

The Voice of Outdoor Kansas

May-
June 2014

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

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www.kswildlife.org,
for additional KWF information



Photo by Bob Gress of Birds in Focus www.BirdsInFocus.com

USFWS lists lesser prairie-chicken as endangered species

Enables states to maintain lead management for conservation efforts

In response to the rapid and severe decline of the lesser prairie-chicken, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced the final listing of the species as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as a final special rule under section 4(d) of the ESA that will limit regulatory impacts on landowners and businesses from this listing. Under the law, a "threatened" listing means the species is likely to become in danger of extinction within the foreseeable future; it is a step below "endangered" under the ESA and allows for more flexibility in how the Act's

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Protecting the Land...
Passing on Our Traditions

KANSAS WILDLIFE
FEDERATION
The voice of outdoor Kansas



KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Officers and Board of Directors

Kansas Wildlife Federation, Inc.

P.O. Box 771282
Wichita, KS 67277-1282
Business: 785-650-3182
Fax: 316-755-2239
E-mail: info@kswildlife.org
Website: www.kswildlife.org

KWF OFFICERS

President:

Troy Schroeder

1785 CR 390
Albert, KS 67511
Home: 785-650-3182
E-mail: troyas@gbta.net

Immediate Past President:

Don Snider

2319 W. 60th North
Wichita, KS 67204
Home: 316-755-0920
E-mail: drsnider@cox.net

Administrative Vice President:

Angela Anderson

353 Road 300
Allen, KS 66833
Cell: 620-481-9547
E-mail:
mystery_barnowl@yahoo.com

Conservation Vice President:

Steve Sorensen

9 Weatherly Ct.
Valley Center, KS 67147-8547
Home: 316-755-2239
Cell: 316-214-3001
Fax: 316-755-0321
E-mail: webforbs@cox.net

Secretary:

Matt Nowak

1007 N. 2nd
Lansing, KS 66043
Business: 913-684-8979
Home: 913-727-3871
E-mail: matthew.c.nowak@us.army.mil

Treasurer:

Brian Snider

1058 N. Crestway St.
Wichita, KS 67208-2807
Home: 316-210-1277
E-mail: sniderbm@gmail.com

Editor:

Steve Sorensen

President's Message

By Troy Schroeder

As of this writing conditions, especially in the western part of the state, don't look good for upland bird production. Lesser prairie-chickens have dropped to low levels made worse by drought and have been listed as threatened by the USFWS as of May 12. Pheasant and quail numbers are also headed for recent lows, although not candidates for listing.

I have become interested in butterflies, bees and other pollinators lately along with a lot of other folks. We will have more on this later in this issue and in future issues.

But for now plant something that blooms this spring. No pollinator garden is too small. See the Dyck Arboretum (<http://dyckarboretum.org/>) or Monarch Watch (<http://monarchwatch.org/>) websites for more info.

For those interested in fishing remember that May is the overall best fishing



month. That means that it is the time when you have the best chance of catching about any kind of fish in any body of water.

Please check out our improved website www.kswildlife.org and be watching for outdoor events in your area.

Kansas Hunter Education instructor recognized

They spend countless hours teaching their students basic firearm safety, the importance of conserving and managing our state's natural resources, and what it means to be an ethical hunter. Kansas Hunter Education Program volunteer instructors attempt to teach young and new hunters everything they should learn before hitting the field. They don't do it for the money – they aren't paid. They don't do it because they have to – no one is making them. They do it because it's what they love. Volunteer Hunter Education Program instructors are a vital component in creating responsible hunters and protecting our hunting heritage in Kansas, and it's only fitting that contributions such as these be recognized.

One such instructor, Tim Boxberger, has made the aforementioned tasks more than a priority in his career as a volunteer instructor – he has made them a lifelong passion. His dedication for teaching and serving 20-plus years as a volunteer instructor convinced eight fellow instructors to nominate Boxberger for the Kansas Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Award.

“As if teaching many hunter ed classes in the spring and fall are not enough, Tim is also instrumental in Pheasants Forever field days, youth hunts, and NRA youth

outdoor days,” his nomination letter reads. “Tim shows remarkable dedication to the program and (he) has proven many times he is not afraid to go above and beyond.”

Boxberger will receive a certificate of appreciation and a Savage .17 HMR bolt-action rifle in snow camouflage as tokens of appreciation for his dedication. He resides in Great Bend with his wife, Laura.

Other instructors recognized for their exemplary involvement, performance, and continuing dedication to the program include:

- Paul Babcock, Region 1 Instructor of the Year
- Dennis Smith, Region 2 Instructor of the Year
- Tracy Gutierrez, Region 3 Instructor of the Year
- Dave Perkins, Region 4 Instructor of the Year
- Don Lile, Region 5 Instructor of the Year

Each regional winner will receive a certificate and a .223 CZ 527 varmint rifle, complete with a scope.

For more information on the Hunter Education program and its volunteer instructors, contact program coordinator, Kent Barrett, at kent.barrett@ksoutdoors.com.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

- May 2-4** Kansas Ornithological Society Spring Meeting, Junction City <http://ksbirds.org>
- May 3** Smoky Valley Ranch Tour, Logan County Craig Freeman ccfree@ku.edu
- May 4** Lake Scott State Park Tour, Scott County Craig Freeman ccfree@ku.edu
- May 18-20** Outdoor Writers of Kansas spring conference, Parsons
- June 1-6** KWF Outdoor Adventure Camp, Camp Wa Shun Ga, Rock Springs 4-H Ranch
- June 1** Konza Prairie Wildflower Walk, [Jill Haukos](mailto:Jill_Haukos) 785-587-0381
- June 6-7** 20th Annual Youth Fishing Clinic, Anneberg Park Lake Manhattan call 785-341-0085
- June 7** Youth in the Outdoors Day, Ravenwood Lodge, Topeka www.ravenwoodlodge.com/
- June 7** Maxwell Prairie Wildflower Tour #1, Maxwell Refurges [Betty Schmidt](mailto:Betty_Schmidt) 620-628-4455
- June 8** Chase County State Lake Prairie Walk, Chase County [Glenn Fell](mailto:Glenn_Fell) 620 794 8478
- June 11** KWF/TimberRidge Let's Get Outdoors Day Camp, Olathe (www.kswildlife.org)
- June 12** Identifying Native Trees, Miami County [Lenora Larson](mailto:Lenora_Larson) 913-284-3360
- June 14** Symphony in the Flint Hills, Rosalea, Butler County
- June 14** Maxwell Prairie Wildflower Tour #2, Maxwell Refurges [Betty Schmidt](mailto:Betty_Schmidt) 620-628-4455
- June 19** KWPTC Commission Meeting, Lamplighter Inn & Suites, Pittsburg
- June 19-22** Hunt 4 Hunger Midwest Outdoor Expo, Topeka
- June 21** Tuttle Creek Lake Summer Wildflower Walk, [Paul Weidhaas](mailto:Paul_Weidhaas) 785-539-8511
- June 21** Coombs Prairie Restoration Tour, Jackson County [Fred or Nancy Coombs](mailto:Fred_or_Nancy_Coombs) 785-872-3463
- June 28** Great American Backyard Campout
- Aug 21** KWPTC Commission Meeting,, Wetland Ed Center, Great Bend
- Sept 13** 12th Annual Justin Corbet Memorial Shoot, www.justincorbetfoundation.com
- Sept 19-21** Kansas Native Plant Society's 36th Annual Wildflower Weekend, Pratt [2014 AWW](http://2014AWW)
- Sept 20** Becoming an Outdoor Woman, Rock Springs 4-H Ranch, Junction City
- Sept 27** Beau Arndt Outdoor Appreciation Day, Emporia
- Oct 4** QUWF Jayhawk Chapter Banquet, Holidome, Lawrence John Hill 785-847-9555
- Oct 16** KWPTC Commission Meeting, Martinelli's Restaurant, Salina
- Oct 23-24** Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas, Manhattan
- Nov 7-9** Kansas Herpetological Society annual meeting, KSU, Manhattan

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

KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Officers and Board of Directors

KWF DIRECTORS

Northeast District:

Ted Beringer

15313 W. 80th Terrace
Lenexa, KS 66219-1530

Home: 913-541-1859

E-mail: beringert@umkc.edu

Northcentral District:

Nick Levendofsky

206 Washington Ave.
Republic, KS 66964-9714

Home: 785-361-2100

E-mail: nick.levendofsky@gmail.com

Northwest District:

Dave Hendricks

P. O. Box 488

WaKeeney, KS 67672-0488

Home: 785-743-2644

E-mail: afbldave@yahoo.com

Southeast District:

Phil Taunton

2508 Loma Vista Drive
Emporia, KS 66801-5856

Home: 620-342-5016

Cell: 620-794-5373

E-mail: ptaunton@cablone.net

Southcentral District:

Terry Sullivan

341 S. 3rd Street

Clearwater, KS 67206-9465

Home: 620-584-6795

Cell: 316-833-1102

E-mail: sullivan@sktc.net

Southwest District: Open

2015 NWF Representative:

Troy Schroeder

2015 NWF Alternate

Representative:

Angela Anderson

KWF Affiliates:

Geary County Fish & Game

Association

Junction City, KS

Kansas Wildlife Officers

Association

Iola, KS

Quail & Upland Wildlife

Federation

Buffalo, MO

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.

Director at Large:

Elby Adamson

1838 12th Rd

Clay Center, KS 67432

Home: 785-632-5986

E-mail: elbyadamson@yahoo.com

Director at Large:

Carl Conley

320 S. 2nd

Clearwater, KS 67206-9454

Home: 620-584-2733

Cell: 620-641-3026

E-mail: conleyfam@sktc.net

Director at Large:

Cindy Higgins

1023 Elm

Eudora, KS 66028

Home: 785-542-2606

E-mail: cinhiggins@yahoo.com

Director at Large:

Randy Kidd

16879 46th St.

McLouth, KS 66054

Home: 785-863-3425

E-mail: drrkidd@gmail.com

Director at Large:

Jim Strine

1900 Fort St.

Hays, KS 67601-4304

Home: 785-625-8940

E-mail: jstrine@ksu.edu

Director at Large:

David Zumbaugh

15507 W. 61st Terrace

Shawnee, KS 66217-9692

Cell: 913-302-4177

E-mail: david_zumbaugh@hotmail.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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Kansas Wildlife Federation Newsletter
P.O. Box 771282
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Women's beginner shooting clinic May 31

Participants will get to shoot shotguns, handguns, bows and more during this one-day clinic

You don't have to own a gun or even know how to properly load one to attend the upcoming Shooting Skills for Women event on May 31. In fact, the less you know, the better. Designed for women who are interested in the shooting sports with little to no experience, this one-day event will provide participants with the opportunity to shoot shotguns; handguns; small caliber, big bore, and black powder rifles; and archery equipment. No experience is required, and all guns and equipment will be provided.

The event is sponsored by the Kansas Bowhunters Association, in conjunction with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, Lil' Toledo

Lodge, and the Kansas Wildlife Officers Association. Participants can learn the ins and outs of shooting in a controlled, low-pressure atmosphere with women who share a similar interest.

This annual event will once again be held at Lil' Toledo Lodge, 10600 170th Rd, Chanute. Participants must be 18 or older to attend and must pre-register. The event will be open to the first 35 women to register and will cost \$45.00 to attend. Participants will enjoy lunch and refreshments courtesy of the Kansas Bowhunters Association, as well as a prize drawing.

For more information, or to sign up for this event, contact Stacy Hageman at (620) 672-5911.

Second Annual Kansas Wildlife Federation Day Camp

June 11th at TimberRidge Adventure Center in Olathe

In recent years the Kansas Wildlife Federation has envisioned adding single day camps around the state to its already successful week long Outdoor Adventure Camp held each year for the past 25 years at Camp WaShunGa at Rock Springs Ranch. So, last year KWF sponsored its first ever Day Camp for kids. It was held at TimberRidge Adventure Center in Olathe, Kansas, for boys & girls (10-12 years old).

This year will be the second edition of the Day Camp, also to be held at TimberRidge. The Day Camp offers kids the opportunity to be outdoors while fishing and canoeing. If your son or daughter wants to know how to fish or paddle a canoe, the skilled staff at TimberRidge will teach them. Plus there will be archery and BB gun ranges, with the added element of crafts this year.

And perhaps a short hike on one of the trails in the park if weather permits.

All the activities are closely supervised. Last year Coleman donated water jugs to each of the kids. Bass Pro Shop contributed canteens to the kids plus a couple of fishing poles that were given away in a free raffle. We'll also receive assistance from the Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation.

The kids don't have to bring anything except a sack lunch and a few other practical items like sunscreen. The Day Camp costs a mere \$25.00. Campers also receive a one-year Basic membership in the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

For more details and the application go online and visit <http://kwfnews.blogspot.com/2014/03/second-annual-kansas-wildlife.html>.

2014 Outdoor Adventure Camp: A summer treat for youngsters

Outdoor Adventure Camp (OAC) is a six-day summer camp for kids who either enjoy the outdoors or want to learn more about it. This conservation education program is co-sponsored by the Kansas Wildlife Federation and KSU Cooperative Extension Service. This will be the 26th anniversary for this popular camp and educational opportunity.

If you are a Kansas youngster who enjoys the outdoors, now is the time to make plans to attend Outdoor Adventure Camp from Sunday, June 1 through Friday, June 6 at the Camp WaShunGa area of Rock Springs Ranch, just south of Junction City. The camp is open to boys and girls ages 10 to 12 this summer.

Mornings will be spent traipsing the grounds at Camp WaShunGa with instructors, getting a hands-on feel for how various critters and plants live together in the ecosystem we call Kansas. Afternoons are spent learning about several areas of the outdoors, including mammals, insects, birds, fish and amphibians and reptiles. Ecology, wetlands, riparian areas and watersheds are some terms you will learn about at this unique camp.

Since the prairie does not go to sleep at sundown, neither will you. Depending on the evening, you may be out and about prowling for owls, stargazing, spotlighting spiders or watching bats gobble bugs.

Other activities include scavenger hunts, water sports including swimming and canoeing, fishing, shooting sports including rifle, shotgun, archery, and pellet gun. You'll pick your choices, or participate in all if you like.

The price of the camp includes all food, instruction and lodging. A swimsuit, sleeping gear and clothes you'll wear for a week are about all you need to bring. Sunscreen, insect repellent, a cap and water bottle also will come in handy. The price for the entire week is \$300, which includes arts and crafts. You may want to bring a little money for snacks and souvenirs at Milford Hatchery and Nature Center. Space is limited and registration deadline is May 27.

Send your application and full fee to Outdoor Adventure Camp, c/o Theresa Berger, 406 S. New York Ave., Sylvan Grove, KS 67481. Checks should be

Name _____

Age _____ Sex _____

Address _____

County _____ Phone _____

Parents' Names & Day/night Phone Numbers:

Father _____

Mother _____

Group Picture Order \$10.00 Each _____

Please include payment with camp fee.

T-shirt: (Adult Sizes)

Size: ___SM ___Med. ___LG___ XL___ XL___

(T-shirts included in Craft Fee)

Full \$300 fee with application due May 27. Refund only upon written notice of cancellation prior to May 27. No reductions or refunds for late arrivals or early departures.

Make check payable to the Kansas Wildlife Federation
(KWF)

Call 785-526-7466 for details or send application with payment:

Outdoor Adventure Camp

C/o Theresa Berger

406 S. New York Ave.

Sylvan Grove, KS 67481

E-mail: bergkwf@wtciweb.com

made payable to the Kansas Wildlife Federation. If you need more information or an application, phone 785-526-7466. Evenings are best, or leave a message

on the machine. You can also go to the KWF website www.kswildlife.org for an application form.

Kansan recognized for conservation contributions

2014 Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champions announced

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture is proud to announce that Joe Kramer, Director of Fisheries and Wildlife Division for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, is the recipient of the 2014 North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award. This award is given to partners that have demonstrated a long-term commitment and dedication to the important work of the Joint Ventures.

“For his 34 years of contributions to the people and places so vital to the wildlife and wetlands we want to sustain, we are honored to present the Conservation Champion Award for an Individual to Joe Kramer,” says PLJV Coordinator Mike Carter. “Joe has been with us from the beginning, as a founding member of the management board, and is still just as involved today.”

Joe Kramer, Professional Conservation Champion

Raised in Great Bend, Kansas, Joe Kramer developed a passion for waterfowl at Cheyenne Bottoms. He began his professional career upon completion of his Wildlife



Kramer

twenty-seven years later.

Joe recognized early the need for the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures. He also wholeheartedly worked to bring together and sustain the crucial partnerships needed to make Joint Ventures fully functioning conservation implementation vehicles that foster landscape-wide response to habitat needs for birds, especially those that need wetlands. He was a founding board member of the Playa Lakes Joint Venture and was at the first Management Board meeting in 1989, served as chairman from 1991 to 1993, and continues

Biology degree from Kansas State University in 1976 and was soon employed as a wildlife area technician with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. In just 11 years, Joe rose to Chief of Wildlife and Fisheries Division, where he remains an important leader

to be active on the board today. He was also a key player in bringing Playa Lakes Joint Venture into the non-profit world, which increased funding opportunities.

Joe has been an exemplary leader outside of Kansas throughout his career and is committed to advancing the science and management of wetlands and waterfowl. He has served on the Central Flyway Council since 1991 and was the Council's representative to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee for 10 of those years. Joe currently serves on the Kansas NRCS State Technical Committee and Board of Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams.

Joe has also been a leader in fostering wetland conservation partnerships. One shining example is McPherson Valley Wetlands, which now spans 4,500 acres in central Kansas and provides a critical anchor for waterfowl and other migratory birds traversing the continent between their breeding and wintering grounds. This acquisition and restoration project was built on partnerships taking almost 20 years to fully accomplish.

A Duck Stamp success story: Quivira NWR

Located near the geographical center of the lower 48 is Region 6's Quivira NWR in Stafford County, Kansas. The property's 22,135 acres lie about midway between Hutchinson and Great Bend. The refuge was established in 1955, as Great Salt Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, and was given its present name in 1958.

Quivira's central location is a contact zone between eastern and western species of birds, plants, and other wildlife. Both species of North American meadowlarks breed there, for instance. Located two degrees east of the 100th meridian, it's also an ecological crossroads between the wetter tallgrass prairie to the east and the drier shortgrass prairie to the west. But most unusually, due to ground-water percolating through subsurface salt deposits, Quivira offers rare inland saltmarsh habitat, where salt-tolerant plants like Alkali Sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*) and Seepweed (*Suaeda calceoliformis*) thrive. The uplands consist of native sand prairie, another habitat at risk of disappearing from this part of the country.

There's a prairie-dog town within the confines of the NWR. The Breeding Bird Survey

for June 2013 lists 74 species, and migrants expand the checklist to a count of 344 species. As Laura and William Riley wrote in their Guide to the National Wildlife Refuges, it's estimated that half the shorebirds in North America stop at Quivira or nearby Cheyenne Bottoms on their migrations along the Central Flyway.

The refuge provides critical habitat for migrating Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*), listed as Federally Endangered. Quivira also supports a subspecies of Snowy Plover, and the Interior subspecies of Least Tern. In streams fed by Artesian springs can be found a small fish, the Arkansas Darter (*Etheostoma cragini*), endemic to the Arkansas River watershed and a candidate for Federal listing.

Quivira is far enough west that water rights are an important factor in its success. According to the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan, water for the refuge's wetlands is taken from Rattlesnake Creek, which flows southwest to north through the property. Although the refuge holds senior rights to about 15,000 acre-feet of water per year (having filed in 1957), in general, water

rights have been overappropriated within this agriculture-dominated management district. Declines in the water table, with concomitant reductions in water quality and availability, loom in the future.

Meanwhile, the prairie uplands are threatened by encroachment from native and non-native trees and shrubs. The native Sand Plum, or Chickasaw Plum (*Prunus angustifolia*), scarce elsewhere, is invasive on these grasslands, growing in thick, monotypic stands.

Quivira is fortunate to have an active Friends organization. An audio tour of the Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway offers a 10-minute visit to the refuge and a chat with staff. The next Wings N Wetlands Birding Festival, a biennial event, will take place in April, 2015.

As of September, 2012, 99.1% of Quivira NWR's acreage was acquired with MBCF money. Here's something even more revealing: most (21,820 acres) of this land was purchased by 1969 (when the Stamp price was \$3); the total tab for all 22,135 acres has come to \$2,059,238. That works out to \$93.03 per acre, quite a bargain!

New state record Rainbow Trout tips scales at 15.72 pounds

In Kansas trout waters, it's not uncommon to drop a lure and get a bite after a few minutes, but to drop a lure, get a bite, and reel in a 15.72-pound rainbow trout is almost unheard of. That's what angler Josh McCullough of Spring Hill experienced on Feb. 23 earlier this year. Fishing at Kill Creek Park Lake in Johnson County, McCullough had no idea the hook he had just fitted with a piece of Berkeley Gulp corn bait would land him a fish for the books.

When McCullough's catch surfaced, he knew this was no ordinary fish. As he landed the trout ashore, McCullough quickly realized that fish on the end of his hook could very well be a new record. McCullough grabbed his gear, snapped a few

photos with a phone, and then did what any angler should do when potentially holding a new state record fish – he took it to a certified scale to get weighed.

The 28.5-inch long fish tipped the scale at 15.72 pounds, a mere .29 of a pound heavier than the former state record rainbow trout weighing in at 15.42 pounds caught by Nicole Wilson. Wilson made the books in 2012 with her catch from Lake Shawnee in Topeka.

Before a new state record can be accepted, the following steps must occur:

-The fish must be identified and witnessed by a Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) district fisheries biologist or regional fish-

eries supervisor

-The fish must be weighed before it is frozen

-The angler must submit an official Kansas state record fish application, accompanied by a sharp, color photo of the fish

-The angler must undergo a mandatory 30-day waiting period following application

Only species listed on the KDWP state record list will be accepted. A tissue sample may also be required.

To view a complete list of current Kansas state record fish, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click "Fishing/State Record Fish."

USFWS

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protections are implemented.

In recognition of the significant and ongoing efforts of states and landowners to conserve the lesser prairie-chicken, this unprecedented use of a special 4(d) rule will allow the five range states to continue to manage conservation efforts for the species and avoid further regulation of activities such as oil and gas development and utility line maintenance that are covered under the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (WAFWA) range-wide conservation plan. This range-wide conservation plan was developed by state wildlife agency experts in 2013 with input from a wide variety of stakeholders. The special rule also establishes that conservation practices carried out through the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service's Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative and through ongoing normal agricultural practices on existing cultivated land are all in compliance with the ESA and not subject to further regulation.

"The lesser prairie-chicken is in dire straits," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. "Our determination that it warrants listing as a threatened species with a special rule acknowledges the unprecedented partnership efforts and leadership of the five range states for management of the species. Working through the WAFWA range-wide conservation plan, the states remain in the driver's seat for managing the species - more than has ever

been done before - and participating landowners and developers are not impacted with additional regulatory requirements."

The Service has considered the lesser prairie-chicken, a species of prairie grouse commonly recognized for its colorful spring mating display and stout build, to be a species in trouble for the past 15 years. Its population is in rapid decline, due largely to habitat loss and fragmentation and the ongoing drought in the southern Great Plains. Once abundant across much of the five range states of Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado, the lesser prairie-chicken's historical range of native grasslands and prairies has been reduced by an estimated 84 percent. Last year, the range-wide population declined to a record low of 17,616 birds, an almost 50 percent reduction from the 2012 population estimate. The states' conservation plan has a population goal of 67,000 birds range-wide.

"To date, we understand that oil and gas companies, ranchers and other landowners have signed up over 3 million acres of land for participation in the states' range-wide conservation plan and the NRCS' Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative," said Ashe. "We expect these plans to work for business, landowners and the conservation of prairie-chickens."

In addition to the range-wide conservation plan and the Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative, a number of other on-the-ground programs have been implemented over the last decade across the bird's five-state range to conserve and restore its habitat and improve its status. Key programs such as the USDA's Farm Service Agency's

Conservation Reserve Program, the Bureau of Land Management's New Mexico Candidate Conservation Agreement, the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances in Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, are engaging state and federal agencies, landowners and industry in these efforts.

Collectively, these programs - and in particular, the range-wide conservation plan - serve as a comprehensive framework within which conservation of the lesser prairie-chicken can be achieved. The various efforts are similar to a recovery plan, something that the Service normally prepares after a species' listing. This early identification of a strategy to conserve the lesser prairie-chicken is likely to speed its eventual delisting.

However, threats impacting the species remain and are expected to continue into the future. After reviewing the best available science and on-the-ground conservation efforts focused on the species, the Service determined that the lesser prairie-chicken is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future and warrants listing as threatened under the ESA. The agency is under a court-ordered deadline to make a listing determination on the species by March 31.

The final rule to list the lesser prairie-chicken as threatened and the final special rule will publish in the Federal Register and will be effective 30 days after publication. Copies of the final rules may be found at the Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest>.

Miss Kansas to host 'Limitless' hunting show

By Daniel Xu
The Outdoor Hub

Lifelong hunter and National Guard member Theresa Vail may not be what most people expect from a beauty queen. The 23-year-old broke stereotypes last year when she won the Miss Kansas title, and although she lost her bid for the Miss America crown, Vail is already planning her next career move. Once again, Vail is planning on shattering expectations. According to The Wichita Eagle, Vail was present at the Governor's Turkey Hunt in El Dorado last week, shooting footage for her new hunting show on the Outdoor Channel titled *Limitless*.

Vail said she got a call from the network shortly after the Miss America Pageant, during which she won the "America's Choice" award in an online vote.

"I told them I didn't want to do what everybody else was doing and they said they didn't either," Vail said. "We both wanted it to have more than just me on hunts. I was sold from there on."

An avid bowhunter, it should be no surprise that *Limitless* will focus partly on Vail's skills with a bow and arrow. Unlike most other hunting programs, Vail's show will also shine a spotlight on local heroes and those who push themselves to the limits. An early episode will put her in a New Mexico elk hunt as well as surviving a day's training with US Forest Service "smokejumpers." These elite wilderness firefighters earned their name by jumping into remote areas by parachute to battle forest fires. Their duties often take them into harm's way, and smokejumpers are required to be at the height of



Miss Kansas Theresa Vail.

mental and physical preparedness.

"I'm not afraid to say, 'Hey, I don't know how to do this,' but I want to learn and do it myself," Vail tells the *Eagle*.

Although a veteran bowhunter, Vail admitted that she expects a lot of learning experiences while filming for the upcoming show. Vail also decided to re-enlist with the Kansas National Guard for an additional six years.

Along will the completion of her college degree and work with outdoor brands such as Bass Pro Shops and Realtree, Vail's schedule for 2014 is looking very crowded.

"Whatever I decide to do, I know that I will not lose sight of my cause," Vail wrote on her [blog](#). "I will continue to speak to women, empowering and challenging them to step outside of their comfort zones. I pray that God continues to use me as His servant, working through me to reach others. I am here to serve."

To read more about Theresa Vail's hunting and fishing adventures go to <http://blogs.kansas.com/outdoors/2014/04/14/blasts-and-casts-from-hunting-with-theresa-vail-miss-kansas/>

10 ways to play the turkey roost

By Steve Hickoff
Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation

You know you have at least one or more gobblers to hunt. How? You heard them on the roost at daybreak or dusk - or both. That's half the challenge. Now hunt them seriously.

STEP 1: Fix roosting locations with locator calls or simply by listening to turkeys fly up the night before your hunt.

STEP 2: Rise early enough to make your way there in the dark.

STEP 3: Close in on the roost, walking quietly - you'll make some noise later yelping to turkeys on the ground. Don't move too much. If you call at all, make it a hands-free mouth diaphragm. For added realism, stake a decoy or two near your position and in range

(do this in the dark). As turkeys fly down and regroup, a gobbler may move in for a look.

STEP 4: Adjust your setup before action begins; quietly, slowly clearing sticks and debris.

STEP 5: Get comfortable one more time and don't move much as you listen to turkeys waking up.

STEP 6: Focus your mind right as fly-down time begins - no distractions. (Notice the emphasis on making ready.)

STEP 7: Watch or listen as turkeys pitch down. Wait now call softly as they regroup. Pay attention. Did a legal bird pull into range? If so, take the turkey. If not, let the flock drift.

STEP 8: Where did they go? You'll want to know to set up between the roost and where they hang out all day - assuming afternoon hours are legal in your state. Be there

before fly-up time when they stroll back and close the deal. Get in there early enough to avoid detection. Call now and then to get a response from approaching birds.

STEP 9: Did you accidentally scare and scatter turkeys while moving in? That's okay. Relax. If you unintentionally separated a gobbler from the flock, use this to your advantage. Get between this bird and the remaining turkeys - ideally hens he wants to regroup with.

STEP 10: Locate turkeys in wilderness country on your Yamaha ATV or Side-by-Side. Camp nearby, not far from the birds you've found.

Make your morning setup miles from the nearest road. Hunt these gobblers yourself. Start with Step 1 again if nothing works. Enjoy it. As the say-ing goes, the journey is the destination.

Good news for Kansas River

By Friends of the Kaw

After review of a consultants report and completion of an Environmental Assessment, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was unable to conclude that there are no potentially significant impacts associated with dredging activities proposed by the dredging companies. They have determined an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be necessary before dredging operations may be reauthorized in the Kansas River. Current dredging permits have been extended through this process.

The last EIS was published in 1990 and this new EIS is an important step to POSSIBLY getting sand dredging off the Kaw, a long time goal of Friends of the Kaw. We have worked to move in-river dredging to appropriately sited pit mines in the Kansas River valley for more than 20 years.

[More information on our dredging advocacy efforts!](#)

Friends of the Kaw will continue to follow this issue and let our members know when public meetings are scheduled or written comments need to be submitted.

What will the future of the Kaw look like?



OR

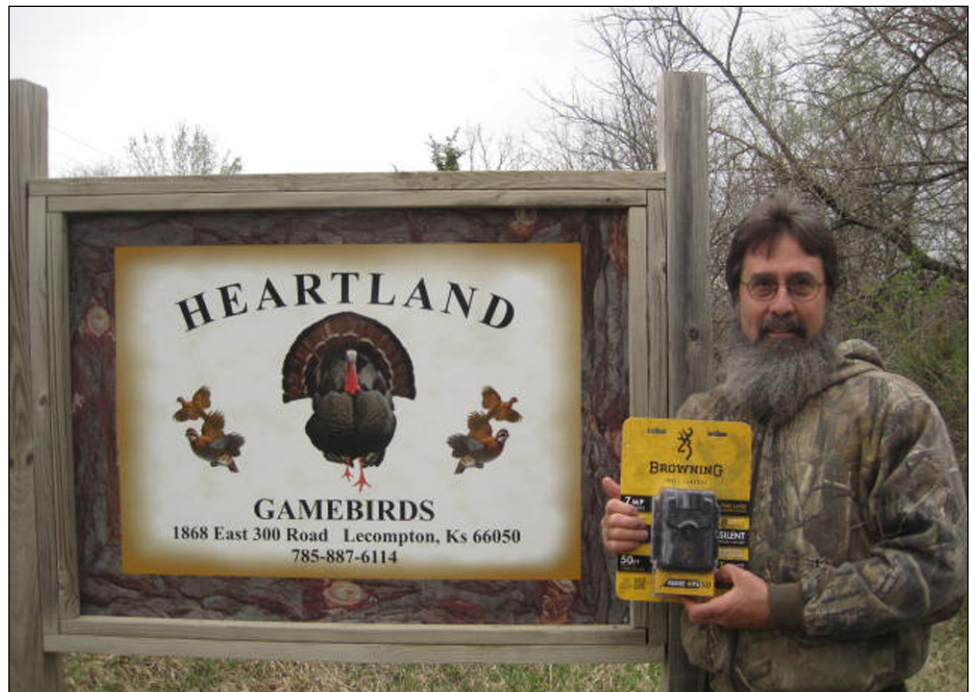


KWF gives away a trail camera at the Monster Buck Classic

The Kansas Wildlife Federation had a booth at the *Monster Buck Classic, We Are Kansas* event in Topeka in late January. For those who attended the event and registered at our booth, we offered a trail camera as a door prize.

The winner of the trail camera is Roy Cook of LeCompton, Kansas. As well as working a full time job, Roy and his wife own and operate a game bird farm raising Wild Eastern Turkey, Ring neck Pheasant and Northern Bobwhites. They try to provide the best birds for the budget minded hunter as well as helping parents wanting to introduce their children into the sport of hunting for the first time. From the hobby breeder to individuals wanting to train or work their new pup to refreshing that gundog's nose before the upcoming season, Roy and his wife try to provide birds for any reason for all seasons.

Congratulations to Roy on winning the KWF trail camera.



Somewhere in Wyoming

**By D.M. Zumbaugh
KWF Board Member**

I was obligated to travel through Wyoming in April, so on a whim, I Googled, “fishing near Casper”. I was both surprised and skeptical at the results on the computer screen before me, but intrigued as well. It seemed far-fetched that a tail water stream system coursing across a sage brush plateau could be hospitable for cold water species. After viewing a few digital videos from Grey Reef Anglers, I thought it worthy of a phone call to verify the claimed opportunities in the form of big trout in the North Platte flowage. With only a brief discussion with Jason Ostrander, I was convinced that it was worth a go, but needed a partner for the drift trip. I recently had an article published in the award winning magazine, Wyoming Wildlife, so it was appropriate to invite editor, Amber Leberman. She had just assumed responsibilities from retiring Chis Madson, formerly chief scribe of our own Kansas Wildlife and Parks publication.

The City of Casper was quite impressive, hosting familiar chains of retail, hotel and restaurant establishment’s as well unique historic attractions. The chosen river flows directly through the town, although the best fishing is found about 20 miles south. I decided to explore the area and hoped to try some wade fishing at least to get in some refresher casting practice. Stopping by the regional office of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, I picked up a map and the fishing regulations to review. I quickly found that access to the Platte was abundant and included facilities such as boat ramps, parking and restrooms.

Although the weather did it’s best to intimidate me, I would not be denied and put in about a half-day of wader soaking, dodging snowflakes and attempting to find a sheltered bend or two out of the chilled breeze. But, after all, this was Wyoming and I was in the geography between the Great Plains and the intermountain basins and wind is a constant companion. To the distant west, the Rockies could be seen and the Big Horns loomed in the north. The only cooperation from the fish were a few light bites on dry flies and none were willing to hop into my net. With the water temperature hovering just above 30 degrees, I was the one doing the hopping; in and out of the stream to try and warm up my frozen legs. Guide Ostrander maintains com-



The author, David Zumbaugh, shows off a nice North Platte trout to guide Jason Ostrander of Grey Reef Anglers.



Fishing partner Amber Leberman and Guide Jason Ostrander in the boat used to float the North Platte near Casper, WY.

fortable lodging near enough the Platte to walk out the back door and immerse yourself in all things Wyoming and I did just that late in the day.

Amber, Jason and I rendezvoused the next morning at 7:30 AM and were on the water an hour later. The day was forecasted to be the best spring day so far in these parts, with bright sunshine and calm conditions. Mere moments later we were hooking fish and these were BIG trout! The rods were rigged in a seemingly strange configuration based on my past

experiences. Six-weight sticks were the choice with clear 10 lb. Stren line used as leader material. A small yellow egg was strung on the 9 foot leader for attraction, with a small hook wrapped in red fuzz just below it. The bug of choice was a black leech pattern about an inch long with a stout, straight shanked hook. Two split shots were pinched on the leader above the egg at the appropriate level to reach the depth of the channel. We used

Continued on Page 17

Scholarships available for students studying wildlife, natural resources

Interested applicants have until June 10 to apply

The Willis Scholarship Foundation, in conjunction with the Governor's One Shot Turkey Hunt, invites students currently enrolled in a Kansas regent's institution pursuing a degree relating to wildlife, natural resources, and/or natural resource management to apply for a scholarship. The application period is open now through June 10, 2014.

Created in memory of Wayne Willis, a long time supporter of the Governor's One Shot Spring Turkey Hunt and renowned wildlife artist from the Wichita area, the scholarship foundation started in 1996 when the Past Shooters & Guides Association offered two \$1000 scholarships. Since then, approximately \$400,000

has been awarded to Kansas students.

Successful applicants can be awarded \$500 - \$1,250 per semester, based on grade point average and the following criteria:

- desire to pursue a career in wildlife or natural resources
- maintain at least a 2.5 GPA, pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher
- Commit to attending the Governor's One Shot Turkey Hunt, providing assistance where necessary

The 28th annual Kansas Governor's One Shot Turkey Hunt will be held April 10, 11 and 12, 2014 in El Dorado. Hunters from across the U.S. are participating this year, including Kansas Governor Sam

Brownback.

Passing on the hunting heritage to the next generation remains a continued focus for the event. Twenty-three Kansas youth applied for a chance to participate in the Kansas Governor's One Shot Turkey Hunt Youth Program 2014. Riley Brown of El Dorado, Allison Dix of Stockton, Joseph Heimann of Hays, Avery Lewellen of Wellington, Ethan Shaw of Logan and Jenna Smithson of Osage City are the six chosen this year.

For more information on the Willis Scholarship Foundation, Inc., and to receive an application, visit www.centrankansascf.org/non-profit-organizations/scholarships/.

'Focus on the Byway' photo contest begins

Website outlines rules

Anyone with a camera has a new opportunity to get the creative juices flowing and compete in a unique photography contest.

It is called "Focus on the Byway" and is open to amateurs and professionals of all ages. The year-long contest begins immediately and provides several chances to win cash prizes each quarter of that year. Photographers are asked to focus their lenses on the Kansas Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway.

The Byway corridor includes Claf- lin, Ellinwood, Great Bend, Hoising- ton, Hudson, St. John and Stafford; the Byway winds through Barton, Reno and Stafford counties.

"We encourage photographers to get involved in this new opportunity to draw attention to the beauty of the Byway and the quality of life that exists here in central Kansas," said Cris Collier, director of the Great Bend Convention & Visitors' Bureau (CVB). "This contest is unique in a number of ways that we think will attract those with a creative flair."

Collier outlined a few of the contest basics:

- ◆ Photographers will submit entries

only online; there are a variety of categories for adults; the contest will be ongoing from now until April of next year; and there will be "great cash prizes."

◆ "Photographers from ages 5 to 17 will not have to follow the category structure," she noted. "They can shoot whatever they want."

Collier also noted that the contest is a first for a Kansas byway, and she knows of only one other in the United States. There are 150 national scenic byways nationwide.

"This contest is a new way to promote the Byway region as a popular travel destination," Collier said. "This will be a great way to showcase our great visitor experiences and opportunities."

All rules for the online submissions can be found at www.KsBywayPhoto-Contest.com. This is a page on the CVB website, which is www.visitgreatbend.com

Judges will select winners in each category every quarter beginning in April. Categories are outdoor adventure; events and attractions; people; scenic/wildlife; and slice-of-life portrait.

Bob Gress of Wichita will be one of

the five judges. The prize for first place in each category each quarter is \$300. Second place will receive \$150 and third, \$50.

First-place winners in each category for each quarter will be placed in the "Best of the Byway" contest at the end of the final quarter. The grand-prize winner will earn \$1,000 in cash.

"All entries should depict the beauty, spirit and/or character of the Byway," Collier said. "We strongly encourage anyone interested to visit our website for all the rules and guidelines. It clearly outlines the photographers' assignments."

The Byway is sponsoring the contest; the Great Bend CVB is its marketing arm.

The Byway connects two of the world's most ecologically important wetlands - Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.

"This 77-mile route offers these wonderful wetlands, as well as stone bridges, underground tunnels, museums, local artwork, birds of prey and grasslands," Collier said. "It is a photographer's paradise."

Student archers set sights on national competition

219 schools currently offer the Kansas Archery in the Schools program

Kansas Archery in the Schools hosted its fifth annual state archery tournament, Saturday, April 5, at Clearwater High School, southwest of Wichita. Three hundred and twenty students vied for a chance to compete at nationals. Of those 320 archers, three teams and 60 individual competitors qualified for the National Archery in the Schools tournament in Louisville, Kentucky, May 9-10.

Operating under the umbrella of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) and the National Archery in the Schools (NASP) program, the Kansas archery program is aimed at promoting international-style target archery among students in grades 4-12. With the help of KDWPT and NASP, program coordinators are able to introduce archery as a fun, lifelong activity to young people who may have never taken up the sport otherwise.

Students from 11 communities competed this year, including: Anthony, Clay Center, Clearwater, Erie, Tribune, Holton, Hugoton, Kingman, Neodesha, Olathe, and Rose Hill.

Competing in three divisions, elementary school (4-6), middle school (7-8), or high school (9-12), participants are required to shoot five arrows in each of the three rounds from a distance of 10 meters and a distance of 15 meters. A score of 300 points is considered perfect, which would be scores of 10 on each of the 30 total arrows they can be scored



Photo by Luke Laha, PCC Wildlife Enterprise Management

on.

Individual winners in each grade division are as follows:

GIRLS

Avery Schill, 264, Clearwater Elementary

Tatyana Miner, 278, Clearwater Middle School *Top overall score, top female score

Amber Asbury, 266, Clearwater High School

BOYS

Richard Wolf, 260, Clearwater Elementary

Daniel Schule, 274, Clearwater Middle School

Kyle Reed, 277, Clearwater High School *Top male score

Clearwater school teams placed first in all divisions. The top 10 boy and girl competitors from each grade division from any of the participating schools also qualified for nationals.

Congratulations to the State Champion teams from Clearwater Intermediate Center, Clearwater Middle School, and Clearwater High School. Good luck at Nationals!!

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Collin O'Mara appointed president and CEO of National Wildlife Federation

'Collin is a tireless leader with a deep understanding of conservation issues and a strong, entrepreneurial spirit'

National Wildlife Federation, America's oldest and largest wildlife conservation and education organization, announced last night at the annual NWF Conservation Achievement Awards gala that its Board of Directors has appointed Delaware Secretary of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Collin O'Mara to serve as the next President and Chief Executive Officer effective July 7, 2014. He will succeed Larry Schweiger who is retiring May 2, 2014 after serving for 10 years as NWF's President and CEO.

Secretary O'Mara will be joining NWF from the state government of Delaware where he has led the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control since 2009. In that position, Secretary O'Mara served as the state's top environmental official, led the state's efforts to conserve and restore wildlife and fishery habitat, improve air quality and public health, ensure access to clean water, expand outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities, and enhance the state's resilience to extreme weather and other



O'Mara

climate impacts.

When Secretary O'Mara was appointed in 2009, he was the youngest state cabinet official in the nation. Over the past several years, he has spearheaded a range of initiatives, including Delaware's "No Child Left Inside"/ Children In Nature campaign, a comprehensive

strategy to confront childhood obesity by reintroducing children to the outdoors; the First State Trails and Pathways Plan, a multi-year initiative to expand and connect the state's trail system; and the Delaware Bayshore Initiative, an effort to establish the region as a world-class conservation and low-impact recreation tourism destination for hunting, birding, fishing, hiking, canoeing, and kayaking, as part of the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

In addition, Secretary O'Mara led the largest investment in environmental infrastructure in Delaware's history, including more than \$200 million in wastewater and storm water systems, beach restoration, dam and dike repair, drainage projects, and park and wildlife area. At the same time, he successfully executed the first significant reorganization of the state's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control since 1972, to make the agency more effective at implementing strategic priorities and more efficient in carrying out its mission at a time of limited resources.

"Collin is a tireless leader with a deep understanding of conservation issues and a strong, entrepreneurial spirit," said Deborah Spalding, Chair of the NWF Board of Directors. "His track record in implementing innovative solutions to conservation challenges and his experience in managing large, complex organizations with a diverse stakeholder base are key skills that will be

Continued on Page 14

Friends of the Kaw introduces new program and communications director

Erik Wolf was hired in March as the new Communication and Program Director for Friends of the Kaw. He grew up in Overland Park, KS and has his degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Kansas. Erik takes care of the social media and various programs run by Friends of the Kaw.

Erik is an avid outdoorsman and loves recreating in and around all types of water, especially kayaking on the Kaw. He enjoys teaching people about anything they want to know about the outdoors.

Erik believes highly the "leave-no-trace" ethic when enjoying the outdoors so the next person who paddles, bikes, hikes

or sight sees behind him will get their own feeling they are the first to explore. Erik lives on Strawberry Hill in KCK where he has a beautiful view of the Kansas River everyday of the year!

Check out the Friends of the Kaw website at <http://kansasriver.org/>.

Youth Fishing Clinic June 6 and 7

Tuttle Creek Lake Association invites youth age 8-12 to participate

The Tuttle Creek Lake Association invites youth 8-12 to participate in its 20th Annual Youth Fishing Clinic June 6-7, 2014 at Anneberg Park Lake. Open and free to youth who have not previously attended, the two-day clinic will begin with an educational session Friday evening covering topics such as casting, hook tying, and water safety. Activities will pick back up Saturday morning with fishing from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.,

followed by an award ceremony, and free lunch. Each youth will be provided with a free rod and reel to take home, as well as hooks, bobbers, split shot, and bait.

Opportunities to catch a fish will be plentiful as the Tuttle Creek Lake Association, in cooperation with Manhattan Parks and Recreation, will stock Anneberg Park Lake with 700 channel catfish ranging from 12-18 inches long and weighing up to 3

pounds.

Trophies will be awarded to girls and boys who catch the smallest fish, the largest fish, and the largest three fish.

Youth must be accompanied by an adult and must register to attend. Registration will be open the day of the event, however early registration is encouraged.

For more information, contact Paul Miller at (785) 341-0085.

Anglers almost lose fishing opportunities due to trash

Although the following article is from Iowa, the principle is true nationwide. Anglers tend to leave considerable trash wherever they fish. Ethical anglers must help keep the areas clear of trash and smelly fish remains. If we don't, we'll see more areas closed to angler access.

Littering is not only an eyesore; it shows a lack of respect someone demonstrates by leaving their trash behind for others to clean up. And that reputation as litterbugs nearly cost the Des Moines fishing community the opportunity to fish along the new Des Moines River Walk.

"Anglers nearly lost the opportunity to fish a premier location because of litter.

This should serve as a wakeup call to take better care of our resources and clean up after ourselves," said Joe Larscheid, chief of fisheries for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

"We are using a lot of energy and resources to get people fishing and when they come out to a shoreline they see all this trash on shore. That's pretty disappointing."

A number of civic and conservation groups spend countless hours volunteering their time to clean the shorelines of the empty bait containers, old fishing line, pop and beer cans, chips and candy wrappers and so on.

"Just about anything you can carry with you fishing, we've probably cleaned it up,"

Larscheid said.

The solution, he said, is not that difficult. Anglers should tuck a few plastic grocery sacks in their tackle bag and use it for trash.

"When you're done fishing, carry the sack out with you. Pretty simple," Larscheid said. "It's our resource and we need to do a better job of keeping it clean, and that includes not throwing rough fish on shore. That leaves a terrible, smelly mess."

"If you don't want to eat the fish, either throw it back to the water or give them to someone who does. Don't leave it to rot on the bank; that makes the area less family friendly and a rotting mess. And, it's littering," he said.

Doting on young wildlife can be deadly

Young animals may appear alone, but that doesn't mean they're abandoned

Stumbling upon a seemingly-abandoned nest of young cottontails may have you thinking it's time to make a trip to the store for a cardboard box and some carrots, but this act of kindness may actual kill the very wildlife you're trying to "save." Every year, well-intentioned people attempt to "rescue" what they assume to be neglected young, often with deadly consequences. In almost all cases of young wildlife found alone in the wild, the mother is typically feeding nearby, keeping a distant eye on her offspring. When concerned individuals decide to retrieve these young animals and care for them, they are unintentionally giving the young a premature death sentence.

The notion that a young animal found in the wild will die if not given care is wrong. Not only are most young found in

the wild not abandoned, picking them up is against the law. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment have regulations against such activity that can result in a fine up to \$1,000 or more. In addition to legal repercussions, wild animals can pose a number of health risks, including diseases such as distemper, rabies, Lyme disease, roundworms, tapeworms, mites, tularemia and more.

Additionally, if a "rescued" animal were to bite someone, it must be put to death and tested for diseases. Even if they don't bite, the young usually fail to survive in captivity because most people are not equipped to handle wild animals, especially as they mature. On the off chance the animal does survive in captivity, it typically loses instincts that allow it

to survive in the wild.

It is important to remember that although young wildlife may be cute, they belong in the wild. Wild animals cannot legally be inoculated by veterinarians, and few people really know how to care for them.

If you should see a young animal in the wild this spring or summer, observe at a distance and consider yourself lucky. But remember, just because they are temporarily alone, that doesn't mean they are abandoned.

If you really want to help, leave young in the wild where they were born and belong.

If you find an injured animal, a list of licensed rehabilitators can be found at www.ksoutdoors.com, by clicking "Services/Rehabilitation."

O'MARA

Continued from Page 13

critical in taking the Federation forward in the coming years."

"Confronting the pressing conservation challenges of this generation will require that

Americans from every corner of our nation and every walk of life work together community by community and state by state to drive change at the national and international level," said incoming CEO O'Mara. "The National Wildlife Federation has a proud legacy of bringing diverse groups together to protect wildlife, advancing landscape scale conservation, expanding environmental edu-

cation, promoting outdoor recreation from hunting and fishing to birding, kayaking and wildlife watching, and driving meaningful policy change at every level of government. I look forward to building upon Larry's inspiring work as we do our generation's part to leave a healthier and more sustainable planet for all wildlife and future generations."

New clean water rule will protect streams, wetlands and benefit economy

Sportsmen's groups applaud action to restore protections for waters, valuable fish and wildlife habitat

**By Katie McKalip
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency jointly released a proposed rule on March 25th that would clearly define which streams and wetlands are protected by the Clean Water Act. This action would begin restoring longstanding protections to many of the nation's wetlands, streams and lakes, conserving critical fish and wildlife habitat and providing flood control, cleaner drinking water and a host of other benefits.

Several leading sportsmen's organizations – the [American Fly Fishing Trade Association](#), [Berkley Conservation Institute](#), [Izaak Walton League of America](#), [National Wildlife Federation](#), [Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership](#), [Trout Unlimited](#) and [Wildlife Management Institute](#) – applauded the release of the proposed rule, saying that it would better protect important habitats for fish and wildlife.

“We are pleased the administration has taken this crucial step to provide clarity and certainty to landowners, conservationists and businesses regarding waters of the United States,” said TRCP President and CEO Whit Fosburgh. “Long overdue, this action restores some – but not all – Clean Water Act protections to these critical resources, conserving healthy habitat, upholding water quality and supporting the sporting traditions that tens of millions of Americans enjoy.”

“This is a huge step forward for protecting America's waters and wildlife,” said Larry Schweiger, NWF president and CEO. “We simply cannot protect our rivers, lakes and bays without protecting the many small streams and wetlands that feed into them. Drinking water supplies for more than one-third of Americans will be safer once this rule is put into place.”

Together with administrative guidance issued in 2003 and 2008, two Supreme Court decisions in the 2000s removed

Clean Water Act protections for at least 20 million acres of wetlands, particularly prairie potholes and other seasonal wetlands essential to waterfowl populations throughout the country. Intermittent streams that provide critical habitat for fish, especially trout, and feed into the public drinking water systems for more than 117 million Americans also were put at increased risk of pollution and destruction.

“Many of these small waters provide vital spawning and rearing habitat for trout and salmon. Simply stated, the proposal will make fishing better,” said TU President and CEO Chris Wood. “Restoring protections to these waters ensures healthy habitat for fish and a bright future for anglers.”

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the rate of wetlands loss accelerated by 140 percent from 2004 to 2009, the years immediately after the Supreme Court rulings.

“The economic benefits to the United States from these wetlands and streams are staggering,” said AFFTA president Ben Bulis. “For example, direct spending on hunting and fishing totals \$86 billion each year in the United States, which ripples through the economy, generating \$200 billion in total economic activity annually.”

The wording of the two Supreme Court decisions left state and federal regulators, landowners and manufacturers confused about which U.S. waters are protected by the Clean Water Act.

“In a measured response to the Supreme Court's decisions, the proposed rule will provide the clear direction necessary to conserve the nation's wetlands and streams,” said WMI President Steve Williams. “In addition, it provides practical and necessary exclusions for farming and forestry activities. The rule recognizes the essential value of clean water for our nation's citizens and our fish and wildlife resources.”

“The proposed rule takes a moderate

approach – based on the best available peer-reviewed scientific evidence – that falls within the limits of the Supreme Court decisions,” said Scott Kovarovics, executive director of the IWLA. “It preserves the existing exemptions for farming, forestry, mining and other land use activities, such as the exemption in the existing regulation for many wetlands converted to cropland prior to 1985, as well as exemptions written into the Clean Water Act itself that cannot be changed by administrative action.”

The rule also for the first time explicitly excludes many upland water features important for farming and forestry, such as

- upland drainage ditches with no more than ephemeral water flows;
- artificially irrigated areas that would revert to upland should irrigation cease;
- artificial lakes or ponds used for purposes such as stock watering;
- artificial ornamental waters created for primarily aesthetic reasons; and
- water-filled depressions created as a result of construction activity.

“All sides of this debate and the Supreme Court have said a rulemaking is necessary to give regulators and the regulated community certainty as well as fulfill the Clean Water Act's goal of ensuring fishable and swimmable waters,” said TRCP Center for Water Resources Director Jimmy Hague. “Now that the proposed rule is public, we can finally have this discussion based on fact and go about the process of restoring Clean Water Act protections to waters upon which America's hunters and anglers rely.”

“We are glad to have the Clean Water Act protections for our lakes, rivers and streams clarified to end the confusion,” said Jim Martin, conservation director of the Berkley Conservation Institute. “It simply makes no sense for the taxpayers to pay millions to clean up waters that were polluted, flooded and damaged when it makes the most sense to protect them in the first place.”

Ted Turner: Time to finally protect wetlands, streams

By Ted Turner

Editor's note: *Ted Turner, founder of CNN and Turner Broadcasting, is chairman of Turner Enterprises, Inc., and oversees 2 million acres of land in 12 states and in Argentina, as well as more than 55,000 bison. He is also chairman of the Turner Foundation, the United Nations Foundation and the Turner Endangered Species Fund. The opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the author.*

Clean water is vital to every single American. Families should be able to turn on the tap and have safe drinking water for their children, vacationers expect healthy rivers for fishing and swimming, and businesses need a steady supply of clean water to make products.

The administration is proposing a clean water rule to better protect America's most vulnerable waters -- the streams and wetlands that feed our larger rivers, lakes and bays. These bodies of water were clearly protected by the Clean Water Act when it was passed more than 40 years ago. Unfortunately, two convoluted Supreme Court decisions, actions of the previous administration and inaction by Congress have left these water bodies in a legal limbo. This poses a threat to all of us.

Without this common-sense new rule, about 2 million miles of streams and 20 million acres of wetlands are at risk. These bodies of water may seem small, but they form part of the drinking water supplies for more than one third of Americans.

Clean, healthy waters are also the engines behind a strong outdoor recreation economy. [Nationally, hunters and anglers spent \\$90 billion in 2011 and wildlife watchers spent an additional \\$55 billion](#), according to the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

These dollars translate into economic vitality -- filling beds in hotels and making the cash registers ring in restaurants and sporting goods stores. All told, hunting and angling expenditures contribute about \$200 billion to the economy each year.

Like many Americans, I treasure our waters, and I am proud that I am able to manage my properties to preserve their natural streams, wetlands and grasslands.

On my Ladder Ranch in southern New Mexico, you can see the importance of small streams in action. These tiny streams, in a very arid area, support a diversity of animal and plant life that make this place special. In [New Mexico, 55% of all verte-](#)

[brate species depend on wetland habitats](#), and nearly 25% of the threatened or endangered species in the state live in wetlands.

It feels good to do my part to protect and restore small streams and riparian areas where I can. But water flows downhill. In order to ensure we have safe drinking water for all, communities upstream and downstream must work together.

I applaud the administration's initiative to restore Clean Water Act protections to these vulnerable waters and to keep them from pollution, and I urge the President to follow through and finish the effort this year. I urge members of Congress to support the Environmental Protection Agency's public process to clarify and restore these protections -- a public process called for by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Our waters have been threatened by this uncertain status quo for more than a decade. We can't wait any longer. Now is the time to ensure the Clean Water Act effectively protects the water our children drink -- and the businesses that keep our economy strong.

Poll after poll shows that a strong majority of Americans value clean drinking water. I write now to add my voice to the chorus demanding clean water.

Teddy Roosevelt wept

NPS retirees blast U.S. House for anti-park vote

In what may be the single darkest day ever for U.S. national monuments and parks, "extreme politics" prevailed March 28 when the U.S. House of Representatives voted in support of H.R. 1459 (widely known as the "Anti-National Parks Bill"), according to the 950-member Coalition of National Park Service Retirees (CNPSR).

If previous Presidents had been stripped of the 1906 Antiquities Act authority to create monuments, they would not have been able to preserve and protect key aspects of America, including what are now many national parks. Since President Teddy Roosevelt pushed for the passage of the Antiquities Act, it has been used on a bipartisan basis by 16 Presidents (eight Republicans and eight Democrats) to protect America's most iconic natural, cultural, and historic places: the Grand Canyon, Statue of Liberty, Acadia, Zion, Grand Teton, and Olympic National Parks. Half of our National Parks were originally protected using the Antiquities Act.

On behalf of CNPSR, Maureen Finnerty, the former superintendent of Everglades and Olympic National Parks, said: **"For those of us who have worked for years to keep America's national parks and monuments truly bipartisan and non-political, today's vote is a tragic development. Now, our national parks and monuments are being treated as a political football that is being kicked around, for the sake of nothing more than crass political posturing.**

The passage of H.R. 1459 marks a sad day for America. Proposed changes to the Antiquities Act are baseless, unwarranted and contrived strictly for political gain. The lawmakers in Washington who voted for this bill need to re-study American History 101 because many holding the reins of power have forgotten why our ancestors gave the White House powers to protect public lands.

Do the House Members who passed H.R. 1459 understand that a large major-

ity of Americans want our government to continue to identify and protect National Parks and Monuments? The idea of a "public good" has been lost on these lawmakers. At no point over the past century have landmark laws established to protect the special historical places we cherish been more vulnerable to attack from inside our own government.

H.R. 1459 changes the ground rules for how the federal government will designate protected lands. The goal of bill sponsors is to have not more but less protection, less attention to places that are nationally significant resources and should be national monuments.

The vote should be a wake-up call for voters. The Anti-Parks Bill is fundamentally un-American and constituents should think twice about electing people who take such a strong stance to deconstruct

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Harmful water grab bill passes House, fight continues

By Matt Niemerski
The River Blog
American Rivers

The House of Representatives voted March 14th to approve a bill that could dry up countless stretches of rivers and harm river restoration efforts nationwide. H.R. 3189 – the so-called “Water Rights Protection Act”¹ – passed by a 238-174 vote.

This bill is terrible news for rivers nationwide. It puts the interests of the oil and gas industry, corporate agriculture, and other private interests over the health of our rivers, fish and wildlife, and the millions of Americans who fish, boat, and enjoy river recreation. It is ultimately a broad swipe at federal natural resource agencies’ authority to protect public lands and recreation.

The bill, pushed by the National Ski Areas Association and Aspen’s SkiCo2, as well as the Farm Bureau, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, the Colorado Petroleum Association, and the Colorado Oil and Gas Association, would strip away critical safeguards for rivers, fish and wildlife.

The bill was originally introduced to address a specific conflict between Colorado’s ski industry and the U.S. Forest Service³. Even though the Forest Service has already acted to address the ski industry’s issue, the bill became a vehicle for the oil and gas industry, corporate agriculture, and other industries, putting their interests ahead of the public’s interest in healthy rivers and recreation.

This bill was so badly written, that in a last ditch effort to try to bring some sanity to the legislative process, House Democrats offered an amendment that

would, at the very least, allow federal agencies to protect rivers enough to guarantee recreation jobs, fire suppression, and communities threatened by drought. But apparently those restrictions did not work for the ski industry, the CAFO operators, and the hydrofrackers. So their supporters in the House voted no.

In a rare and almost unprecedented move, Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO) took a bold step to protect rivers in Colorado and across the nation by removing his support for a bill of which he was an original sponsor. Rep. Polis introduced an amendment that would rectify the flaws in the bill by narrowing it to address the ski areas’ original concerns, but that was ultimately rejected by the House. Congressman Polis went down to the floor of the House to oppose the bill and offer a passionate defense for rivers and the outdoor recreation economy.

River advocates spoke up, and Congressman Polis listened. We should all applaud Congressman Polis for having the courage to stand up and do what is right. Jared Polis is a true champion for healthy rivers, and for everybody who fishes, boats, and enjoys the outdoors and he called this bill out for what it truly is: a job killing water grab. His leadership sets a great example, and we hope his colleagues follow this example in the future. Additionally Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Rep. Peter Defazio (D-OR), Rep Jared Huffman (D-CA), Rep Niki Tsongas (D-MA), Rep. Ann Kuster (D-NH) all engaged the fight on behalf of the America’s rivers on the floor of the House to fight a bill which Rep. DeFazio described as “just another attempt to undermine critical environmental protections and target federal

agencies that manage our public lands for future generations.” They deserve our thanks.

Most importantly I thank you, our friends who care deeply about our nations rivers. Although this bill passed the House, your voice was heard. Passing legislation like this comes with a price for its supporters, and it took the full weight of some of the nation’s most powerful interests to get it through the House. River advocates and our allies in Congress landed the blows needed slow this legislation down.

Even though the President declared his strong opposition to the bill, the ski industry and their polluter allies don’t appear to be giving up. Well, neither will we.

The bill is now in the Senate’s hands, and we have to keep the pressure on. American Rivers and our partners across the country will continue to stand against this bill and we urge the Senate to oppose this sweeping attack on our rivers. But we are only as strong as our supporters. River advocates must also stand firm and keep the pressure on the National Ski Areas Association to break with big polluters like the hydrofrackers and the CAFOs, and instead work on a solution that addresses their concerns.

Keep Fighting!

1) <http://www.americanrivers.org/blog/hr3189-sucks-rivers-dry-why-you-should-care/>

2) <http://www.americanrivers.org/blog/supporting-a-bill-that-could-hurt-rivers/>

3) <http://www.americanrivers.org/blog/water-rights-bill-disaster-rivers-public-lands/>

WYOMING

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Thingamabobbers for strike indicators which proved vital and incurred significant action on our float.

I will admit that I am not Mr. Orvis. Amber is a just beyond the beginner stage and she reeled many trout to the boat, so this is not highly technical fishing. Most

impressive was the abundance, size and color variation of the fish we landed. Jason’s naturalist skills were impressive, explaining that results of numerous trout stocking attempts were mediocre until it was learned that releasing a strong spring torrent to flush out fine sediment allowed fish to more successfully spawn. Both cutthroat and rainbows appeared to be flourishing, but lurking in these waters were some huge browns, some reaching over 30 inches. We did not catch any

small fish, ours ranging between 16 and 22 inch torpedoes. These were hooked in various habitats from shallow cobbled riffles to mud banks and also deep-green snaggy holes, where the channel narrowed.

I encourage ambitious fly casters to test out the North Platte in April or alternatively in autumn for a better chance at the big browns. You might just see me there doing my best to toss wind knots in a 10 lb. leader!

Oklahoma AG issues consumer alert for HSUS

By J.R. Absher
The Archery Wire

Does the nation's largest anti-hunting and animal rights organization solicit contributions from the public under dubious pretense during times of national disaster, only to funnel those assets to further its agenda to end certain types of legal hunting and agricultural practices?

The Attorney General of Oklahoma apparently suspects that might be the case.

In a statement issued March 12, AG Scott Pruitt issued a warning to Oklahomans regarding solicitations and advertisements by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), an organization known well by hunting groups and animal farming interests. Pruitt said he was concerned HSUS gave Oklahomans the mistaken impression their donations are assisting Oklahoma animal shelters, when in fact the donations of Oklahomans may go toward unrelated efforts like lobbying in other states or at the federal level.

Archery Wire readers may recall our feature appearing earlier this month, "Ballot Measure Threatens Black Bear Archery Hunting in Maine," in which we

detailed the effort to prohibit the hunting of bears using bait, hounds or traps through the voter initiative process. The primary organization bankrolling the issue is - you guessed it - HSUS.

It marks the second attempt to ban bear hunting in Maine - the most bear-rich state in the lower 48 - in the past ten years using the ballot box and an emotion-driven campaign. For its ultimately unsuccessful 2004 effort, Washington DC-based HSUS ponied up nearly a half-million dollars.

In Oklahoma, the Attorney General said he is specifically looking into concerns over fundraising advertisements in the wake of the devastating and deadly May 2013 tornadoes that struck the Oklahoma City suburb of Moore. Pruitt contends HSUS advertising and public relations gave Oklahomans the deceptive impression their donations would help pets and other animals displaced by the storm, as well as support local shelters impacted by the storm.

But that was not the case, Pruitt's office discovered.

Through consultation with central Oklahoma animal shelters in the region most

affected by the 2013 tornadoes, the AG's office could not find any that indicated they received financial or in-kind assistance from any national animal welfare groups, much less HSUS.

Not surprisingly, HSUS conducted a strikingly similar widespread public relations and advertising campaign on the heels of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, seeking memberships and donations to allegedly aid displaced pets in and around New Orleans.

"Oklahomans are caring people and gave generously to assist our friends and neighbors devastated by the deadly May 2013 tornadoes," Pruitt said. "The concern is the donations of Oklahomans made to national animal welfare organizations in the wake of the tornadoes may have gone instead to lobbying activities. We all want the best for displaced animals and appreciate the work animal welfare organizations do to provide care for dogs, cats and other animals. But it's important to ensure Oklahomans are not being deceived, and that the donations they made to help Okla-

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37 plants you DON'T want to grow!

By Melinda Myers
Horticulture Expert

When you think of unwanted plants, dandelions, quack grass and other weeds that bully their way into your yard and garden probably come to mind. But, occasionally, we inadvertently plant a seedy character that either takes over the garden, gets you itching or causes a whopper of a stomachache (or worse) if eaten.

Too Much of a Good Thing

It's covered with pretty, purple flower spikes from late summer through fall. A long-lived perennial, it adapts to a wide range of growing conditions. Plus, it makes a beautiful cut flower. It's a gardener's dream come true, right? Wrong!

I'm talking about **purple loosestrife**. And as many gardeners throughout the United States and Canada know, this invasive blooming beauty, which has taken over many a backyard garden, has now taken to our natural wetlands. A vigorous grower, it crowds out native plants, eliminating cover and essential food sources needed by wetland wildlife.

Purple loosestrife isn't the only invasive landscape plant causing problems in natural spaces. **Norway and Amur maples** have joined **buckthorn** and **honeysuckle** as

woodland invaders.

The lesson here? Do a little research before adding new plants to your landscape. Select plants suited for the growing conditions in your backyard. Then, check with your local extension service, an area nursery or the Web for a list of invasive species that plague your region.

Keep in mind, however, that it's possible for a plant to be invasive in one area yet struggle to survive in another. **Butterfly bush**, **tamarisk** and **ivy** are a few plants that are invasive in warmer locales but have a hard time making it in cold, wet or less-than-ideal growing conditions.

Look, But Don't Touch

Gas plant, **meadow rue**, **euphorbia** and **hyacinths** are common landscape plants that can leave some gardeners covered with an itchy, red rash. Though the list of potential irritation-inducing plants is long, not all gardeners will be affected by some—or even any—of these plants.

The best tactics to avoid the itch are to be careful about what you plant, be diligent about wearing protective garden garb and learn maintenance strategies that'll keep your landscape looking good...and your skin rash-free.

Start by taking note on how the offend-

ing plant causes the rash, and make changes based on that information. For instance, some gardeners with sensitive skin develop a rash after only a few minutes of handling prickly plants. If this is you, be sure to wear heavy clothing and leather gloves, or convince your thicker-skinned gardening friends to help out.

Infamous plants like **poison ivy** or even some **ornamental euphorbias** also contain irritants in their saps that result in a painful and itchy rash. Don long sleeves if you plan to garden around or weed these irritants out of your landscape. It's also a good idea to immediately wash the irritating oils off your body and clothing to avoid further exposure and expansion of the rash.

Oddly enough, **gas plant**, **wild parsnip** and **garlic mustard** sap cause a rash only when the irritating oils are exposed to sunlight. That's why some gardeners I know weed at dusk or by their landscape lighting to eliminate the risk. But if you can work around these irritants only by the light of day, be sure to wear long sleeves and gloves and wash skin immediately.

Deadly Beauties

Just as we weigh the risk of planting

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Growing native plants

By SeEtta Garden Club Newsletter

I wanted to provide some resources for growing native plants to go along with my recent blog [Bird and butterfly garden planning](#). One very useful website I just found is [NativePlant.org](#). This website has a wealth of information including regional plant lists, representative native plants with lots of information about them, a native plant nursery finder by state, recommended books and more.

I have mentioned the Wildflower Center before but it is such a great resource I need to describe what you can find on their [website](#). They have a Native Plant Database with a variety of ways you can search their more than 7,000 plants including by both common and scientific names, by recommended species lists for your state or province and even by various combinations of plant characteristics. They have an extensive Image Gallery with more than 30,000 photos of plants with a number of options for searching the list. There are 'How to' articles, 'Step by Step' guides, drought resources, recommended species by state or province, conservation resources and a 'Mr. Smarty Plants' section where you can search for answers to plant questions (and if your question isn't answered there, you can submit your question).

A great resource for gardeners in New England, the Mid-Atlantic region and the Midwest are the [American Beauties Native Plants](#) that are offered by the National Wildlife Federation in partnership with [North Creek Nurseries](#) and [Prides Corner Farms](#). According to their website American Beauties Native Plants "offer a line of



Growing native plants like this butterfly milkweed can benefit native pollinators, such as honey bees and Monarch butterflies (butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa* subsp. *interior*) photo by Jacob Weber in Montgomery County, KS).

approximately 130 varieties of native plants and their cultivars—including trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses and vines." They have a Plant Search webpage that lets you search their offerings by type of plant with either the botanical or common name. Also available on their website are Landscape Plans for Bird Gardens, Dry Shade Gardens, Butterfly Gardens, and Moist Sun Gardens. Plus you can search for a garden center in your area that carries American Beauties Native Plants (I was surprised to find 8 locations in my home state of Colorado).

And fellow Birds and Blooms Magazine

blogger Jill included some information on resources for growing native plants in her [Finding and Using Native Plants blog](#).

Spring planting season is not far off for most of us, and already here for some. Time to find the information you need to decide which native plants to add to your yard this year to better attract and provide for birds, butterflies and other pollinators.

Editor's Note: Kansans can find native plant information from the Kansas Native Plant Society's webpage www.kansasnative-plantsociety.org/.

HSUS

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homa-based animal shelters are doing just that."

The \$64,000 Question remains, did the generous (but naïve) animal lovers who felt compelled to write checks to HSUS based on its pleas for the 4-legged victims of Oklahoma and Katrina actually help fund its recent lobbying campaign to ban lead-component ammunition and outlaw bobcat trapping in California and attempt to block state agency wolf management practices in Michigan?

If you believe it, you have plenty of company.

Days after Pruitt's announcement, billboards began appearing around the Oklahoma City metropolitan area sponsored

by The Center for Consumer Freedom, a noted HSUS adversary and lobbying group for the food industry. While praising Pruitt's actions in an accompanying press release, the billboards read: "The Humane Society of the United States deceives donors with tear-jerking and manipulative images of dogs and cats, and then funnels the money to push a radical animal liberation agenda aimed at attacking farmers."

We would add "hunters, conservationists and wildlife managers."

In his March 12 statement, Pruitt encouraged Oklahomans to donate directly to state-based causes and organizations to ensure their money goes to help local animal welfare organizations and not to other states or programs.

"The best way to ensure your donation is assisting the charity or organization you intended is to give directly to that organi-

zation," Attorney General Pruitt said. "If anyone suspects they have been the victim of false or misleading fundraising efforts by national animal welfare groups, they should contact the Attorney General's Office. As the state's top consumer advocate, I will continue to review these concerns to ensure no one is taking advantage of the generosity of Oklahomans."

Further, the Attorney General's Public Protection Unit provided a list of tips to avoid charity fraud, and a couple were particularly relevant to HSUS and its notorious track record:

- Be leery of charities with names similar to well-known organizations;
- Beware of appeals that are long on emotion, but short on fact.

That's what archers refer to as a bull's eye.

Non-native Nandina bad for birds

You know this shrub as “Nandina”, “Sacred Bamboo” or “Heavenly Bamboo”. *Nandina domestica* is found in most landscaping mixes in yards, parks, hospital grounds, and other locations in the lower 48 states. Its bright red berries and contrasting dark green foliage is planted for color and texture by commercial landscapers. Some home owners plant Nandina to provide food for Cedar waxwing, American robin, Northern mockingbird, Eastern bluebird and other birds that depend on winter fruits to survive. Nandina berries last for months attracting hungry birds when food is in short supply.

When dozens of Cedar waxwings were found dead in Thomas County, Georgia, Mages Wolderemeskel and Eloise L. Styer (2010), College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia, found the cause to be Nandina berries, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3005831/>. All birds had intact berries of *N. domestica* in their crops. There was hemorrhaging in the heart, lungs, trachea, abdominal cavity and other organs.

Nandina berries contain cyanide and other alkaloids that produce highly toxic hydrogen cyanide (HCN) which is extremely poisonous to all animals. Sudden death may be the only sign of cyanide poisoning and death usually comes in minutes to an hour Wolderemeskel and Styer report.



Photo of *Nandina domestica* http://plants.usda.gov/gallery/pubs/nado_001_php.jpg. Photo by J. S. Peterson.

The US Department of Agriculture and most states classify *Nandina domestica* as a noxious non-native invasive weed from China and Japan. It has naturalized and invaded our National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, National Forests and other habitats throughout the United States. Home owners and commercial landscapers are still planting this toxic species without constraint. In addition to bird deaths in Georgia, bird deaths have been reported in Houston and other parts

of the country. Hydrogen cyanide (HCN) is a painful and unnecessary way for birds and other animals to die.

“Over 220 bird species nationwide are in serious decline, including our most common birds. Birds are being killed on all fronts,” Davis said. “For people to ignore poisoning birds and other wildlife is inexcusable. By working together we can eliminate this toxic and noxious invasive plant. If you are not doing your part, the job is not getting done.”

PLANTS

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allergy-inducing plants in the landscape, we do the same for poisonous plants. It may surprise you to learn just how many of your favorite plants can cause stomachaches, diarrhea or even death when eaten. But let's take a realistic look at living with potentially poisonous landscape plants before leveling our garden beds and switching to artificial turf and silk flowers.

Those with small children and pets may want to avoid planting the very toxic **datura** and **castor bean**. The seed in the fleshy red fruit of the **yew**, the nuts of **horse chestnut trees** and all parts of the **oleander** plant are also toxic. And let's not forget the **mushrooms** Mother Nature sometimes scatters in the yard.

That said, perhaps the most important thing we can do for our children is to curb their sense of adventure when it comes to eating items from the landscape. After all, we teach them about the risks associated with

their indoor environment. Why not do the same for the outdoors?

You should also keep houseplants, seed and bulbs out of the reach of small children and pets. And store all garden chemicals in their original containers in a secure location.

Lastly, reduce the risk by identifying and labeling all your landscape plants. As a gardener, it is great to have a record of what's planted where. But as a parent or pet owner, you never know when this kind of information will be useful in the case of an emergency.

PARKS

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historic public policy that has served our country well.”

Every one of the Kansas U.S. Representa-

tives voted to destroy the Antiquities Act. Although HR 1459 has language preventing the President from declaring private property as part of a National Monument, The Antiquities Act *always* limited establishment of National Monument *only* to property already owned by the Federal Government... just a

red herring. For more about the Antiquities Act, from which National Monuments are established, is here..... http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiquities_Act.

The law as passed can be found here... <http://clerk.house.gov/floorsummary/floor.aspx?day=20140326>

Nest site selection

Where ducks make their nests is vital to the birds' breeding success

By Johann Walker and Scott Stephens Ph.D.

After a long migration northward from the Gulf Coast, a hen pintail has finally arrived on the prairies of North Dakota in late April. She and her mate have established a territory on a shallow wetland in the middle of several square miles of native grassland. She has spent many days feeding and carefully inspecting potential nest locations in the surrounding pasture. Now she is ready to nest. The hen pintail lands at her chosen site, scrapes out a shallow depression in the soil next to a clump of little bluestem grass, and lays her first egg. If she has chosen a good nest site and luck is with her, her eggs will hatch, and she will lead a brood of ducklings to a nearby wetland in three to four weeks.

Selecting a nest site is an important decision in the annual cycle of ducks. Nest site choice can influence whether the female survives the nesting season and her eggs survive to hatch. A poor choice might expose the nesting female and her eggs to predators, destruction by machinery, or flooding. This aspect of nesting behavior is shaped over time by natural selection, reflecting strategies that have been effective for the species.

Ducks generally use three strategies for nest site selection. Notwithstanding the occasional mallard that nests in a backyard apple tree, most ducks can be categorized as either upland nesters, overwater nesters, or cavity nesters. Upland nesters include the familiar puddle ducks like mallards and pintails as well as some divers like white-winged scoters and lesser scaup. Overwater nesters include many diving ducks including canvasbacks, ruddy ducks, redheads, greater scaup, and ring-necked ducks. Cavity nesters are wood ducks, buffleheads, goldeneyes, and mergansers (although the common and red-breasted mergansers will also nest on the ground). These nesting strategies are best understood in the context of each species' life history and habitat.

Upland Nesters

Pairs of upland-nesting ducks begin arriving in the Prairie Pothole Region just after ice out. They settle on shallow, seasonal wetlands, many of which are less than one acre in size and are embedded in cropland, pasture, hay meadows, and perennial grassland. The females feed heavily on protein-rich invertebrates in these shallow wetlands, and pairs of breeding ducks establish wetland territories that are defended by drakes to ensure their mates have



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Photos by Bob Gress of Birds in Focus www.BirdsInFocus.com

sufficient food resources to recover from migration and begin nesting. Most mallards and pintails establish breeding territories on wetlands from mid-April to early May. Once the birds have established territories and acquired adequate nutrient reserves, upland-nesting ducks begin prospecting for potential nest sites. During this period, it's common to see pairs of ducks walking along the edge of nesting cover.

Where upland-nesting ducks ultimately nest varies among species. Blue-winged teal, which have a smaller home range than other species, build their nests close to wetlands. Bluewings are also willing to nest in rather sparse cover compared to many

other species. In contrast, mallards have large home ranges, and hens sometimes nest more than a mile from their wetland territory. In addition, mallards typically nest in some of the thickest nesting cover available.

Overwater Nesters

Overwater nesters make their nests on floating mats of emergent vegetation like cattails and bulrush. Their preferred nesting sites are semipermanent wetlands with relatively deep water and dense stands of emergent vegetation. Ideally, females select nest sites that provide cover and protection

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Study shows deterioration in memory functions of seniors infected by common parasite

A new study (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0889159113005783>) published in the scientific journal *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* documents what

scientists describe as “remarkable” working memory performance reductions in seniors 65 and older that test positive for infection by the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*. The parasite

is believed to infect about one-third of the world’s population.

For more details see <http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/140220.html>

NESTS

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as well as an easy escape route if they have to flee the nest. Once a suitable overwater nest site is located, females create a platform of nesting material on which to safely deposit their eggs.

Redheads and canvasbacks, which largely breed in the Prairie Pothole Region, typically establish breeding territories on relatively deep, semipermanent wetlands ringed by a thick wall of tall cattails. The bottom third of these six- to eight-foot plants is often underwater. Female redheads and canvasbacks make floating nest bowls by folding cattails down into a cup-shaped raft.

Cavity Nesters

Not surprisingly, nesting sites are more limited for cavity nesters than they are for upland- and overwater-nesting ducks. Nesting cavities are often made in trees by the excavations of pileated woodpeckers or are created by decay caused by old age or damage from wind or lightning. Although tree cavities are relatively safe from most predators, female ducks must select a nest site that has an entry hole large enough for the birds to enter and a cavity roomy enough to hold a clutch of eggs. As a result, cavity nesters must carefully explore and scout for suitable cavities before making a decision about a nest site.

Perhaps the most well known cavity-nesting species is the wood duck. In areas where suitable nesting cavities are limited, female wood ducks that can’t find a suitable nest site often pursue a strategy known as nest parasitism or dump nesting, where the birds lay their eggs in the nests of other female wood ducks. Hooded mergansers, which are also cavity nesters and share many of the same habitats with wood ducks, will also lay eggs in wood ducks nests. In some cases, as many as 50 eggs can be deposited in a single wood duck nest, forcing the residing female to abandon the nest. Hence, it’s advantageous for female wood ducks to select secluded nesting sites that are less likely to be

discovered by other female wood ducks or hooded mergansers.

The development of “life history characteristics” like nest site selection behavior in waterfowl is influenced by survival and successful reproduction of many generations of nesting females. Over time, the process of natural selection leads to consistent patterns of behavior that maximizes individual reproductive success on average. To determine the past effects of natural selection on present nest site selection behavior in ducks, waterfowl biologists compare where ducks nest in a particular area to mathematical projections of where the birds would nest if they selected nest sites randomly. For example, mallards will typically nest in some of the densest vegetation in a particular field and will generally avoid nesting in surrounding sparse vegetation.

But natural selection is a never-ending process. Waterfowl biologists can identify the current effects of natural selection on duck nest site selection by measuring and comparing the survival of nests in different cover types. Recent research has confirmed that mallard hens tend to hatch more nests in dense vegetation than in sparse vegetation. Thus, waterfowl researchers infer that this behavior among mallards is the product of both past and ongoing natural selection.

Natural selection also helps explain why the three basic nest site selection behaviors developed over time among waterfowl. The ground-nesting dabbling ducks tend to nest in areas where the birds are most vulnerable to predators. Consequently, these species re-nest persistently and disperse farther between successive nesting attempts.

Overwater-nesting ducks build their nests in areas that are well-protected from many types of mammalian and avian predators. Hence, they are generally less persistent re-nesters and do not disperse as far between nesting attempts. They will also defer breeding entirely in dry years.

Cavity-nesting species like wood ducks also nest in relatively secure places, so they tend to lay large clutches, which typically result in higher production. However, throughout much of the wood duck’s

breeding range, the growing season is long and in many cases predation on ducklings is high, so the birds have retained the ability to re-nest. Where the birds attempt to re-nest is determined by the availability of suitable nesting cavities.

By pursuing different nest site-selection behavior, ducks are able to occupy different habitats and use different resources. Collectively, different species occupy diverse ecological niches, helping ducks become one of the most common groups of birds on Earth.

Pintails and Cropland: An Ecological Trap

Nest site selection behavior that once had a beneficial or neutral effect on waterfowl reproductive success can be detrimental in a changing landscape or environment. The nesting behavior of pintails in Prairie Canada is a prime example. Compared to other upland-nesting ducks, pintails aren’t particular about the type of cover in which they nest. They seem to be much more concerned about getting an early start on the nesting season on landscapes where there are large numbers of highly productive, shallow wetland basins holding water.

Unfortunately, the same landscapes that are attractive to nesting pintails are also well suited for cultivation, and today there is very little perennial grassland left in many of these areas. Grain stubble is often the predominant residual vegetative cover on the landscape when breeding pintails return in spring. In the past, a significant proportion of the cropland in Prairie Canada was left idle during the growing season in a practice known as “summer fallowing.” At that time, pintails nesting in crop stubble had comparable nest success as pintails nesting in grassland.

Today, almost all the cropland in Prairie Canada is cultivated every spring, and pintails nesting in spring-cultivated cropland generally have poor nesting success and are at high risk of being killed by machinery. As a result, DU is working with prairie landowners to switch from spring wheat to winter wheat, which isn’t cultivated in the spring and provides more secure upland nesting cover for pintails and other ducks.

Third range-wide lesser prairie-chicken aerial survey being conducted

Survey monitors lesser prairie-chicken population across five states

This month, wildlife experts are starting the third annual helicopter survey to assess lesser prairie-chicken populations across the bird's range, according to the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). The historic first-ever, large-scale helicopter survey of lesser prairie-chicken breeding areas, or leks, across the species' five-state range occurred March-May 2012. The survey area encompassed more than 300,000 square miles and detected several previously unknown leks, despite severe drought conditions. Survey teams also detected leks in Kansas beyond what was thought to be the northern extent of the bird's historic range.

The 2013 range-wide survey revealed population estimates of 17,616, down from the 34,440 birds estimated the first year in 2012. The population decrease was predicted by biologists because of the persistent drought that has plagued the region in recent years.

Lesser prairie-chicken populations

have historically fluctuated due to weather and habitat conditions. In fact, populations were so low during the droughts in the 1930s and 1950s, biologists feared the species was almost extinct. However, when the rains returned, the populations rebounded.

Bird numbers have been largely increasing in Kansas for the last 15 years, while populations have declined in parts of the southern portion of the range. Some biologists believe this northward expansion may represent a shift in the population of the species caused by climatic conditions associated with changing precipitation patterns.

"Besides rain, what will really help are the on-the-ground conservation efforts we're putting in place with the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Range-wide Conservation Plan," said Bill Van Pelt, WAFWA grassland coordinator. Van Pelt noted how the five-state plan provides ways for industry to be supportive and landowners to enroll in voluntary conser-

vation agreements.

The range-wide plan includes management goals and voluntary conservation programs and practices to be applied throughout the lesser prairie-chicken's range. The final plan was endorsed last October by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which has been considering whether to list the species as threatened. An announcement on the final listing decision is expected by March 31.

Aerial surveys will continue through mid-May, extending from the southern plains of the Texas Panhandle and southeast New Mexico up to northern Kansas and Colorado. Surveys will be flown at 35-40 mph about 80 feet above ground. Pilots involved have extensive experience conducting aerial surveys and will make a special effort to avoid hazing livestock on pastures.

Anyone can learn more about the range-wide plan and options for landowners and industry on the [WAFWA website](#).

We're all connected downstream

By Jeff Wiedner American Rivers

It seems logical: small streams lead to rivers and what happens upstream affects those downstream. If they are all connected, then small streams should have the same protections as rivers, right?

Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Over the last decade, two Supreme Court rulings have created confusion about which waters are covered by the Clean Water Act. This has made it difficult for the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] to enforce the Clean Water Act consistently, which has allowed polluters to get away with dumping toxins into small streams and wetlands without repercussions.

But the good news is the EPA released

a draft rule that should help close some of the loopholes polluters use to avoid penalties. [1] It would also reduce some of the uncertainty around existing regulations, helping to ensure the Clean Water Act is enforced consistently for everyone.

Right now, the EPA is accepting comments from the public on the rule. [Can you tell the EPA that you support improving protections for our small streams and wetlands?](#)

Approximately 117 million Americans rely at least in part upon small streams and wetlands for their drinking water supply. ***That's more than one third of the entire population.***

These streams also provide buffers for absorbing and reducing the impacts of flooding, help recharge groundwater

supplies, and retain and filter nutrients that can cause water pollution. [2] So it is critical that protections are restored.

[Please send your comments today](#) in support of the Administration's efforts to better protect our clean water and the health of our communities. And as always, thanks for your support!

1 Proposed Rule Marks an Important Step for Clean Water <http://www.americanrivers.org/blog/proposed-rule-marks-important-step-clean-water>

2. Where Rivers Are Born: The Scientific Imperative for Defending Small Streams and Wetlands <http://www.americanrivers.org/newsroom/resources/where-rivers-are-born-the-scientific-imperative-for-defending-small-streams-and-wetlands>

The secret to painlessly removing ticks

It can start with pain, itching, redness and swelling in the area of the skin, and in more pronounced cases, it can include fever, headache, fatigue, and/or a skin rash. The culprit is a tick bite, and if left untreated, it can lead to Lyme disease, which can spread to the joints, heart and nervous system.

According to Lauren Allen, who just completed her undergraduate degree with a double major in communication media studies and journalism from DePaul University, and writing for RadioMD.com (www.radiomd.com), “you can have a tick (or three) burrowed in your skin without even feeling a thing.” She notes that ticks are usually most active from April until

September.

But she also reveals that removing ticks, once an onerous task using tweezers (which often did not remove the tick and was impossible to use for some parts of the body) is now a swab of cotton balls away.

Her advice:

- Apply a dime sized dollop of dish or hand soap onto a damp paper towel, tissue, or cotton ball.
- Cover the tick with the soap-saturated tissue or cotton ball, and hold in place for a few seconds (15-20).
- The tick will come out all on its own and will be stuck on the towel or cotton ball when you lift it away.

Look for tick bites under arms, behind

ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between legs, around the waist and through hair. Also make sure to check any gear that was taken along, including clothing. A helpful tip is to put clothes in the dryer on high heat for at least an hour. It’s also a good idea to shower as soon as possible.

Ticks are small but they can cause big problems, so be vigilant when walking in outdoors and take the proper precautions. To read the complete story, visit <http://radiomd.com/blogs-experts/radiomd-blogs/lauren-allen/item/12758-a-surprisingly-safe-effective-way-to-remove-ticks>

Bird-compatible soybean developed

The American Soybean Growers Association (ASGA) reports two new related strains of soy that will be “bird-habitat compatible” according to soy agronomists at the association’s research center.

Previously, the crop has been criticized as “a virtual wasteland for birds,” but the new release indicated that experimental fields in parts of South Dakota and North Carolina - two very different areas - have produced remarkable results for native birdlife.

Some of these soy plantings - depending on soil types - will require a bit more water, but at the same time, they produce beans at a level that is at least 12.6% larger than regular soybeans. There are two types of new-style soy: Type 666A, which is “moister” than the second experimental strain, Type 666B.

Type 666A, tested in northern sections of South Dakota, sustained breeding numbers of Willet, Upland Sandpiper,

Marbled Godwit, Grasshopper Sparrow, and a few species of waterfowl, including Green-winged Teal and Northern Pintail. The drier Type 666B, tested in the East, favored Prairie Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and, at times and at edges, surprising Yellow-breasted Chat.

Both types are harvested in the late fall, with Type 666A often providing shorebird habitat in the interim. Astounding flocks of migrating Bobolinks in Type 666B fields in North Carolina can be viewed at: <http://www-tc.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/science-now/3410/images/03-ever-01.jpg>.

Curiously, both soy types provide excellent nesting cover for numerous bird species, but it is a late-season odor from the soy fields that seem to have an attraction to migrating field-oriented songbirds. This phenomenon has yet to be fully explained by the researchers. Clearly, the birds are not consuming the soybeans, but they use the fields for cover and for “play.”

According to Dr. Byron Fong, one of the lead researchers for the ASGA, “our model fields have been for many birds like catnip is for cats.” (Obviously, Dr. Fong missed the irony of his analogy.)

Still, considering the “range” of soybean production in the US - from the Northern Great Plains, to the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, to the Southeast Coastal Plain - the impact on birdlife could be remarkable, using either Type 666A or Type 666B soy plantings.

ASGA soy-spokespersons boasted that American rice would be “left in the dust” in its “boastful claims” of bird-compatibility.

Meanwhile, the American Rice Federation, based in the Central Valley of California had little comment, but Dr. Paul Butler, the ARF sustainability chief, stated, “Well, if these folk can provide a ‘bird-friendly’ soy, more power to them.”

Drone use barred in Boone and Crockett records

Trophies scouted or taken with the assistance of drones/unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) are not eligible for entry in Boone and Crockett records, the Club announced today.

“These highly sophisticated, remote-controlled aircraft have no place in fair-chase hunting,” said Richard Hale, chairman of the Club’s Big Game Records Committee. “The Boone and Crockett Club stands with state wildlife agencies, the Pope and Young Club and hunter-conservationists everywhere who are discouraging the use of drones in hunting.”

In the early 1960s, the Boone and Crockett Club barred trophies taken with use of aircraft. “Spotting or herding game from the air, followed by landing in its vicinity for the purpose of pursuit and shooting” was deemed unethical. The Club’s policy spawned regulations in Alaska and elsewhere designed to protect the integrity of hunting and conserve game.

Hale said Boone and Crockett is always on alert for new technologies that could erode the time-honored traditions of fair chase.

Fair chase is defined by the Club as the

ethical, sportsmanlike and lawful pursuit and taking of any free-ranging wild, native North American big game animal in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper advantage over such animals.

North America’s first hunting and conservation organization, the Boone and Crockett Club was founded by Theodore Roosevelt in 1887. Its mission is to promote the conservation and management of wildlife, especially big game and its habitat, to preserve and encourage hunting and to maintain the highest ethical standards of fair chase and sportsmanship. Join us at www.boone-crockett.org.

Researchers use GPS to track whooping cranes

A study conducted by a partnership of researchers from multiple organizations is using lightweight GPS devices to track individual whooping cranes of the Aransas - Wood Buffalo population, the only naturally wild flock of whooping cranes in existence.

Efforts have focused on putting tracking devices on adult whooping cranes captured on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, where the birds winter on the Texas coast, and on chicks at Wood Buffalo National Park, the birds' nesting grounds in Canada. To date, 68 birds have had tracking devices attached.

The GPS units are attached to a bird's upper leg and record four to five locations every 24 hours, information that is uploaded to a satellite every two and half days. These data reveal migration routes, habitat use, nesting locations, and much more. Biologists in the United States and Canada will use the results of this work to identify management and conservation priorities in both countries.

The research partnership is made up of governmental and non-profit partners working on the recovery of the whooping crane. Representatives include the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Canadian Wildlife Service, Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, Crane Trust,



Photos by Bob Gress of Birds in Focus www.BirdsInFocus.com

Parks Canada, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, and International Crane Foundation.

Whooping cranes are an endangered species with more than 300 birds in the Aransas-Wood Buffalo population. All of the whooping cranes alive today, both wild and captive, are descendants of the last 15 cranes

found wintering at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in 1941.

A video of the banding operation can be seen on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtVt842trpo>. Video is courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Lady hunters: Tips for starting them young

By Marshall MacFarlane
The Desert Rat
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

It's not much of a secret that lady hunters are the fastest-growing demographic in the hunting community. Part of that is due to families starting their daughters, nieces, neighbor girls, and granddaughters early, and making it fun for them with no pressure. My daughter is not an avid hunter, but she has hunted and has a javelina under her belt. As a matter of fact, she got her first javelina before I did! My friend Chris McCotter is well-known in Arizona hunting circles for not only his hunting prowess, but his support of wildlife organizations. He is also well-known for getting his entire family into hunting, including his wife and his daughter, Cidney. Recently, someone asked Chris for some tips on raising lady hunters. His advice was as thorough and well-presented as I have seen. With his permission, I have reprinted it here.

I'll go on record that I have not pushed Cid to do any of this, but instead asked if she wanted to and let her make the call. I probably learned more from her while taking her

hunting over the past few months than she did from me.

A few I have learned along the way, and in no particular order:

♦ **Relax.** If you're overexcited and losing it, then chances are she will be too—or worse yet, she won't want to be in that situation as she won't want to see you like that again. Just "let it happen"—don't try and make it happen. And if it doesn't? So what, laugh it off.

♦ **Don't get frustrated** when you're sneaking around the hill putting on a stalk and you look back and she's lagging behind picking flowers along the way. Expect a frustrated look from her when you tell her to throw them down and get ready to shoot a javelina.

♦ **Invest** in one of these portable toilets. Store it in your hunting rig and never forget it and you will be the greatest dad in the world.

♦ Never let a question she has go unanswered, and **no question is stupid.**

♦ Being a great shot at the range bench doesn't mean jack when you're in the field on live game (this is true for most adults). But if you can provide **lifelike targets** of the animal she's hunting, use them after the gun

is dialed-in and she have the basics down.

♦ Surf the internet and download or print off **live photos** of the animals she's hunting—in all different positions. You're looking for "shoot" and "no shoot" scenarios. In the weeks leading up to the hunt, review "yes" and "no" shots. The night before going out hunting, review those pics again.

♦ Never underestimate the **leg power** a little kid has. They aren't lugging your body weight up the mountain and it will surprise you. But don't walk them to death, either. If they want a pack make it, ultra-light—carry your gear and theirs and shop for a kid's pack if you can. There are cheap ones out there—I bought my kids' packs for \$20 to \$25 each.

♦ If your kid is going to carry a pack, **inspect** it twice a day for items they may have added. A 10-pound rock lugged 1.5 miles back to the truck will explain why she's so tired and can't make the trek be one that could have been avoided.

♦ **Camo is not mandatory** hunting attire and any Hello Kitty clothing she wants to wear is completely acceptable (pink is not mandatory for her, either). Let her wear

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Study says ethanol use does not qualify as a 'renewable fuel'

By Cliff Weathers
AlterNet

A government-funded study conducted by the University of Nebraska finds that corn-based biofuels contribute more to global warming than gasoline.

Ethanol and other biofuels made from corn contribute more to climate change than gasoline in the short term, according to a study released by the journal *Nature Climate Change*.

The study challenges the Obama administration's assertions that ethanol and other biofuel derivatives from corn are a cleaner gasoline alternative that will help fight climate change by reducing the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere.

The peer-reviewed study, which cost \$500,000 and was paid for with a federal grant, concludes that biofuels made with

corn byproducts release 7% more greenhouse gases in the early years compared with conventional gasoline. Thus, they don't even come close to meeting current federal standards to qualify as a renewable fuel source.

The federal government has given more than \$1 billion to companies producing cellulosic biofuels because of their status as a renewable fuel source.

The report, released Sunday, was immediately criticized by producers of cellulosic biofuels and the Obama administration, who claims the research presents flawed data.

The study, led by researchers at the University of Nebraska, is one of the first to quantify how much carbon is dispersed into the atmosphere when corn residue is removed and used to make biofuel, instead of left on farm fields to replenish them with

carbon.

The Environmental Protection Agency previously conducted a similar analysis and found that biofuels made from corn residue do meet federal renewable fuel standards. Renewable cellulosic biofuels must release 60% less carbon pollutants than gasoline to qualify. If a biofuel doesn't meet that standard, it would be hard to produce and sell, as the industry relies on government subsidies of \$1 per gallon.

Last year, the Associated Press published an article where it revealed that the EPA analysis of corn-based biofuels did not correctly assess the environmental consequences.

Despite the study's harsh findings, its researchers claim that corn-based biofuels still hold promise as a greener alternative to gasoline in the long term.

New sunflower seed coming

In late March, word spread from bird-seed importers dealing with Russia (mostly out of Krasnodor), that a new and robust sunflower seed will soon be available in the U.S and Canada. The "giant black" variety may constitute the most significant change in bird feeding since the spread of black-oil sunflower on this side of the Atlantic at the start of the 1970s.

Giant black sunflower is a two-inch-sized seed, packed with protein, almost

irresistible to feeder visitors in sample tests. Still, its use may require re-design of popular tube feeders, currently with insufficiently sized openings.

The seed is reportedly enough to satisfy the appetite of three chickadees at one feeder-visit. Such small birds are, however, unable to fly off with these large seeds. (They must remain at the feeder to consume the seed-meat, making the use of the seed particularly attractive to

feeder-watchers.) In some respect, the giant blacks are better suited for jays and, perhaps, some grosbeaks, with these birds being able to fly off with the large seeds.

The giant blacks may be grown in North Dakota next. This has raised new concerns that this breakthrough sunflower may replace corn as the new crop of choice to usurp native prairie. Experimentation is also now being conducted over the sunflower-ethanol qualities of the new seed.

HUNTERS

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what she wants within reason given weather conditions.

◆ **Long hair** held back in ponytail and or braid keeps it tucked out of the way and out of the way of a scope or rifle's action. Simply put, it's a distraction just not needed and take care of it at camp.

◆ **Don't go cheap on boots and socks.** Blisters on her feet mean an end of the hunt, period. They won't play through the pain and you shouldn't make them. When you think about it, tossing in another \$25 at the time to purchase boots will help pay back all you've invested in gas and time off work.

◆ **Carhart youth pants** will allow her to **blaze through stickers** like they aren't there. Truth be told they are sold as boys' pants, just don't mention that and cut the tag off.

◆ If while you're **glassing** you find an animal, show it to her. This doesn't matter if it's a rabbit or a chipmunk—let them see it through the bins. It's both practice getting them used to seeing game in glasses but also a distraction to the mind-numbing, boring-as-heck dead silence we call glassing. But to them, it's brutal nothingness and they want to do something.

◆ I'll add this one for those of you thinking of taking your older daughter or wife out hunting, and I mean it in all seriousness. Keep your hunting rig stocked with feminine hygiene products.

◆ It's blazing hot out and you just finished the gutless method on two javelina, and she wants you to **cut open the guts** and see what's inside. You do it and give the best review of organs you can. If she wants you to cut the heart open, you do. You never know, she might find it so fascinating that it leads to her becoming a heart surgeon. If she wants you to cut the stomach open you do,

but hold your breath before you do. I don't think she'll *ever* ask me to do that again. We laughed quite a while over that one.

◆ **Make it fun** and try to book hunts with her friends or other kids her age. Get her out to youth camps and let her mingle with the other kids and hear the stories they have. They seem to learn a lot from others their own age, and not us old farts.

◆ If you can, **let her choose** some of the details about the hunt. If it's the third day of the hunt and you're stumped where to go and what to do, give her some ideas and let her pick. If it turns out you find critters and she gets one *she* gets the credit. Got that, dad?

◆ **Take photos**—tons of them—and let her take photos, too! Kids take the coolest pictures.

◆ **Lastly**, and the one I failed to master, but learn how to not cry your eyes out that first time she fills a tag. If you figure that one out, let me know. I have a second kid to go through this all again.

Yellowstone grizzlies progress towards federal delisting

By Daniel Xu
The OutdoorHub

Federal officials say that a study on whether Yellowstone's grizzly bears should be removed from the Endangered Species List could be finished as early as this fall. According to the "Jackson Hole News and Guide," Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator Chris Servheen said in an interagency meeting that Yellowstone's grizzlies could be delisted by this time next year.

Former US Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced last year that the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be seeking to delist the estimated 600 grizzlies in Yellowstone National Park. After more than 30 years of restoration efforts, the agency considers the species to be recovered. Not all conservationists agree with this sentiment, saying that the position occupied by Yellowstone's bears is fragile.

In 2007, the USFWS managed to successfully delist Yellowstone's grizzlies, but restored the species' federally protected status less than two years later due to a court case. The plaintiffs behind the lawsuit argued that the USFWS did not account for the dwindling number of whitebark pine in the park. The pine's nuts are a major food source for the bears, and their decline could threaten the grizzly population.

"The gains are precarious," Louisa Willcox of the National Resources Defense Council said at the time. "Grizzlies are



Yellowstone's grizzlies could be delisted as early as next year.

low-reproducers. You can turn increased numbers into a decline very quickly."

However, a later report by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team found that the whitebark decline had little impact on the bears. Wyoming and federal biologists added that bears thrive in plenty of areas where whitebark pine is not available.

The USFWS is currently conducting a five-pronged study into whether Yellowstone's largest carnivore should be delisted. Factors taken into account are

the status of Yellowstone's bear habitat, threats from disease or predation, protection given to the bears by other laws, threats to the species from commercial or recreational overuse, and other issues that might affect the continued survival of the population.

"That will all be done, we expect, by this fall," Servheen said.

At that point the USFWS will decide whether it will further pursue efforts to delist Yellowstone's bears.

Keep conservation funding from being burned

With the increase in wildfire frequency and severity, the costs of fire suppression are growing. In order to fund the rising costs of fighting wildfires in recent years, the U.S. Forest Service has been forced to borrow from non-fire natural resource and conservation accounts, damaging programs important to American sportsmen. This style of budgeting forces major cuts to programs that restore fish and wildlife habitat and enhance access for hunters, anglers and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

Despite suppression costs exceeding \$13.7 billion since 2004, catastrophic wildfires have yet to be designated as natural disasters. The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership calls on sportsmen to contact their legislators and encourage them to cosponsor the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (H.R.3992 in the House and S.1875 in the Senate).

This bill would enable the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior to classify America's most severe wildfires as natural disasters, enabling

severe wildfire suppression funds to be drawn from federal emergency accounts reserved for that purpose and ending the practice of borrowing from important non-fire accounts.

The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act calls for commonsense changes to the outdated budgeting practices that have stretched U.S. Forest Service accounts thin in recent years. This legislation would maintain effective wildfire suppression while simultaneously restoring Forest Service programs important to sportsmen and conservation.

AFWA announces national Blue Ribbon Panel on sustaining America's fish and wildlife resources

Bipartisan panel will produce recommendations on how the nation can fund natural resource conservation

The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) announced that Johnny Morris, Bass Pro Shops founder, and Dave Freudenthal, former Wyoming governor, will co-chair AFWA's new, national *Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Fish and Wildlife Resources* to advance recommendations for funding a 21st century model of conservation.

Under the co-chairs' leadership, the bipartisan *Blue Ribbon Panel* will convene 20 invited visionaries representing the outdoor recreation retail and manufacturing sector, the energy industry, conservation organizations and sportsmen's groups to recommend funding solutions and Congressional policy options for delivering sustained conservation funding to states and their partners that maintain a balance between natural resource diversity and natural resource-based enterprise.

"I strongly believe that the future of our industry, the outdoor sports that we serve, and the outdoor sports we personally enjoy, is absolutely more dependent upon how we manage our natural resources than anything else," said Johnny Morris. "Industries, agencies, key conservation organizations and individuals can work together and assure a very bright future for America's full diversity of fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

The Blue Ribbon Panel is the first effort to bring business, energy, conservation and environmental interests to the table to focus on funding a 21st century model of conservation to sustain the full array of

fish and wildlife species for our country."

Over the past several years, federal funding for the conservation of imperiled fish and wildlife species has declined by one-third, while petitions for federal endangered species listing has skyrocketed by 1,000 percent. According to the Government Accountability Office, once listed, the average cost to U.S. taxpayers for the recovery of a single species can exceed \$125 million.

Thousands of additional species could be listed in the coming years leading to more expensive recovery attempts; reduced recreational and development access; and increased regulation and compliance costs.

"We've reached a point where inaction will only dig us a deeper hole of controversy, litigation, lost business opportunities and declining fish and wildlife," said Mr. Freudenthal. "I'm honored to co-chair the *Blue Ribbon Panel* with Johnny Morris to ensure wildlife and business prosper and divisiveness and reactionary conservation are a relict of the past."

State hunting and fishing license dollars, federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing gear and motorboat fuel taxes have provided the backbone for funding states' fish and wildlife conservation programs over the past century. However, there has always been a gap in dedicated funding for conserving the 95 percent of all species that are neither hunted nor fished.

Only partially filling that gap is the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program,

the sole federal source of funding to state agencies to prevent new endangered species listings. Since 2010, the program's funding has been cut by more than 35 percent.

"The diversity of wild species that inhabit this nation's lands and waters belong to every American to experience, use and enjoy," said Dan Forster, director of the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division and 2013-2014 president of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "We owe it to the resources we manage and the public that pays our bills to not relent until we solve the fiscal predicament that looms if we don't find a more equitable funding model for fish and wildlife conservation."

Mr. Morris and Mr. Freudenthal intend to convene three meetings of the *Blue Ribbon Panel* over the course of a year to develop funding recommendations. The list of *Blue Ribbon Panelists* will be announced in the coming months. Staff from AFWA and state fish and wildlife agencies will support the work of the Panel.

The official announcement of the *Blue Ribbon Panel* co-chairs was made at the annual Teaming With Wildlife Fly-in Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill. Teaming With Wildlife is a national coalition of more than 6,400 conservation organizations and nature-based businesses - representing state fish and wildlife agencies, wildlife biologists, hunters and anglers, birdwatchers, hikers and other conservationists - to garner support for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program.

Using Merlin to identify bird species

How Merline from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology can help you identify bird species

By Rob Ripma

One of the toughest parts of getting involved in birding is learning to identify bird species. Even common backyard birds can cause confusion and frustration when you start birding. As we gain experience, we are able to quickly identify most of our backyard birds but what happens when something totally unexpected arrives in our yards? The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has created Mer-

lin to help you with both of these situations! This app asks a series of five questions and then gives you options as to what your bird might be!

I've been testing it out for over a week now and I can say that it's incredible how accurate it is! In addition to identifying the birds, the app gives you a good written description of the bird, several photos, a range map, and it can play the sounds of the bird.

I really believe that this app will make a big difference in the ability of backyard birders to quickly and accurately identify the bird species that they are seeing! Merlin is currently available on Apple devices and will be launched for Android sometime this spring. It is a free app and currently includes 285 of the most commonly seen bird species in the United States. You can learn even more about the app at <http://bitily/MerlinApp>.

Agencies release Rockies' wolf numbers

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), in collaboration with other federal, state and tribal agencies, is announcing the 2013 Northern Rocky Mountain (NRM) Gray Wolf Population numbers. This annual report is conducted as part of the Service's work to monitor the wolf population to ensure that it continues to exceed recovery goals under professional state management, and no longer requires federal protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

As of December 31, 2013, there were at least 78 breeding pairs and 1,691 wolves within the NRM area. The wolf population remains well above the recovery levels identified by Service and partner biologists in the recovery plan. Minimum management targets are at least 45 breeding pairs and at least 450 wolves across the NRM area.

The report is posted online at <http://www.fws.gov/home/wolfrecovery/> and <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov>. The report is

a cooperative effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Wyoming Fish and Game, the Nez Perce Tribe, National Park Service, Blackfoot Nation, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Wind River Tribes, Colville Tribe, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Utah Department of Natural Resources, and USDA Wildlife Services.

Birding journalist Paul Baicich honored at 2014 Wetland Conservation Achievement Awards ceremony

Ducks Unlimited announced the winners of the 2014 Wetland Conservation Achievement Awards during the 79th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference held in Denver March 13. This year's recipient in the Communications category is Paul Baicich of Oxon Hills, MD.

Baicich has been an active birder since his early teens in New York City. A former employee of the American Birding Association, he edited 14 of their *ABA Birdfinding Guides*, as well as their bi-monthly magazine, and served as Director of Conservation and Public Policy. Today, Baicich directs the on-line *Great Birding Projects* and co-edits the popular

monthly *Birding Community E-bulletin*. He writes regularly for birding magazines, including *Bird Watcher's Digest*. He has also been instrumental in starting and running Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp—a nonprofit dedicated to the promotion, preservation, sales, and better understanding of the Duck Stamp.

"Paul takes every opportunity to promote wetland conservation, especially through the purchase of Federal Duck Stamps," said DU Chief Conservation Officer Paul Schmidt. "He has been inspiring people to think about the stamp's benefits to wetland conservation for years, and has gone beyond the typical hunter audience to reach birders, hikers, elected officials,

and others to spread the value of the Duck Stamp, not only for wetlands and birds but for people too."

Ducks Unlimited's Wetland Conservation Achievement Awards are presented annually in six categories to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation and restoration of North America's wetlands and waterfowl. To view a complete list of the 2014 Wetland Conservation Achievement Award winners, please visit www.ducks.org/wetlandawards.

Paul has provided informative articles for use in the Kansas Wildlife Federation's newsletter and is quite deserving of the DU award.

Service announces completion of national wetlands database

To coincide with American Wetlands Month, which begins May 1, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is announcing the completion of the most comprehensive and detailed U.S. wetland data set ever produced, capping a 35-year effort by the Service to map the extent of the nation's wetlands.

The Wetlands Inventory Mapper (<http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>) has digitally mapped and made publicly available wetlands in the lower 48 states, Hawaii and dependent territories, as well as 35 % of Alaska. It is an invaluable aid to landowners, developers, government planners and permitting authorities, conservation organizations and academic institutions in their collective efforts to ensure wetland conservation and inform economic development.

"The completion of this wetland dataset marks a significant milestone in national efforts to conserve wetlands in the United States," said Gary Frazer, the Service's Assistant Director for Ecological Services.

"Wetlands are critical ecosystems that support an astounding diversity of plant and animal life, and provide essential ecological services; yet wetlands are disappearing at an alarming rate. This online mapper is a key tool in the ever-more challenging quest to maintain the health of our wetland habitats and the biodiversity they sustain."

Wetlands provide habitat for thousands of species of fish, wildlife and plants, and act as nurseries for many saltwater and freshwater fishes and shellfish of commercial significance. They also provide

important ecological services such as flood control, water filtration and the supply of groundwater, and they provide recreational and wildlife viewing opportunities for millions of people.

Wetlands are facing numerous, ongoing challenges, such as agriculture, development and resource extraction, as well as sea level rise, increasing storm severity and drought due to climate change.

Between 2004 and 2009, the reported average annual rate of wetland loss in the coastal watersheds was 80,160 acres. This demonstrates that the target of "no net loss" of wetlands in coastal areas is not yet being achieved.

To access the wetlands data and mapping tool, and learn more about the National Wetlands Inventory, visit: <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/index.html>.

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

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

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

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

How You Can Help:

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

Here's How to Join:

Complete the form on Page 12 and mail with your membership fee to:
Kansas Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 771282, Wichita, KS 67277-1282