843, is a program that provides a toll-free number for anyone witnessing wildlife-related violations to call immediately and make a report. All calls received through the OGT line are immediately relayed to the natural resource officer nearest the violation. The line is available anytime of day or night, every day of the year, and callers

may remain anonymous.

Each year, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) game wardens check tens of thousands of hunters in the field, and about 96 percent of them are law-abiding. Unfortunately, many non-hunters don't distinguish between the small percentage of those who break wildlife laws and the majority who hunt legally. KDWPT game wardens work long hours during the fall, but most have large territories to cover, and they are much more effective with help from hunters and landowners who witness illegal activity.

When reporting a wildlife crime, remember these two important reporting rules:

- never confront suspects; and

- provide as much specific information as possible, such as vehicle descriptions and license tag numbers, descriptions of people involved, locations, and the time and location the incident occurred.

OGT calls have resulted in arrests and convictions on violations ranging from public lands vandalism to deer poaching. In many cases, poachers have been arrested within minutes of the call. Even drug operations have been uncovered by alert hunters using this number.

Remember, when you see someone violating wildlife laws, they are stealing from you and damaging the image of all hunters. Help bring them to justice by calling OGT at 1-877-426-3843.

## Drought year ponderings

**By Mary Fund  
Kansas Rural Center**

Late one Sunday afternoon in early December, we saw billowing clouds of smoke on the southern horizon of our farm. Given how incredibly dry it has been, we were alarmed, and jumped into the truck to race around the section to see what was going on. Surely no one would be crazy enough to set a fire on purpose.

And yet that is what we found.

The local fire department was burning an 80 acre field of former CRP ground so that the farmer could work the ground yet this fall, and plant it to corn or soybeans next spring.

It was a warm calm day, so there was not much danger of the fire escaping the field, but it still deeply disturbed me.

By all official reports, 2013 will see more of the same here in Kansas as far as drought goes. And yet, farmers are willing to gamble on the likelihood of rain in order to cash in on high grain prices.

Or is it just rain they rely on?

While in the above instance, I do not claim to know the specific farmer's plan (and he is but one of many doing the same thing). I am told that crop insur-

ance plays a big role. I've heard stories about farmers buying poorer quality land in grass or brush, tearing these out to plant high priced corn or soybeans, and buying federally subsidized crop insurance which guarantees them a payment if they lose that crop due to drought or flood etc.

Sounds like poor public policy to me-- especially in a drought year or cycle. Subsidized crop insurance is intended to protect farmers from routine risks. But instead it appears to be encouraging many to take risks they might not otherwise take-- risks that will expose more than just the individual to loss.

In mid-November, not long before we saw the billowing smoke, Ken Burn's documentary "The Dust Bowl" was aired on PBS. I am amazed at the number of old and young alike who were shocked at how bad the drought was in western and southwest Kansas and throughout the Plains. "We never knew it was so bad!" they claimed. "So hard on young and old. So totally destructive! It can't happen again, can it?"

While the topic of another Dust Bowl happening is fodder for a future article, I fear that the actions of those who tear

out grassland to plant crops for short term profit reflects that same lack of historical memory. "Those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it."

My father was a storyteller. So while growing up, I heard lots about the Dirty Thirties and the Depression and yes, the drought. When my son was home from college over Thanksgiving, he unearthed a copy of an interview he'd done for high school with his Grandmother about the Dust Bowl. Ken Burns's documentary- impressive. Personal interview- priceless.

This holiday season as families, friends and neighbors gather, take the opportunity to ask about the Dust Bowl. Ask your grandparents, older aunts and uncles, and older neighbors about the 1930's and what they experienced. Learn from history.

And, oh yes, talk to your Congressman about conservation compliance for subsidized crop insurance, and putting caps on those insurance subsidies.

*Mary Fund, editor of Rural Papers, farms with her husband in Nemaha County.*

# Tourism ad campaign touts Kansas

Study shows 80:1 return on investment from advertising campaign

Some people think Kansas is a well-kept secret, but the Division of Tourism of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) doesn't keep quiet about trumpeting the virtues of our state. According to an independent study, the state's "There's No Place Like Kansas" marketing campaign generated 133,400 additional visitors to Kansas and contributed \$73.5 million to the Kansas economy, yet cost only \$915,400 – a return on investment (ROI) of \$80 for every dollar spent. The KDWPT Division of Tourism directed the campaign, and an independent research company, H2R Market Research, conducted the study.

The campaign ran between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. It used television, print, online and digital advertisements and reached 1.84 million people in seven states: Nebraska, Missouri (including St. Louis), Arkansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Iowa. A sample of the television ads can be viewed on

YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/travelks>.

"This campaign focused on the unique and surprising experiences visitors can enjoy when they visit Kansas. The study shows that investing in tourism marketing pays big dividends and that tourism is an important part of the Kansas economy," said KDWPT Secretary Robin Jennison.

The campaign did not spend state general taxes. Instead, it was funded with dollars from Economic Development Initiative Funds (EDIF) generated through the Kansas Lottery and eight community partners that contributed \$20,000 each: Dodge City Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB); Hutchinson CVB; Kansas City CVB; Lawrence CVB; Manhattan CVB; Visit Salina; Visit Topeka and Go Wichita.

"We believe it is essential to partner with statewide industry leaders to maximize the many and varied programs of the Kansas Tourism Division," said

Becky Blake, Kansas Tourism Director. "Our advertising partners help stretch our limited funds, enabling all of us to create excitement about Kansas far beyond the state's borders."

"Based on advertising effectiveness studies we have conducted over the last three years for state tourism offices and destination marketing organizations, Kansas' ROI of 80:1 is well above the industry average," said Jerry Henry, president of H2R and widely-respected expert with nearly 30 years of travel and leisure research.

The Kansas tourism industry employs one of every nine Kansas citizens in jobs that stay in the state and can't be sent to another state or overseas. Tourism is the third largest private sector employer in Kansas.

For more information or a summary of the report, visit [www.TravelKS.com](http://www.TravelKS.com), or call 785-296-2009. Find Kansas on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TravelKS](http://www.facebook.com/TravelKS) and on Twitter at @TravelKS.

## Agriculture secretary announces pilot project to improve Kansas farm ponds

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on December 13 a new pilot program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Kansas and Colorado to remove sediments from ponds to help provide more water for livestock or for irrigation. Part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the pilot provides an additional conservation

option for producers who face drought-related issues on their agricultural operations.

Also, for the current fiscal year, NRCS has made available over \$16 million through the EQIP program to farmers and ranchers for water conservation, practices, and wildlife habitat that have been affected by the drought. Those funds are in addition to the over \$27

million provided to farmers ranchers in 22 states for drought mitigation during fiscal year 2012.

At this time, EQIP is a continuous sign-up process. For more information on the new project contact the Kansas Natural Resource Conservation Service state office at 760 S. Broadway Blvd. Salina, KS 67401-4604 785-823-4500 or contact your local NRCS county office.

## Bird cupcake recipe

Treat the birds this winter with these high-energy suet treats

In the winter, birds benefit from a high-energy suet treat. Stacy Tornio, editor of *Birds & Blooms*, developed this recipe with her kids using cupcake liners to stay mess-free. They're happy to report that the birds love it.

To make a bird cupcake, melt 1 cup shortening and 2 cups chunky peanut butter over low heat, then mix in 5 cups cornmeal. Fill cupcake tins and top with your choice of nuts, birdseed or dried berries. Cool in the refrigera-

tor. To give as a gift, arrange on a plate or stack and then wrap with cellophane. Print off the recipe card below and attach it to the cellophane so your recipient can make more. Add a bow, and you have an instant gift!

# Hunter education in public schools

**By Annabelle Arndt  
Emporia**

The hunter education course was created to support hunter awareness, knowledge and skills so that people may collaborate amongst themselves and extend the wonderful hunting tradition, all whilst handling weapons safely. There are many rules and regulations for hunting in this day and age. Anyone born on or after July 1, 1957 has to be certified by an approved course before they can hunt in Kansas. Yet there are more regulations to this guideline; Children under the age of 15 can hunt without being certified as long as they are with an adult over the age of 18 who is certified. No one under the age of 11 can be certified. They can take the course, but will have to retake the course again after their 11th birthday.

Although all these young children aren't required to take hunter education yet may be hunting with adults who have taken the course, it still doesn't mean that they know the difference between right and wrong. Because hunters do not have proper gun handle training, approximately 160 shooting accidents happen while hunting each year. If a hunter education course was taught in school these accidental shootings could have been prevented. Educators have found that through hunter safety courses at school kids can learn valuable life lessons in all areas of life.

Phil Taunton is the South East Kansas District Director of the Kansas Wildlife Federation, a volunteer instructor for hunter education for fifteen years and is currently involved in "No Child Left Inside" initiatives amongst many other accomplishments. He is a firm believer in hunter education teaching life skills. Whether the child wants to hunt or not, he or she will gain incredible knowledge about right and wrong during this course. Throughout this program, the kids must think and care about wildlife, the land, landowners, other hunters, and themselves. These abilities that they would learn would be applied to

other areas of life, since they would be building good morals while they are still at a critical stage. In this class they would be taught to obey all hunting laws. Being taught obedience at a young age is vital for their learning process. The students would learn to respect the rights and privileges of all people and animals that use the outdoors.

There are many people who work alongside Phil Taunton in Kansas pushing for hunter education to be established in our schools. One of the main players in this area is Monica Bickerstaff, who is the assistant coordinator for Kansas Hunter Education. "Our program affords students opportunities to hone decision-making skills, critical thinking and apply other learned disciplines such as math, algebra and geometry," Monica stated in a personal interview. Presently, Kansas has twenty two schools that offer hunter education in their curriculum. The numbers are steadily increasing as the interests in Green School programs continue to increase.

Many children don't have the perfect life and are now finding role models elsewhere in life. Steve Henry, who teaches middle school archery, bow hunting, and hunter education in Oklahoma has noticed the difference it has made in the children's lives; "A lot of them don't have a man in their lives to expose them to something like this. They are getting the opportunity to do something they couldn't do normally". The children enjoyed the programs that had been instilled in the schools in Oklahoma so much that the teachers were asking the Department of Wildlife what else they had to offer. Since the programs were benefited from so greatly that the children and teachers were pushing for more, this type of education should be integrated into more schools throughout the United States (especially Kansas). Another plus; the funding for the program is cheap. For the proposed programs in Kansas the instructors would be volunteers. The program costs nothing; valuable teaching tools are provided by the state and excellent resource materials

are handed out for free for the students to take home.

The younger generation is surrounded by technology. Every child needs the newest, the best, and the shiniest. Many children no longer play in their front or back yards and are oblivious to the squirrels, trees, and dandelions. Many science teachers are afraid of the effects of technology on their lessons. While students in the 1980s could have named around twenty five flowers, many students now cannot name half a dozen. Because of this drastic change, many people may wonder what our world is coming to. Teachers' who realize that at least some minimal field experience is essential to the healthy growth of their students, need the educational rationale to defend nature experiences.

However, some people may criticize hunter education in schools for the obvious reason of bringing dangerous firearms into schools. It could be a huge risk to have the youth handling harmful weapons. Not only that but schools already have a heavy curriculum, with scheduling difficulties as it is. To add to those points, children can learn hunter education at home from their parents or grandparents.

The youth should be taught how to handle fire arms safely in a controlled setting. If children were taught how to use guns at a young age, whether they wanted to hunt or not, the rate of accidental shootings could dramatically drop. Schools do have a heavy curriculum, but hunter safety courses can easily be integrated into the curriculum that's already in place in the schools. Hunter education and the disciplines it teaches satisfy many benchmarks and indicators found in traditional subjects.

The notion of children learning hunter education in the comfort of their home from their parents is a nice one, however, rather unrealistic. While it is fantastic when a father or mother can teach their child the right ways to hunt, it is hard to find the time do so, especially if the parents don't share the same interest in the hunting as

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# 5 tips to stay warm outside in winter

It's not bathing suit weather, but winter's still a great season for outdoor fun

By Anne Keisman

1. Dress in Layers: Wear several layers of clothing and peel them off if you get too warm. The heat captured in between the layers keeps you toasty. (Hint: mittens are warmer than gloves, because fingers retain more heat when they touch each other.)

2. Stay Dry: Nothing chills you like wet skin. Your base layer should be made of a material that wicks sweat away from your body. Popular fabrics include polypropylene and silk. Your outermost layer should be water-proof and wind-proof.

3. Keep Head, Neck, Hands and

Feet Toasty: Your extremities let off the most heat -- so keep them wrapped with warm scarves, hats, mittens or gloves, and thick socks!

4. Bring a Backpack: As you and the kids get hot on a hike or while playing outside, make sure you have a backpack to store their clothes they'll want to peel off. (Or, you can clip or tie damp clothing outside your pack to help them dry). When you get to your destination, have everybody put a layer back on to stay warm when they are not moving.

5. Feet First: Especially for snowy or icy conditions, get good boots that the kids can take on and off easily.

And when you get back inside, make some hot chocolate to warm you up! You can even prepare it before your adventure and carry it in a thermos.

MYTH BUSTER: Has anyone ever told you that if you don't bundle up, you'll catch a cold? False! You don't catch a cold by going outside in cold weather or from going outside with wet hair. Viruses and bacteria cause colds and flu -- spread by contact with infected people -- not cold air.

Health risks of cold weather include hypothermia, which can be easily avoided if you dress smartly and use common sense.

Have fun out there!

## Report: Half of total U.S. deer-automobile collisions occurred in 10 states

By Agnieszka Spieszny  
Outdoor Hub Reporters

Recently the Outdoor Hub published a report from State Farm Insurance listing the top 10 states (<http://www.outdoorhub.com/news/west-virginia-tops-list-of-most-likely-states-for-a-deer-vehicle-collision/>) where you are most likely to hit a deer while driving. The list was as follows:

☐ West Virginia – a one in 39.9 chance

☐ South Dakota – one in 68

☐ Iowa – one in 71.9

☐ Michigan – one in 72.4

☐ Pennsylvania – one in 75.6

☐ Montana – one in 77.7

☐ Wisconsin – one in 78.7

☐ Minnesota – one in 79.7

☐ Arkansas – one in 102.5

☐ Virginia – one in 103.2

Now take a look at State Farm's Likelihood of Collision with Deer (2011-2012) chart ([http://www.statefarm.com/aboutus/\\_pressreleases/2012/october/24/likelihood-of-collision-2012.pdf](http://www.statefarm.com/aboutus/_pressreleases/2012/october/24/likelihood-of-collision-2012.pdf)), which lists the projected number of deer-vehicle col-

lisions and paints a slightly different picture. Below are the top 10 states by deer-vehicle collisions:

☐ Pennsylvania – 115,571

☐ Michigan – 97,856

☐ New York – 80,262

☐ Ohio – 67,699

☐ Wisconsin – 52,525

☐ Virginia – 52,369

☐ Illinois – 51,627

☐ North Carolina – 48,362

☐ Texas – 45,418

☐ Georgia – 42,996

Notice that Pennsylvania had almost four times as many projected collisions than West Virginia, yet it only made the number five spot on the first list. That's because the list factored in the number of licensed drivers at that time (statistics were gathered between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012).

That means that more deer were hit in Pennsylvania than any other state by 17,715 deer. There were about three times as many deer killed in that state by hunters than the amount hit by a motor vehicle. To compare, Pennsylvania's Game Commis-

sion reported that hunters harvested 336,200 deer in the 2011-2012 season, an increase of six percent from the previous year.

In the entire United States, more than one million deer were hit in the year surveyed by State Farm. There were a total 1,231,710 deer hit nationwide by a vehicle, a 7.7 percent increase from the same time period the year before. In the ten states listed above, a total of 654,685 deer were hit. That means 53 percent of the total number of deer hit in the United States were hit in just 10 states.

By comparison Kansas sportsmen and women harvested 97,938 deer during the 2011-12 deer seasons. Kansas motorists reported 9,199 deer hit in 2011, up 1.5% from 2010.

Deer collisions occur annually, although they peak in October and November during the rut. They then don't slow down until mid-December. Motorists are advised to slow down after sundown and before sunrise to reduce their risk of colliding with a deer.

# Kansas deer hunters aim to feed hungry

Hunters, meat processors, food banks provide meals to poor

During the 12-day Kansas firearm deer season, which opened Wednesday, Nov. 28, more than 50,000 deer may be harvested. In some areas of the state, hunters can obtain up to five whitetail antlerless deer permits, in addition to their either-sex permit. And while additional harvest helps stabilize and control the deer population, many hunters don't want or need more than one or two deer in the freezer. That is where Kansas Hunters Feeding the Hungry (KSHFH) comes into the picture.

KSHFH is a nonprofit organization that is the conduit for hunters to donate deer and provide food for hungry Kansans. With the help of hunters, meat processors, and private donors, KSHFH annually provides

thousands of meals to those in need. Just one deer can feed nearly 200 hungry people in the state. In 2011, 1,038 deer were donated through KSHFH, providing nearly 225,000 meals through 100 food banks across the state.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism makes supporting this program easy. When outdoorsmen and women buy licenses, permits, or stamps, they can donate \$2 to fund the program, which the agency collects for KSHFH. Contributions from hunters, businesses, churches, sportsmen's clubs, organizations and other foundations help KSHFH pay butchers to process, package and freeze the donated venison for distribution by local food pantries.

Volunteers help organize and coordinate the efforts of KSHFH in communities across the state by helping with fundraising, promotional gatherings, meat donation, meat distribution and much more.

KSHFH invites hunters to donate any legally harvested deer to one of the more than 40 participating meat processors around the state. To find one nearest you, go online to [www.kshfh.org](http://www.kshfh.org) and click on "Lockers." It's always a good idea to call ahead before taking your deer to a processor. There is no cost to donate your deer as long as the KSHFH organization has sufficient funding to cover the processing expense. Donated game must be field dressed and legally tagged.

## Prairie Trout!

Trout season is in full swing, providing great winter fishing fun

The Kansas state record rainbow trout weighed 15.43 pounds. That's not a typo; the official state record really weighed more than 15 pounds. Nicole Wilson caught it last March while fishing at Lake Shawnee in Topeka.

Kansas trout fishing is a winter-time activity. With one exception, the cold-water fish won't survive a Kansas summer, but they do fine when stocked from November-April. There is a strip-mined lake on the Mined Land Wildlife Area in Cherokee County where cool spring flows allow trout to survive year-round. All other Kansas trout waters are stocked periodically throughout the trout season, Nov. 1-April 15, 2013.

Trout fishing is a great way to get out of the house on a warm winter day and enjoy some fishing. If you're 16 or older, you'll need a Trout Permit, which is \$12.50 and valid through the calendar year. All resident anglers 16-75 (anglers 65-74 need a fishing license beginning Jan. 1, 2013) will also need a fishing license. Anglers 15

and younger may fish for trout without a trout stamp, but they may only keep two trout per day. An angler with a Trout Permit may keep five trout per day, unless a more restrictive creel limit is posted.

More than 30 waters are stocked with trout, and they are divided into two categories, listed in the Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary. All anglers 16 and older fishing on Type 1 Trout Waters must have a Trout Permit. On Type 2 waters, only anglers fishing for or possessing trout must have a Trout Permit.

Revenues from the sale of Trout Permits allow the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to purchase trout from contracting hatcheries for stocking. Contracts require catchable-sized trout along with a percentage of larger fish, so there is always the chance to catch a lunker. Most trout stocked are rainbows, but there are some brown trout stocked in the Kanopolis Seep Stream and Mined Land Unit No. 30.

Anglers use a variety of techniques to catch Kansas trout. Many still-fish commercial baits such as Berkley PowerBait, usually on or near the bottom. Others prefer to cast small spinners, spoons, or jigs on light tackle. And others choose to use fly tackle. Winter water is clear, so light line and ultra-light tackle is recommended. Even though these fish have been raised in hatcheries, they can be as finicky as their wild counterparts. Keep switching lures, flies and presentation until you find the combination that works. No matter how you catch them, winter trout are great fun and tasty when slow grilled or smoked fresh.

For more information on Kansas trout fishing, consult the 2012 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary, available wherever licenses are sold and online at [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com). A complete list of stocking schedules can be found online at: <http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Trout-Fishing-Program>.

# Adventures of a vagabond volunteer

By Marilyn Kircus

Where else can you wake to the sounds of owl calls, the morning coyote chorus, and hear thousands of ducks and geese returning after a night out grazing in the surrounding rice fields? Watch a red sunrise silhouetted with hundreds of ducks and geese? See roseate spoonbills and egrets nest and raise their babies? Have people return for more of your birding tours? Have a harrier fly directly at you while working on your computer, and then fly up and over your house? Help put radio tags in carp? Listen to sandhill cranes from your bed? Or visit a hot spring with fellow volunteers and interns?

I'm a retired school teacher who loves to travel, take pictures, garden, camp, and paddle. I also love to help take care of our wonderful natural world and help other people become passionate about wild places and wildlife. I regularly volunteer at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, so it was only natural that I decided my richest life as a retired woman would

be a traveling and volunteering one. In November, 2010, I started working as a live-in volunteer for national wildlife refuges with provided housing. I chose to travel down this path because I can't afford an RV and continue to do all my hobbies, see a variety of landscapes, and make new friends all while working at national wildlife refuges.

While volunteering for approximately 3,500 hours at three refuges, Anahuac NWR (TX), where I logged 1000 hours of work before retiring, Sacramento NWR complex (CA), and currently, Malheur NWR (OR), my duties have included:

- Working as a traveling docent, where I meet people, share views of wildlife through a scope, and answer questions about the refuge and animals.
- Gardening including invasive removal, starting trees and shrubs from cuttings, planting and watering trees, and planting and maintaining butterfly gardens.
- Surveying birds and bees and entering data for refuge biologists.

- Writing articles and producing Power Point presentations.
- Leading bird watching tours.
- Working in visitor centers, answering questions, and selling merchandise.
- Preparing and sharing educational programs with children on and off the refuges.

This life is never boring as I change locations frequently and usually have several different jobs during each stay. I have lots of time to poke into the far reaches of each refuge and hike, camp and canoe in the surrounding areas. I never stop learning through the exploration of the culture, habitats, and wildlife, and recreational opportunities of each of my host refuges. My hope is to continue traveling to new refuges and revisiting my favorite places until I'm no longer physically able to do the work. For the day to day details of my life read my blog—Adventures of a Vagabond Volunteer.

*Marilyn Kircus is using her retirement for the betterment of the National Wildlife Refuge System.*

## Procedural motion stops Sportsmen's Act of 2012 in Senate

*In a surprise upset, the U.S. Senate failed to advance the Sportsmen's Act of 2012 (S. 3525). After months of discussion with Senate members by a diverse coalition of angling, hunting and conservation organizations to create a historic bill containing 17 key provisions for anglers, hunters and fish and wildlife conservation, the bill failed to pass over a party line vote on a procedural motion.*

*"The shocking aspect of this bill's defeat - one that would have such a positive impact on anglers, hunters and fish and wildlife conservation - is that it occurred over a budget argument giving the Secretary of the Interior the ability to increase the duck stamp price \$10, thus pumping more dollars into wetland conservation for both fisheries and wildlife*

*benefits" said Gordon Robertson, vice president of the American Sport-fishing Association (ASA).*

*"Adding salt to the wound is that the increase is strongly supported by waterfowl hunters who champion the user pay-user benefit concept for fish and wildlife conservation along with all sportsmen and women as well as the fishing and hunting industries," said Robertson. "The Congressional Budget Office has stated that overall, S. 3525 would reduce the nation's deficit by \$5 million."*

*"It's a cruel twist that the Senate failed to move S. 3525 over a budget procedural question when in the end the bill adds to conservation and would most certainly have a positive impact on the nation's economy," said Robertson. "It would truly be a tragedy if this historic piece of leg-*

*islation went down in flames due to partisanship and simmering disputes over Senate rules and procedures that have nothing to do with the merits of the bill."*

*Robertson further noted, "Previous procedural votes advancing this legislation on the Senate floor have won more than 80 votes. ASA is urging Senate leaders to bring the focus back to fish and wildlife conservation and the needs of the nation's 60 million sportsmen and women that are addressed in this historic legislative package. We've come this far because we've kept partisan politics away from this bill. We need to get back on that course."*

*With just a few legislative days remaining in the lame duck Congress,*

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*Continued on Page 19*



# Conflicts in Panoche Valley

By Paul J. Baicich  
Great Birding Projects

The Panoche Valley, which ranges across parts of Fresno and San Benito Counties in California, is an Important Bird Area (IBA) of global significance. It supports a sizable number of over-wintering Mountain Plovers on short-grass habitat and also hosts other species of interest, including Golden Eagle, Northern Harrier, Prairie Falcon, White-tailed Kite, Long-billed Curlew, and multiple sparrow species, including nesting Grasshopper Sparrows. Pasture-based livestock grazing land and native grassland habitat in the valley are vital bird attractants.

Since 2009, however, there has been an ongoing debate over establishing a \$1.8-billion solar energy project covering almost 5,000 acres of the valley floor, mostly in parts of the San Benito County portion of the valley. While few

people dispute the necessity of developing and installing solar energy as a meaningful renewable resource, the issue in the Panoche Valley is one that raises the issue of appropriate siting. While solar development in urban and industrial areas and in certain retired farming areas with little wildlife habitat value may make good sense, solar development in active, high-quality, ranchland and agricultural zones with exceptional wildlife value need to be considered more carefully. It's all about location.

Serious review of the potential environmental impact of this enormous solar-energy project have found the stated justification - and the mitigations proposed to compensate for its harmful impacts - to be inadequate. (There are also three endangered species in the area: San Joaquin Kit Fox, Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard, and Giant Kangaroo Rat.)

Concurrently, the recent entry of Duke Energy as the major partner in

the project has boosted the expectations of pro-development forces. Still, in the words of one project skeptic, "Panoche Valley is not the only place where the sun shines. Tracts of lands of less significance to wildlife also get their share of sunlight."

The issue in Panoche Valley regarding the solar energy project is similar to the issue we face in Kansas regarding wind energy projects. The Kansas Wildlife Federation does not oppose industrial wind energy projects per se but we are concerned about their location. Kansas is blessed with native prairies which are essential habitat for many resident wildlife species, including the greater and lesser prairie-chickens. Wind energy projects, which can impact over 20,000 acres of prime native prairie, should be located in previously disturbed areas, such as cropland. It would minimize negative impacts on wildlife habitat and still accomplish alternative energy demands.

## EDUCATION

*Continued from Page 13*

the child does. The parents or grandparents are most likely rusty on their hunting laws, since it will have been a few years since they have taken hunter education. Some grandparents (or even parents) may not have even taken hunter education since anyone born before July 1, 1957 is not required to take hunter education.

Although some people may criticize the schools that already have hunter education in it, the teachers themselves feel they are making a difference in the kids. If other schools throughout the United States would jump on this bandwagon, the schools, staff, and children would benefit greatly. Not only would the students learn about fire arms, they would be taught valuable lessons about wildlife, the land, landowners, other hunters, and themselves. Whether the students chose to hunt or not, it is hoped that

they at least gain an appreciation for the role hunting plays in wildlife conservation. As Phil Taunton stated in a personal interview, "...educators are seeing the need for students to reconnect with nature." Through these hunter education programs kids can reconnect with nature and learn valuable lessons about wildlife, hunting, and ethics. Yet perhaps the greatest lesson of all would be that the students could truly experience the great outdoors with a wonderful mentor: their instructor.

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# Ultralight-led whooping cranes arrive at wintering destination in Florida

Five endangered whooping cranes arrived November 23rd on their wintering grounds at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Wakulla County, Florida. These cranes are the 12th group to be guided by ultralight aircraft from central Wisconsin to the Gulf coast of Florida. The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP), an international coalition of public and private organizations, is conducting the reintroduction project in an effort to restore this endangered species to part of its historic range in eastern North America. There are now 115 whooping cranes in the wild in eastern North America thanks to WCEP's efforts.

"This is the earliest the birds have arrived at St. Marks, and we are thrilled to have them here so soon," said Terry Peacock, Refuge Manager at St. Marks NWR. "I was in the blind at the pen site to watch the birds arrive. I just have to say that it never gets old watching the birds come to the refuge. It was as touching this time as it was the first time."

In addition to the five birds led south by WCEP partner Operation Migration's ultralights, six cranes are making their first southward migration as part of

WCEP's Direct Autumn Release (DAR) program. The DAR cranes were hatched and raised by biologists with project partner International Crane Foundation. The six birds were released in the company of older cranes from whom the young birds learn the migration route south. Five of the DAR cranes have completed their migration and are located in Hendry County, Florida. The sixth bird is currently located at Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area in Pulaski County, Indiana. The ultralight-led and DAR cranes this year are joining two wild-hatched chicks in the 2012 cohort.

Whooping cranes were on the verge of extinction in the 1940s. Today, there are only about 600 birds in existence, approximately 445 of them in the wild. Aside from the WCEP birds, the only other migratory population of whooping cranes nests at Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Alberta, Canada and winters at Aransas NWR on the Texas Gulf Coast. A non-migratory flock of approximately 20 birds lives year-round in the central Florida Kissimmee region, and an additional 14 non-migratory cranes live in southern Louisiana.

WCEP asks anyone who encounters

a whooping crane in the wild to please give them the respect and distance they need. Do not approach birds on foot within 200 yards; remain in your vehicle; do not approach in a vehicle any closer than 100 yards. Also, please remain concealed and do not speak loudly enough that the birds can hear you. Finally, do not trespass on private property in an attempt to view or photograph whooping cranes.

Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership founding members are the International Crane Foundation, Operation Migration, Inc., Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and National Wildlife Health Center, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, and the International Whooping Crane Recovery Team.

Many other flyway states, provinces, private individuals and conservation groups have joined forces with and support WCEP by donating resources, funding and personnel. More than 60 percent of the project's budget comes from private sources in the form of grants, public donations and corporate sponsors.

## "Spook" Spann pleads guilty for illegal hunting

On November 27 in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, William "Spook" Spann, a well-known bowhunter, pleaded guilty to illegally killing a trophy Kansas deer in 2007.

A court press release said Spann, 50, of Dickson, Tenn., admitted to killing the whitetail buck in Stafford County on land owned by another person. His permit for that year required he only hunt on property that he owned.

The buck carried non-typical antlers that gross-scored about 230 inches on the Pope & Young scoring system, with a net score of about 224 inches. If legally taken, it would rank as one of the top bucks ever shot in Kansas and was thought to be one of the top bucks

taken in the world in 2007.

He was charged with transporting the illegally-killed deer across state lines, a violation of the federal Lacey Act. The deer was shot with archery equipment, during legal shooting hours, during Kansas' archery season.

Spann, who is featured on several television shows and hunting videos, and a cameraman saw the deer on property owned by another landowner, stalked within range and he shot the buck at about 10 yards. Video of the hunt, and photos of the deer, were widely circulated.

Spann's sentencing is set for Feb. 28. The court release said prosecutors and defense attorneys have agreed to

recommend Spann be sentenced to three years federal probation, including a six-month suspension of U.S. hunting privileges, plus another six months in which he would be prohibited from hunting in Kansas. Recommended is a fine of \$10,000 and another \$10,000 could also be paid in restitution to the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

Sentencing will probably also include he not promote the illegal deer on his site, [www.spookspann.com](http://www.spookspann.com).

The press release did not indicate if Spann could retain possession of the deer antlers. Normally in poaching crimes, all parts of the animal are confiscated.

# Election 2012 — What next for conservation?

The conservation community, dating back to George W. Bush's first term as President in 2001, has rallied together to produce a transition document titled, *Wildlife for the 21st Century*. Its purpose was to codify issues of greatest concern to sportsmen, prioritize these issues, and recommend solutions. Its purpose is to also advise incoming administrations as to the critical work and programs that are already underway that should be allowed to continue in order to bear fruit.

Such efforts, and these documents, have been produced and presented to each U.S. president since then by the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP). AWCP is a consortium of 49 wildlife conservation organizations representing over 20 million sportsmen-members that works to safeguard our nation's wildlife resources and the interests of America's sportsmen and women.

During the George W. Bush Administration, AWCP advocated for formal recognition of sportsmen conservation under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The result was the formation of the Sporting Conservation Council, later to be renamed the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council. "The Council" charter authorizes it to hold public meetings with the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to examine issues and submit recommendations.

*Wildlife for the 21st Century* Volume IV will be presented to the Obama Administration for his second term. It will contain priority recommendations for resolving major national issues facing our hunting heritage and wildlife conservation, including:

- Promoting our hunting heritage
- Promoting access for hunting and recreational shooting on federal lands
- Enhancing wildlife habitat conservation

on federal public lands

- Enhancing coordination between federal and state agencies
- Enhancing wildlife habitat conservation on private lands
- Funding wildlife conservation
- Fully incorporating wildlife conservation into energy development
- Addressing impacts of climate change on wildlife
- Addressing threats to wildlife from diseases and invasive species
- Enhancing effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The bottom line is, the conservation community that represents sportsmen, our wildlife, and the habitats that support us all has gained the respect, credibility, and the access needed to be able to be heard and advise at the highest levels within our government. AWCP has been able to achieve great things since its formation in 2000. These successes are set to continue.

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## MAGAZINE

*Continued from Page 7*

been repurposed as an iPad magazine app that takes children on an interactive tour of his virtual treehouse.

"We tested this magazine with kids, and they loved the idea of exploring these rooms," Ms. Dalheim said. "This delighted them to wonder what's behind the doors and exploring new

content."

The magazine app will include stories, activities and videos curated by the magazine editors and produced by FableVision Studios. Starting with the first issue on Wednesday, it will be published five times a year for \$4.99 each or \$19.99 for an annual subscription.

Younger readers will get their own iPad app called Ranger Rick Jr. Appventures. To emphasize the difference, Ms. Collins said, Appventures will be a digital storybook that will focus on a

single animal each time. The first one, which was released in November, visits lions in the grasslands of Africa. The app takes advantage of the iPad's technology by using the internal gyroscope, for instance, to offer panoramic views of the African plains.

The app, which costs \$4.99, was developed in partnership with Moonbot Studios, the studio behind the animated short "The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore," which won an Academy Award this year.

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## SENATE

*Continued from Page 16*

*it will be a challenge to resurrect S. 3525. The bill ran into trouble when a point of order was raised about whether the bill violated a 2011 budget agreement and a motion to waive the point of order failed by 10 votes. Budget related disputes are not uncommon when large pieces of legislation come to the Senate floor. It is however very uncommon for a budget*

*point of order challenging a provision that would modestly increase revenues to sink a bill. Six senators were not present and the vote on the procedural motion to waive the point of order fell along party lines with the exception of two senators. To see how your Senator(s) voted, please visit the Sportsmen's Act of 2012 page on [KeepAmericaFishing™](#).*

*"The American Sportfishing Association and the members of the coalition stand ready to work with Senate and House members to find a*

*solution that enables passage of the Sportsmen's Act of 2012 before Congress adjourns," Robertson concluded. "It will take a lot of effort, but we remain hopeful. This historic package of bipartisan bills was crafted and advanced through Congress thanks to bipartisanship. It is not too late for our Senators to put aside the partisanship that caused the bill to fail and pull this bill from the flames, but they must act quickly."*

# Evolution of the U.S. Farm Bill

## The largest source of conservation funding

Farm Bill conservation programs and technical assistance funding dwarf all other conservation funding sources

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) spends considerable time working with Farm Bill conservation programs—from conservation delivery and policy staff who spend time working with partners to ensure more effective on-the-ground application of the programs to the science staff who develop biologically-based decision support tools to site these programs for the most effective and efficient outcomes. While we wait for congress to approve a new Farm Bill sometime in the next congressional session, we thought it would be interesting to take a look at the history of the conservation programs supported in this important legislation.

In 1933, as America was in the midst of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl was devastating farms across the Great Plains, the first Farm Bill was signed, guaranteeing commodity prices didn't fall below a certain level. At this time, one in four Americans lived on farms (now less than one in 50); farm income had dropped by 52 percent; and by 1933, farm income was 40 percent of urban incomes. The goal of the bill was to get farmers to take land out of production and reduce the crop surplus while increasing prices.

As the Dust Bowl continued to drive farmers from the plains, soil conservation practices became the focus of the next three bills (from 1935-1938). The Soil Conservation Service was established in 1935 to oversee programs intended to protect land from soil erosion. Social and economic policy analysts determined that conservation was in the public interest and, therefore, the public should contribute to the farmers' costs. Farmers were paid to replace soil-depleting crops (including corn, cotton and wheat) with soil-conserving crops (grass, legume or cover crop). Although the intent was to reduce surplus crops, surpluses grew because farmers enrolled their poorest ground in the conservation program while

using technology to increase yields on their best land.

During World War II, the increasing world market led to higher commodity prices, and the government developed huge surpluses to ensure national security. Conservation was put on hold as farmers cashed in on high prices. When the war ended, the demand for commodities shrank causing greater surpluses, which the 1949 and 1954 Farm Bills did little to control; conservation was not addressed in these bills either.

In 1956, the Soil Bank was created, which took 29 million acres out of production and put them into practices for soil, water, forest and wildlife conservation; in exchange, landowners received rental payments. The land retirement programs (acreage reserve and conservation reserve) aimed to reduce erosion, support farm incomes, and reduce commodity price support payments by reducing supply and raising market prices.

Farm productivity, and therefore surpluses, continued to grow in the 1960s as conservation payments were used to improve soil quality and increase yields. The 1961 Farm Bill attempted to remove more corn and grain sorghum out of production by paying farmers to put the land in conservation. But, in the 1970s, conservation took a backseat to growing crops as American farmers were encouraged to "feed the world"; this was a setback to the past 40 years of conservation efforts as farmers tilled up their conservation acreage and cashed in on the high commodity prices. As the decade came to an end, the USDA became more concerned with water pollution from sediment runoff and the overall quality of water.

The 1980s saw a shift in farm policy, with more programs focusing on water, air, and wildlife conservation rather than supply control or increasing the quality and quantity of production.

The current iterations of the Farm Bill started in 1985, which included the creation of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). More than 36 million acres of highly erodible land and other biologically sensitive and important areas were put into CRP, but the program still needed to evolve before it truly left supply control and income support behind.

Farm Bills of the 1990s introduced more of today's conservation programs, including the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). In 1994, the Soil Conservation Service was renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service. With its new name, it also had a more focused goal of maximizing environmental benefits per dollar expended rather than ensuring all counties participated; funds were more likely to be distributed to conservation priority areas that were determined as environmentally critical.

By 2008, environmental enhancement was finally more important than productivity and supply control, partially due to increasing commodity prices. There was a fundamental change in environmental spending from maximizing the number of acres conserved to maximizing the environmental benefits for the money spent. The Farm Bills of this decade increased funding for EQIP, WHIP, CRP and WRP, and created the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) and Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP). Additionally, NRCS Chief Dave White created more than a dozen special initiatives under the EQIP program—such as the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative, Ogallala Aquifer Initiative, and in the Great Basin region, the Sage Grouse Initiative—to focus conservation efforts on geographic areas and deliver

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*Continued on Page 23*

# Woodlands-related funding still available through Environmental Quality Incentives program

**By Robert Atchison, Rural Forestry Program Coordinator**  
Kansas Forest Service, Manhattan, Kansas

Kansas landowners can apply for fiscal year (FY) 2013 funds for woodland and windbreak improvement projects through U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI).

The application deadline for FY 2013 funding will be February 15, 2013.

Until then, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices housed in the Kansas' statewide network of USDA Service Centers can help landowners start their application. And, through its district foresters, the Kansas Forest Service (KFS) can help landowners complete the technical parts of the application process including project plans.

"Getting in on this year's funding could be well worth the time and effort," said Bob Atchison, rural forestry coordinator for the Kansas Forest Service. Funds also are available for renovating and planting windbreaks and trees adjacent to streams.

"No one knows what the U.S.

Congress will do to next year's budget. But, fiscal year 2013 forestry funding is about twice the size it was just five years ago with the addition of CCPI," Atchison said. "That's a blessing for Kansas. Statewide, our needs are becoming critical in terms of our having healthy, mature trees in place.

"We need those trees to preserve our soil resources. We need them to protect our surface water supplies from sedimentation and from the brew of pollutants that runoff can carry. Mature trees are also the basis for Kansas agroforestry income, and they provide money-saving, natural protection for our homes, roads, crops, and livestock."

"In Kansas, EQIP can provide financial assistance to remove poor quality trees," the forester said. "Or, the program can provide financial assistance for heavy equipment to remove larger, expanding stands of Osage orange, honeylocust, Asian bush honeysuckle, and/or other invasive species.

"If landowners then want to bring their forest stand up to proper stocking levels, the program can cover the cost of planting higher quality trees, including oaks and black walnuts," Atchison said. "Project plans can be ambitious enough to require more than one fund-

ing year to complete."

Forestry EQIP is also for owners whose land includes stream or river banks. It can help them to prepare for, plant, and manage riparian trees that stabilize those banks and filter runoff. As part of a riparian project, landowners can receive funding for planting seedlings, acorns, and/or walnuts.

"This is a voluntary program, but it is also competitive," he said. "In general, the more the plan addresses resource concerns that sustain woodland health, water quality, and reduce soil erosion, the better the chances for funding."

"Fortunately, inviting a district forester to your place and working with that forester to complete your plan will cost you nothing."

Further information about CCPI's forestry initiative is available by contacting Atchison at 785-532-3310 or [Atchison@ksu.edu](mailto:Atchison@ksu.edu) or at your local NRCS field office located in the USDA Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government or on the internet at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov).) More information is available on the Kansas Web site at [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov). Follow us on Twitter @NRCS\_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Zebra mussels found in Chase State Fishing Lake

Officials with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism have confirmed the presence of zebra mussels at Chase State Fishing Lake located in Chase County, 2 ½ miles west of Cottonwood Falls. In regular testing, biologists identified zebra mussel larvae, called veligers. After a thorough search, fisheries biologists found adult zebra mussels. The pristine 109-acre state lake is a popular fishing spot located in the scenic Flint Hills.

This latest discovery highlights the need for anglers and boaters to be aware of new bait regulations and the dangers of moving live baitfish and water

between water bodies. On Jan. 1, 2012, new regulations designed to prevent further spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) require anglers to use wild-caught baitfish only in the lakes or streams where they were caught. In addition, livewells and bilges of boats must be drained prior to transport from any Kansas water on a public highway. And anglers may not transport live fish from any ANS-designated water. Chase State Lake is now an ANS-designated water.

Zebra mussels are just one of the non-native aquatic species that threaten our waters and native wildlife. Boaters and anglers must remember to follow regula-

tions and precautions that will prevent the spread:

- Clean, drain and dry boats and equipment between uses
- Use wild-caught bait only in the lake or pool where it was caught
- Do not move live fish from waters infested with zebra mussels or other aquatic nuisance species
- Drain livewells and bilges and remove drain plugs from all vessels prior to transport from any Kansas water on a public highway.

For more information on stopping aquatic nuisance species in Kansas, visit [ProtectKS Waters.org](http://ProtectKS Waters.org).

# NAWMP explores policy work by joint ventures

## Development of Kansas SAFE practice an example of PLJV policy work

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Committee recently released a white paper on Migratory Bird Joint Ventures role in policy. The report is a result of a January 2011 NAWMP workshop that brought together Joint Venture members, academics, and government officials to explore this topic.

The workshop participants examined approaches to improve Joint Venture effectiveness in identifying, developing, promoting, and evaluating policy issues and discussed examples of how Joint Ventures and other broad partnerships have approached policy issues relevant to their conservation planning and delivery efforts. According to the authors, the paper “is a first step towards better coordination of policy work within and across the Joint Ventures, and to improving the sharing of pertinent information....”

“NAWMP always has a first level understanding of what really supports conservation so it is great to see this paper and, of course, the indirect acknowledgement of the policy work that we are doing,” says Playa Lakes Joint Venture Coordinator Mike Carter.

Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV), one of the organizations represented at the workshop, takes an active role in educating public and private policy makers about regional issues and providing current tools and research to help inform their decisions.

“The PLJV landscape is significantly influenced by agriculture, energy development, climate change, invasive species, and limited water supply. But effective policy can reduce habitat loss and increase habitat protection and restoration — locally and regionally,” says PLJV Conservation Policy Director Barth Crouch, one of the contributing authors of the report.

An example of an effective policy change is the development of a new Kansas State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) practice that was approved by the US Department of Agriculture in November 2010. Earlier that year, PLJV staff worked with various partners — including Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Kansas Wildlife Federation, Audubon of Kansas, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service — to develop a proposal that advocated

for 30,000 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to be enrolled in specified target areas to benefit the Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LEPC). The additional SAFE acres were located in areas within the LEPC range where new or re-enrolled CRP acres would provide the most benefit for the birds by expanding large patches of native habitat.

To help USDA staff define the target areas, PLJV worked closely with their representatives from Washington, D.C., as well as the state and local offices, to create a decision support tool to evaluate land against several criteria related to LEPC habitat needs. The decision support tool helped target areas for enrollment within 2 miles of large habitat patches where a high percent of CRP was set to expire in 2010 and 2011. All of the allotted SAFE acres were enrolled by early summer of this year.

“In sharing our knowledge of science and GIS, we were able to help the USDA strategically target areas where enrollments would have the greatest impact, which led to a more effective program,” says Crouch. “And that’s what policy work is all about.”

## EPA temporarily suspends BP from new federal contracts

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced on November 29 that it has temporarily suspended BP Exploration and Production, Inc., BP PLC and named affiliated companies (BP) from new contracts with the federal government. EPA is taking this action due to BP’s lack of business integrity as demonstrated by the company’s conduct with regard to the Deepwater Horizon blowout, explosion, oil spill, and response, as reflected by the filing of criminal information.

On November 15, 2012, BP agreed to plead guilty to eleven counts of Miscon-

duct or Neglect of Ship Officers, one count of Obstruction of Congress, one misdemeanor count of a violation of the Clean Water Act, and one misdemeanor count of a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, all arising from its conduct leading to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster that killed 11 people and caused the largest environmental disaster in U.S. history.

For the Deepwater Horizon investigation, EPA was designated as the lead agency for suspension and debarment actions. Federal executive branch agencies take these actions to ensure the integrity

of Federal programs by conducting business only with responsible individuals or companies. Suspensions are a standard practice when a responsibility question is raised by action in a criminal case.

The BP suspension will temporarily prevent the company and the named affiliates from getting new federal government contracts, grants or other covered transactions until the company can provide sufficient evidence to EPA demonstrating that it meets Federal business standards. The suspension does not affect existing agreements BP may have with the government.

# US F&W Survey final report

## The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released the final report of the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

According to a USFWS news release issued Dec. 20, the report shows that wildlife-related outdoor recreation nationally increased dramatically from 2006 to 2011. USFWS had released a preliminary overview in August. This final national report includes more details on participation and expenditures with regard to fishing, hunting and wildlife watching.

A preliminary overview by state was released in September and a final report by state is anticipated to be released soon.

Highlights of the final national report include:

- More than 90 million U.S. residents 16 years old and older participated in some form of wildlife-related recreation in 2011; that is up 3 percent from five years earlier. The increase was primarily among those who fished and hunted.

- Wildlife recreationists spent \$144.7 billion in 2011 on their activities, which equated to 1 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. Of the total amount spent, \$49.5 billion was trip-related, \$70.4 billion was spent on equipment, and \$24.8 billion was spent on other items such as licenses and land leasing and ownership.

- The number of sportspersons rose from 33.9 million in 2006 to 37.4 million in 2011. The data show that 33.1 million people fished, 13.7 million hunted, and 71.8 million participated in at least one

type of wildlife-watching activity such as observing, feeding and photographing wildlife.

### Fishing and Hunting Highlights:

- Of the 13.7 million hunters that took to the field in 2011, 11.6 million hunted big game, 4.5 million hunted small game, 2.6 million hunted migratory birds, and 2.2 million other animals.

- Of the 33.1 million anglers that fished, 27.5 million freshwater fished and 8.9 million saltwater fished.

- While 94 percent of the U.S. population 16 years of age and older resided in metropolitan areas (50,000 and over populations), 89 percent of all anglers and 80 percent of all hunters were metropolitan residents.

- 73 percent (24.2 million) of all anglers were male and 27 percent (8.9 million) were female. 89 percent (12.2 million) of all hunters were males and 11 percent (1.5 million) were females.

### Wildlife Watching Highlights:

- 71.8 million U.S. residents observed, fed, and/or photographed birds and other wildlife in 2011. Almost 68.6 million people wildlife watched around their homes, and 22.5 million people took trips of at least one mile from home to primarily wildlife watch.

- Of the 46.7 million people who observed wild birds, 88 percent did so around their homes and 38 percent on trips a mile or more from home.

- Other types of wildlife also were

popular for trip takers: 13.7 million people enjoyed watching land mammals such as bear, squirrel, and buffalo. 4 million people watched marine mammals such as whales and dolphins; 6.4 million enjoyed watching fish; and 10.1 million enjoyed watching other wildlife such as butterflies.

- People spent \$54.9 billion on their wildlife-watching trips, equipment, and other items in 2011. This amounted to \$981 on average per spender for the year.

At the request of state fish and wildlife agencies, USFWS has been sponsoring the national survey every five years since 1955. It is viewed as one of the nation's most important wildlife-related recreation databases and the definitive source of information concerning participation and purchases associated with hunting, fishing and other forms of wildlife-related recreation nationwide.

The U.S. Census Bureau selected over 48,600 households across the country to obtain samples of sportspersons and wildlife watchers for detailed interviews. Information was collected through computer-assisted telephone and in-person interviews. Starting in December 2012 through May 2013, the State reports will be prepared for release on a rolling basis. The survey is funded by Multi-State Conservation grants under the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs which celebrated 75 years of conservation success in 2012.

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## BILL

*Continued from Page 20*

specialized practices where needed most.

As of September 30, 2012, the current Farm Bill has expired. Programs whose authorization expires along with the bill—including the Wetlands Reserve Program, the Grassland Reserve Program, and the Conservation Reserve Program—cannot enroll new acres or

contracts until a new Farm Bill is authorized sometime next year. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program are authorized through 2014, and, therefore, are funded by the six-month Continuing Resolution at FY 2012 levels through March 27, 2013.

We hope a compromise agreement between the bipartisan Senate passed Farm Bill and the House of Representatives' Agriculture Committee's

Farm Bill will be found and approved in 2012. If this doesn't happen and an extension of the current Farm Bill is passed, the new Congress taking office in January may have to begin the process again, with lower amounts of money available to fund these vital conservation programs.

The historical information about the Farm Bill from 1930 to 2002 was summarized from the article "History and Outlook for Farm Bill Conservation Programs" by Zachary Cain and Stephen Lovejoy.

**Kansas Wildlife Federation**  
**P.O. Box 771282**  
**Wichita, KS 67277-1282**

## **The Kansas Wildlife Federation is Working to Preserve a Way of Life for Kansas!**

*Conservation of the state's natural resources means . . .*

- Public awareness of our state's wonderfully diverse advantages and a determination to keep and improve them for wise use now and in future years.
- Proper safeguards—within the bounds of wise use—for the state's soil, water, forests and wildlife, to assure proper balance, use and advancement of our state's entire economy!

## **How You Can Help:**

- \* **Basic Membership:** As a Basic member, for \$30 you'll receive 6 issues of the KWF newsletter packed with the latest information on wildlife resources, events and issues around the state. You also have voting privileges at the KWF Annual Meeting.
- \* **Expanded Membership:** When you send in your Expanded member dues of \$75, you receive the basic membership benefits, and, as a bonus, a free copy of *Watching Kansas Wildlife: A Guide to 101 Sites* and a complimentary ticket to the KWF Annual Meeting
- \* **Kansan:** For an annual fee of \$150, you receive all the benefits listed above plus a copy of the book *Kansas Wildlife*.

## **Here's How to Join:**

**Complete the form on Page 17 and mail with your membership fee to:**  
**Kansas Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 771282, Wichita, KS 67277-1282**