

## *The Voice of Outdoor Kansas*

**March-  
April 2015**

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

### **News & Events**

Pages 2-9, 11-12, 14-17

### **Anglers & Habitats**

Pages 22, 27-28, 30

### **Hunters & Habitats**

Pages 12, 19, 23-25, 27

### **Natural Resource Management**

Pages 1, 10-11, 13, 18-20, 23,  
25-36

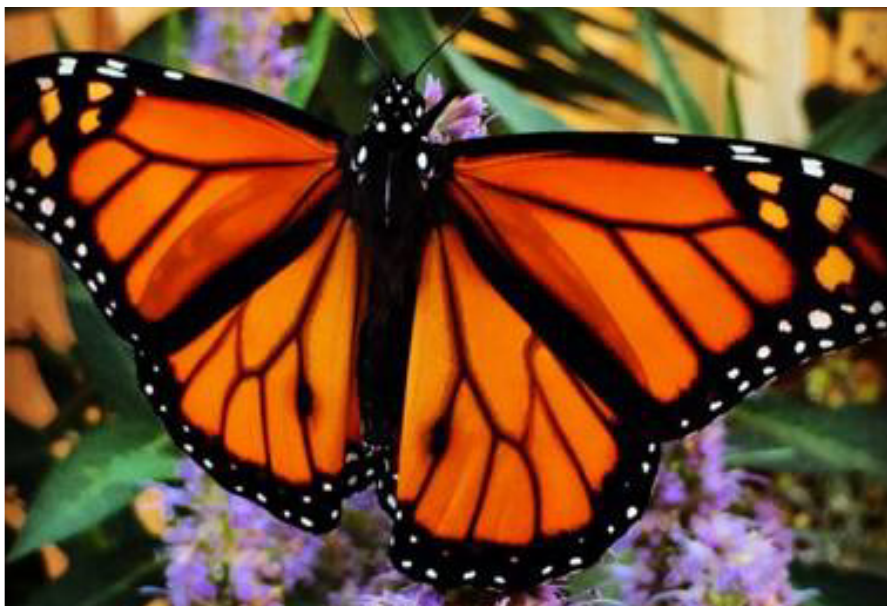
### **Outdoor Recreation**

Pages 12, 18-19

### **Kids' Wildlife Friends**

Pages 29, 23

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



Monarch butterfly. Photo by David Mizejewski.

## **Six ways to save Monarchs**

**By David Mizejewski**  
National Wildlife Federation

Monarch butterflies are in trouble. Over the last few decades, populations of these iconic orange and black butterflies have declined by over 90 percent.

The National Wildlife Federation is teaming up with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners to reverse this alarming trend and ensure that this beautiful butterfly has a future.

### **The Problem**

Like all butterflies, monarchs lay their eggs on select plants, called "host

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*Continued on Page 15*

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



# KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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# President's Message

**By Angela Anderson**

*"The imprint of his gavel has been deep,...his impact has been profound."  
- Bill Frist*

Though he did not wield an actual gavel, Troy Schroeder's impact while he served as President for the Kansas Wildlife Federation was profound. We are extremely grateful that he has agreed to continue to volunteer his time as Southwest District Director in order to see goals he started continue and thrive. As I embark in a new capacity, the knowledge that the board has such professional, outdoors-loving volunteers is reassuring.

My own admiration for the great outdoors began from the many exploration opportunities my family provided during my childhood. The best memories of my youth included nature walks with my father that involved such activities as identifying the five main species of grasses in the tallgrass prairie, in addition to other grasses and forbs; cleaning my first quail after a successful hunt; and watching a sweet, little honeybee crawl over my hand before heading back to the swarm. My grandmothers demonstrated that getting outdoors is a treasured activity. I witnessed lightning-quick hummingbirds swarming in anticipation of being fed sweet, liquid. As well, I will always cherish the times of getting my first driving lessons from my grandmother as we headed to a small, farm pond to while the day away fishing (or turtling as I prefer to call it as it seemed all we ever caught were turtles). It was those first outdoor experiences that led me to ensuring my own two children had the opportunities to explore nature and the hope that other children can have the same freedom. It is amazing to witness what exploring the environment does for the health of the mind, body, and soul of a child. It can be as simple as plunging hands deep into the soil, or observing squirrels frolicking in the neighborhood park to something as grand as fishing in a small pond amongst the great expanse of the rolling Flint Hills, with the "gentle" Kansas breeze blowing through the grasses – one will see the result in the child's face.

This is what excites me about being a part of the Kansas Wildlife Fed-



eration. Each board member has the personal mission to see that this can become reality for as many area children as possible and that the necessary legislative happenings occur to ensure this opportunity for future generations. The Kansas Wildlife Federation witnessed other great outdoor stewards and leaders in Kansas at the Annual Meeting in Hays. We were proud to honor them and their works through the KWF Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) awards, as Kansas' natural resources & children are sure to benefit from their efforts.

There are many ways you, too, can assist the Kansas Wildlife Federation accomplish its mission of introducing youth, the future stewards of the earth, to the rewards and satisfaction of getting outdoors and becoming engaged with nature. In addition to the traditional means of supporting through membership and legacy giving, anyone with a Dillon's Rewards Card can now swipe and demonstrate their own mission to getting Kansas children outdoors. Simply visit <https://www.dillons.com/communityrewards>, set up an account and choose the Kansas Wildlife Federation as the recipient for community rewards (KWF's NPO number is 62633). Visit our website, [www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org), or look for additional details in the newsletter for more donation information.

I look forward to meeting and talking with you more about Kansas wildlife & habitat, children in nature and everything in between. As David Suzuki has said, "Unless we are willing to encourage our children to reconnect with and appreciate the natural world, we can't expect them to protect and care for it."

# Calendar of Events

- Mar 2** Read Across America Day, Seuss classic, Oh, The Places You'll Go  
**Mar 14** Women in Farming workshop, Lawrence <http://kansasruralcenter.org/>  
**Mar 14** National Wildlife Refuge System's Birthday  
**Mar 14** Kansas River Cleanup, Lawrence call 785 312 7200 or contact the Kansas Riverkeeper  
**Mar 14** 5th Annual Go Green Leprechaun Run Dyck Arboretum of the Plains Hesston  
**Mar 16-22** Spring Break for Kansas Regents Schools  
**Mar 20** First Day of Spring  
**Mar 21** KDWPT Volunteer Fishing Instructor Class, Pratt [kansasangler@gmail.com](mailto:kansasangler@gmail.com)  
**Mar 27** Caucasian Bluestem Workshop, Ashland Community Center  
[aok@audubonofkansas.org](mailto:aok@audubonofkansas.org)  
**March 27-28** Kansas Academy of Science, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS  
**Mar 28** Flint Hills Gobblers Spring Turkey Hunting Clinic Emporia Gib Rhodes at 620-437-2012  
**Mar 28** Hunter education class, Geary County Fish & Game Assoc. go to [www.safehunters.com](http://www.safehunters.com)  
**Apr 7** Cedar Crest Woodland Wildflower Walk, Shawnee County [hanjd@cox.net](mailto:hanjd@cox.net)  
**Apr 10** 2015 KACEE Awards Celebration, Manhattan [www.kacee.org](http://www.kacee.org)  
**Apr 10-11** Kansas Assn. of Teachers of Science [KATS] Kamp, Rock Springs  
**Apr 18** Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sale #1, KCMO [djsher@fairpoint.net](mailto:djsher@fairpoint.net)  
**Apr 22** Earth Day  
**Apr 24-25** Wings n/Wetlands Festival, Great Bend  
**April 24-26** Kansas Herpetological Society Spring Field Trip, Russell County  
**Apr 24** Arbor Day  
**Apr 25** 5th Ad Astra Archery Tournament, MacLennan Park, Topeka (785) 296-4580  
**Apr 25** Concordia Wildflower Tour, Cloud County [nadinechamplin@yahoo.com](mailto:nadinechamplin@yahoo.com)  
**Apr 25** Chisholm Creek Park Honeysuckle Removal, Sedgwick County [jim@gpnc.org](mailto:jim@gpnc.org)  
**Apr 25** Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sale #2, KCMO [djsher@fairpoint.net](mailto:djsher@fairpoint.net)  
**May 1-3** Kansas Ornithological Society spring meeting, Scott City, KS  
**May 2-3** Kansas Sampler Festival, Wamego  
**May 3-5** Outdoor Writers of Kansas spring meeting, Emporia  
**May 9** International Migratory Bird Day  
**May 14** NWF National Conservation Achievement Awards Gala, Washington, D.C.  
**May 15** Endangered Species Day  
**May 29-31** Kansas Assn. of Biology Teachers spring field trip, Chautauqua Hills  
**June 6** 11th Annual Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament, Scott Waters, 785-545-3345  
**June 6** Youth in the Outdoors Day – Ravenwood, Topeka  
**June 6** National Trails Day  
**June 7-12** KWF Outdoor Adventure Camp, Rock Springs Camp Theresa  
[bergkwf@wtciweb.com](mailto:bergkwf@wtciweb.com)  
**June 13** 6th Justin Corbet Foundation "Youth in the Outdoors Day" 785-256-6444  
**June 13** Symphony in the Flint Hills, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Chase County  
**June 13** National Get Outdoors Day  
**June 15-21** National Pollinator Week  
**June 21** First Day of Summer  
**July 30-Aug 2** Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, national meeting, KU, Lawrence  
**Aug 29** Hunter education class, Geary County Fish & Game Assoc. go to [www.safehunters.com](http://www.safehunters.com)  
**Sept 12** Kansas Assn. of Biology Teachers annual mtg, Konza Biological Station, Manhattan  
**Sept 23** First Day of Autumn  
**Sept 25-27** Kansas Native Plant Society annual meeting, Konza Biological Station, Manhattan  
**Sept 26-27** Kansas Hunting & Fishing Expo and Arndt Event, Emporia 620-342-4631  
**Sept 26** National Public Lands Day  
**Sept 26** National Hunting & Fishing Day  
**Oct 10** Hunter education class, Geary County Fish & Game Assoc. go to [www.safehunters.com](http://www.safehunters.com)  
**Oct 12-18** National Wildlife Refuge Week  
**Nov. 6-8** Kansas Herpetological Society annual meeting, FHSU, Sternberg, Hays, KS  
**Dec. 22** First Day of Winter

For a more up-to-date calendar go to  
<http://kswildlife.org/calendar.php>.

## KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

### Officers and Board of Directors

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##### Angela Anderson

#### 2016 NWF Alternate Representative:

##### David Zumbaugh



## 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, anglers and conservationists.

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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#### KWF Affiliates:

**Geary County Fish & Game**

**Association**

Junction City, KS

**Kansas Wildlife Officers Association**

Fredonia, KS

**Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation**

Buffalo, MO

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

Kansas Wildlife Federation Newsletter

P.O. Box 771282

Wichita, KS 67277-1282

## KWF honors 2014 Conservation Achievement Program winners



On Saturday, February 21, the Kansas Wildlife Federation honored 7 individuals and organizations for their conservation efforts in 2014 at the Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) Awards banquet in Hays. Pictured are (front row, l to r): Michael Pearce from Newton, Conservation Communicator; and Jim Mason from Wichita, Conservation Educator.

Back row, l to r: Joe Kramer of Pratt,

Conservationist of the Year; Theresa Berger, Outdoor Skills Instructor; David Royer, Holton, Forest Conservationist; Stacy Hoeme, of Scott City, Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist; and Kenny Poston of Anthony, representing the Harper County Youth/David Berry Memorial Hunt, Conservation Organization.

Photo taken by Kathy Pearce of Newton.

## 2013 President's Award

**KWF President Troy Schroeder, left, presents the President's Award to Cynthia Rhodes of Whitewater. Cynthia served on the KWF Board of Directors and was cited for her many years of dedicated service and exceptional performance as chairperson of the KWF Conservation Education Committee. Photo by Steve Sorensen of Valley Center.**



# Conservationist of the Year

Joe Kramer, Pratt

Joe Kramer has lived in Kansas since he was five, as a youngster, learning about its ecology by exploring the Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area. Joe was first hired by Kansas Fish and Game Commission in 1968 as a Biologist Aide, conducting waterfowl and dove surveys. From 1968 to 1970 he was a student assistant in the biology department at Fort Hays State University.

Then, after stints in the Air Force and at the University of Minnesota and University of Hawaii, Joe earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology/Education from Kansas State University in 1976. While at KSU he was a Park Assistant at Tuttle Creek State Park. He went to Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and worked as a Conservation Aide, and in 1977 he was hired by the Kansas Fish and Game Commission as a Farmer I at Milford Wildlife Area.

During his career in Kansas, Joe served as a Farmer I, a Refuge Manager at Melvern Wildlife Area, a Fish and Game Biologist II in Dodge City, and the Regional Wildlife Supervisor in Dodge City. Joe has served as



**Joe Kramer, from Pratt (right), is awarded the 2014 Conservationist of the Year award from Randy Kidd (left), Chair of Kansas Wildlife Federation's CAP Committee. Photo by Troy Schroeder of Albert.**

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*Continued on Page 8*

# Conservation Communicator

Michael Pearce, Newton

For almost 15 years, Michael Pearce has been living an outdoors enthusiast's dream. As the outdoors writer for the Wichita Eagle, he has been paid to be in the Kansas wilds.

Whether it be hunting for deer, quail, pheasant, or ducks, fishing for crappies, white bass or walleyes, camping or hiking, Michael has written about it and in an entertaining style.

Since he came to the Eagle in 2000, he has been the voice of the Kansas outdoors. But it's not just his words that captivate readers; his outstanding photos also paint a picture of the beauty of wild Kansas, inspiring many to visit the places he has featured.

Michael also serves as watchdog, protecting Kansas outdoors interests with articles about questionable proposed legislation and regulation changes that would affect outdoorsmen.

He received kudos from the outdoors



**Michael Pearce, right, of Newton jokes with audience members as Randy Kidd, Chair of Kansas Wildlife Federation's CAP Committee, watches on. Photo by Kathy Pearce of Newton.**

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*Continued on Page 9*



# Conservationist Educator

Jim Mason, Wichita

Jim Mason has committed his life to enjoying and protecting the environment. He is a naturalist at heart and currently plies that trade as the director of the Great Plains Nature Center in northeast Wichita.

Jim has committed his life to enjoying and protecting the environment. As a kid, he was so mesmerized watching ants take apart a dead grasshopper in his back yard that he lost track of time and got a sunburn.

"A lot of kids go through a bug phase," Mason once said. "I just never grew out of mine. Since I was really small, I've always been interested in critters and wildlife and the outdoors. I guess it just stuck with me more than it does other people."

Mason's interest in the outdoors extended to his concern with the destruction of the environment and lack of concern for its preservation. At one of the Boy Scout summer camps Mason attended, campers were given an Indian name by



**Jim Mason, center, receives the 2014 Conservation Educator of the Year award from Randy Kidd, Chair of the Kansas Wildlife Federation's CAP Committee. Looking on is Eric Johnson of Westar Energy, Inc., of Topeka, which sponsored the Conservation Educator award. Photo by Helen Ehlers of Wichita.**

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*Continued on Page 7*

## Conservation Organization

### Harper County Youth Deer Hunt, Anthony

The Harper County Youth Deer Hunt (later changed to the "David Berry Memorial Hunt" to honor a local member of the armed forces who died during active duty) was started by Brad Odle, a Kansas Department of Wildlife And Parks wildlife biologist back in 2000. The idea was to provide a unique outdoor and deer hunting experience for Kansas kids, mostly aged 12-16, in and around Harper County. It was initiated as a result of KDWPT's Pass It On Program, aimed at getting kids outdoors and into hunting activities. The 2014 David Berry Memorial Hunt was the 15th annual hunt.

Hunting youngsters are paired with a local sportsman who acts as a guide. A parent or guardian is encouraged to attend the hunt so they too can learn about deer hunting. Attendees are treated to a two-day event that typically includes: meeting with local sportsmen; a shooting range accuracy check of their rifles;

instructions on clay target shooting; and an educational session where they learn about hunting safety and the behavior and natural history of deer. Hunt participants, guides, and parents are also treated to several meals throughout the event.

Hunt participants have come from all over Kansas. Over the years 100% of participants have seen deer; successful harvest rates have been upwards of 75% most years and nearly 100% in some years. Those not harvesting deer go away with tall tales of near misses, close encounters, and buck fever.

The hunt has steadily grown in popularity and has become an entire community undertaking, involving dozens of guides, local landowners, and sponsors. All the food and supplies are provided or paid for through donations. One sponsor pays for each child's first deer permit. Rifles are provided if kids don't have their own. One year the hunt was short

one rifle so another sponsor went to town and bought a .243 rifle to use that year and each year thereafter. Two .243 rifles and other outdoor equipment are given away to lucky youngsters each year at the hunt through a drawing. Another sponsor provides half-price processing and transport for harvested deer.

Each hunt is a reunion of sorts for many and the camaraderie and atmosphere is fun in itself for all those involved. Instilling the participating kids with a deeper appreciation of Kansas' great outdoors as the joy of hunting is passed on to future generations wouldn't be possible without the longstanding support and dedication of those involved in the Harper County Youth/David Berry Memorial Hunt.

The Harper County Youth/David Berry Memorial Hunt is deserving of the 2014 Kansas Wildlife Federation Conservation Organization of the Year.

# Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist

## Stacy Hoeme, Scott City

Stacy Hoeme's name has been linked to conservation for more than half of his 56 years.

In the latter years of the last century he earned his way into a string of local, state, and national awards for his upland game conservation projects on his farmlands near Scott City.

Stacy stepped up and bought the first stripper-header in the area when a state biologist mentioned it could be good for pheasant habitat. As well as his own lands, Stacy planted lush food plots in the bottom of other landowner's CRP fields so wildlife could find easy food throughout the winter.

He has also been a leading landowner/conservationist in the plight of lesser prairie-chickens in Kansas.

In fact he was the first to identify the birds in what is now their best region of Kansas.

It was about 16 years ago when Stacy noticed two sizes of prairie-chickens on the lands his family ranched in Grove County. (The Hoeme's managed the famous, and conservation award-winning, Pyramid Ranch for decades up until its recent sale.)

Though at the time the lesser prairie-chicken range was thought to end 60 miles to the south, Stacy persisted in his belief of two species. He was the guide the following spring morning when biologist Randy Rodgers documented several lesser prairie-chicken leks in Grove County. That discovery led to more research and leks found in several surrounding counties.

The Hoeme's have been involved with the birds ever since.

Stacy has worked diligently with researchers since scientific studies were initiated in the western Smoky Hills several years



**Stacy Hoeme of Scott City (right), is congratulated by Randy Kidd, Chair of the Kansas Wildlife Federation's CAP Committee, for being named the 2014 KWF Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist award winner. Photo by Angela Anderson of Allen.**

ago. As well as allowing nearly unlimited access to the 9,000 acres the Hoeme's own, Stacy adjusted his grazing rates to insure there was the best grass possible through one of the worst droughts in the region's history.

And his conservation planning paid off big time, when last summer's rains brought the growth of optimum plants and his first

successful lesser prairie-chicken broods in the region in several years.

No doubt most in the conservation field of western Kansas (and those of us affiliated with the Kansas Wildlife Federation) would agree that Stacy Hoeme is a very deserving recipient of the KWF Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservation Award.

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## MASON

*Continued from Page 6*

other members of the troop. Mason's name translated to "Spirit of Good".

A graduate of Wichita High School West, Mason remembers participating in the first Earth Day celebration there. As Jim tells it, "I became aware of the world at the end of the political activism in the 1960's, and it was something I wished I could be a part of it".

Mason went on to Kansas University where he completed a degree in biol-

ogy. After a few years of working for the Johnson County and Wichita Parks and Recreation Departments in various roles, Mason arrived at the Great Plains Nature Center.

Jim is an active educator, having given some 2,500 educational programs to groups of all ages since he began as a naturalist for the city of Wichita. More than 150,000 people visit the center each year.

Mason is co-author of the Nature Center's Pocket Guide to Kansas Freshwater Mussels and the author of the Pocket Guide to Common Kansas Butterflies. A

new pocket book on Kansas' stream fish is scheduled to come out soon to give people a greater appreciation of what lives in our streams.

Jim has great plans for the future of the Great Plains Nature Center. Plans for a complete renovation of Koch Habitat Hall are in the making; the center's bicycle trail will be re-done; and he hopes to increase the center's educational outreach.

In addition to his naturalist and educational duties in Wichita, Jim and his wife, Helen Ehlers, are nurturing the property they own in the Flint Hills.



# Forest Conservationist

## David Royer

Well managed riparian forests are critical for good wildlife habitat, for producing timber products, and to meet the water quality and water needs of Kansas. Dave Royer's 740 acre farm in Atchison County borders the Delaware River, and Dave has been working for years now to stabilize the steambanks on his property.

In fact, Dave bears the distinction of having the first three forest, streambank stabilization projects on the Delaware River, where he has also planted thousands of trees.

Dave has become the Delaware River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) greatest advocate for streambank stabilization and other watershed protection practices, serving on the WRAPS Stakeholder Leadership Team. He has allowed WRAPS to host multiple tours on his property; has been a voice for WRAPS/streambank stabilization in the community; has visited with other landowners about the importance of streambank stabilization, conservation and forestry; and has provided conflict resolution with other landowners and neighbors.

Dave serves as Vice Chair for the Delaware WRAPS Stakeholder Team, and has been the speaker at several events on behalf of the Delaware WRAPS, including a WIBW-TV program, assisting with social marketing workshops at K-State, and as a featured person in one of K-State's reports to the Kansas Legislature. He has hosted tours with the US Forest Service to encourage their financial support of riparian forest management. Dave has also volunteered his own time and equipment to prepare tree planting sites for his neighbors, a critical component for project success.

Dave has established a total of 8.9 acres



**David Royer of Holton (right), is congratulated by Randy Kidd, Chair of the Kansas Wildlife Federation's CAP Committee. Photo by Robert Atchison of Manhattan.**

of native grass cover crops and over 4,000 trees and shrubs on three highly erosive sites, thus increasing wildlife and aquatic habitat. Dave's plantings represent nearly a dozen different tree and shrub species, with several hundred individual plantings of each of these species.

In addition to his work on the Delaware River, Dave has built and stocked several ponds on his property where he regularly feeds the catfish and enjoys taking people

along to do this. He also has installed quail habitat (native grasses and forbs) through CRP in multiple areas of his property.

David Royer has been extremely effective in convincing landowners to adopt forestry and wildlife conservation practices. His legacy will stand beyond his lifetime in the trees and shrubs he has helped to plant and manage, and in the many people he has positively impacted. This makes Dave Royer well qualified as the KWF Forest Conservationist for 2014.

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## KRAMER

*Continued from Page 5*

Director of the Fish and Wildlife division in Pratt since 1988. As director he served five different Assistant Secretaries.

Joe has been active in numerous organizations throughout his career. His expertise in natural resource management has been invaluable to: the Kansas Wildlife Federation; the Wildlife Society – both the Kansas

Chapter and the Central Mountain and Plains Section; Kansas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society; the Upper Arkansas River Basin Advisory Committee; the Dodge City Chapter of Quail Unlimited; the Dodge City Wildlife Explorer; the Cheyenne Bottoms Restoration effort; the Playa Lakes Joint Venture; the Central Flyway Council; Ducks Unlimited; the Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams; North American Fish and Wildlife; and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Joe served 16 years as Secretary/Treasurer and 25 years

as a member of the Midwest Association of fish and wildlife Agencies. He is a long-time Hunter Education instructor.

Joe is married to Sandy, and they have two daughters, one son, and one grandson. Joe retired at the end of 2014 with 37 years of service with Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

His dedicated service and career in natural resource management in Kansas makes Joe Kramer deserving of the 2014 Kansas Wildlife Federation Conservationist of the Year.



# Outdoor Skills Instructor

## Theresa Berger, Sylvan Grove

Theresa Berger is the current KWF Outdoor Adventure Camp Coordinator and has been for the past 15 years or more. Outdoor Adventure Camp is heading into its 27th year in 2015, making it one of the more successful and longest running camps for kids in Kansas or the United States, for that matter.

The success and lasting history of this camp is due to several things. Number one is the positive attitude of the camp coordinator. Theresa is a pretty laid back individual who likes to have fun and learn at the same time. Her positive attitude and love of kids makes her a perfect OAC coordinator. Her nursing skills have been a big asset in a camp for 10 to 12 year old, often rowdy, youngsters.

Theresa has been a positive influence on many youngsters who not only come to camp to enjoy the camp experience, but to learn about Kansas and the outdoor environment. The influence has encouraged some to return as junior counselors and as permanent yearly adult counselors. When over 50% of the campers each year are returnees and when the junior counselor list grows larger each year that is testimony to the fact that this camp and the camp staff continue to be very popular. The returning staff of volunteer counselors are almost all previous campers who are willing to give up a week out of their busy schedules to give back to the outdoors men and women of the future.

Theresa is also an Elementary school teacher in the Sylvan/Lucas Unified



**Theresa Berger, center, receives the KWF 2014 Outdoor Skills Instructor award from Randy Kidd, left, Chair of the Kansas Wildlife Federation's CAP Committee. Looking on is Ed Augustine with the Geary County Fish and Game Association which sponsored the Outdoor Skills Instructor trophy. Photo by Angela Anderson of Allen.**

School District where her favorite subjects are science and math and where she is yearly involved with the D.A.R.E. Program. When she is teaching high school biology, she routinely takes her students to regional Eco-Meets, Envirothons, and Wildlife Habitat Educational Programs. In her school classroom her aquariums are home for native Kansas fish, turtles, and other aquatic critters. The kids have a resident guinea pig and just about

anything else they can drag into the classroom and talk her into keeping. Her classroom contains a host of magazines and books on all aspects of the outdoors.

Theresa's hobbies are fishing, hunting, reading, and working puzzles and electronic games. She has raised a son Fritz who attended OAC from the time he was one year old until he was 12. Fritz is currently a freshman at KSU pursuing a dual degree in fisheries and wildlife biology.

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## PEARCE

*Continued from Page 5*

community in 2014 when he came out with a cookbook, "Michael Pearce's Taste of the Kansas Outdoors Cookbook". In the book Michael offers some of his favorite recipes for everything from venison to fish. He also presents readers with a taste of the outdoors in terms of some of his favorite photos and stories from the Wichita Eagle.

Michael is fully immersed in the

outdoors lifestyle and has been for most of his life. When he was just a tadpole, his grandmother bought him a subscription to Outdoor Life, hoping to instill an interest in reading. It must have worked.

Though he was only 6 at the time that was a life-changing moment. Soon he was fishing or hunting whenever he had a chance. That has carried over into adult life. Even on his days off, he is doing the same thing as he does on his job. He goes fishing or hunting.

Michael started his outdoors journalism career when he was in college, writing regular articles for Outdoor Life magazine. He later worked as a freelanc-

er for the Wall Street Journal, and has been published in Sports Illustrated, the Robb Report, and many other outdoors magazines.

As a mentor for the Pass It On program, and as one of the leaders of the Steve Harper Memorial Scholarship Fund, a joint effort of the Outdoor Writers of Kansas and Kansas Wildscape, Michael maintains his goal of getting others involved in the outdoors.

Pearce and his wife have lived in Newton since 1993. Their grown children, Lindsey and Jerrod, share their dad's passion for the Kansas outdoors.

# Support Nongame species with tax donation

Nongame wildlife makes up more than ninety-nine percent of all species in Kansas

More than 4,500 birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, crustaceans and mollusks are considered nongame species, or species that are not trapped, fished, or hunted, in Kansas. We share our state with hummingbirds and herons, bats and butterflies, turtles and toads, mussels and snakes, and almost everything in between. Collectively, nongame wildlife makes up more than 99 percent of all species in Kansas.

While habitat management efforts designed for game species also benefit nongame wildlife, there was a need for programs specific to nongame species, so the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism established the Kansas Nongame Wildlife Improvement Program, also known as the Chickadee Checkoff Program. The program, which seeks support through tax-deductible donations, provides funding for nongame wildlife research, habitat enhancement and restoration projects, as well as a variety of educational programs.

Private donations are crucial in fund-



ing these vital programs, especially when Chickadee Checkoff proceeds are matched by federal funds. Contributions have been steadily decreasing in recent years, making it imperative that every Kansan consider donating this tax season.

To make a contribution, taxpayers can simply mark the Chickadee Checkoff box on their state income tax forms (line 36 on Form K-40) and designate the amount they would like to donate. There is no minimum

or incremental requirement, and donations can also be made directly to the Chickadee Checkoff program at any time throughout the year by mailing the donation to Chickadee Checkoff c/o Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) 512 SE 25th Ave, Pratt, KS 67124.

For more information on how you can support Kansas' nongame wildlife, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) and click "Services/Wildlife Diversity/Chickadee Checkoff."

## Welcome the new Kansas Riverkeeper

Dawn Buehler

Dawn Buehler will begin her duties as the Kansas Riverkeeper on March 1, 2015. Growing up on a farm on the plains of Kansas, Dawn knew at young age how much she loved the land, water and nature. She was born and raised in the Kaw River Valley in DeSoto on a 2,000 acre crop farm. The family farm ran along the Kansas River in DeSoto and she developed a personal relationship with the river. She spent her childhood riding alongside her father learning about the importance of taking care of the soil, water and providing for the family. She also spent many hours on the beautiful Kansas River fishing, camping, canoeing and riding in her Dad's airboat. Her love for the river began at this early age when she would sit and watch the sunset on the river at the end of each farm day.

Dawn continued to help on the farm and also went on to college after high school and earned both a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Conservation from Oregon State University and a Bachelor in Business Administration



from Baker University. Dawn has spent her career working as a conservationist, accountant and farmer. Dawn's passion is watershed management and finding ways we can all work together to improve our watershed and the quality of the Kansas River. As a Kansas native, Dawn has a vested interest and passion for the river.

Dawn is happiest when she is outdoors. You can often find her fishing, hiking, kayaking, reading and exploring. Dawn lives with her family, including two chocolate Labrador retrievers, on their farm south of Eudora.

We would like to thank the tireless efforts of our Riverkeeper Search Committee - they posted the job description, considered over 25 applications, held phone and personal interviews and selected our new Riverkeeper. The search committee was composed of the following Board Members: Bill Modrcin, chair; Sarah Hill-Nelson, Heidi Mehl, Mike Rawitch and Kelly Savage.

Our former Kansas Riverkeeper, Laura Calwell, is still on board with Friends of the Kaw on a part time basis. Her title is changing to Executive Director. Laura will focus on assisting our new Riverkeeper, managing day-to-day activities outside of advocacy and working with Educational Specialist, Kate Delehunt, to fund and promote our educational efforts for schools, in particular the Kids About Water Project.



# Caucasian Bluestem Workshop

Caucasian Bluestem is emerging as possibly the greatest long-term invasive threat to the natural integrity of native prairies and prairie rangelands in Kansas and the central Great Plains. It seems to be spreading from roadsides where it often gets its start on disturbed sites, possibly from contaminated seed mixtures provided by contractors or from mulch. Various observers have suggested that it is spread up and down the roadsides by mowing machinery, and haying of roadsides presents the prospect that it may be unknowingly spread major distances to pastures wherever it is fed - maybe even by livestock producers who purchase hay harvested on roadsides and have no idea that it includes seed of this highly invasive plant.

If it continues to overtake pastures (as it already has in some whole landscapes in western Oklahoma and the panhandle of Texas), it will be much more difficult to control than *Sericea Lespedeza* because there are no available selective herbicides effective at eliminating it. Basically, the entire plant community within spots infested by Caucasian Bluestem has to be sprayed with herbicide cocktails, killing most or all of the other plants as well. As it spreads from roadsides, Corps of Engineers dams and levies (as is obvious in and near Manhattan), and other disturbed sites where it is expanding like a cancer, it will require astronomical investments by landowners and managers for herbicide control.

If undertaken soon the cost may only be collectively in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, or single digit millions, but if it continues to spread the cost will likely be in the tens of millions of dollars - assuming it can be controlled on a regional basis (as within the Flint Hills or Smoky Hills). The other costs to landowners of expanding invasion will be a

substantial reduction in forage value and livestock weight gains from now-productive native rangelands. In most circumstances cattle do not like to eat it if they have native rangeland or other grass in the pasture as an alternative.

The ecological damage goes far beyond these financial considerations. It makes grasslands relatively unsuitable as nesting, brood rearing or year round habitat for many grassland birds (including Prairie-chickens), and it is unsuitable as habitat for many other species of wildlife. The presence of Caucasian Bluestem (and Yellow Bluestem) even changes the soil chemistry and biology to render it unsuitable for germination of most native plant seeds. Thus, restoration of native prairie or even other introduced pasture plants is MUCH more difficult. The mulch (with water running through it) can even be toxic to other existing plants.

The workshop will be built around presentations by the foremost authority on the subject of Old World Bluestems. Karen Hickman and her students have been conducting research on non-native Old World Bluestems. She is a Professor at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. She conducted research on the subject at Kansas State University and obtained her PhD. in 1996. Other presenters will also be invited, as a full range of considerations will be presented; tentatively from Fort Hays State University and Kansas State University.

The threat of old world bluestems is on the list of concerns addressed by USDA's NRCS staff and the Kansas State Technical Committee. Control in pastures now qualifies as an EQIP funded project, but there is an incredible lack of information about the subject.

The workshop will help to provide more of an understanding of this threat,

and the urgency. Our plan is for 30 to 50 people, hopefully with strong representation of individuals involved in land management, including county officials and state (KDOT) roadside maintenance staff, as well as some native range landowners.

The workshop will be held April 24 in the Ashland Community Center at 2901 West 32nd Avenue south of Manhattan. It is planned to extend from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., including morning informational presentations, lunch on site, and a field trip in the early afternoon. Registration (including the cost of lunch) will not exceed \$10.

Send an email to [aok@audubonofkansas.org](mailto:aok@audubonofkansas.org) to be on the roster of likely participants and to receive any updates. Registrations may be sent (without any payment) to Audubon of Kansas, 210 Southwind Place, Manhattan KS 66503. Advance registrations (even tentative) may be important because there is a possibility that the keynote workshop speaker may have to cancel due to a medical condition of a family member. The Kansas Wildlife Federation is one of the co-sponsors of the workshop.

Directions: The designated address is 2901 West 32nd Avenue, zip 66502. From Manhattan, east side of bridge over Kansas River on Highway 177, turn south on McDowell Creek Road (Riley County Road 901) and go south/southwest approximately six miles. Turn right and go north about a half mile on Riley County Road 424 and the community center is the native limestone building next to a white country church.

For those coming from the south, another option is to exit off Interstate 70 at Exit 307 and go north on McDowell Creek Road to the same intersection with Riley County Road 424 (about six miles).

## Affiliate News

### Geary County Fish & Game Association Triple E Days

GCFGA is preparing for this spring's EEE days for all the local fifth graders. The event will be May 12-15, with over 600 fifth graders attending the activities. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Chris Blodgett at 785-375-2714.

GCFGA will offer Hunter Education classes on March 28, August 29 and

October 10. These are one day classes on Saturday. These will be internet-assisted field day and testing sessions. Students can enroll by going to <http://www.safehunters.com/kansas/default.asp>.

Range Hours - open on Sundays from noon to 4 pm. Tuesdays from 5 pm to dark. Registered shoots: March 15, May 16,

August 9, Oct. 18, Jan. 1, 2016

League shoots: Mar. 21 or 22, Apr. 25, May 22, Jun. 27, July 24, Aug. 28, Sept 24, Oct. 25

Visit GCFGA's website <http://www.gearycountyfishandgame.net/> for club information and additional details on their range.

# You and Dillons can help the Kansas Wildlife Federation

This year Dillons and other Kroger affiliates have created a way for you to choose which non-profit/charitable organization you'd like to support EVERY TIME you shop at Dillons. Kansas Wildlife Federation will get credit for every purchase\* its members make using their registered Plus card. The more they shop with us, the more opportunity KWF has to earn even bigger rewards. It's that easy!

A customer must have 3 things to register and begin supporting KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION:

1. A Plus card, which is available at any store by asking an associate
2. A valid email address, which can be obtained from any free online service and can be anonymous
3. A personalized account at our website, which again can be anonymous

Here's how it works!

## TO ENROLL IN THE COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM:

1. Members must visit our website at [www.dillons.com/communityrewards](http://www.dillons.com/communityrewards) (substitute Dillons, Bakers or Gerbes for banner depending on your location)



2. Sign in OR Create an account (see below on creating an online account at our website)
3. Click on "Enroll Now"
4. Enter the 5-digit NPO (Kansas Wildlife Federation is 62633) and search
5. Select your Organization and click on "Enroll"

## TO CREATE AN ONLINE ACCOUNT AT THE DILLONS WEBSITE:

1. Visit their website at [www.dillons.com/communityrewards](http://www.dillons.com/communityrewards)
2. Click on "Register" at the top of the page
3. Enter your email address, password, zip code (select preferred store) and check the box if you desire to receive email

communication from us

4. Click on "Creat Account" at the bottom of the page

5. You will receive an email confirmation to your inbox, to activate your account click on the link in the body of the email and enter your sign in information to confirm

We are very grateful to Dillons for this opportunity for our members and supporters to guide their potential giving dollars to the Federation and other worthy causes. And we are grateful to you for supporting the Kansas Wildlife Federation in many different ways!

\*Specific purchases that cannot be included are: alcohol, tobacco, fuel, Pharmacy purchases with gov't assistance (i.e. Medicare, Medicaid, Tricare), postage, bottle deposits, lottery, Western Union, other customer services, promotional tickets, sales tax, banner gift cards, reloadable gift card products (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Green Dot). Please see FAQs at our website for a complete list of exclusions.

## Flint Hills Gobblers to host 14th annual spring turkey hunting clinic

Event open to first 250 who register

The Flint Hills Gobblers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation will hold the 14th Annual Spring Turkey Hunting Clinic and Internet-Assisted Hunter Education Class on Saturday, March 28. The event will take place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Dry Creek Sporting Clays, south of Emporia and is open to anyone interested in learning how to become a better turkey hunter.

Participants 17 years old and younger will receive commemorative t-shirts and

JAKES (Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics and Sportsmanship) memberships. Prizes will also be drawn for youth at the end of the clinic. Lunch will be provided. There is no fee to participate; however, preregistration is required.

Participants will go through several education stations covering various aspects of turkey hunting, including:

Turkey biology and management • turkey hunting equipment and safety • turkey

calling and locator calling • scouting and roosting • bowhunting for turkeys • shotgun hunting and safety • trap shooting • and target shooting.

An Internet-Assisted Hunter Education Class will also be taught during the clinic; however it will be limited to 24 students.

For more information or to register for the clinic or Internet-Assisted Hunter Education Class, contact Gib Rhodes at (620) 437-2012.

## 5th Annual Ad Astra Archery Tournament!

Each year since 2011 the Kansas Secretary of State has sponsored the Ad Astra Archery Tournament together with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

This event is named in honor of the 20-foot-tall bronze statue of a Kanza Indian named "Ad Astra" placed atop the Kansas Capitol dome. The warrior aims his bow and arrow at the north star, illustrating our state motto "ad astra per aspera" meaning "to the

stars through difficulties."

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism administers the Kansas Archery in the School Program (KASP). Civics groups, home schools and churches also provide archery instruction and equipment for children to learn and enjoy the sport of archery.

This annual tournament gives Kansas kids a fun day to compete with one another

and enjoy other family activities in a lovely outdoor setting.

The tournament is set for Saturday, April 25 (inclement weather date is April 26). The tournament will be held at MacLennan Park in Topeka (south of Cedar Crest). Check out the new archery website at <http://www.sos.ks.gov/archery/main.html>. Registration and payment (\$10/competitor) is required by April 2, 2015.



# Butterflies and Weddings — A Match That Shouldn't Be Made

By eNature

Now that it's high season for weddings, it seems a good time to remind folks that releasing butterflies at weddings is generally a bad idea.

Below is a reprint of one of our more popular blog entries from April of 2013, right about the time of the Royal wedding.

From reading the news, it doesn't sound like Will and Kate are doing it, but lots of folks probably will be releasing live butterflies at their weddings this spring.

It's a way to try to make the day special and connected to nature—and it sure seems more appealing than throwing rice or flower petals at the ceremony's end. As one advertisement proclaims, the effect is "uniquely romantic, genuinely moving, and unforgettable." Unfortunately, such releases also may be harmful. And not just to the butterflies set free but to the other butterflies native to the location as well.

On one side of the debate are the people who breed butterflies for profit and those who want butterflies for their weddings. On the opposite side are the conservationists who consider the practice a form of environmental pollution.

The butterflies released at weddings more often than not come from the several dozen butterfly farms or ranches across the country. These establishments raise thousands of butterflies each year and ship them overnight in



**Painted Lady Butterfly**  
© Derek Ramsey

special containers with the insects either wrapped individually in small envelopes or packed together in a decorative box. A typical shipment will include anywhere from twelve butterflies to hundreds, with Monarchs and Painted Ladies being the most popular species.

At a cost of up to \$10 per insect, not including shipping, live butterflies are certainly more expensive than rice or flowers. But the added expense doesn't discourage some couples, especially when they hear that the butterflies released at their wedding will enhance the environment. The act can even be considered benevolent — that is, returning captive creatures to their natural habitat.

Conservationists, though, contest the claims made by butterfly breeders. Aside from a concern that the released butterflies will take food from the mouths of native butterflies, conservationists fear that released butterflies will introduce disease into their native counterparts and alter the native butterflies' survival mechanism should the two populations



**Monarch Butterfly**  
© Derek Ramsey

interbreed.

Monarchs in Southern California, for example, don't migrate to avoid a winter chill. So what happens when a Monarch raised in Southern California is released somewhere else? Will it know where to fly when fall arrives? And what will happen when its offspring face their first winter?

Among the organizations opposed to ceremonial butterfly releases are the American Museum of Natural History, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Yet the practice seems only to be gaining in popularity. The best conservationists can hope for at this time is that, like most fads, this one soon loses its appeal.

So if you know anyone planning a wedding this spring or summer, please share the word. Your local butterflies will thank you!

## Schedule for Regional Water Supply Public Meetings

### Kansas Water Regional Goal Leadership Teams to hear water supply priorities

Recently the 14 Regional Goal Leadership Teams met to begin the water supply goal setting process to help develop water supply goals for each region. The role of each team is to participate in a public scoping process in their region, develop and draft water supply goals for their region based on public input and available resource condition information.

Beginning in March, the 14 teams will be holding public meetings in their region to hear input from stakeholders and citizens that will assist each team with

drafting the goals for the future water supply needs in each region. Recommended water supply goals should seek to implement the following Vision statement:

Kansans act on a shared commitment to have the water resources necessary to support the state's social, economic and natural resource needs for current and future generations.

The public will be asked to share their input on specific topics that are water supply issues for their region. Trained facilitators from Kansas State University

Research and Extension as well as the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy will be helping with the goal development and facilitate the public meetings. Region stakeholders and citizens are encouraged to attend one of the input sessions.

Go to the KWF website [www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org) under State Issues for detailed information provided by the Kansas Rural Center on dates, times and locations of these meetings.

# Kenneth L. Hudson

Hudson, Kenneth L. "Ken", 52, loving dad, son, and best friend to his wife of 30 years, passed away Friday, Jan. 16, 2015. Ken was born May 11, 1962, in Stillwater, OK. His family eventually settled in Wichita, KS where he graduated from Wichita Northwest High School in 1980. He married his high school sweetheart, Shelley Smith Hudson on May 19, 1984.

Ken always lived life to the fullest. An outgoing and welcoming person, he took pleasure in meeting new people and cherished his friendships. He was an avid reader and outdoorsman who enjoyed motorcycling, hunting, fishing, boating, skiing and scuba. Above all else he loved his family and spending time with them at Beaver Lake.

Ken served in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Kitty Hawk; he had a 28-year career as the owner / operator of Bo-La

Services, a third party logistics firm; and he later pursued work that enabled him to do two things he cared about deeply: having fun and interacting with people - both of which he found in the real estate and casino industries.

He was incredibly hardworking and driven to make a wonderful life for his wife and children. He was loved dearly. Shelley survives him along with their children, Jordan D. Hudson and his wife, Frannie, of Los Angeles, CA, and Lacey R. (Hudson) Lies and her husband, Ryan, of D'Hanis, TX. Also surviving are his mother and step-father, LaDonna and Bob Schneider, of Newton, KS; mother- and father-in-law, Gail and Les Smith, of Wichita, KS; brother James "Kevin" Hudson and his wife Sharon, of Newton, KS; brother Brian "Keith" Hudson, of Newton, KS; step-sister Brenda Brown and husband Ron, of Hillsboro,

KS; step-sister Dawn Long and husband Roger, of Lenexa, KS; step-sister Chandra McCoy and husband David, of Avondale, AZ; sister-in-law Suzanne Hermanson and husband Alan, of Wichita, KS; step-sister Jozetta Griffith, of Wichita, KS; step-brother Brian Glasscock, of Wichita, KS; as well as many cousins, nieces and nephews. Preceding him in death is his father, Oscar L. Hudson. Memorial service will be 3:00 P.M. Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at Pathway Church, 2001 N. Maize Rd., Wichita, KS.

A memorial fund has been established with The Kansas Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 771282, Wichita, Kansas, 67277. The family has elected to provide sponsorships for 2 kids from Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Sedgwick County to attend the KWF Outdoor Adventure Camp held each June at Rock Springs 4-H Ranch south of Junction City.

## Another way to contribute to the Kansas Wildlife Federation

Here is another opportunity (in addition to Dilons Community Rewards) to shop and give back to the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

This one is called AmazonSmile. If you have an Amazon account (or you can create an Amazon account), you can go to Amazon Smile and register for a percentage of your purchase to go toward KWF.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.

amazon.com), you need to type in Kansas Wildlife Federation to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. AmazonSmile will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at <http://smile.amazon.com/> will result in a donation. It is not difficult at all.

Thanks for your support. This is another simple way to give back to KWF.



## Outdoors scholarship available for high school seniors

Applicants must plan to attend a Kansas college or university

The Emporia Community Foundation and staff at What's In Outdoors understand that college can be expensive – that's why they're inviting high school seniors to apply for the What's In Outdoors Scholarship.

The \$1,000 scholarship is available to any graduating high school senior in the state of Kansas planning to attend a Kansas college or university. Applicants must plan to make a career in conservation in

some capacity and take classes pertaining to wildlife, nature, photography, journalism, communications, or any other related fields.

Successful applicants will receive \$500 per semester after showing proof of full-time enrollment (minimum of 12 credit hours). The second semester payment will be sent after grades from the first semester are received.

Applicants should include with their application: A letter of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, coach or employer; information on any involvement with wildlife- or other nature-based fields; and examples of work relating to photography or writing, if applicable.

For more information and to apply, visit [www.emporiacf.org](http://www.emporiacf.org) and click "Grants," then "Scholarships."



# New Members Elected to the Board of Directors

The membership of the Kansas Wildlife Federation elected Board members for 2015-16. For the first time in its 64 year history the membership has elected a woman as KWF President. Angela Anderson had served as Administrative Vice President for two years prior to

running for the President's position. See the President's message on page 2 for her initial comments.

The following were elected to the Board: Angela Anderson, Allen, President; David Zumbaugh, Shawnee, Administrative Vice President; Jim Strine,

Hays, Northwest District Director; Elby Adamson, Clay Center, Northcentral District Director; Randy Kidd, McLouth, Northeast District Director; Troy Schroeder, Albert, Southwest District Director; and Amy Bickel, Burrton, Director at Large.

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## MONARCHS

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*Continued from Page 1*

plants.” These are the only plants their caterpillars can eat, and for monarchs, milkweed is their only host plant.

Unfortunately, milkweed is becoming harder for monarchs to find. Despite being ecologically important and an often ornamental wildflower, many consider milkweed a weed to be eradicated, both in agricultural lands as well as in the urban and suburban landscape. As we've gotten better at wiping out milkweed, monarchs have suffered. Even when milkweed isn't being targeted directly, monarch habitat in the United States is being gobbled up by development. Monarchs are also being directly killed by pesticides, both as caterpillars and as adult butterflies in farmlands and backyards.

This, coupled with threats to the monarchs' overwintering grounds in Mexico and California, has resulted in the precipitous decline of the insect's population in North America.

### **Six Ways to Save Monarchs with NWF**

There is hope for the monarch, if we act now. NWF and our partners are taking on the challenge, and we need your help. Here are six ways that you can join the effort to make a difference for monarchs.

**Help Save Grasslands** – America's native grasslands are critically important for monarchs. They offer both milkweed for monarch caterpillars as well as nectar plants for adult butterflies (and many other pollinators too). Today, more than

90 percent of native grasslands have been converted to cropland and development. Grasslands are disappearing faster than any other ecosystem in North America, and that's a big problem for monarchs. Join NWF in fighting to save grasslands for monarchs.

**Support Highway Habitat Corridor** – NWF and USFWS are working to create a coalition of agriculture leaders and highway transportation organizations to plant milkweed and nectar plants along monarch migratory flyways and in other important monarch breeding grounds along key Midwest and Texas corridors. Learn more about highway habitat corridor plan and how to support it.

**Plant Milkweed** – You can make saving the monarch personal by planting milkweed in your yard or garden. There are many milkweed species found in North America, so no matter where you live, there's at least one species native to your area. You'll be rewarded not only with the knowledge that you are making a difference, but by attracting monarchs to enjoy. Find out what milkweeds are from your region.

**Don't Use Pesticides** – Monarchs are insects, and so spraying insecticides will kill them. Make the commitment to avoid spraying pesticides in your yard. Find out how to garden organically.

**Create Monarch Habitat** – NWF's Garden for Wildlife program can teach you how to turn any outdoor space into a complete habitat for monarch. Just provide food, water, cover and places to raise young. It all starts with what you plant and you can create a habitat garden in your own yard, at your office, your church or the local schoolgrounds. Entire communities are launching efforts to cre-

ate monarch habitat. Learn how to create a wildlife-friendly garden.

**Join NWF Affiliate Efforts in Your State** – Eleven of NWF's state affiliates are active partners in the Garden for Wildlife program, teaching people how to create habitat for monarchs and other wildlife. They offer regional expertise and resources, offering native milkweed seeds, running monarch tagging and citizen science efforts and even working on legislative solutions. Joining these efforts is a great way to get involved on the local level. Find out if your state's NWF affiliate is working to protect monarchs.

Monarch populations have plummeted over the last 20 years. Chart via Monarch Joint Venture.

### **It's Up to Us**

The loss of any species weakens the ecosystem that all species rely on for survival, including humans. Monarch butterfly decline is an indicator that there is something wrong in our shared environment and a warning that we could be affected as well. Do we really want to live in a world where the next generation has no chance of seeing a monarch butterfly on a flower?

We are committed to reversing the decline of the monarch. NWF's President Collin O'Mara has this to say:

“I have a 3-year-old whose eyes pop wide open when she sees monarchs crawling on leaves in the backyard. This is one of those keystone species. These are things that don't make headlines, but they are indicators that something bigger is happening.”

Will you help us be part of the solution and make sure monarchs have a future?

# Resolutions passed at the 2015 Annual Meeting

The members of the Kansas Wildlife Federation adopted three resolutions as a part of the 2015 Annual Meeting held February 21 in Hays. The resolutions help guide the Officers and Directors of KWF as they address various topics in the following years.

## KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION NAMING THE CHANNEL CATFISH (*Ictalurus punctatus*) AS THE STATE FISH OF KANSAS

**Whereas**, the Channel Catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) is a native species to Kansas and;

**Whereas**, the Channel Catfish is present in nearly every pond, lake, reservoir, river and stream in Kansas, and;

**Whereas**, the method for Channel Catfish propagation used in fish hatcheries worldwide originated in Kansas by Seth Way in 1922, and;

**Whereas**, a total of 2.58 million Channel Catfish were stocked in Kansas waters in 2013, and;

**Whereas**, the Channel Catfish is the most fished for species in Kansas according to the 2013 Kansas Licensed Angler Survey.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Kansas Wildlife Federation assembled during its annual meeting, February 21, 2015 in Hays, Kansas, urges the Kansas Legislature to name the Channel Catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) as the state fish of Kansas.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Kansas Wildlife Federation provide this resolution to the Governor of the State of Kansas, appropriate Kansas Legislature committees and members, the Chairperson and members of the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission and the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

## KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION SUPPORT FOR THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND

**Whereas**, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a simple idea: that a portion of offshore drilling fees should be used to protect important land and water for all Americans; and

**Whereas**, the LWCF is authorized to receive up to \$900 million each year - but most of these funds have been diverted elsewhere<sup>1</sup>; and

**Whereas**, even with the fraction of authorized funding that's been available, LWCF has had positive conservation and recreation impacts in Kansas and throughout our country; and

**Whereas**, recent polling found that voters think this is more important than ever in the light of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico<sup>2</sup>; and

**Whereas**, nearly nine in ten voters indicated that they thought oil and gas fee revenue should continue to be used for the LWCF<sup>3</sup>; and

**Whereas**, nine in ten voters oppose any diversion of funding from the LWCF - and most of that number would like to see money from past diversions replaced<sup>3</sup>; and

**Whereas**, most voters (85%) clearly oppose any future diversion of money from the Fund - a majority that cuts across all segments of the electorate<sup>3</sup>; and

**Whereas**, LWCF investments protect clean drinking water supplies, support jobs and local economies, reduce fire-fighting costs, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and

for our children and grandchildren to enjoy<sup>5</sup>; and

**Whereas**, even while providing all these public benefits, LWCF is not funded by taxpayer dollars; and

**Whereas**, active outdoor recreation is an important part of the Kansas economy where 544,000 sportspersons and 816,000 wildlife watchers combine to spend \$839 million annually on wildlife-associated recreation<sup>2</sup>; and

**Whereas**, outdoor recreation is an integral part of the American outdoor recreation economy, which contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports 6.1 million American jobs (1 out of every 20 jobs in the U.S.), and stimulates 8 percent of all consumer spending, according to the Outdoor Industry Association<sup>4</sup>; and

**Whereas**, Kansas has received approximately \$55 million in LWCF funding over the past four decades, protecting places such as the Flint Hills Conservation Area, Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge and Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site<sup>1</sup>; and

**Whereas**, to date no member of Kansas' congressional delegation has signed on to this year's Dear Colleague letter to cosponsor or support LWCF reauthorization<sup>2</sup>; and

**Whereas**, if permanently funded at the authorized level of \$900 million a year, the LWCF will help ensure our quality of life, from the water we drink to our enjoyment of the great outdoors.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Kansas Wildlife Federation assembled during its annual meeting, February 21, 2015 in Hays, Kansas, urges Kansas' congressional delegation to work to keep the promise of the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that KWF strongly recommends Kansas' congressional delegation work to pass legislation to ensure full, dedicated funding of \$900 million each year and replace funds from past diversions; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Kansas Wildlife Federation provide this resolution to the Kansas congressional delegation, the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, the CEO of the National Wildlife Federation and the Executive Director of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

1 <http://lwcfcoalition.org/files/FY15/Kansas.pdf>

2 <http://www.lwcfcoalition.org/kansas.html>

3 <http://www.lwcfcoalition.org/usa-conservation.html>

4 [http://www.nasorlo.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/4pg\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Kansas2.pdf](http://www.nasorlo.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/4pg_Fact_Sheet_Kansas2.pdf)

5 <http://waso-lwcf.ncrc.nps.gov/public/index.cfm>



# KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

## MAINTENANCE & RESTORATION OF STREAMSIDE HABITAT

**Whereas**, riparian forest buffers act to protect water quality for more than 134,400 miles of streams, creeks, and rivers in Kansas although Kansas is one of only ten states that does not have a single National Wild & Scenic River, and

**Whereas**, numerous wildlife species depend upon undisturbed native streamside habitat for all or part of their life cycle, streamside are the most productive wildlife habitat in North America, and

**Whereas**, streamside forests are transitional zones between aquatic and upland ecosystems, they provide a unique mix of water, food, and cover that create a wide range of micro-habitats utilized by a wide variety of wildlife species, and

**Whereas**, streamside forests and their deep root systems act as filters, trapping pollutants found in surface runoff such as sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and bacteria before these pollutants reach the state's waterways, and

**Whereas**, soils below streamside forests generally have a greater ability to absorb water than row-crop agricultural and urban land; and, slowly release that water to the stream overtime, down-stream flooding is reduced, and

**Whereas**, tree trunks reduce water velocity during flooding, more water infiltrates the soil to recharge groundwater, and

**Whereas**, tree canopy along streams shades and cools the water, thereby maintaining healthy levels of dissolved oxygen that benefits many forms of aquatic life, and

**Whereas**, upland birds use woody cover along streams for thermal cover, and

**Whereas**, small mammals finding food and cover along streams attract predators like weasels & mink to streamside habitat, and

**Whereas**, large woody debris from the

riparian tree canopy creates den sites, and attracts insects and small mammals that act as prey for larger creatures like bobcat, snakes, and raptors, and

**Whereas**, watersheds are damaged when a stream is channeled or straightened to control erosion, and

**Whereas**, trees along streams provide a unique form of aesthetics and beauty to the Kansas landscape, and

**Whereas**, riparian forests contain the most valuable tree species in Kansas making them economically valuable, and

**Whereas**, live riparian trees provide roosting sites for turkey; and, bald eagles use large Bur oaks, Sycamores, and Cottonwoods along stream & river banks, and

**Whereas**, streamside snags (standing dead trees) provide den and nesting sites for birds and mammals (e.g. raccoons, squirrels, and bats); and, also provide suitable nesting sights for Great blue herons and Bald eagles, and

**Whereas**, insects that feed upon decaying dead wood from dead standing or fallen trees provide food for woodpeckers, nuthatches, brown creepers and other birds, and

**Whereas**, native trees and shrubs in arid areas or in agricultural areas support upland birds such as pheasants and turkeys; and, may be the single critical factor limiting bird populations in those arid areas, and

**Whereas**, many types of waterfowl also utilize riparian forests as well, such as Bufflehead, Wood Duck, Goldeneyes, and Mergansers, and

**Whereas**, tall grasses & forbs provide food and nesting cover for rabbits, deer and birds that can be damaged by over grazing, agricultural cultivation or flooding.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Kansas Wildlife Federa-

tion assembled during its annual meeting, February 21, 2015 in Hays, Kansas, make the following recommendations:

Restore aquatic habitat along damaged streamside with plantings of native trees, shrubs, grasses & forbs, and

Properly manage riparian forests to maximize the benefits they provide, and

Recommend off-stream watering stations for livestock to prevent damage to streamside habitat and prevent water pollution due to soil erosion, and

Enforce legislation that makes it illegal to dispose of fracking water into streams & rivers, and

Avoid damage to watersheds resulting from stream channeling or straightening intended to control erosion, and

Eliminate needless and expensive mowing along streamside since it destroys habitat, and

Installation of adequately large culverts for fish passage since flooding can wash fish out of their banks, and

Recommend a minimum of 50 feet of forested riparian buffers as circumstances warrant. Generally the buffer should be the average width of the canopy of a mature streamside tree such as a cottonwood or other likely trees, and

Encourage the use of CRP along streamside to preserve riparian habitat, improve water quality, prevent erosion, provide forage and increase wildlife numbers, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Kansas Wildlife Federation provide this resolution to the Governor of the State of Kansas, the Chairperson and members of the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission, the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism and the State Forester of the Kansas Forest Service.

## JOIN THE KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION!

### Current member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

#### Options:

- ☐ Youth \$10 <17 yrs
- ☐ Basic \$30
- ☐ Expanded \$75
- ☐ Kansan \$150

Current member  
can give a new gift  
Basic membership  
for half price (\$15)

### New member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please make checks payable to Kansas Wildlife Federation.  
MAIL TO: Kansas Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 771282, Wichita, KS 67277-1282

# 2015 Kansas Wildflower of the Year

## Spider Milkweed

Spider milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*), also known as green antelopehorn, is the Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS) 2015 Wildflower of the Year (WOY). Spider milkweed is 18" to 24" tall with green flowers showing May through July. It is found on dry prairies in the eastern 2/3 of the state with a substrate ranging from sand to limestone. An especially common species in prairie pastures, cattle do not find it palatable due to its production of toxic cardiac glycosides. The common names are given for the common presence of crab spiders hunting for insect prey around the flowers, and small antelope horn-like appearance of the seed pods. Previously belonging to the milkweed family (*Asclepiadaceae*) the genus *Asclepias* is now classified in the subfamily *Asclepiadoideae* of the dogbane family (*Apocynaceae*).

The plant resources committee chose this species primarily for its importance as a host plant for the monarch butterfly which has had a perilous population decline in recent years. According to Chip Taylor from Monarch Watch, *Asclepias viridis* is the next most desired host plant for monarchs after common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). With importance to monarchs, showy flowers, exquisite seed pods, and a shorter stature and less weedy growth habit than common milkweed (perhaps making it more suitable for native landscaping), *Asclepias viridis* emerged as the best choice for this year's KNPS WOY selection.

The spider milkweed is one of the earliest flowering milkweeds and has some of

the largest milkweed flowers. The flowers are not strikingly colored but are interesting because of their unique floral structure. Spider milkweed in bloom accents the spring prairie with attractive clumps of pale green. The thick smooth gray-green stems may grow erect but often recline with only the ends erect. The plant is seldom more than one foot tall. Each stem is single or has few branches but there is often a clump of stems. The simple smooth leathery leaves are gray-green with pink-tinged veins and wavy margins. If any part of the plant is cut it exudes a milky white sap. Flowering occurs from early May (5/7) to July or later. The plant will often bloom in the fall when it has been cut earlier in the year. The flowers occur in loose rounded clusters, 3 to 5 inches (7 1/2 to 13 cm) across; each cluster on a stalk that arises near the tip of stem. Betz and Lamp (1992a) found 1 to 8 clusters per stem in the plants they examined. Each cluster has 1 to 23 flowers (Betz and Lamp 1992a), a relatively small number for a milkweed. The flowers are up to an inch in diameter (large for a milkweed) and the 5 green petals spread upward rather than being reflexed as in most milkweeds. In the center is a purple and white "star" composed of 5 radiating hoods and a central column (fused anthers and pistil).

Grazers do not normally eat this plant, and it is suspected of being poisonous (Stephens 1980). The nymphs of the orange and black small milkweed bug (*Lygaeus kalmii*) and large milkweed bug (*Oneopeltus*



**Spider Milkweed Flowers by Michael Haddock**

*fasciatus*) feed on seeds in the developing pods. Bumblebees commonly pollinate the flowers.

Spider milkweed is found in the eastern 3/5 of Kansas. The species range extends from Ohio to southeastern Nebraska and central Kansas south to Florida and Texas.

Spider milkweed is found in well drained soils of tallgrass and mixed grass prairies and roadsides. It is more common on rocky, often limestone, or sandy soils.

Go to the Kansas Native Plant Society website for further information on Spider Milkweed [http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/wfoy\\_2015.php](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/wfoy_2015.php).

## Learn outdoor skills at women-only workshop

Three-day event is perfect place to learn ins and outs of outdoor recreation

If you're intimidated by the thought of picking up a bow, if you're stumped at what lures to use when fishing, or if you've always wanted to kayak down a river, but don't know how to get started, consider the Becoming An Outdoors-Woman (BOW) workshop May 15-17. Conducted at the Rock Springs 4-H Center near Junction City, the workshop will offer participants courses on everything from woodcarving and GPS basics, to rifle marksmanship and fly fishing. Participants get hands-on experience in several areas of their choice, while surrounded by peers with similar interests.

Offered through the Kansas Department

of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, BOW is a non-profit, non-membership program designed for teaching women outdoor skills. The workshop will offer more than 30 different classes thanks to a core of volunteer instructors, including KDWPT employees, law enforcement officials, and even past participants, all of whom are considered to be experts in their field.

Cost for the three-day workshop is \$250, which includes lodging, meals and class supplies. Three \$100 scholarships are available to first-time participants based on financial need.

To register, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com), click "Services/Education/Becoming an

Outdoors Woman," and download a registration form. Must be 18 or older to attend. Early registration will be open to first-time participants through April 3. If spots still remain, past participants may register beginning April 4. Applicants are encouraged to apply early as the spring workshop has limited space and the application period will close May 1.

For questions, call or email Jami McCabe at (785) 845-5052 or [kansasbow@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kansasbow@sbcglobal.net).

Learn more and view pictures of past workshops at the BOW Facebook page found under "Becoming an Outdoors Woman KANSAS."



# KU to study prairie-chickens

University will work with Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

## By The Associated Press

The University of Kansas has a \$2.1 million contract to study the Lesser Prairie-chicken. The university will work with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to track the federally threatened species in hopes of conserving the birds' habitat.

A conservation plan by the association calls for voluntary cooperation from industries in Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Kansas. Kansas has the largest prairie-chicken population of those states.

The Kansas Biological Survey, a part of Kansas University, for five years will monitor the location and costs of proj-

ects that impact the animal's habitat. The plan is to encourage industries to build in clusters rather than spreading over a lot of territory.

Kansas Biological Survey research associate Mike Houts says fewer prairie-chickens means changes to shortgrass and shrubland habitats.

# Morel Mushroom Hunting Tips

Hunters should do their research prior to consuming any mushrooms as some forms found in Kansas can be toxic

Of all the edible Kansas flora that debut in early spring, none may be so prized as the morel mushroom. Finding these tree stump-dwelling fungi can make for quite an adventure, so as hunters come from far and wide, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) reminds hunters of a few tips for a legal, safe and fun mushroom hunt:

- Stick to state parks and wildlife areas. Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) areas are not open for mushroom hunting. These lands are private property and accessing them for anything other than hunting game during the identified access period is trespass unless hunters have the appropriate landowner permission.

- Be prepared to walk. The use of motorized vehicles on public lands is restricted to maintained roads only, so if your mushroom honey-hole is off the beaten-path, strap on those hiking boots.

- Be aware of your surroundings. Public lands are open for many types of hunting and fishing activities. This time of year, mushroom hunters can expect to encounter turkey hunters and anglers looking to lure in white bass and crappie. There's plenty of space for everyone, so when in doubt, move to another spot.

- Enjoy your harvest. Mushrooms found on KDWPT public lands may only be harvested for personal consumption and selling mushrooms harvested from KDWPT-managed lands is against state law (see K.A.R. 15-8-20). You've worked hard for your harvest, so enjoy the fruits of your labor and heat up a frying pan.

- Use a mesh or breathable bag as a container. Allowing the mushrooms to air out after being picked will prevent unwanted sweating and keep them in tip-top shape until they can hit the dinner table.

- Cook your mushrooms thoroughly before eating them. Some morels can make people sick if consumed raw. This wild mushroom is often served fried, or baked and stuffed.

Typically found under hardwoods and along rivers, the yellow morel, also known as the common morel or sponge mushroom, is the most sought-after wild mushroom in the state. Other types of morels also found in Kansas may include the thick-footed, black, half-free, bell, and edible morel. Hunters should do their research prior to consuming any mushrooms as some forms found in Kansas can be toxic.

A Guide to Kansas Mushrooms book is available for purchase online through the KDWPT Outdoor Store at [ksoutdoors.com/outdoor-store](http://ksoutdoors.com/outdoor-store). Purchases can also be made over the phone by calling (620) 672-5911.

# New wildlife area acquired in Jefferson County

Special hunts offered on newly-acquired public land

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's (KDWPT) Public Land staff are excited to announce the addition of a wildlife area in Jefferson County. The recently-acquired, 840-acre area is approximately 6 miles northwest of Lawrence. Called Buck Creek Wildlife Area, it derives its name from Buck Creek, which bisects the property and is one of the few perennial streams in the area that remains unaltered.

Initially, all public hunting opportuni-

ties on the area will be managed through the KDWPT special hunts program. Controlling hunting pressure will allow managers to regulate and monitor how many, who, and when hunters have access to the area. Wildlife viewing and outdoor educational opportunities will be allowed when hunting seasons are closed.

The land consists of oak-hickory forest, native grasses, cool season grasses, and cropland. The warm season grasses and mature timber will be managed

mostly through prescribed fire and timber stand improvements. The cool season grasses will be converted over time to native grasses and forbs to enhance wildlife habitat. The cropland on the area will remain in production, and all revenue generated will be designated for funding wildlife management activities on the property.

For more information on Buck Creek Wildlife Area, contact area manager Justin Hamilton at (913) 845-2665.

# Ducks Unlimited: More Than 5 Million Acres Conserved

Ducks Unlimited is proud to announce the successful conservation of more than 5 million acres of vital waterfowl habitat in the United States. It's a conservation milestone 30 years in the making.

In 1984, Ducks Unlimited launched its U.S. habitat program, which was a logical extension of DU's longstanding mission to conserve and enhance North America's most important wetlands to waterfowl. Thanks to decades of abiding by that single mission, Ducks Unlimited is now the world's largest and most effective private, nonprofit waterfowl and wetlands conservation organization. DU is able to deliver its work through partnerships with private individuals, landowners, agencies, scientific communities and other entities.

"Ducks Unlimited's mission of wetlands conservation continues to be driven by sci-

ence to deliver the best possible outcomes for waterfowl in the highest priority landscapes," said DU Chief Conservation Officer Paul Schmidt. "Our team is proud of what we have accomplished and we look forward to conserving the next 5 million acres as efficiently and effectively as the last."

Conserved acres are habitat Ducks Unlimited, with its thousands of partners, has protected, restored, enhanced or managed for waterfowl. DU considers habitat conserved if it is under an agreement that lasts at least 10 years or is owned by a public agency that assures its long-term dedication to wildlife.

DU restores or enhances habitat using direct management practices such as improving water control and hydrology or establishing native vegetation. Although DU often protects and restores or enhances the

same land multiple times, those acres are only counted once.

"This monumental conservation milestone would not have been possible without the continued help and support of our state and federal agency, corporate and volunteer partners in the United States, Canada and Mexico," said DU CEO Dale Hall. "This is another important step to fulfill Ducks Unlimited's vision for wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. It's always great to celebrate an achievement like this, but we have much more work to do in the United States and across the continent."

Continentially, more than 13 million acres have been conserved in the United States, Canada and Mexico, thanks to the contributions of Ducks Unlimited's millions of supporters.

## LWCF: An almost-victory

### From the Birding Community E-bulletin

On 29 January, a bipartisan majority of the Senate voted in favor of permanently reauthorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Although the action passed with a 59-39 vote, that majority is still one vote short of the needed 60-vote threshold necessary these days in the Senate.

Just over 50 years ago, Congress passed

the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, intended to provide \$900 million a year from offshore oil and gas royalties for federal, state, and local parks, refuges, and forests and to enhance local recreational opportunities.

LWCF is probably America's most important conservation funding program, addressing America's open space, clean water, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and outdoor economic needs. Long-term LWCF benefits to birds and bird habitat have truly

been phenomenal.

Unfortunately, over the years, Congress has rarely spent the total authorized amount for intended LWCF purposes. We wrote about the diversion and misuse of those funds in last September's issue: <http://refugeassociation.org/?p=10225/#lwcf>

Still, the recent close vote is a symbolic win for conservation and outdoor heritage voices. Such symbolism will soon need a reality boost. Unless Congress acts, LWCF will expire at the end of September.

## USFWS investigates Kansas Bald Eagle shooting

### Reward for Information

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement, and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, are investigating the shooting of a bald eagle in Marion County, Kansas, near the Marion Reservoir Dam.

The bald eagle was found dead on Thursday, February 4th, below the base of the dam, on the east side of the outlet. Examination of the eagle found evidence of a gunshot wound.

Bald eagles are protected by state and federal law including 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, and is a serious offense.

Anyone with information regarding the shooting of this eagle is asked to contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement at (785) 232-5149. The Service will pay 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.

About 50,000 pairs of bald eagles occupied the lower 48 states in pre-colonial times, but that number was reduced to 400 pairs by the 1960s. Biologists blamed a loss of habitat, shooting, trapping and the heavy use of pesticides such as DDT. After DDT was outlawed, bald eagles began making a comeback in the late 1980s and in June of 2007, it was removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened species. This majestic bird, our national symbol, continues to need our help to survive, and your assistance is appreciated.

For more information on the bald eagle, please visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).



# Guilty plea in eagle deaths at Wyoming wind projects

**By USFWS  
From The Birding Wire**

PacifiCorp Energy, a subsidiary of PacifiCorp, based in Portland, Oregon, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Wyoming Jan. 6 to violating the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) in connection with the deaths of protected birds, including golden eagles, at two of the company's wind projects in Wyoming.

Under a plea agreement with the government, the company was sentenced to pay fines, restitution and community service totaling \$2.5 million and was placed on probation for five years, during which it must implement an environmental compliance plan aimed at preventing bird deaths at the company's four commercial wind projects in the state. The company is also required to apply for Eagle Take Permits which, if granted, will provide a framework for minimizing and mitigating the deaths of golden eagles at the wind projects.

The charges stem from the discovery of the carcasses of 38 golden eagles and 336 other protected birds, including hawks, blackbirds, larks, wrens and sparrows by the company at its "Seven Mile Hill" and "Glenrock/Rolling Hills" wind projects in Carbon and Converse Counties between 2009 and the present. The two wind projects are comprised of 237 large wind turbines sited on private and company-owned land.

"PacifiCorp Energy built two of its Wyoming wind projects in a manner it knew would likely result in the deaths of eagles and other protected birds," said Sam Hirsch, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "PacifiCorp has taken steps to minimize the hazard, and with this plea agreement has committed to a comprehensive plan to continue such efforts in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to seek eagle take permits for each project, and to work to prevent future eagle deaths."

In documents presented in court, the government alleged that PacifiCorp Energy failed to make all reasonable efforts to build the projects in a way that would avoid the risk of avian deaths by collision with turbine blades, despite prior guidance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). However, the company cooper-



**Golden Eagle. Credit: Tom Koerner/USFWS.**

ated with the FWS investigation and has already implemented measures aimed at minimizing avian deaths at the sites.

"Improperly sited and operated wind energy facilities can kill significant numbers of federally protected birds and other species," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe, urging developers to follow the Service's Land-based Wind Energy Guidelines. "That's why it's imperative that wind energy developers work with the Fish and Wildlife Service to minimize these impacts at every stage in the process."

More than 1,000 species of birds, including bald and golden eagles, are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The MBTA, enacted in 1918, implements this country's commitments under avian protection treaties with Great Britain (for Canada), Mexico, Japan and Russia. The MBTA provides a misdemeanor criminal sanction for the unpermitted taking of a listed species by any means and in any manner, regardless of fault. The maximum penalty for an unpermitted corporate taking under the MBTA is \$15,000 or twice the gross gain or loss resulting from the offense, and five years' probation.

Commercial wind power projects can cause the deaths of federally protected birds in four primary ways: collision with wind turbines, collision with associated meteorological towers, collision with, or electrocution by, associated electrical power facilities, and nest abandonment or behavior avoidance from habitat modification. Collision and electrocution risks from power lines (collisions and electrocutions) and guyed structures (collision) have been known to the utility and communication industries for decades and specific methods of minimizing and avoiding the risks have been developed,

in conjunction with the FWS. The FWS issued its first interim guidance about how wind project developers could avoid impacts to wildlife from wind turbines in 2003, and replaced these with a "tiered" approach outlined in the Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines (2012 LBWE-Gs), developed with the wind industry starting in 2007 and released in final form by the USFWS on March 23, 2012. The Service also released Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance in April 2013 and strongly recommends that companies planning or operating wind power facilities in areas where eagles occur work with the agency to implement that guidance completely.

For wind projects, due diligence during the pre-construction stage-as described in the 2003 Interim Guidance and tiers I through III in the 2012 LBWE-Gs- requires surveying the wildlife present in the proposed project area, consulting with agency professionals, determining whether the risk to wildlife is too high to justify proceeding and, if not, carefully siting turbines so as to avoid and minimize the risk as much as possible. This is critically important because no post-construction remedies, known as "advanced conservation practices" have been developed that can "render safe" a wind turbine placed in a location of high avian collision risk. Other experimental measures such as prey reduction, and devices that detect and deter avian proximity to turbines are being tested. In the western United States, golden eagles may be particularly susceptible to wind turbine blade collision by wind power facilities constructed in areas of high eagle use.

The \$400,000 fine imposed in the case will be directed to the federally-administered North American Wetlands Conservation Fund. The company will also pay \$200,000 in restitution to the State of Wyoming, and perform community service by making a \$1.9 million payment to the congressionally-chartered National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, designated for projects aimed at preserving golden eagles and increasing the understanding of ways to minimize and monitor interactions between eagles and commercial wind power facilities, as well as enhance eagle rehabilitation and conservation efforts in Wyoming. The company must implement a migratory bird compliance plan

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*Continued on Page 22*

# Boaters urged to support new legislation to “fix” Renewable Fuel Standard

## From The Outdoor Wire

New bipartisan legislation introduced today would help ensure recreational boaters don't put unsafe fuel in their boats, according to Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS). Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), with 30 co-sponsors introduced the Renewable Fuel Standard Reform Act of 2015. BoatUS is urging all boaters to contact their US Representative to support the bill. “The new bill would recognize the failure of the current Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and its out of date ethanol-mandate, and make the necessary changes so there is a safe fuel for all gasoline powered engines,” said BoatUS Government Affairs Program Manager Nicole Palya Wood.

According to Wood, BoatUS supports the bill because, “The RFS Reform Act acknowledges the reality of America's declining fuel consumption, allows for the investment in other more compatible biofuels, and erases the twisted math that forces more ethanol onto a marketplace

that neither demands it, nor can physically absorb it at safe levels.”

Currently, there are no marine engines in the US warrantied to run on any gasoline blend greater than 10% ethanol (E10). According to AAA, only about 12 million out of the more than 240 million light-duty vehicles on the roads today are approved to use E15 gasoline, based on a survey conducted by AAA of auto manufacturers. Any damage from the use of higher ethanol fuels (E15 or greater) in cars and trucks will void many manufacturers' warranties.

When the RFS was written in 2005, it assumed that Americans' gasoline use would continue to rise and mandated escalating amounts of biofuels to be blended with our fuel. However, since 2005, gasoline usage has actually dropped steadily. The unintended affect is now the law that forces more ethanol into the nation's gasoline supply, and to maintain adherence with the RFS rules, in 2010 the EPA permitted fuel containing up to 15% ethanol (E15) into the marketplace – a fuel many gasoline

engines cannot use.

It is illegal to use E15 in boat engines, snowmobiles, motorcycles, small engines such as lawnmowers and leaf blowers as well as any vehicle made before 2001. However, this fuel can now be found at over 100 gas stations in 16 states at the same pumps as E10 and ethanol-free gasoline.

The potential for misfueling is significant. In the US, nine out of every ten boaters own a trailerable boat that is most often filled up at a roadside gas station. Additionally, these higher blend ethanol fuels are often the cheapest fuels at the pump.

The new bill would cap the ethanol requirements at E10 (10 percent ethanol), would effectively prohibit the use of corn-based ethanol in the RFS, require more advanced biofuels and take into account actual, real-world production of biofuels when setting requirements.

Boaters can ask their Congressman to support and co-sponsor the bill by going to: <http://goo.gl/2H8v19>.

## Join NestWatch for a Season of Discovery

Got Barn Swallows plastering mud in the eaves? Perhaps a chubby dove is piling sticks in the window box or a pair of American Robins is scoping out the red maple for a nest site. Keeping an eye on nearby nests can make this spring a season of discovery for you and for scientists hoping to better understand nesting birds. Make this the season to join NestWatch, a citizen-science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

NestWatchers have been tracking trends in the nesting success of hundreds of species of birds across the country for nearly 50 years. Participating is easy: map any cup nest or birdhouse location on the NestWatch website at [NestWatch.org](http://NestWatch.org). Report the species of nesting bird and the timing for how many eggs are laid, how many eggs hatch, and

how many young leave the nest. Surprises may be in store as the lives of these feathered families unfold.

During the 2013 NestWatch season, participant Gerald Clark monitored a bluebird nest and noticed one egg was much larger than the others. At hatching time-twin bluebirds emerged!

“It's the first report of twinning in Eastern Bluebirds,” says NestWatch project leader Robyn Bailey. “The finding was so notable that it was written up and published in a scientific journal. We learn new things all the time, even about a species as well studied as the Eastern Bluebird.”

Researchers are also asking NestWatchers to be on the look-out for nesting Eurasian Collared-Doves. The species was introduced

to the Bahamas in the 1970s, entered Florida in the 1980s, and then rapidly colonized most of North America, especially areas converted to agriculture and urban uses. More than 30 years later, scientists still know very little about their breeding habits in North America.

“We don't know how often these doves nest in a single season and how successful they are,” says Bailey. “We're interested in any possible effects on native species, especially other kinds of doves, so we're asking anyone who finds a Eurasian Collared-Dove nest to report it to NestWatch.”

Monitor one nest or twenty - NestWatch can be a wonderful learning experience for the whole family. Sign up and learn more about how to find and observe nests at [www.NestWatch.org](http://www.NestWatch.org).

## EAGLES

*Continued from Page 21*

containing specific measures to avoid and minimize golden eagle and other avian wildlife mortalities at the company's four commercial wind projects in Wyoming.

According to papers filed with the court, PacifiCorp will spend approximately \$600,000 per year implementing the compliance plan. The company must also apply to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a Programmatic Eagle Take Permit at each of the four wind projects cited in the case.

The case was investigated by Special Agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and prosecuted by Senior Counsel Robert S. Anderson of the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Section of the Environment and Natural Resources Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Conder of the District of Wyoming.



# Great Backyard Bird Count sets new species record

Nearly half the world's species identified in four days

Participants from more than 100 countries submitted a record 147,265 bird checklists for the annual Great Backyard Bird Count and broke the previous count record for the number of species identified. The 5,090 species reported represents nearly half the possible bird species in the world. The four-day count was held February 13-16, the 18th year for the event which is a joint project of

the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society with partner Bird Studies Canada.

The information gathered by tens of thousands of volunteers helps track the health of bird populations at a scale made possible by using the eBird online checklist program. A sampling of species found by intrepid counters include Ibisbill in India, Bornean Bistlehead in Malaysia,

and Magellanic Plover in Chile, complete with amazing photos. GBBC participants even reported two species, Millpo Tapaculo and Santa Marta Screech-Owl that have not yet been described in the official scientific literature.

To read the details of the Great Backyard Bird Count, go to <http://kswildlife.org/ww/great-backyard-bird-count-sets-new-species-record-2/>

## Powder Creek Shooting Park in Lenexa Announces Kevin Danciak to Take Reins as General Manager

Kevin Danciak has been named General Manager of Powder Creek Shooting Park in Lenexa, Kansas, while Jason Spengel was promoted to Assistant Manager. Danciak is a National Sporting Clays Association certified instructor and has led operations of other shooting venues. Kevin is also a decorated Navy Veteran with a law enforcement background. His immediate plans are to increase the number of corporate hospitality events, leveraging Powder Creek's unique facilities such

as the Tri-Star Pavilion and C-Z USA sponsored 5-Stand range. He will seek to increase community participation in the trap, skeet and sporting clay leagues and especially boost youth involvement via the nationally popular Scholastic Clay Target Program.

In 2015, Powder Creek will host the Kansas Skeet Championship and 15 NSCA certified events. The Hodgden Powder Company sponsored Powder Creek Cowboys will hold the Kansas State Single

Action Shooting Society's match, "Prince of the Pistoleers".

About Powder Creek:

Powder Creek was founded in 1949 as the Kansas Field and Gun Dog Association and was then known as "a place to run the dogs and shoot some guns." Since those early days, Powder Creek has grown in membership and is the most complete shotgun shooting facility in the Kansas City Metropolitan area. See: [www.powder-creek.com](http://www.powder-creek.com)

## Overview of Kansas water supply and sedimentation problems by KBS

The Kansas Biological Survey (KBS) gave a great presentation to the House Vision 2020 committee on the Kansas water supply threatened by reservoir sedimentation. KBS has been using eco-sounders and sediment coring on a few reservoirs for a decade to document the rate and amount of sedimentation.

Of the 24 federal reservoirs, Tuttle Creek (43%), Toronto (42%), John Redmond (40%), Kanopolis (38%), Fall River (33%) and Elk City (32%) have the most infilling since their construction. 11 Kansas federal reservoirs will be 50% infilled by the end of the century. At \$6 per cubic yard of soil for dredging, it will cost \$13.8 Billion by 2100 to dredge back to original volume.

Kansas has 200,000 impoundments of all sizes with 130,000 larger than 1/4 of an acre. The 24 federal reservoirs have three times the water volume of all of our other Kansas impoundments. Given the cost of monitoring and measuring infilling, Kansas now knows the infilling rates of the 24 reservoirs but few infilling rates of the other 200,000 impoundments.

While natural lakes are thousands of years old, Kansas' reservoirs are just decades old and subject to much greater sedimentation and stream bank erosion. This erosion and runoff sets the stage for more algae growth. In 2012, 24 county lakes were put under KDHE advisories/warnings. With very little data on these lakes and even farm ponds, there is grow-

ing concern that these smaller impoundments will evolve from catching sediment to begin flushing and become sources of sediment.

As Kansas farms have done a better job with land management, cover crops and buffer strips, there now appears to be more stream channel erosion. According to KBS, reservoir infilling does not appear to be slowing. The \$20 million dredging plan for John Redmond reservoir will not be enough to negate the sedimentation still coming into the reservoir. Much more research must be done to fully understand the causes of the infilling and develop strategies. Impoundments such as farm ponds form networks and all must be considered.

# 6 things you can do this winter to help you shoot a big buck next fall

**By Bernie Barringer**  
The OutdoorHub

If you are sitting on the couch in front of a basketball game instead of spending a few hours improving your hunting property, your chances of success during the upcoming hunting season are not going to be as good as they could be. Winter is often seen as downtime by hunters, but there are a few simple improvements you can make to your hunting property during the cold months that will pay dividends in the fall.

## **1. Logging and hinge cutting**

One of the best ways to hold deer on your property is to improve food and bedding cover areas. One of the best ways to improve both is to remove undesirable trees to let more sunlight to the forest floor and increase the amount of edible plants. Taking a few trees out can really help make the area more attractive to deer.

Hinge cutting is done by cutting a tree at an angle about shoulder height, about three-fourths of the way through. Just cut until the tree starts to fall and let it fall. The fallen tree will provide cover and browse for the deer during the winter. It also provides thermal cover, security cover for bedding, and allows more sunlight to the forest floor.

## **2. Food plot fertilizer**

Winter is the time to put lime and some other fertilizers on your food plots. Lime can be applied right on top of snow. Have your soil sampled so you know what fertilizer you need. Have the pH checked also so you know if your ground is too acidic.

In the late winter right before the snow goes off you can apply clover seed. Clover seed is very small and will germinate well

when spring rains and snowmelt come. This is called “frost seeding” and it allows the seeds to hit the ground and be ready once the temperatures are warm enough for germination.

## **3. Cutting and maintaining trails**

Winter is a good time to clean up the trails you use to approach your stands and food plots. Clear logs and debris from the trails and mow them if snow conditions permit. Sneaking to your stand sites can be made much easier by having a smooth clean place to walk without making too much noise or movements.

If you do not have good entry trails to your stands along food plots, make them in the winter. Make them with a curve right before the plot so you can approach the field secretly. If you make a trail that goes straight to the plot and there are deer already in the plot when you approach or leave, they can see you coming. Put a bend in the trail to avoid that.

## **4. Improving deer beds**

One of the best ways to keep neighbors from shooting the bucks you have been letting grow is to provide attractive bedding cover and improve actual bedding sites. A lot has been written about improving bedding cover, but not so much is known about actually creating specific deer beds.

Bucks like to lie with their back against some sort of structure, just like a big old bass likes a brushpile to hide out in. They do not like to lie down on rough ground like rocks or sticks. You can encourage deer to lie in the beds you make by creating the perfect deer beds. Clean the sticks and rough objects out and make small C-shaped piles of limbs. You will be amazed at how fast the deer will begin using them.

## **5. Trim shooting lanes**

The human scent left by trimming branches and saplings to create shooting lanes around your stands can really put deer on edge when done too close to the season or during the season. Doing it in the winter allows you to trim these out without affecting deer movement during hunting season.

Take a pole saw and brush nippers and go to work. Don't overtrim, of course, just make sure you have a clear shot in any direction you anticipate needing one. This can be accomplished by working in pairs, especially if your stands are in the trees. Have one person get up in the stand and point out the limbs that need trimming.

## **6. Predator control**

Studies have consistently shown that the more coyotes you have on your property, the lower fawn recruitment is going to be. If you are seeing coyotes on your game cameras, or if you are seeing a significant number of mature does with only one fawn or no fawns, you probably have a predation problem. Time to take action.

Coyote calling is fun and effective. It's a great way to thin out the population and get some exercise and fresh air during the winter. Trapping and snaring coyotes is the most effective way to curb their numbers. If you don't have the interest in catching them yourself, find a local trapper you can trust and give him a key to the gate. Most trappers will control coyotes if you also allow them to take other animals, such as raccoon and foxes. It's well worth the trouble to maintain a good relationship with a trapper.

Get off the couch and spend some time on your hunting property this winter. You will definitely see the difference come next hunting season.

## NWTF Flint Hills Gobblers Chapter Wins Two National Awards

The National Wild Turkey Federation, located in Edge Field, South Carolina, notified the Flint Hills Gobblers Chapter from Emporia, that it will be receiving two national awards for two of the chapter's 2014 programs. Receiving awards includes the March 15th, 2014 Women in the Outdoors Archery Day which featured 2013 Miss Kansas Theresa Vail.

The Flint Hills Gobblers Women in the Outdoors members won the “Special Event” category.

The other national award won by the Flint Hills Gobblers Chapter was for “Best JAKES Event” for last year's March 29th, 13th Annual Spring Turkey Hunting Clinic and Hunter's Education Class. This is the largest JAKES (youth)

event held in Kansas. Last year, 147 youth attended. This was the second year in a row that the Flint Hills Gobblers Chapter has won a national award for this event.

Both national awards will be presented at the 39th Annual NWTF Convention & Sport Show held in Nashville, TN, on Friday, February 13th.



# Spring turkey hunting atlas mega-map of where to hunt

You've got your turkey permit purchased, your slate call packed, and you've brought your tom and hen decoys out of hibernation – all you need is the perfect place to hunt. Lucky for you, there's the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's (KDWP) 2015 Spring Turkey Hunting Atlas. Available online now at [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) and soon to be in print wherever licenses are sold, this 66-page atlas provides the locations of nearly 200,000 acres of Walk-in Hunting Access (WIHA) areas, as well as state and federal public lands open to spring turkey hunting.

From sunrise and sunset tables, to information on where to camp, the free 2015 Spring Turkey Hunting Atlas is a must-own for every turkey hunter looking to make the most of the season.

In addition to electronic and printed copies of the atlas, hunters also have access to file downloads on [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com) that can be loaded onto Garmin GPS units, and Android and iOS devices that can be used with Google Earth, making locating areas easier than ever.

The 2015 spring turkey season will kick off with the youth/disabled season April

1-14, followed by the archery season April 6-14, and regular firearm season April 15-May 31. Spring turkey permits for Units 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are available at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com) and at any license vendor through May 30. Buy the spring turkey permit combo by March 31 and save \$7.50. A valid Kansas hunting license is required of all residents age 16 through 74 and all nonresidents, except persons hunting on their own land.

To purchase your turkey permit and optional additional game tag today, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) and click License-Permits.

## Top Ways to Help Spring's Migrating Birds

### Help During Migration and Breeding Periods Crucial to 200+ Declining Bird Species

#### From The Birding Wire

Despite persistent late-occurring snowstorms, average temperatures are starting to climb, soon to be followed by the most deadly period of the year for birds: springtime. Although spring means new life and hope to many people, billions of birds face the tribulations of a perilous migration followed shortly by breeding and the production of scores of newborn birds that will spend several highly vulnerable weeks as they grow and fledge.

According to Dr. George Fenwick, President of the American Bird Conservancy, "Spring is a deadly time for birds for three big reasons. Scientists estimate that 300 million to one billion birds die each year from collisions with buildings, many during arduous migrations in unfamiliar environments. Up to 50 million die from encounters with communication towers and up to six million may die each day from attacks by cats left outdoors. These deaths occur year-round, but many occur during spring and fall migration."

"Some studies suggest that perhaps as many as half of all migrating birds do not make it back home," he said, "succumbing to various threats on either end of the journey."

One in five Americans engage in bird watching, so after months of waiting for migrants to return, many people turn to emails, phone lines, and social media to ask ABC a dozen variations on the same question: "How can I help the birds?" Here is our answer to that question, just in time for spring.

#### TOP WAYS TO HELP BIRDS THIS SPRING

1. Keep your cat indoors. This is best for your cat as well as for the birds, as indoor cats live an average of three to seven times longer. Cats are responsible for an estimated 2.4 billion bird deaths each year. In the spring, young birds or nestlings often end up on the ground, attracting the fatal attention of a nearby cat. Ground nesting species that are especially vulnerable include Killdeer and Wood Thrush, but all baby birds—from ducks to warblers—will be on the ground for a critical period of time.

2. Prevent birds from hitting your windows. As many as one billion birds die each year after colliding with glass in buildings. You can reduce this problem at your home by applying a variety of window treatments. For example, ABC BirdTape is a proven solution that is inexpensive and long-lasting. Birds most prone to fatal collisions at home windows or glass doors include Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Wood Thrush.

3. Eliminate pesticides from your yard. Even those pesticides that are not directly toxic to birds can pollute waterways and reduce insects that birds rely on for food. For rodent control, seal cracks, remove food sources, and use snap and electric traps rather than rodenticides, which can poison raptors such as hawks and owls as well as young children. And be sure not to garden with neonicotinoid-coated seeds, or neonics, which are lethal to songbirds as well as to bees and other invertebrates.

4. Buy organic food and drink Smithsonian-certified Bird Friendly Coffee. Going organic helps to reduce pesticide use on farms and increases the market for produce grown without the use of pesticides, which

can be toxic to birds and other animals, and will help to reduce the use of these hazardous chemicals in the U.S. and overseas. Shade coffee farms have been shown to provide far superior habitat for birds than coffee grown in open sun. Buying coffee that is certified Bird Friendly is one of the easiest ways to help migratory birds.

5. Create backyard habitat using native plants. When you garden with plants that evolved in your local habitat, you supply native insects and their larvae with food, which in turn are an irreplaceable food source provided by birds to their nestlings. Yards both large and small can benefit birds and other wildlife. Create a diverse landscape by planting native grasses, flowers, and shrubs that attract birds. You will be rewarded by their beauty and song, and will have fewer insect pests as a result.

6. Reduce your carbon footprint. While all forms of energy use impact birds, small individual actions can add up and make a difference. Use a hand-pushed or electric lawnmower, carpool, and use low-energy bulbs and Energy Star appliances. Less energy used means less habitat destroyed for energy production.

7. Donate old bird-watching equipment. Binoculars or spotting scopes will be appreciated by local bird watching groups—they can get them to schools or biologists in other countries who may not have the resources they need. More people studying birds means more voices for bird conservation!

8. Keep bird feeders and bird baths clean. If you feed the birds, make sure you aren't

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*Continued on Page 27*

# Refuges nourish local economies

## From The Birding Wire

Last year, people flocked to refuges up and down the East Coast as far south as North Carolina's Outer Banks to see what some call "the elusive snowy owls," Arctic birds that are rare winter visitors in those areas. This winter, the owls have been spotted at Sachuest Point NWR in Rhode Island, the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR in New Jersey and Bombay Hook NWR in Delaware. Hundreds of curious fans are rushing to these sites to get a glimpse of this majestic bird with lemon yellow eyes. These fans spend hours peering through their binoculars and scopes, but they also spend money.

Every year, the Virginia Ornithology Society members brave the ocean-whipped wind and cold in a winter trip to Virginia's Chincoteague NWR, a barrier island refuge. The town of Chincoteague can almost seem asleep in the off season, for lack of beachgoers and family-filled vehicles. But when the birders come to town, people fill motel rooms, buy meals in restaurants, fill up their gas tanks and shop in local stores. In 2006, over seven million people visited Chincoteague; 6.6 million of those came from out of town. Their visits generated \$239 million in expenditures, supported 3,766 jobs and produced \$50.3 million in tax revenue - not shabby for a town that goes virtually dormant in winter, at least in human terms.

To some, our nation's wildlife refuges may seem like remote, out-of-the-way places, but they are integral parts of larger communities and in fact, major players in local economies. Consider this fact: For every \$1.00 Congress appropriates, refuges return nearly \$5.00 to local economies in jobs, sales, income and tax revenue. Wildlife refuges are both prized havens of flora and fauna and significant economic drivers in their home communities.

As Congress crunches the numbers, let's look at some more refuge numbers. They tell a compelling story:

The nation has over 560 national wildlife refuges and 38 wetland management districts, totaling 150 million acres of land and water across the country with at least one refuge in each state.

Refuges harbor over 700 species of birds, 220 mammals, 250 reptiles and 200 fish.



**This infographic depicts the information from the Banking on Nature Report which was released in 2013 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.**

The 47 million visitors to refuges every year generate between \$2.4 and \$4.2 billion for local economies.

Economists say that every one percent cut in visitation reduces economic activity by \$16.9 million.

Refuges create 35,000 jobs.

Refuges provide \$342.9 million in tax revenue to state and local governments.

Here are a few examples:

Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, a 64,000-acre bottomland hardwood forest in northeast Louisiana, is home to the Louisiana black bear and the American alligator. From raccoons to crappie, hunting and fishing are popular. The 79,000 visitors pumped \$2.7 million into the local economy and \$481,000 in tax revenue in 2006.

Benton Lake NWR, a short-grass prairie and glacier-formed wetland in central Montana's Cascade and Chouteau Counties, had 9,100 visits in 2006. Those visitors spent \$149,500, and 79 percent of that came from non-residents.

Modoc NWR is in northeastern California, a part of a state that tourists typically do not frequent. This high-altitude desert valley attracts over 250 species of birds and it is a staging area for waterfowl in the spring and fall migrations,

which lures birdwatchers and others. The refuge's 15,000 visits in 2006 generated \$314,000 in expenditures and \$57,000 in tax revenue.

Wheeler NWR, between Huntsville and Decatur in northern Alabama, is a 34,500-acre refuge on the edge of the Mississippi flyway, a favorite wintering habitat for migrating waterfowl. Its diverse habitat types also attract over 285 species of songbirds, 115 species of fish and other wildlife. The refuge had 249,840 fishing visits in 2006 and 590,700 total visitors who generated almost \$12 million in expenditures, 202 jobs and \$2.2 million in tax revenue.

Three Oklahoma refuges attract visitors from near and far. Sequoyah NWR in east-central Oklahoma has the largest concentration of snow geese in the state and many wading birds in the summer and fall. Established in 1946, Tishomingo NWR, at 16,464 acres, is in south-central Oklahoma is part of the central flyway. Washita NWR, established in 1961 in west-central Oklahoma, is a feeding and resting area for sandhill cranes and other migrating and wintering waterfowl. Washita had 59,000 visitors in 2006 who spent \$1.1 million in nearby communities.

Eastern Neck NWR, a 2,286-acre island in Maryland, sits at the confluence of the Chester River and Chesapeake Bay. As a critical staging site for over 240 bird species, like tundra swans, bald eagles and peregrine falcons, it is a popular day trip for people from Washington, D.C., Baltimore and Philadelphia, attracting over 104,000 people in 2006. Those visitors put \$2.7 million into the local economy and generated almost \$597,000 in tax revenue.

The diverse habitats of Bandon Marsh NWR on Oregon's southwestern coast are home to migratory birds and anadromous fish, like steelhead and cutthroat trout. The 4,050 visits to Bandon produced \$46,400 in expenditures; 78 percent of the visitors were non-residents.

As the new Congress debates the next federal budget, our refuges, like many conservation programs, could again be threatened with budget cuts, despite refuges' growing and unmet needs. Let's hope Congress looks at the bigger picture and grasps how federal dollars multiply almost five-fold as they ripple through home communities across the land.



# Protecting America's Wildlife Refuges

**By National Wildlife Refuge Association**

The National Wildlife Refuge Association has released its 2015 Legislative Priorities for Protecting America's Wildlife and National Wildlife Refuge System (<http://refugeassociation.org/2015/02/2015-legislative-priorities-document-released/>). The report highlights the key policy and funding issues facing the Refuge System, and what needs to happen to ensure the Refuge System succeeds.

The National Wildlife Refuge System needs your help now more than ever. This double report highlights both our policy and funding priorities for the year that will ensure the conservation and protection of the natural resources for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

NWRA's priorities cover critical conservation needs, from increased operational funding to protecting precious wilderness values in Alaska's Arctic and Izembek National Wildlife Refuges. But for these policy and funding priorities to be enacted into law, they need your help.

On the heels of this report, they're launching "Take Action Tuesday," so they can galvanize the support of the Refuge Action Network and ensure your voices are being heard regularly on Capitol Hill. Each Tuesday, they'll ask for help speaking out about one of their priority issues.

By taking action through their Action Center, you are ensuring the protection of the National Wildlife Refuge System. You can also view available actions directly in their Action Center (<http://refugeassociation.com/action/#>).

## Public Lands: Sportsmen's most precious resource

**By John Hamill**  
TRCP Blog

Growing up in a small farming and ranching community in Central California in the 50s and 60s, I had access to private lands for hunting and fishing. My brothers and I could literally walk out the back door of our home to hunt for doves and rabbits on our neighbor's ranch. Larger, family-owned ranches in the area were readily accessible for deer and quail hunting and fishing for coastal steelhead.

Times have changed, and many of the lands I visited as a kid are no longer accessible. Some have been turned into subdivisions, and most of large ranches are either closed to public access, or hunting privileges have been leased to elite clubs where only the wealthy can afford to hunt. Fortunately, I have lived most of my adult life in Colorado and Arizona where there are abundant public lands available to pursue my passions.

Opportunities to hunt, fish and recreate on public lands are under attack in nine Western states, however, led by special interests intent on passing legislation that

would require the transfer of federal lands to the states. This includes our national forests, national wildlife refuges and public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Attacks like these are not new. In 2012, the Arizona legislature passed a bill, vetoed by the Gov. Jan Brewer, that would have required Congress to turn over 25 million acres of public lands to the state by the end of 2014. Proposition 120, a ballot measure defeated by two thirds of Arizona voters, would have amended the state's constitution to "declare Arizona's sovereignty and jurisdiction over the air, water, public lands, minerals, wildlife and other natural resources within the state's boundaries." On the surface this may not seem like such a bad idea. However, when you dig into these proposals you find that the primary motivation can be to facilitate the sale of public lands to private interests to generate revenues and enable development.

Western states have a long history of selling their lands. In Nevada, nearly 2.7 million acres of state land have been sold; Utah has sold more than 50 percent of

its land grant. The question of how the states would pay for the management of these lands complicates the issue further. Maintaining roads and recreation facilities, fighting wildfires and similar activities require funds that these states simply do not have. The only practical means to raise the funds would be to charge higher user fees, open more lands to development or sell the lands to private interests.

The transfer or "divestiture" of federal public lands to the states poses a threat to hunting and fishing as we know it today. While sportsmen may be frustrated with the federal government's management of our public lands, transferring public lands to the states and making them available for sale to private interests is not in the best interest of fish and wildlife or hunting and fishing. Sportsmen need to fight to maintain control of and access to our most precious resource: our public lands.

To make your voice heard, I encourage you to write or call your elected official or support organizations like the TRCP, which is leading the fight on behalf of sportsmen. This is the time for action – not complacency!

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## BIRDS

*Continued from Page 25*

accidentally allowing the spread of disease. Disinfect feeders and bird baths, and change water regularly or use a drip system to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

9. Support bird-friendly legislation. U.S. policy makers frequently make decisions that affect birds. For example, decisions are now being made that will impact the survival of the imperiled Greater Sage-Grouse. By raising your voice, you can help to influence the

outcome for birds on this and other important issues.

"Protecting and helping birds is not only the right thing to do," said Fenwick. "It is also good for the economy and the future of our environment. Birds are invaluable as controllers of insect pests, as pollinators of crops, and as dispersers of native plant seeds. They also generate tremendous economic revenues through the pastimes of bird feeding and bird watching."

A federal government study reports that about 20 percent of the U.S. population—47 million people—participates in bird watching.

About 30 percent of all people over 55 enjoy this pursuit. About 40 percent of birders (18 million people) actually travel to see birds and spend about \$41 billion annually in pursuit of their pastime. The top five birdwatching states by percentage of total population are: Vermont (39%), Wisconsin (33%), West Virginia (33%), Wyoming (31%), and Alaska (30%). The states with the greatest raw number of birders are: California (4.9 million), New York (3.3 million), Florida (3.0 million), Pennsylvania (2.7 million), and Texas (2.3 million).

# 2014 was a great year for rivers – thanks to you!

**By Jim Bradley**  
American Rivers

As we enter a new year, and a new Congress, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for everything you did for rivers this past year. 2014 was a great year for rivers, in no small part thanks to you.

For the first time since 2009, Congress designated new Wild and Scenic Rivers. And did they ever! In a package signed into law by President Obama in December, more than 140 miles of rivers in Oregon, Washington, Vermont, and New Jersey and Pennsylvania were given the permanent protection of being named Wild and Scenic. This is a huge deal and your calls to your legislators, your work on the ground, and support in local communities made this happen.

Congress also teed up another 140 miles of rivers to be studied for possible future designations. Rivers in Oregon, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Maine are now going to be considered for Wild and Scenic, a critical step on the march to permanent protection.

Legislation was enacted into law safeguarding Southwest Colorado's Hermosa Creek watershed and its native fish and excellent recreation opportunities. Additionally, in Montana, Congress protected 430,000 acres of National Forest lands in the North

Fork Flathead River watershed adjacent to Glacier National Park from new mining, as well as 275,000 acres of pristine lands along the Rocky Mountain Front as Wilderness and National Conservation Areas.

None of this would have happened without your support.

Congress also fully funded the WATERSmart Program, which will help to advance common sense water efficiency projects throughout the arid West. And cutting against conventional wisdom, Congress gave restoration programs at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration a 12 percent increase! These funds will be used to restore more watersheds and take out more old decrepit dams in the new year. And Congress rejected the President's proposal to slash funding for states to repair old and degraded water infrastructure.

Then there's what Congress didn't do. With your help, we were able to turn back corporate agribusiness' assault on the Clean Water Act. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers are putting forth a rule to restore the Clean Water Act's promise of drinkable, fishable, swimmable waters to all rivers. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations [CAFOs], oil and gas companies, and other corporate interests threw everything they had at the rule. But thanks to you, Congress failed to stop

the rule moving forward.

Likewise, Congress failed to advance the ski industry's bill, also cooked up with CAFOs and frackers, to put the interests of a few corporations ahead of the taxpayers' interest in protecting the water that flows through our public lands. You mobilized, you raised your voices, and Congress listened.

And thanks to you, Congress failed to use the California drought as an excuse to trash the Endangered Species Act. Once again, you spoke up in great numbers, with power and passion, and your elected representatives responded.

So take a moment and be excited for everything we accomplished together in 2014 to protect our rivers and clean water.

We know corporations and their allies in Congress aren't going away. New threats are emerging. The Clean Water Act be under attack again this year, and the Grand Canyon is besieged by mining and development threats. Wild and Scenic Rivers are always under pressure from those who want to build dams or mines or other developments on them. And drought in the West is still being used as an excuse to gut protections for endangered species.

With your support, we have achieved so much in the last year. Now I hope we can count on you in 2015 - because we're going to need your help.

## Kansas paddlefish season opens March 15

Have you ever considered paddlefish snagging? Whether you answered yes or no, consider this a "sign" that this is your year to try it. Hooking one of these pre-historic-looking giants on the end of your line is one of the most unique fishing opportunities Kansas has to offer, and if you've yet to give it a go, it's time to change that. Here are some things you need to know to get started.

The Kansas paddlefish season runs March 15–May 15 during the annual spring spawning run. Paddlefish permit-holders can snag up to two fish per day, and six for the season, from designated areas on the Neosho and Marais des Cygnes rivers. Paddlefish permits, which include six carcass tags, are \$12.50 for anglers 16 and older and \$7.50 for youth 15 and younger. Unless exempt, paddlefish snaggers must also have a Kansas fishing license.

Paddlefish may be taken inside Chetopa and Burlington city parks on the Neo-

sho River; on the Neosho River at Iola, downstream from the dam to the city limits; on the Marais des Cygnes River below Osawatimie Dam, downstream to a posted boundary; on the Marais des Cygnes River on the upstream boundary of the Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area, downstream to the Kansas-Missouri border; and the Browning Oxbow of the Missouri River (Doniphan County).

While the snagging season will open at these locations, certain conditions are necessary for paddlefish to be present. Water temperatures of 50-55 degrees and an increase in river flow will start paddlefish moving upstream out of reservoirs. The Neosho River at Chetopa is the most popular snagging site in Kansas, but for paddlefish to be present there requires a significant increase in river flow. It's a good idea to call local Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism offices or area bait shops for river and angler updates before traveling to a site.

Paddlefish may be snagged using pole and line with not more than two single or treble hooks. Barbless hooks must be used in Chetopa City Park. Catch and release is allowed in Burlington, Chetopa, and Iola, except that once attached to a stringer, a fish becomes part of the daily creel limit. On the Missouri River boundary waters, there is a 24-inch minimum length limit. On the Marais des Cygnes River there is a 34-inch minimum length limit.

Immediately upon harvest, anglers must sign a carcass tag, record the county, date and time of harvest, and attach the tag to the lower jaw of the paddlefish. Paddlefish caught out of season or in non-snagging areas may be kept only if they are hooked inside the mouth.

For information, consult your 2015 Kansas Fishing Regulation Summary, or visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) and click "Fishing/Fishing-Regulations/Paddlefish-Snagging."



# How animals keep warm in winter

**By Francis Skalicky**

Missouri Department of Conservation

When winter's cold arrives, wildlife can't turn up the thermostat or throw an extra log into the wood stove.

In nature, as is the case with humans, staying warm is a high priority at this time of year. Migration and hibernation are two well-known ways some species deal with winter. However, as evidenced by the abundance of birds and animals that flit, fly and scurry across the landscape throughout winter, some animals have other ways of coping with cold temperatures. Some of the techniques are basic, others are unique, but all are effective.

As anyone who traps can tell you, winter is a time when a mammal's fur is thickest. Many mammals shed their summer coats in fall and acquire heavier, thicker fur in winter. Sometimes this results in slight changes in color over winter. Fur is an excellent insulator and, particularly for a larger carnivore such as coyotes and foxes, staying warm isn't a major issue when a heavy coat of snow has fallen and temperatures have dropped.

During these times, finding food can be

a bigger problem. That's because the field mice, voles and some of the other smaller mammals that make up part of a carnivore's diet have retreated to the "subnivian zone." Subnivian refers to the area under the snow that some small mammals retreat to in winter. Small mammals such as mice and voles will tunnel under the snow down to ground level where seeds, roots, lichens and other vegetative food items are plentiful.

In this under-snow world, these creatures continue to stay active. The snow above them acts as comfortable insulation and protective cover from hawks, coyotes and everything roaming above the snow that wants to eat them. For these small creatures, the heavier the snowfall, the better.

Birds can't grow thick fur or tunnel under snow, but they, too, have ways to stay warm. For starters, underneath their exterior feathers, birds have smaller, softer down feathers. These down feathers help to retain heat. Another feather-related issue is moisture. In winter, wet feathers mean a cold body, and one way birds keep water — rain, snow, etc. — from soaking into their feathers is through preening. Birds have oil-producing glands that allow them, through preening, to apply a coat of water-proofing to their

feathers.

Birds also shiver, which provides heat from circulation and muscle movement. Some birds huddle in tight masses when roosting, which is another great way to share body heat and reduce exposure to wind and other elements.

In winter, birds also take full benefit of south-facing areas (more sun), cedar thickets (less wind) and other cold-avoidance areas provided by the landscape. It also helps that a bird's feet and the featherless part of its legs contain very little tissue that can be damaged by cold: Those body parts are mostly bone and sinew.

Another tactic many animals use is to eat heavy in autumn. This creates extra fat which provides bodies with insulation and helps them make it through leaner foraging times of winter.

Information about wildlife in winter can also be found at [www.missouriconservation.org](http://www.missouriconservation.org).

*Francis Skalicky is the media specialist for the Missouri Department of Conservation's Southwest Region. For information about conservation issues, call (417) 895-6880.*

## Sen. Moran Introduces Legislation to Delist the Lesser Prairie-Chicken

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) introduced an amendment late in January to reverse the decision by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife to list the lesser prairie-chicken as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

"It is time for Congress to act to protect rural Kansas from the consequences of the listing of the lesser prairie-chicken," Sen. Moran said. "Regulations due to the listing that dictate how people manage their land and resources are yet another example of unnecessary intrusion into private lives and businesses by the federal government. In

fact, a number of industries — farming, ranching, oil and gas development, transportation and wind energy — are already feeling the effects of the listing. I am confident there are ways to conserve the species without hindering economic development in rural communities. Listing the bird as a threatened species is not the answer."

Approximately half of the lesser prairie chicken population is found in Kansas, while the bird's range also includes Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The lesser prairie-chicken population decreased during the historic drought that severely impacted

much of the bird's habitat area. However, from 2013 to 2014, annual aerial surveys show the lesser prairie-chicken population increased by 20 percent, largely due to rainfall conditions in much of the habitat area that were closer to historic norms.

Sen. Moran worked to avoid the lesser prairie-chicken's listing. He remains committed to reversing the decision to protect rural Kansas from rules and regulations from the federal government that infringe on private property rights and hinder economic development.

## Kansas Legislative Actions

The Kansas Legislature is roughly half way through its 2015 session. Many bills have been introduced; some have been worked on in committees while others have been tabled. The cross over date has passed, the date by which an introduced bill must have been voted out of the chamber of origin or it dies for

this session. The exception is a bill that has been assigned a 'blessed' committee, allowing the bill to be worked at a later date in the session.

Actions take place at a hectic pace from now to the end of the regular session, scheduled for April 3. They will return April 27 for the beginning of the

Veto session.

To find out the current status of legislation the Kansas Wildlife Federation is monitoring, go the KWF website at [www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org) and search for State Issues. We will try our best to keep you up-to-date as things change in Topeka.

# Visit these trout fishing hot spots

## Kansas offers trout fishing at more than 30 public fishing lakes

Winter weather may not be synonymous with fishing for most people, but the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism offers anglers winter trout fishing opportunities that make putting up with the cold worth it.

Trout are stocked in select waters during the trout season, which is open through April 15. Anglers can try their luck at trout fishing in Type 1 waters, which require all anglers to possess a \$12.50 trout permit, and in Type 2 waters, which require only those fishing for or possessing trout to purchase the permit. The \$12.50 permit is valid for the calendar year and can be purchased wherever licenses are sold and online at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com).

Trout fishing opportunities are available at the following lakes:

### TYPE 1 LAKES: TROUT PERMITS REQUIRED OF ALL ANGLERS

Cedar Bluff Stilling Basin  
Dodge City Lake Charles  
Ft. Scott Gun Park Lake  
Glen Elder State Park (SP) Pond  
Kanopolis Seep Stream  
KDOT East Lake in Wichita

Lake Henry in Clinton SP  
Mined Land WA Unit #30  
Pratt Centennial Pond  
Walnut River Area in El Dorado SP  
Willow Lake at Tuttle Creek SP  
Webster Stilling Basin  
Sandsage Bison Range and WA Sandpits (Periodically Dry)  
Vic's Lake and Slough Creek in Sedgwick County Park  
Topeka Auburndale Park  
Garnett Crystal Lake

### TYPE 2 LAKES: TROUT PERMITS REQUIRED ONLY FOR TROUT ANGLERS

Sherman County Smoky Gardens Lake  
Solomon River between Webster Reservoir and Rooks County #2 Road  
Ft. Riley Cameron Springs  
Lake Shawnee - Topeka  
Salina Lakewood Lake  
Moon Lake on Fort Riley  
Scott State Fishing Lake  
Scott State Park Pond  
Hutchinson Dillon Nature Center Pond  
Atchison City Lake # 1  
Belleville City Lake (Rocky Pond)

Holton-Elkhorn Lake  
Syracuse Sam's Pond  
Cimarron Grasslands Pits  
Colby Villa High Lake  
Great Bend Stone Lake  
Herington - Father Padilla Pond

**TROUT Permit required year-round**  
Cherokee County – Mined Land Wildlife Area No. 30

\*Because trout survive through the summer here, a trout permit is required year-round for anglers utilizing the lake.

Residents 16-74 years old, and all non-residents 16 and older must also have a valid fishing license. The daily creel limit is five trout unless otherwise posted. Anglers 15 and younger may fish without a trout permit, but are limited to two trout per day, or they may purchase a permit and take five trout per day. Possession limit for trout is 15.

For information on trout stocking schedules, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) and click "Fishing/Special Fishing Programs for You/ Trout Fishing Program."

# Victory! Browns Canyon becomes a National Monument

**By Collin O'Mara**  
President & CEO  
National Wildlife Federation

After two decades of tireless efforts, the ecologically rich public lands of Colorado's Browns Canyon are now permanently protected for wildlife like bobcats, falcons and elk.

President Obama signed the executive order — Browns Canyon's 22,000 acres are now America's newest National Monument!

National Monument designation means that Browns Canyon lands can't be sold off, mined or mismanaged. It means wildlife like bobcat are free to roam their homes without pollution, habitat fragmentation or destruction.

This is a major victory for wildlife,

and a testament to the incredible power of determined wildlife supporters like you who have helped for years to safeguard our natural treasures for generations to come.

But even now, there are still many places where pristine wildlife habitat is at risk.

Boulder-White Clouds — an impressive high alpine ecosystem and refuge for bighorn sheep, mountain goat, elk, moose and antelope needs our protection. Rare and sensitive predators such as wolverines, gray wolf, lynx and mountain lions roam this cherished place.

We know we can succeed when good people like you lend your support for protecting wildlife habitat. But a strong will is not all it takes to achieve victory. Your gift today really matters.

Like Browns Canyon, the treasured landscape of Boulder-White Clouds in Idaho today is threatened by industrial mining and deserves the highest federal protection.

Four major rivers originate in Boulder-White Clouds, delivering cool, clean water from its towering peaks. These river systems are home to many species of trout, and are the spawning grounds of the world's farthest and highest elevation migrating salmon and steelhead.

So even as we celebrate our victory in Browns Canyon, we must shore up our resources to defend America's pristine, irreplaceable places like Boulder-White Clouds.

Thanks for all you do to protect wildlife and our natural world.



# Study: Ancient humans developed weaker bones as they hunted less

**By Daniel Xu**  
The OutdoorHub

For much of human history, our ancestors lived in nomadic, hunter-gatherer societies. It was only a few thousand years ago that humans began moving toward agriculture as a way of life, which drastically changed not only food production, but human civilization as a whole. Scientists now say that the invention of farming may have had a physical effect on early humans as well. A recent study conducted in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS) found that human hunter-gatherers from around 7,000 years ago had much stronger bones compared to their farming descendants 1,000 years later. According to the study, the bone mass of hunter-gatherer humans was about 20 percent higher than that of the farmers. This loss in bone density is attributed to the increasingly sedentary lifestyle provided by efficient agricultural practices, as opposed to strenuous activity of

hunting and foraging.

“Sitting in a car or in front of a desk is not what we have evolved to do,” said study co-author Colin Shaw of Cambridge University in a press release.

An earlier study by researchers at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History found that the change in bone density first occurred about 12,000 years ago, when humans started to explore farming. The bone strength of the hunter-gatherer humans was similar to that of a modern orangutan, whereas farmers from the same area many years later would have lighter and weaker bones more susceptible to breaking. *Discovery Magazine* reported that both studies were interested in changes to trabecular bone, the spongy honeycomb-like structure inside our bones. Trabecular bone provides bone with added strength and durability, but can also adjust to increased stress. This is why regular exercise can increase the strength of your bones.

“It can change structure from being pin

or rod-like to much thicker, almost plate-like. In the hunter-gatherer bones, everything was thickened,” said Shaw. “The fact is, we’re human, we can be as strong as an orangutan—we’re just not, because we are not challenging our bones with enough loading, predisposing us to have weaker bones so that, as we age, situations arise where bones are breaking when, previously, they would not have.”

There are other theories regarding why humans have developed a weaker, more fragile skeleton. Some scientists say that the change in diet may have caused the decrease in bone mass, or that humans simply adapted to their new role with a lighter, more agile frame. One thing that did surprise researchers is how rapid the change was, and how recently it took place.

“This was absolutely surprising to us,” Habiba Chirchir, a co-author on the second study also published in PNAS, told NPR. “The change is occurring much later in our history.”

## Study: Disease spread by cats detected in minks and muskrats

**From The Birding Wire**

Don’t let the nickname “cat disease” fool you. A recent study in Champaign, Ill. shows toxoplasmosis, a disease spread by cats, is prevalent in semi-aquatic mammals, minks (*Neovision vison*) and muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*) as well.

“Infected cats shed *Toxoplasma gondii* oocysts in their feces, and these oocysts are picked up by other hosts in the environment,” said Adam Ahlers, University of Illinois graduate student and TWS Associate Wildlife Biologist who led the study published last week in the *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*. “This is an important finding because animals like muskrats and minks spend most of their time in streams and wetlands and rarely encounter cats, so the parasite is likely transferred via runoff from the surrounding landscape.”

Ahlers and his research team sought out to determine the prevalence of the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* in minks and muskrats in order to determine if the parasite is contaminating freshwater watersheds.

“In our region, most of the wetlands have been drained to accommodate agricultural production and urbanization, and natural drainage systems have been altered,” Ahlers said. “With increased tile drainage and loss of natural wetlands, the transfer of *T. gondii* oocysts into watersheds from agricultural and urban runoff is likely.”

The researchers predicted that animals positioned in larger watersheds would have higher prevalence rates since they are exposed to drainage from larger areas. Without wetlands to filter out pathogens like *T. gondii*, the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis, rainwater likely flushes *T. gondii* oocysts into the watershed via altered drainage systems, Ahlers said.

Ahlers and his team tested 30 muskrats and 26 minks for *T. gondii* antibodies in central Illinois. They found that 77 percent of the minks tested positive for *T. gondii* and about 60 percent of the muskrats tested were also infected.

“This was really surprising for us because muskrats are tightly linked to the watershed,” Ahlers said. “We think they are picking up the parasite from

contaminated runoff originating from agricultural and urban landscapes.”

Ahlers said muskrats in larger watersheds had higher prevalence rates than those positioned in smaller watersheds. Muskrats are herbivores and likely pick up oocysts while drinking, grooming, or foraging on aquatic vegetation, he said. On the other hand, there was no link between minks and their location in relation to watersheds. As carnivores, they may become infected by consuming other infected prey, he said.

The *T. gondii* parasite rarely discriminates against who it infects, and even humans are exposed to it. Once infected, animals can develop unhealthy behavior changes, Ahlers said.

“In mice, toxoplasmosis causes behavioral changes in the individual,” he said. “Mice that have been exposed to toxoplasmosis seek out cat urine. We don’t know for sure what the effects are in muskrats and mink, but with sea otters, we know that survival is reduced.”

In humans, the infection is linked to

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*Continued on Page 33*

# What would change your mind about using native plants in your landscape?

**By Scott Vogt**

Dyck Arboretum of the Plains

Would you choose a garden that takes less of your time to maintain? Or a sustainable, environmentally, eco-friendly, pollinator friendly garden that heightens the senses? Do you want masses and drifts of color that are attractive throughout the year? What about native plants that can be used in smaller spaces? Are you needing a multi-functional garden that attracts pollinators, which also help your food crops or vegetable garden? How about gardens that look attractive both day and night? What if you could still have the usable space you need to entertain, but have a sustainable garden at the same time blended into the landscape? I want each of these to happen in my native plants landscape.

It can be intimidating to change the way you garden or landscape. We want evidence that making such a change really will make a difference in our lives and in our gardens. Below is one case in favor of using native plants. When the Lincoln Public Library transitioned its landscape to native buffalo-grass and prairie plantings, the results were worth the effort.

Case Study from the Great Plains

A Public Library in Lincoln, Nebraska converted 2.5 acres of bluegrass turf to buf-



**Butterfly weed**

falograss and mixed prairie plantings.

Results:

Reduction of 1.5 million gallons of water per year for irrigation;

Reduction of 800 pound of fertilizer per year;

Reduction of 5 gallons of pesticide concentrate per year.

Source: Leafings, August 2000, a Nebraska Statewide Arboretum publication.

Here is how NATIVE PLANTS DELIVER!

Offer carefree beauty once established;

Require less water if properly matched to your site;



**Pale Coneflower**

Adapted to our soils and climate; and Attract birds, butterflies and a host of other pollinators to your garden.

A properly designed garden provides year-round beauty (for information go to <http://dyckarboretum.org/how-to-design-a-native-plant-garden/>). Home landscapes can be transformed as well using native plants so that they are sustainable, easy to maintain, and beautiful. To start planning your native plant garden, be sure to SAVE THE DATE for our FloraKansas Spring Plant Sale April 24-27 (Dyck Arboretum member's sale is on April 23) and keep an eye out for their upcoming 2015 plant list.

## USDA Selects First Projects of New, Innovative Program

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on January 15 that 100 high-impact projects across all 50 states, including Kansas, will receive more than \$370 million as part of the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). RCPP focuses on public-private partnership and enables private companies, local communities, and other non-government partners a way to invest in efforts to keep our land resilient and water clean, and promote tremendous economic growth in agriculture, construction, tourism, and outdoor recreation.

This year's projects in Kansas will accomplish a wide diversity of agricultural goals to improve soil health, water quality and water use efficiency, wildlife habitat, and other related natural resources on private lands.

"Partners are seeing the value of conservation and investing in their future," Vilsack said. "These partnerships are forging a new path for getting conservation on the ground and are providing opportunities for communities to have a voice and ownership in protecting and improving our natural resources. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program ushers in a new era of conservation, and we're excited about the down-the-road benefits from this new Farm Bill program."

This year's projects will engage hundreds of partners with wide-ranging interests, including communities, conservation districts, agribusiness, non-government organizations, for- and non-profit organizations, state and federal agencies, and Tribal governments. In addition to U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture's (USDA) funds, partners will contribute an estimated \$400 million, more than doubling USDA's investment.

"RCPP puts our partners in the driver's seat," said Eric B. Banks, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist in Kansas. "Projects are locally led, and demonstrate the value of strong public-private partnerships that deliver solutions to tough natural resource challenges."

In Kansas, there is one multi-state project approved through a national ranking pool.

Improving Water Quality Through the Implementation of Forestry Practices and the Assessment of Riparian Systems in Kansas' Priority Watersheds (Lead Partner: Kansas State University—Kan-

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*Continued on Page 35*

# How can a Hummingbird's heart be larger than a Blue Whale's?

By eNature

Think those heart-shaped boxes of Valentine's chocolates are impressive? Compared to the size of a human heart perhaps. But a whale's heart dwarfs even those samplers that require weightlifters to hoist them.

Picture a heart the size of a car. That's what a Blue Whale possesses - a heart that deserves its own parking space.

And how does a heart like that pump? Very slowly. In fact, a Blue Whale's heart

beats just five or six times per minute when the whale is at the surface and even slower when the animal dives. A human heart, by contrast, typically beats seventy times per minute at rest. And a hummingbird's heart, for even greater contrast, beats five hundred times per minute at rest and more than a thousand times per minute when the bird flies.

But don't underestimate the little hummingbird. Its heart is the largest proportionally of any animal. Whereas the average

mammal's heart comprises less than 1 percent of its total body weight, a hummingbird's heart can be more than twice that figure. For a Blue Whale, that's the equivalent of a two-car garage.

Go here to learn more about the Blue Whale » <http://enature.com/fieldguides/detail.asp?recnum=MA0151>

Go here to learn more about the Ruby-throated hummingbird » [http://enature.com/fieldguides/view\\_default.asp?curGroupID=1&shapeID=966](http://enature.com/fieldguides/view_default.asp?curGroupID=1&shapeID=966)

## USDA creates more bird habitat opportunities on irrigated farmland

Changes increase eligibility and financing options for hard working families

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Val Dolcini announced on January 26 that the Conservation Reserve Program now will encourage more bird habitats to be established in irrigated farmland regions.

Declines in upland bird populations, such as the northern bobwhite, pheasant, and prairie chicken, led to the creation of new Conservation Reserve Program features to help restore habitats for these species in these agricultural areas. Since the program's creation in 2004, more than 240,000 acres of marginal cropland has been converted to native grasslands, spurring an increase in upland bird populations.

In recent years, however, applications for this type of habitat creation have slowed. To encourage more participation, USDA's new policy focuses on farmland with center-pivot irrigation systems where

there are circular areas of cropland with patches of land beyond the reach of irrigation. Until now, these patches – known as pivot corners – were only eligible for habitat creation when connected by a linear strip of grassland also enrolled in the program. The new policy allows producers interested in habitat creation to use disconnected pivot corners to help increase the population of upland birds.

"This is how creative thinking can strengthen the intersection of both agriculture and conservation," said Dolcini. "By removing the program's requirement for connecting strips, we believe more participants will convert more pivot corners into habitat. Studies suggest that the shapes of these patches, and their proximity to each other, create an attractive environment for the birds, even without the connecting strips."

Other species that can benefit from today's change include the mourning

dove, wild turkey, several sparrows, meadowlark and bobolinks.

The Conservation Reserve Program is a voluntary program. FSA contracts with agricultural landowners so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed but instead used for conservation. Participants establish long-term plant species that control soil erosion, sequester carbon, improve water quality, and strengthen declining wildlife populations. In return, participants receive annual rental payments between 10 and 15 years.

Interested landowners can enroll pivot corners in the Conservation Reserve Program at any time. Participants and land must meet certain eligibility requirements. Other restrictions may apply. For additional details, contact your local Farm Service Agency office at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov) or visit the website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

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## DISEASE

*Continued from Page 31*

miscarriage, autism, depression, schizophrenia, increased suicide risk and decreased learning in children, Ahlers said.

"There are definitely human implications," he said. "Humans can pick up oocysts by eating infected meat, or if they come in contact with contami-

nated water. There have been instances of freshwater contamination causing *T. gondii* infection in humans in Canada and in South America."

With the study's implications of increased pathogen in watersheds, it's clear that not only minks and muskrats are affected, but other wildlife as well.

"Removing natural wetland habitats and altering natural drainage systems may play a big role in the spread of dis-

eases like toxoplasmosis," Ahlers said. "It is likely facilitating the transfer of *T. gondii* oocysts into freshwater watersheds."

Dana Kobilinsky is an editorial intern at The Wildlife Society. Contact her at [dkobilinsky@wildlife.org](mailto:dkobilinsky@wildlife.org) with any questions or comments about her article.

View the study abstract at: <http://www.jwildlifedis.org/doi/abs/10.7589/2014-03-071?=&>



# NWF applauds bipartisan sportsmen's legislation introduction

## Senate package expands access to public lands, boosts conservation funding

By Bentley Johnson

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) welcomes the introduction of a bipartisan legislative package in the Senate that would expand and enhance hunting, angling and other outdoor recreation on our public lands and help secure conservation funding for years to come.

The Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015 introduced February 5 by Sens. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, and Martin Heinrich, D-New Mexico, includes many positive wildlife conservation and public access elements. Hunters and anglers know that access and opportunity are as crucial to the future of hunting and fishing as committed funding programs for fish and wildlife.

"We thank Sens. Murkowski and Heinrich for their bipartisan commitment to fish and wildlife conservation and the outdoor traditions we will pass on to future generations. This is a strong start, and we encourage Senate and House colleagues to work together to strengthen its conserva-

tion provisions and advance the bill to the President's desk," said Collin O'Mara, NWF's president and CEO.

O'Mara noted that sportsmen and women spend about \$90 billion a year on hunting and fishing. The total for all outdoor recreation is about \$646 billion. A significant portion is committed by law to wildlife restoration and habitat enhancement activities.

"Investing in conservation is a win for wildlife, hunters, anglers, and the economy," O'Mara said.

He said NWF acknowledges the following provisions in particular:

Reauthorization of the Federal Land Transaction and Facilitation Act, which, among other things, allows public agencies to work with willing landowners to acquire private land surrounded by public land while creating jobs, revenue and enhanced wildlife habitat.

Reauthorization of North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, both of

which leverage public and private funding for fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, migratory birds and conservation projects. NAWCA has helped protect or restore 25.6 million acres of wetlands during the last two decades while NFWF has leveraged nearly \$576 million in federal funds into \$2 billion worth of conservation projects.

Provisions to identify and provide hunting and fishing access and opportunities to inaccessible public lands.

*KWF Editor's note: There are some aspects of the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015 that includes many items that are not in the sportsmen's best interest. Rep. Dan Benishek (R-MI) has reintroduced his "Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act" (HR 528). As with his bill from the last Congress (which did not pass), this legislation would gut protections for every Wilderness in the nation. Unfortunately, this is probably just the beginning of Congressional attacks on Wilderness.*

## Why Boats Sink

When a boat sinks, that's likely the end of her. That's because repairs on a sunken boat often cost more than the actual value of the boat. So if boaters want to prevent a sinking at all costs, what can they do? Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS) recently took its first significant look since 2006 at its boat insurance claims files to identify the causes of boat sinkings and found that most were preventable. About two out of every three (69%) boats sink at the dock or mooring, while the remainder (31%) sink while underway.

Of all of the dock/mooring sinkings, 39% occur when some small part gives up the fight with water due to wear, tear and corrosion. When it comes to gradual leaks due to slowly failing parts, too many boats existed in a "zombie state" somewhere between floating and sinking, dependent upon the bilge pump, which merely postponed the sinking until the pump failed or was overwhelmed. This one is a no-brainer: lack of maintenance is the factor here.

For boat sinkings while underway, the most common cause (43%) is hitting

something - a log, the bottom or colliding with another boat or dock. Some of these sinkings might have been avoided if some extra care had been taken - and some can be chalked up to simply bad luck.

Interestingly, low-cut transoms that were common on boats in the 1990's and a cause of sinkings is no longer much of a factor, as contained splash wells separating the interior of the boat from the transom are more common in boat designs today. However, being swamped while tied stern-to waves remains a cause.

To prevent a sinking, here are ten tips from the boat owner's group:

- For inboard-outboard powered boats, inspect sterndrive bellows annually and replace every three to five years. The shift bellows is usually the first to fail.

- For inboard powered boats, check the stuffing box every time you visit the boat, and repack - rather than simply tighten down the nut - every spring.

- For engines with raw water hoses, replace them the moment they indicate wear - such as when small cracks appear or they feel "spongy" when squeezed. Rusty hose clamps are also a concern and

should be replaced.

- Replace the engine cooling system impeller every two to three years.

- Inspect the boat's cockpit and livewell plumbing - again look at hoses, clamps, and cracked or broken fittings. Make sure you can inspect all such plumbing, and if you can't, install inspection ports to make the task easier.

- Each season take a hard look at all below-waterline fittings, hoses, and clamps.

- Don't forget the drain plug - you knew this one would be on the list.

- Keep a good lookout and ask guests to help keep their eyes peeled for dead-heads. If you've grounded or hit something, consider a short-haul to inspect the bottom or drive gear.

- Always pull trailerable boats from the water when storms are forecast. These boats generally have too little freeboard to stand up to any kind of wave action.

- Dock line management systems that keep the boat centered in its slip can prevent snags that sometimes lead to a sinking.

# Wildfire Spending Bill Introduced to 114th Congress

Strong support by sportsmen helped propel measure, which would balance Forest Service budget, bolster forest health and improve conservation funding overall

The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, bipartisan legislation that would restructure the federal budgeting process for catastrophic wildfires and enable a more proactive approach to reducing the risk of wildfires, has been introduced to the 114th Congress by Reps. Mike Simpson of Idaho and Kurt Schrader of Oregon.

Sportsmen have consistently advocated the measure, which would allow the Forest Service to cover the costs of fighting wildfires without raiding funds from other key accounts, including trails, hazardous fuels reduction and legacy road decommissioning. The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and others commended the action.

"The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act would restore balance to the U.S. Forest Service budget," said TRCP President and CEO Whit Fosburgh, "allowing the agency to resume forest management activities like access enhancement, habitat restoration and wildfire prevention instead of focusing its efforts to putting out wildfires. With strong bipartisan support, this is must-pass legislation for the 114th Congress."

Each year, the federal government attempts to fund fire suppression through the regular appropriations process, but adequate funds are typically unavailable to cover these costs. As a result, the Forest Service is forced to borrow from other, non-fire accounts such as those designated for wildfire prevention, impeding its ability to take a proactive approach to reducing the risk of future wildfires.

The length of fire seasons has steadily increased in recent years, and wildfires also are becoming more severe. As a result, the cost of wildfire suppression has increased at an average annual rate of 22 percent since 1985. In 1991, wildfire suppression accounted for 13 percent of the Forest Service budget; that number increased to a staggering 47 percent in 2012.

The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act would permit the Forest Service to utilize federal disaster dollars to pay for catastrophic fire costs, funding wildfire suppression similarly to hurricanes, tornadoes and flash floods. This would

end the practice of fire borrowing, freeing hundreds of millions of dollars each year for their congressionally intended purposes.

"The Nature Conservancy strongly supports this bill, and it is a top policy priority for us again this year," said Kameran Onley, director of U.S. government relations for The Nature Conservancy. "It is essential to meet our nation's growing need to fight wildfire disasters, and that must not be done at the cost of some of the very programs that would reduce wildfire risk, among many other conservation programs."

"The Forest Service is one of Trout Unlimited's most valued partners in restoring trout and salmon streams across the country," said Steve Moyer, Trout Unlimited's vice president of government affairs. "This strong partnership is jeopardized when the Forest Service has to change funding decisions during the middle of a fiscal year due to fire borrowing, so we welcome this long-term solution to an ongoing problem."

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## USDA

*Continued from Page 32*

sas Forest Service)

Surface water reservoirs in Kansas have lost 40 percent of their storage capacity and waterways are experiencing stream bank erosion. By implementing forestry best management practices on 25,000 acres and creating a protection framework for remaining riparian forests in ten high-priority watersheds, this project will help sustain reservoir storage and wildlife habitat, improve the drinking water supply, and increase recreational opportunities. This project also supports the outcomes outlined in the Governor's Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas by sustaining and creating forest riparian conservation near Kansas streams.

State-level projects include: Advanced

Irrigation Water Management on the High Plains Aquifer in Kansas (Lead Partner: Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 3)

This project will provide producers and crop consultants with telemetry-enabled soil moisture probes, water metering, and evapotranspiration measurement for near real-time monitoring. Implementation of this practice through RCPP will bring conservation and economic gains to producers in southwest Kansas.

Pheasant Initiative (Lead Partner: Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism [KDWPT])

Pheasants are a socially and economically important resource to Kansas; however populations are experiencing challenges across their range. With the recent drought, loss of Conservation Reserve Program acres, and intensifying farming practices, the pheasant population is the lowest on record in Kansas. KDWPT and its partners have proposed

a focus-area approach to intensify habitat management.

More than 600 pre-proposals were submitted for RCPP in 2014. Of those, more than 200 were invited to submit full proposals. "With so many strong project proposals, the project selection process was extremely competitive. RCPP is a 5-year, \$1.2 billion USDA commitment; projects not selected in this first year may be eligible in subsequent years," Banks said.

For more information on Kansas RCPP projects, visit the Kansas NRCS Web site, [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov). To learn about technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/Get-Started](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Get-Started) or local USDA service center. For more on the 2014 Farm Bill, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



# Sharing the Experience

**Story and Photo  
by Tim C. Flanigan**  
Special to The Birding Wire

"You know Tim; I believe that far more people have come to know the American Woodcock through watching their spring-time sky dance rituals at sunset, than have ever gotten to know them through hunting. I never tire of marveling at it," Doc said with a smile in his voice. "And it's far easier to take folks out to a field edge on a spring evening than it is to get them into a hawthorn or alder thicket on a hunt."

"I wish I could remember how many folks I've introduced to the woodcock through watching their courtship rituals; got to be hundreds," he continued as though talking to himself. "Never knew anyone to not be awed by the experience. Some acted like kids on Christmas morning when they first saw it. Many of them have told me that they still go out each spring to watch the courtship flights and often take others with them."

As Doc reminisced, a male woodcock peented (called) repeatedly on the ground, just a few yards from our location, seated upon an oak log at the edge of a little-used cattle pasture dissected by a small stream. The pasture was bordered by a woodcock-friendly hawthorn thicket that we'd hunted in successive fall seasons. Scattered young hawthorn trees dotted the reverting pasture and alders lined the stream's edges and its numerous open areas provided stages for several male woodcock to perform their sky dance courtship displays. This was a singing ground.

Each repeatedly announced his availability and virility with series of nasally, buzzing "Peents." Following each series of eight to ten calls the males would launch skyward on twittering wings to perform their entrancing sky dance in the rapidly fading dusk.

We could easily hear the aerial portion of nearest bird's his performance high above and we watched intently for a glimpse of the little show off. At each flight's zenith he circled widely while broadcasting his courtship song of enchantingly melodic, trilled notes to woo his lady friends below. During his spiraling descent he punctuated the still, cool, clear evening with musical kissing notes; "Kiss-Kiss-Kiss-Kiss-Kiss!"

A few silent seconds indicated that he'd landed. "PEENT" signaled the start of another series of calls and another upward spiraling flight that would reach several hundred feet above our admiring ears. During one of his downward-spiraling, corkscrew-like descents, Doc and I caught a glimpse of him skittering across a faint hint of daylight

in the western sky. "Isn't that wonderful?" Doc whispered.

Watching the woodcock's sky dance courtship ritual is an unforgettable pleasure and sharing it with others makes it even more memorable. Doc's history of introducing others to the American Woodcock, (*Philohela minor*) in this manner, included an occasion that resulted in 1000 acres of prime woodcock habitat being set aside for these odd and fascinating, long-billed birds.

On a pleasant spring evening in 1960, Doc and a wealthy land developer laid on their backs, watching woodcock perform on a large tract of land that was destined to be converted to a palatial resort. Doc had invited the developer to the show, hoping that he might be charmed by woodcock's elaborate display and possibly realize the value of woodcock habitat. To say that his plan worked is an understatement.

When darkness ended the timberdoodle performances, the completely enthralled developer turned to Doc and said: What kind of people are we if we can't set aside places for wildlife too? Today, a conservation easement insures that one thousand acres of that habitat, including their woodcock-watching site, remains in a natural state, protected from the urban sprawl that surrounds it. Doc's adjoining twenty-two acres is similarly protected.

Woodcock prefer dense habitats that are typically festooned with thorny plants and briars making entry by humans challenging. Other than dedicated woodcock hunters, few people probe such inhospitable cover in an attempt to see the wondrously camouflaged woodcock. We hunters employ sharp-nosed dogs to locate these secretive birds, but even when pointed, a motionless woodcock, sitting on the forest floor is virtually invisible.

So secretive and mysterious is the woodcock that many avid birdwatchers have not seen one. Classified as a shorebird, the woodcock is a migratory upland game bird that thrives in damp riparian habitats all across the eastern half of the USA and Canada.

Watching their springtime courtship flights is especially rewarding. It's an experience that you'll want to share and it's easy to do. Select an appropriate site near a wooded riparian flood plane on a mild March or



April day with generally clear skies and calm winds at sunset. As daylight fades into darkness, listen for the male's "PEENTS" on the ground followed by the whistling twitter of woodcock wings and his melodious songs above.

Woodcock perform their courtship rituals at dawn and dusk, but the evening performances last longer. Sky dance watchers should be on sight as the sun sets and remain still and quiet until the first tell-tale "PEENT" is heard.

Once generally located, viewers can hone in on the male's repeated peents and approach his stage stealthily while he performs successive sky dances above. Wear dark clothing and avoid spooking the amorous bird by approaching too closely. Viewers can easily enjoy the show from as close as close as thirty yards to his stage to which he will return following each aerial performance.

Within seconds after returning to earth he'll "PEENT" to begin another display. On the ground he is sensitive to movements, but seems oblivious to artificial light, permitting viewers to illuminate his antics with flashlights for a very personal view of this rarely seen bird. It is wise to extinguish the artificial light when he launches into the night sky and only use the light to view him on the ground.

By remaining quiet and still viewers are commonly able to enjoy successive performances before the descent of full darkness ends the show. The very lucky observer may see a hen woodcock approach the male bird's stage, captivated by his elaborate exhibition.

Once you've witnessed woodcock courtship, you'll want to share it with others and you'll want to learn more about "timberdoodles." The more that we know about a species, the more we tend to care for it and its survival.



**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!

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- 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.
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