



The Voice of Outdoor Kansas

November-
December 2012

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

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www.kswildlife.org,
for additional KWF information

Goal set: 10 million more kids outdoors in three years

A GENERATION AGO, kids spent hours playing outside each day. Now it's down to minutes. To combat today's "indoor childhood" trend, National Wildlife Federation has set a goal—made public earlier this month—to get 10 million more kids outdoors for regular time in nature during the next three years.

NWF has a three-pronged approach to achieve this goal: educate, inspire and partner with the major influencers of children's time: 1) parents and caregivers, 2) child-serving institutions, and 3) policy makers. Through an unprecedented program of public media education, signature events and online outreach, parents—with a special focus on mothers—will gain the knowledge and tools they need to incorporate regular outdoor time into their children's daily lives. We will encourage child-serving institutions, such as schools, day care centers, city park departments, after-school programs and neighborhood YMCAs, to incorporate regular time for outdoor learning and play. We will advocate for local, state and national policy makers to pass innovative new policies that help children, youth and families spend regular time outdoors.

"The goal is a natural outgrowth of NWF's core mission and the mission of our affiliates to protect wildlife for our children's future," says Meri-Margaret Deoudes, NWF's vice president of strategic alliances and special events. "In meeting this goal, we will help parents, schools and policy makers create a generation of healthier, happier and more eco-minded children who will safeguard our wildlife and wild places."

The 10 million kids outdoors campaign encourages kids to get outside to explore, play, and learn for at least 90 minutes per week. This outdoor time excludes time spent in organized sports, which while beneficial, does not provide children the same benefits as outdoor play and learning in green spaces. Research shows that spending time outside helps kids grow lean and strong, boosts mood, improves school performance and creates a stronger tie to the

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Protecting the Land...
Passing on Our Traditions

KANSAS WILDLIFE
FEDERATION
The voice of outdoor Kansas



KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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President's Message

As 2012 winds down it is time to review what we have done in the past year and what may lie ahead in the coming year. To help accomplish that, we scheduled a Board of Directors retreat at Rock Springs 4-H Camp in early November. I will report details of that meeting in the next newsletter.

Some topics of discussion include of course the need for funding to accomplish our priorities of safeguarding wildlife and providing youth outdoor education. Membership dues are an important part of our income and we will be trying to increase membership numbers, but we need to look at other sources of income as well.

We would like to provide more opportunity for inaction of our members. Our revised website provides some opportunity with the invitation for members to submit wildlife photos and our spotlighting a species of the month on the home page. But we are looking for other opportunities to unite us in our appreciation of wildlife and natural resources. Kansas has an abundance of outdoor beauty and we need to find ways to deepen our appreciation for it. We may even try to sponsor some outings such as float trips or wildlife/wildflower walks.

We intend to coordinate some activities with other groups with similar interests such as Friends of the Kaw, Audubon of Kansas or the Native Plant Society. I think there is much to be gained when groups with similar interests unite to work for a common cause.

An example is when we established the Kansas Conservation Coalition, a group of about 20 wildlife and conservation groups that united to work on the Federal Farm Bill. With Kansas land nearly all in private ownership and agriculture production, the farm bill has a tremendous impact on wildlife habitat. Unfortunately Congress grid-locked on the bill and one has not been passed as of this writing. Rumor has it that it will be done after the election. When it comes up, you can bet we will be there to help insure a strong conservation component.

We would like to hear from our members about what you would like to see in KWF and how we could better serve your needs. Please submit your thoughts to us via email at info@kswildlife.org or via postal mail at P.O. Box 7771282, Wichita, KS 67277. And check our website regularly at www.kswildlife.org.

Iconic upland gamebird fading from the wild and from hunters' minds

By Chad Love Field and Stream

Lesser prairie-chickens are in big trouble. They were—at one time—the most important and probably most numerous gamebird on the southern and central plains. They numbered in the millions and rivaled the bobwhite quail in numbers, popularity and cultural tradition. Everyone on the southern plains hunted chickens. These days, few hunters are familiar with them. And their decline is probably the most interesting and ultimately tragic upland game

conservation story no one has ever heard of.

All the usual suspects are to blame: habitat losses, climate change, booming energy development of both the wind and gas varieties—all have played a part. For example, grasslands are being converted for agricultural production at an absolutely stunning pace. But it's not only these factors. There is also the issue of non-awareness among hunters. The lesser prairie-chicken, like most prairie gamebirds, has been

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A call for 2013 resolutions

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

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

members at the 2013 Annual Meeting February 23, please send the proposed resolution to KWF by **January 15, 2013** at KWF Resolutions P.O. Box 771282 Wichita, KS 67277-1282 or e-mail it to info@kswildlife.org.

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

Supporting water quality protection of Kansas streams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Officers and Board of Directors

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

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

Kansas Wildlife Federation
Newsletter
P.O. Box 771282

Wichita, KS 67277-1282

2012 Conservation Achievement Program Awards

You know someone who has volunteered countless hours towards a particular wildlife project or someone who has devoted themselves beyond normal expectations for conservation. It is important for conservationist to give credit to those who deserve it. It demonstrates that we hold these activities in high regard and gives some appreciated recognition to folks who work very hard for something they love. Do your part and consider those you work with or know who have performed beyond the call of duty, someone who deserves to be recognized for their contributions to Kansas' wildlife. Let's not let them go unrecognized for their dedication and sacrifices.

Please make an effort to identify folks who have made special efforts for wildlife in 2012. Those who have received Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) awards in the past can attest to the pride they felt in

being bestowed such a noteworthy recognition. Do your part and make certain we recognize those most deserving at the CAP banquet February 23, 2013.

To nominate someone simply e-mail a nomination of 2,000 words (more or less) to prattbrunsons@gmail.com. Make sure you put full contact information for yourself and the nominee, including mailing and e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Do it now! E-mail me if you'd like a cyber copy of the form. Thanks for your help with this very noteworthy program for wildlife conservation in Kansas. **Get your nominations to us by December 10.**

Ken Brunson

CAP Co-Chair

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Conservation a priority for hunters and anglers

"Hunters and anglers are putting conservation and public lands stewardship first."

**By Brett Prettyman
The Salt Lake Tribune**

The National Wildlife Federation released a national public opinion poll in September (<http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/Media-Center/News-by-Topic/Wildlife/2012/09-25-12-Sportsmen-Poll-Public-Lands-Protection-Trumps-Energy-Production.aspx>) of 800 hunters and anglers that illustrates sportsmen's attitudes about public lands, conservation, global warming and habitat restitution for environmental disasters.

• Forty-seven percent said conservation is just as important as gun rights. Thirteen percent believe

conservation is more important than gun rights.

• Fifty-nine percent believe global warming is occurring and two in three sportsmen believe there is a moral responsibility to confront global warming.

• Forty-nine percent feel protecting public lands should be given priority, even at the risk of limiting the amount of energy supplies such as oil, gas and coal. Thirty-four percent favor development of energy supplies even if public lands suffer.

• The largest numbers in the poll showed 81 percent of sportsmen believe British Petroleum should be

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CAP Nomination Form

To make a nomination, e-mail this form with all attachments to: Ken Brunson, CAP Chairman, prattbrunsons@gmail.com by **December 10**.

Name of Nominee: _____

Address: _____

Phones: _____ Award Category: _____

(Please specify one of the categories for which nomination is made. Use a separate form for each nomination and category.)

Nominator's Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Phones: _____

*Attach a typewritten description, not to exceed three pages, detailing specific acts for which award is recommended. Include such other information as past recognition, organization memberships, affiliations, past achievements, etc. as nominator feels pertinent. When a company or organization is involved, include the name of the president, chief executive officer, sponsor, editor or other appropriate representative.

Official Entry Form 2012 Kansas Wildlife Federation Conservation Achievement Program Awards

The Kansas Wildlife Federation's CAP awards recognize outstanding accomplishments in Kansas's conservation. Nominations should be made for efforts worthy of state recognition. The accomplishment should reflect a long-time commitment to natural resources with a significant effort during the past year. A nominee must be a Kansas resident and have accomplished the meritorious work in Kansas. Nominees may be any professionals, lay people, clubs or business. Past years' winners are not eligible for nomination in the same category. Current KWF officers are not eligible.

Wildlife Conservationist

For outstanding achievement in fish or wildlife resource management. Nominees should have demonstrated leadership in management, restoration or research of habitats or wildlife species.

Water Conservationist

For outstanding achievement in water pollution control, conservation and protection of rivers and wetlands, prevention of degradation of water quality through effective planning and management or other activity aimed at maintaining or improving water standards.

Land & Soil Conservationist

For outstanding achievement in watershed protection, wetlands develop-

ment, erosion control, habitat improvement or other management practices that improve land so as to benefit wildlife.

Conservation Education

For outstanding achievement in educating others in conservation. The process may be formal or informal. The nominations may be for leadership, which, by example or demonstration, aids in the environmental/wildlife education of others.

Forest Conservationist

For outstanding achievement in forest and woodlands management, including reforestation, preservation of wilderness areas and wildlife habitat development.

Conservation Communicator

For outstanding achievement in effectively conveying the conservation message and creating public awareness of conservation issues in the news and other media.

Youth Conservationist

For outstanding conservation efforts for someone under 21 during the contest year. Winners should have demonstrated ability and accomplishment in some phase of conservation. Youth groups are eligible as well.

Conservation Organization

For outstanding achievement by an organization for work in some phase of conservation during the contest period. May include civic clubs, conservation groups, garden clubs, sportsman's clubs,

businesses, professional organizations and others.

Stream Team or Stream Monitor

For outstanding efforts by a group of citizen volunteers in monitoring and contributing to the protection of our state's waterways. Any civic club, conservation group, youth group, school groups and others. Nominees should have demonstrated leadership in stream monitoring, protection and educational efforts.

Conservation Legislator

For outstanding achievement by a legislator in conservation legislation, that took place in or culminated in the contest year. Competition is open to state or federal legislators and their staff members.

Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist

This award is to recognize special efforts of a farmer and/or rancher who have made extra efforts towards conserving wildlife.

Outdoor Skills Instructor

This award recognizes wildlife, nature, shooting, and outdoor instructors for their superior involvement in educating others.

Conservationist of the Year

The Conservationist of the Year will be selected from all the nominations submitted in all categories. This award will be based on exemplary service to Kansas's fish, wildlife and environmental conservation efforts.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

- Nov. 3-4** KWF Board of Directors mtg. Salina
Nov. 10 Kansas Environmental Forum KSU, Manhattan
Nov. 13 Organic Farming Forum – Salina ksrc@rainbowtel.net
Nov. 15 Riparian Forestry Field Day Flint Hills NWR Hartford 620-364-2182

2013

- Jan. 5-6** Clint Bowyer youth non-antlered deer management hunt. Emporia Area
Jan. 12 6th Annual KS State Chapter NWTf Awards Banquet Concordia 785-243-7798
Jan. 11-13 Hunt 4 Hunger deer management hunts and banquets. Emporia and Ft. Scott. Contact Chuck Gardner...620-343-0225
Jan. 19 KWF Board of Directors mtg. Location TBD
Jan. 24-25 Kansas Natural Resource Conference Invasive Species in KS Airport Hilton, Wichita
1. Great Plains Society of American Forestry
2. Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams
3. Kansas Chapter: American Fisheries Society
4. Kansas Chapter: Soil and Water Conservation Society
5. Kansas Chapter: The Wildlife Society
6. Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition
7. Kansas Section: Society for Range Management
Jan. 25-27 2013 Monster Buck Classic We Are Kansas event KS ExpoCentre Topeka
Feb. 15-18 16th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count www.birdcount.org
Feb. 22-23 KWF Annual Meeting and CAP Banquet Best Western Hotel, Emporia
Mar 2-3 Southeast Kansas Hunting and Fishing Expo. Flint Hills Mall, Emporia. Contact Tonya Carson 785-366-3565
Mar 18-24 National Wildlife Week
Mar 31 NWTf turkey hunting clinic, Camp Alexander. Contact Gib Rhodes 620-437-2012

Grassland bird habitat supported through development of prescribed fire councils

Native Americans used fire to manage rangeland for thousands of years, but a hundred-year burning hiatus followed European settlement of the North American heartland. Those decades of fire suppression allowed invasive plants to negatively alter the landscape. Now, rangeland researchers and managers are proponents of burning, when done safely and in a controlled setting. In the past few years, ConocoPhillips grants have been awarded to support the development of Prescribed Fire Councils in Oklahoma and Kansas, which are helping landowners put fire back into the natural cycle of the plains.

“Prescribed fire is a practical, low-cost management tool for the mid- and short-grass prairies, increasing habitat for grassland bird species such as the Lesser Prairie-Chicken

and creating better grazing for livestock,” says Tim Christian, Coordinator of the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition and one of the founders of the Kansas Prescribed Fire Council. “It reduces invasive woody species, improves forage quality and quantity, and provides quality grassland bird habitat that is also beneficial for the land user.”

“Eastern Red Cedar continues its rapid expansion within the mixed grass prairie ecosystem of the playa lakes region,” says Christopher Rustay, PLJV Conservation Delivery Leader. “It dramatically alters rangeland hydrology, reduces plant diversity and annual production, and especially important to us, contributes to declining grassland bird habitat, diversity and populations. Fire is an effective tool in combating

the advance of this and other invasive species.”

The Kansas Prescribed Fire Council, which is being partly supported through a 2012 ConocoPhillips grant, is now incorporated as a non-profit organization and recently finalized an agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Kansas Forest Service to house and supply their full-time coordinator who will work toward expanding membership in local prescribed burn associations and increasing the number of acres burned within the state. The organization is also planning to offer affordable liability insurance as well as training and equipment to help landowners conduct prescribed burns.

Similar efforts in Oklahoma were supported through a ConocoPhillips grant in 2011.

Motorists beware: Deer on the move now

Kansas deer-vehicle collisions peak in mid-November

Deer can be spotted near our roadways any time of the year. However, in the fall, motorists should be especially vigilant for deer crossing the highways. Deer breeding season peaks in mid-November, and this marks the period when deer-vehicle collisions are highest. That's why the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), the Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) are working together to raise awareness and help drivers avoid collisions with deer.

According to KDWPT biologist Lloyd Fox, the increase in deer-vehicle crashes is strongly influenced by the deer mating season, called "rut." During rut, deer focus on mating; they travel more than in other seasons and pay less attention to hazards such as vehicles. Also during the fall, many deer move to new locations as crops are harvested and leaves fall from trees and shrubs.

Not only are deer more active during the fall, shorter days mean dusk and dawn — when deer are more likely to be on the move — occur when commuter traffic is highest. According to KDOT spokesperson Steve Swartz, there were 9,199 deer-vehicle collisions reported to KDOT in 2011, killing two people and injuring 297 others. Deer-vehicle collisions

occur in every Kansas county, but counties with high human populations and high traffic volumes usually record the most deer-vehicle crashes; Sedgwick County recorded the most with 354, followed by Johnson County with 339 and Butler County with 250.

Motorists should observe the following tips to avoid deer collisions:

- Be especially watchful at dawn and dusk when deer are particularly active;
- Watch for more than one deer. They seldom travel alone, so if one crosses the road, others may follow;
- Reduce speed and be alert near wooded areas or green spaces such as parks or golf courses and near water sources such as streams or ponds;
- Don't swerve to avoid hitting a deer — the most serious accidents occur when motorists swerve and collide with another vehicle or run off the road and hit an obstacle;
- Heed deer crossing signs;
- Always wear a seat belt; and
- Use bright lights and slow down whenever the reflective eyes of deer are spotted.

According to KHP Lieutenant Josh Kellerman, if you hit a deer, slow down and pull onto the shoulder, turn on your emergency flashers, and watch for traffic if you have to exit your vehicle. If you

have a cell phone and are on a Kansas highway, dial *47 (*HP) for a highway patrol dispatcher or *582 (*KTA) for assistance on the Kansas Turnpike, or dial 911.

Anyone involved in a vehicle-deer crash resulting in personal injury or property damage that totals \$1,000 or more is required to immediately report the crash to the nearest law enforcement agency. Failure to report any traffic crash is a misdemeanor and may result in suspension of driving privileges. A salvage tag is required to remove a deer carcass from an accident site. Tags can be issued by KHP troopers, sheriff's deputies, or KDWPT natural resource officers.

If you are involved in a non-injury crash on an interstate, U.S. highway, or any divided or multi-lane road in the state of Kansas, and if you are not transporting hazardous materials, you are required by law to move your vehicle out of the lane of traffic. This law is intended to help keep drivers and passengers safe by getting them out of the lane of traffic and away from oncoming vehicles. Make sure you and your passengers are buckled up and are using the appropriate child safety seats, which are the best ways to prevent injuries or death should you be involved in a crash.

Monster blue catfish certified as Kansas record

After the required 30-day waiting period, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) has officially recognized a 102.8-pound blue catfish as a new state record. Rob Stanley, of Olathe, caught the fish, which bests the former state record blue by more than 8 pounds.

When Stanley hooked into a blue catfish while fishing the Missouri River on August 11, he was pretty sure it was bigger than most he'd caught. Stanley had taken a 70-pounder from the Kansas River earlier in the summer, and this fish was showing his heavy tackle surprising power as it bulldogged in the big river's muddy current.

After a 40-minute battle that required

pulling anchor to follow the fish downstream and prevent it from taking all of Stanley's 80-pound-test line from his reel, Stanley and his boat partner, Brad Kirkpatrick, realized the fish wouldn't fit in their over-sized net. They wrestled the monster fish into the boat and immediately weighed it on a digital scale. When it "bottomed-out" the 100-pound scale, Stanley and Kirkpatrick knew they had a special fish.

After calling KDWPT fisheries biologist Andy Jansen, Stanley kept the big cat in an aerated tank near the river. After weighing the fish on certified scales and species confirmation by Jansen, Stanley released the fish back to the Missouri River.

Stanley caught the new state record blue catfish at 5 a.m. using cut bait (Asian carp caught from the river). The fish was 56.75 inches long and had a girth of 39 inches.

Blue catfish are native to eastern Kansas rivers, and there are historical records of fish weighing more than 100 pounds. However, interest in catching blue catfish has been growing in recent years after Kansas biologists began stocking them into reservoirs. Milford Reservoir, near Junction City, received its first blue catfish stocking in 1990 and has gained a reputation for producing blue cats weighing more than 50 pounds. Some anglers

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As fall temperatures cool, fishing heats up

Anglers and fish, alike, enjoy respite from summer heat

There may not be a better way to enjoy the cool fall weather than by casting a line in your favorite farm pond, state fishing lake or reservoir. For anglers, it was a long, hot summer, and the fall weather is a welcome relief. For fish, the cool water temperature signals a move to shallower water and a feeding binge before winter sets in.

Cold-blooded fish are affected by water temperature, and as much as warm temperatures push them deep and discourage activity, cooler temperatures do just the opposite. The feeding urge is strong as fish eat to build up winter reserves. While baitfish populations are also abundant this time of year, anglers can easily take advantage of the increased feeding activity by being in the right place with the right lure.

On a small lake or farm pond, small minnows and sunfish are on the diets of bass and crappie. The young-of-the-year baitfish have grown all summer, so anglers should match this hatch and use larger lures. Shallow-running crankbaits, spinnerbaits, plastic swimbaits, and jig-and-pig combos are good bets for large-

mouth bass. For crappie, it's hard to beat an eighth-ounce jig dressed with white marabou or a white plastic curly-tailed grub. For both species, fish near weeds and woody cover.

Kansas reservoirs can provide outstanding white bass and wiper fishing in the fall. These open-water species are hunting for gizzard shad along main-lake points, underwater humps, and creek channel edges. Trolling silver, white or chartreuse crankbaits over structure is a good way to find fish. Or you can watch the birds. Gulls will flock and dive over the water where whites and wipers are feeding, picking up the scraps from the frenzied attacks. Boaters should approach the melees carefully to avoid spooking the shallow fish, then cast jigs, topwater plugs and spoons. Strikes are usually immediate, and the action can last for a few minutes or much longer, depending on the sizes of the schools.

Shoreline anglers can enjoy excellent fishing this time of year by casting jigs and spoons on the windy side of the lake. The wave action provides excellent feeding conditions, concentrating shad

and making them easy marks. A good method is to wade out on long, main-lake points or rip-rapped piers and cast into the wind. A 7-foot spinning rod with a light super line will allow long casts even in a stiff wind. This type of fishing can be very productive.

Reservoir crappie can be caught from now through winter as they gather around standing trees and man-made brushpiles. KDWPT fisheries biologists spend a good portion of their time each winter and summer building fish-holding brushpiles. The weighted trees are often marked with buoys, but biologists will also provide GPS coordinates for those that aren't. Crappie anglers search out brush in 15-25 feet of water and fish jigs and minnows vertically just over the top or even in the brush. A light wind and stationary boat will be necessary to avoid snags, but big crappie fat from eating gizzard shad will be worth the trouble.

When you add the pleasant weather, cooperative fish and low angler numbers together, it adds up to a great outdoor experience. Enjoy Kansas fall fishing.

USFWS sign Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker! MOU with Wildlife Forever

During the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) 102nd annual conference on Hilton Head Island, SC the week of September 11, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe, signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Wildlife Forever, transferring the operational lead of the Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker! conservation branded message to Wildlife Forever.

Invasive Species are one of the greatest threat to America's natural resources. Costing the U.S. economy \$137 billion annually to combat, invasives weaken the U.S. economy and severely limit access and opportunity for youth and all Americans to become engaged in the outdoors.

"I'm thrilled at the opportunity this partnership will create for expansion of the internationally acclaimed Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker! message. With guidance from our diverse partners, we hope to expand the branded message to include new audiences and user groups who share a passion for healthy natural resources" said Douglas Grann, President and CEO of Wildlife Forever.

"The Wildlife Forever Threat Campaign™ partnered with the "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!" campaign since day one. It has always been about partnerships and consistent messaging, sharing ideas, tools, resources and a commitment to conservation. I'm grateful for the USFWS in what this opportunity will create" said Pat

Conzemius, Conservation Director of Wildlife Forever.

For over seven years the Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker! Threat Campaign has reached out to hunters, anglers, and recreational users with a consistent invasive species prevention message. Reaching nearly 1 billion impressions, the partnership extends from coast to coast including Alaska and encourages easy to follow steps everyone can do to protect the resource.

Wildlife Forever is the nonprofit conservation arm of the North American Hunting Club and North American Fishing Club. To learn more about how you can help fight invasive species, visit: <http://www.wildlifeforever.org/invasive-species>.

Zebra mussels found in Wyandotte County Lake

Wyandotte County Lake the latest to be infested with invasive species

During regular monitoring efforts, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) officials discovered zebra mussel veligers (larval stage) in Wyandotte County Lake, which is located at Leavenworth Rd. and 92nd St. in Kansas City. Adult zebra mussels were found upon further investigation.

This latest casualty brings the total of Kansas reservoirs and lakes infested with non-native zebra mussels to 17 and highlights the need for anglers and boaters to be aware of the dangers of moving water and baitfish between lakes. New regulations designed to prevent further spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) require anglers to use wild-caught baitfish only in the lakes or streams where they were caught, except that live green sunfish and bluegill may be moved from waters not on the ANS-designated list. In addition, livewells and bilges of boats must be drained prior to transport from any Kansas water on a public highway. And anglers may not transport live fish from any ANS-designated water. The 407-acre Wyandotte County Lake, which is owned by the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, is now an ANS-designated water. A complete list of ANS-designated waters is included on

the ANS page of the KDWPT website (ProtectKS Waters.org) and will be in the 2013 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary.

Zebra mussels are bean-sized, bivalve mollusks with striped shells. They are native to the Black and Caspian seas of western Asia and eastern Europe and have been spread across the world via cargo ships. They were discovered in Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River in 1988. Zebra mussels quickly spread throughout the Great Lakes and to many inland rivers including the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, Arkansas and Hudson. They first appeared in Kansas in 2003 when they were discovered in El Dorado Reservoir. Public education programs were used to inform boaters about the dangers of zebra mussels in our waters and ways to prevent spreading them. However, zebra mussels continue to show up in new lakes every year. Moving water in boats and bait buckets was identified as a likely vector.

After settling, zebra mussels develop byssal threads that allow the shells to attach to hard surfaces such as rocks, piers, and flooded timber. They also attach themselves to pipes, water intake structures, boat hulls, propellers, and lower units of outboard motors. As

populations increase in these areas, they can clog intake pipes and prevent water treatment plants and electrical generating plants from drawing water. In 2012, two Kansas communities, Council Grove and Osage City, experienced water shortages because of zebra mussel infestations before water intake structures could be cleaned up. Removing large quantities of zebra mussels to ensure adequate water supplies can be labor-intensive and costly.

Zebra mussels are just one of the non-native aquatic species that threaten our waters and native wildlife. Boaters and anglers must remember to follow regulations and precautions that will prevent the spread:

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

For more information on stopping aquatic nuisance species in Kansas, visit ProtectKS Waters.org

Kansas Green Teams Photo Contest winners announced

The Kansas Green Team program has announced its 2012 Photo Contest winners. Photographers throughout Kansas were invited to submit photos that celebrate the unique character of Kansas. Winning photos will be displayed on the KansasGreenTeams.org home page.

“The photos submitted this year

show that Kansas continually offers exceptional beauty. We hope these photos will serve to inspire Kansans to be more environmentally conscious in order to preserve our natural resources,” said Bill Bider, Director of the Bureau of Waste Management.

The winning photos can be viewed at <http://www.kansasgreenteams.org/>

photography-contest-winners.

The Kansas Green Team program was created in 2007 as a way to make a difference by incorporating environmentally responsible practices into your daily routine at work and at school. If you are interested in joining Kansas Green Teams, please visit www.kansasgreenteams.org.

Federal government targets sportsmen's dollars to reduce deficit

Conservation of wildlife resources and your outdoor recreation heritage is at risk!

“The Greatest Story Never Told” is the mantra being extolled by the nation’s wildlife conservation community in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Fund (WSFR). Far-sighted and forward-looking sportsmen worked with Congress in 1937 to pass the Pittman-Robertson Act, whereby excise taxes on hunting equipment flow into a trust fund that is one of the most significant sources of funding for state wildlife conservation efforts. Subsequent amendments of the act and passage of the Dingell-Johnson Act and the Wallop-Breaux Act have since added excise taxes from fishing equipment, archery tackle and motor-boat fuel to grow the funding available for wildlife conservation. By law, your dollars are allocated to each state to support important conservation work on the ground and to keep critical wildlife programs going. Since 1939, the State of Kansas has integrated these funds, along with dedication of license-based revenues, into the core of our financing for wildlife conservation. With these resources, the state has been able to restore elk and bighorn sheep populations, construct and operate boat ramps and shooting ranges, restore native trout species, develop a modern hatchery program and continue conservation of our wildlife heritage.

Your funds have been untouched in the 75 year history of the WSFR fund and have been used only for conservation. In order to participate in the program and receive these funds, each state and territory made legal, binding commitments that these funds (and license fees) would be used only for wildlife conservation in specific, approved programs. Ironically, the current administration’s Office of Management and Budget has decided that your funds must be withheld

(sequestered) under provisions of the Budget Control Act of 2012. While this action only keeps funds from being allocated to state wildlife agencies (for now) and does not in and of itself divert your funds, it does set the stage for future Congressional action which could sweep these funds from the trust accounts into the federal treasury. The fact that this diversion is occurring during the 75th anniversary of the WSFR Act is the ultimate irony.

Because of explicit language in the original acts, these funds are to be allocated to the states and are not subject to annual Congressional appropriation. It is difficult to understand how these funds are now subject to the provisions of the Budget Control Act of 2012. Excise taxes would still be collected from manufacturers of hunting and fishing equipment and excise taxes would be paid by hunters, anglers, archers, boaters and shooters. Interest will still accrue in the various accounts. However, the new action of the Budget Control Act automatically denies the full allocation of funds to each state for their intended purpose of fish and wildlife conservation.

This should be a critical concern to all sportsmen and conservationists. Under the Department of Interior’s Fish and Wildlife Service, every state would see funding reductions in administration, multi-state grants, boating safety, wildlife and sport fish restoration (WSFR) that will directly affect the department’s ability to do on-the-ground conservation, permanent agency jobs, agency resources and agencies’ ability to provide public access for hunting, fishing, boating and shooting. Conservation of wildlife resources and your outdoor recreation heritage is at risk, no matter what your choice of hobby, sport or pursuit. For Kansas, the impact for 2013 could

be as much as \$945,000 with cuts to Wildlife Restoration, Sport Fish Restoration, Boating Safety and other programs.

State wildlife agencies have been working diligently with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Interior to exempt State Trust Funds from being sequestered, but to no avail. Remember, these are your dollars as a sportsman or as a manufacturer of hunting and fishing equipment. If you are a Kansas citizen, your dollars support wildlife-related recreation that is a \$1 billion economic driver annually. The federal administration needs to know how the sequestration of these funds and the impacts on your programs here in Kansas will affect you personally (contacts listed below). You may also want to contact your Congressional Representatives on this issue.

DOI Secretary Ken Salazar
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240
Phone: (202) 208-3100
Email. feedback@ios.doi.gov

USFWS Director Dan Ashe
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Phone: 1-800-344-WILD
Email. <http://www.fws.gov/duspit/contactus.htm>

White House – Council on Environmental Quality
Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503
Phone: (202) 395-5750
Email: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/submit-questions-and-comments>

KDWPT's Dan Hesket receives national award

Kansas boating law administrator recognized by national organization

On Sept. 12, Major Dan Hesket, boating law administrator for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, received the Association of State Boating Law Administrators' (NASBLA) President's Award. NASBLA president Capt. Mike Fields presented Hesket with the award at the association's 53rd annual conference held in Mobile, Ala. Hesket was recognized for helping the organization achieve greater uniformity in vessel identification, registration and titling.

Hesket has been a passionate chair of NASBLA's Vessel Identification, Registration and Titling (VIRT) Com-

mittee since 2009. With his trademark unique sense of humor, he led the committee through a number of significant projects including:

- Passage of the Uniform Certificate of Title for Vessels Act with National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws and then adoption of the act as NASBLA's official model act on titling;

- Implementation of the NPRM / Final Rule for Standard Numbering System, the Vessel Identification System and the Boating Accident Report Database;

- And publication of the Third Edi-

tion of the National Vessel Numbering & Titling Manual.

NSABLA is a national nonprofit organization that works to develop public policy for recreational boating safety. NASBLA represents the recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and the U.S. territories. NASBLA offers a variety of resources, including training, model acts, education standards and publications. Through a national network of thousands of professional educators, law enforcement officers and volunteers, the organization affects the lives of over 83 million American boaters.

New evidence suggests humans hunted for meat 1.6 million years earlier than previously thought

By Outdoor Hub Reporters

Up until recently, it was widely believed that humans hunted for meat up to 400,000 years ago. A new discovery by anthropology professor Henry T. Bunn at the University of Wisconsin pushes back that assertion another 1.6 million years. This means that our human ancestors, *Homo habilis* (a diminutive and small-brained ape-like species), may have been selectively hunting adult animals in their prime two million years ago.

While it was commonly accepted that humans have been eating meat for millennia, scientists believed they ate the scraps of kills left by other predators or scavenged from animals that died of natural causes.

Bunn spoke at an annual meeting of the European Society for the Study of Human Evolution (ESHE) in Bordeaux to present his findings. The first evidence of hunted meat appeared

at a site in Germany where evidence existed of horses being speared and eaten some 400,000 years ago.

"We know that humans ate meat two million years ago," Bunn said. "What was not clear was the source of that meat. However, we have compared the type of prey killed by lions and leopards today with the type of prey selected by humans in those days. This has shown that men and women could not have been taking kill from other animals or eating those that had died of natural causes. They were selecting and killing what they wanted."

Bunn determined this was the case by studying a huge, ancient butchery site in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. About 1.8 million years ago, human ancestors brought wildebeests, antelopes and gazelles there to strip the meat from the bones to eat. They determined the age of the animal carcasses by studying the teeth in their

skulls. It was found humans were butchering adult large antelope in their prime and older small antelope species. In contrast, lions and leopards preferred more elderly representatives of the large antelope species, and adults in their prime of the smaller antelope species.

"For all the animals we looked at, we found a completely different pattern of meat preference between ancient humans and other carnivores, indicating that we were not just scavenging from lions and leopards and taking their leftovers. We were picking what we wanted and were killing it ourselves," Bunn said.

Speaking on speculation, Bunn predicted that these *Homo habilis* waited in trees until antelopes or gazelles passed by, then speared them at point-blank range – something to think about the next time you're sitting in a tree stand with a handy bow or rifle!

ConocoPhillips grants fund outreach efforts to landowners in Kansas

Almost all of the land within the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) region is privately owned, so most conservation efforts must happen on private lands—often through enrollment in various Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). But first, landowners and resource managers need to know the available options and how programs can help meet their goals. That's where a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist or Private Lands Biologist can be invaluable.

In 2010 and 2011, ConocoPhillips grants helped create three Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist positions in the Red Hills and Lesser Prairie-Chicken range of Kansas through a joint effort between Pheasants Forever, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, and other conservation partners. The biologists work with ranchers in the area, providing quality information, education and outreach about the importance of restoring and improving habitats for Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Northern Bobwhite and other species of concern and showing them

how enrolling in conservation programs can positively impact their economic well-being.

“Kansas is over 99 percent privately owned so outreach is essential if we are going to increase participation in native prairie restoration and protection practices. The Farm Bill Biologist program provides landowners a ‘one-stop shop’ experience for their habitat and conservation program needs and gets the word out about what conservation programs are available, the deadlines for submitting applications, whether or not a program would be a good fit for an individual, and possible financial incentives,” says Steve Riley, Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist Manager. “During the last two years, many producers with expiring CRP acres were contacted personally to discuss options. The biologists encouraged them to keep their land in conservation and provided guidance on how to avoid plowing it up to put into crops—a very tempting scenario with \$7 per bushel for corn, \$9 for wheat, and \$16 for soybeans.”

“Education is crucial too and, in many cases, is as much about salesmanship as it is about biology,” adds James Krueger,

the Assistant State Conservationist from Kansas NRCS. “The biologist makes every attempt to explain why doing a certain conservation practice is beneficial to a given resource and why improving that resource is important to the individual. For example, when discussing prescribed burning it's not only important to educate about the benefits to the grass such as reduction of excess litter, killing invasive trees and increased protein levels, but also to talk about the benefits to the landowner—things like less acres lost to invasive trees, faster cattle weight gains and improved wildlife habitat for the species of concern.”

At the end of 2010, with only one new position added, the biologist's efforts had contributed to over 8,000 acres of new or improved habitat through the Conservation Reserve and Lesser Prairie-Chicken programs. In addition, these programs and others are being implemented in more wildlife friendly ways including the use of more diverse seeding mixtures even when they are not required by program specifications, improvements in frequency and types of management used, and producers taking on extra practices within the programs.

Wilson State Park's Switchgrass Bike Trail 'Epic'

Ruggedly scenic shore of Wilson Reservoir perfect mountain bike trail setting

The Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail at Wilson State Park was recently given an “Epic Award” from the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) at the organization's World Summit in Santa Fe, N.M. According to IMBA's website, “Switchgrass Trail: With over 20 miles of twisting trails, this destination has something for everyone, from beginners to hammerheads.”

Wilson State Park is located on the shores of Wilson Reservoir 20 miles east of Russell. The park and surrounding landscape features rugged prairie and sandstone outcroppings; a perfect

place for challenging mountain bike trails. The Switchgrass Bike Trail begins at the trailhead in the Switchgrass parking lot of the Hell Creek State Park area. The trail winds for about 24 miles through the pristine Smoky Hills grasslands along the shores of one of Kansas' most scenic lakes. Novice riders will enjoy an easy, but beautiful ride of just more than 5 miles.

The Switchgrass Trail is the product of an all-volunteer effort by local mountain bike enthusiasts and the Kansas Trail Council (KTC). It started in 1994 as a 6-mile loop built by a group of local mountain bikers from

Great Bend. Since 2004, it has been one of 17 trails coordinated and maintained by the KTC. In 2006, a Federal Recreational Trails Program grant was used to extend the Switchgrass Trail and purchase equipment.

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational association with a mission to create, enhance and preserve great mountain biking experiences. The Kansas Trails Council is also a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the development and enjoyment of Kansas trails.

Unprecedented federal agreement will spur conservation on privately owned lands

An unprecedented lands management approach unveiled by the federal government will provide long-term regulatory predictability to agricultural and private landowners and improve habitat for a range of valuable game species, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership announced September 18.

Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Dave White and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe discussed the innovative new approach on Sunday evening at the TRCP's annual Western Media Summit, briefing participants about the plan's benefits and objectives. The plan was formally announced this morning.

"This partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service reflects the direction we need to go and want to go in the future," said Ashe. "It's important for agriculture and important for species conservation. It represents a great step forward - and how we need to continue doing business moving forward."

Farmers, ranchers and forest landowners taking part in the Agriculture Department's Working Lands for Wildlife initiative are eligible to participate in the approach, whereby landowners voluntarily implement practices designed to conserve fish and wildlife habitat, including habitat for several at-risk and vulnerable game species. Seven species, including the sage grouse and lesser

prairie chicken, are identified as initial targets for management.

"By adopting this approach, we're maximizing our investments in conservation and working cooperatively to resolve habitat management issues," said White. "We think this agreement should be the template for how we deal with endangered species in America."

"Through the Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative, the departments of Interior and Agriculture recognize that private landowners have been and will be more effective wildlife stewards if they just receive a little help," said Dr. Steve Williams, president of the Wildlife Management Institute, former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and TRCP board member.

"This initiative provides a powerful tool for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners," stated Williams. "Through the federal government's providing technical assistance and grant dollars, wildlife habitat practices will be put in place to preserve species and provide much needed regulatory certainty for landowners struggling to sustain their private working lands."

"This unique agreement recognizes that species conservation works best when private landowners are committed and active partners in the process," said TRCP President and CEO Whit Fosburgh. "It makes funds available to help implement important projects and guar-

antees to landowners that the government won't keep moving the goal line.

"Certainty is key," continued Fosburgh. "If a landowner undertakes conservation projects that work and a listed species moves onto his or her lands, or if a resident non-listed species like sage grouse subsequently becomes listed under the Endangered Species Act, that landowner can be confident that he or she won't suddenly be subject to new restrictions or penalties."

Such "safe harbor" agreements are not unique and are a mainstay of Endangered Species Act implementation on private lands. The new plan, however, is notable both in its duration (up to 30 years) as well as its scope (in terms of geographical range of the species in question). Further, WLFW is strongly funded: \$33 million has been allocated for on-the-ground implementation of the initiative in 2012.

"Why should sportsmen care about this initiative?" asked Fosburgh. "First, the seven species in the agreement are surrogates for important game species. Conserving and restoring sage grouse directly benefits mule deer and pronghorn, which share the same habitats. Second, about half of all Americans hunt only on private lands. Ensuring that these lands remain healthy and productive and that landowners have adequate resources

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Hunter and angler numbers up

Expenditures rival some of America's biggest companies

A coalition of hunting and angling groups and the outdoor industry briefed members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus on the rise in hunting and fishing participation in this country. The groups, led by the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Cabela's, Safari Club International, National Shooting Sports Foundation, American Sportfishing Association and National Marine Manufacturers Association, used recently released data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) 2011 National Survey on Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation to compare hunting and fishing participation and expenditures to mainstream industries.

"To put it in perspective, the 37 million sportsmen and women over the age of 16 in America is the same as the population of the state of California, and the \$90 billion they spent in 2011 is the same as the global sales of Apple's iPad™ and iPhone™ in the same year," commented Jeff Crane, president of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. "Hunting and fishing have been, and clearly continue to be, important elements of our country's outdoor heritage and they are critically important to our nation's economy - particularly the small local economies that support quality hunting and fishing opportunities."

The participation and economic data, released in August by the Service shows a 9 percent increase in hunters and an 11 percent increase in anglers compared to the 2006 survey. The important thing to note is that these numbers are just accounting for sportsmen and women age 16 and older so actual participation is likely higher when adding in youth. Most notable, however, is that hunters and anglers continued their strong

spending habits. From equipment expenditures (\$8.2 billion for hunters, \$6.2 billion for anglers) to special equipment (\$25 billion towards boats, RV's, ATV's and other such vehicles) to trip-related expenses totaling over \$32 billion, sportsmen and women continue to direct their discretionary income toward their outdoor pursuits.

"The economic impact of hunting and fishing is profound in South Dakota and across the country," noted Senator John Thune (SD), Republican Senate Co-Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, at the briefing. "It's important that we have policies that promote hunting and fishing and support the outdoor industries."

"People don't think about hunting and fishing in terms of economic growth," stated Senator Jon Tester (Montana), Democratic Senate Co-Chair of the CSC, to the participants. "The statistics in the new economic impact report are great and will go a long way to telling the public just how important hunting and fishing are in this country."

"One of the statistics I learned today is that the \$6 billion that hunters spent in 2011 on guns, ammunition and archery equipment is comparable to the sales of bicycles in the United States. This is particularly important because most of those gun and ammunition companies are based right here in this country meaning sportsmen's dollars support American jobs and American workers," said Representative Bob Latta (OH), Republican House Vice-Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus.

"In today's world, we are talking about economics and jobs - those are the main drivers in most policy discussions. It is so important to see how strong the sportsmen's community is and what they are doing to support the American economy so they

have a voice in those discussions," commented Senator Jim Risch (ID), Republican Senate Vice Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus.

Beyond the impact to businesses and local economies, sportsmen and women have played an essential and unmatched role in conserving fish and wildlife and their habitats. Sportsmen and women are the nation's most ardent conservationists, putting money toward state fish and wildlife management. When you combine license and stamp fees, excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment, the tax from small engine fuel and membership contributions to conservation organizations, hunters and anglers directed \$3 billion towards on-the-ground conservation and restoration efforts in 2011 - that is over \$95 every second. This does not include their own habitat acquisition and restoration work for lands owned or leased for the purpose of hunting and fishing, which would add another \$11 billion to the mix.

The comparisons released during the congressional briefing are the beginning of what will include more detailed economic and participation data and comparisons to more industries. A full report that will include state-by-state information will be released in late November.

"This is the 75th anniversary of our nation's system of conservation funding - a model that is envied throughout the world - that directs excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment toward state-based conservation. The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration programs have resulted in robust fish and wildlife populations and quality habitat that is the legacy of the industry and sportsmen and women," said Michael Nussman, president and CEO of the American Sportfishing Association.

Therapeutic hunting

By Whitetail Weekly

As my feet hit the porch, I could tell right away it was going to be a good day. The air was cool and crisp, a sliver-shaped moon cast barely a hint of light over the dark morning and the crickets sang in harmony. As I started my walk I was giddy and full of excitement. I had visions of that first deer of the morning coming into sight and could almost hear the faint crunch of leaves as the second deer of the morning worked in behind it.

Unfortunately it was the morning of August 15th and hunting season

was still some 46 days away. Regardless of the date, just the feel of the morning put me in a good mood and calmed my nerves as I drove into work. My work day was hectic, frustrating, confusing and lasted 45 minutes past my quitting time but still wasn't long enough to get everything done that I needed to complete. I walked towards the exit with my head in a fog and hanging low. I was a tired, beaten man.

As I swung the door open and felt the fresh air, something popped into my head. I thought back to the memory of the morning and that feeling of fall. Just like that my at-

titude changed, I pepped up a bit and could feel my head coming out of the 5 o'clock fog it had been in. It wasn't fall like anymore, probably close to 80 with a warm sun, but that didn't matter to me. My mind was back on my front porch in that crisp morning air and that was all I cared about. The worries of the day were left right there behind me and things were quickly looking up.

It's crazy to me how therapeutic hunting can be and it never ceases to amaze me how a few days in the woods can all but erase any bad

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OUTDOORS

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natural world.

"Our affiliate network has been a leader in reconnecting kids with nature for decades," says Kevin Coyle, NWF's

vice president for education and training. "Whether running summer camps to get youth hunting and fishing or engaging families for outdoor learning at a nature center, NWF affiliates will play a critical role moving forward."

Working towards the 10 million kids goal will help the entire NWF family reach broader audiences and build pow-

erful new allies to grow the conservation movement. NWF is currently developing national partnerships around the goal with organizations like the YMCA of the USA and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). In fact, just last week NRPA announced its intent to enlist 1,000 park agencies in the effort.



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Sportsmen poll: Public lands protection trumps energy production

A new national poll released today shows sportsmen prioritize protecting public lands above energy production. The poll conducted by Chesapeake Beach Consulting shows threats to America's conservation heritage are priority issues for sportsmen, on par with gun rights.

"Hunters and anglers tend to be conservative politically, but many are split-ticket and independent voters. What's clear from this poll is that sportsmen deeply value conservation and believe we have a moral responsibility to confront global warming to protect our children's future," said Bob Carpenter, president of Chesapeake Beach Consulting.

"Through shifting political winds, sportsmen have not flinched in their conservation values," said Larry Schweiger, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. "Candidates at all levels should answer this simple question: What's your plan for protecting our outdoor heritage for our children's future? These are ethics that sustain America's wildlife, outdoor economy and healthy families."

Among the poll's key findings:

Given a choice between protecting America's public lands and prioritizing the production of oil, gas and coal, 49 percent want to protect public lands and just 35 percent choose fossil fuel production.

Conservation is just as important as gun rights, according to nearly half (47 percent) of sportsmen polled. Another 13 percent believe conservation issues are even more important than gun rights.

Supermajorities say Congress should update the 1872 Mining Law to ensure public lands are protected and royalties generated are used to clean up abandoned mines (82 percent favor) and restore Clean Water Act protections to wetlands and waterways, including smaller creeks and streams, to protect our health and important fish and wildlife habitat (79 percent favor).

Two in three sportsmen polled (66 percent) believe we have a moral responsibility to confront global warming to protect our children's future. Additionally, 69 percent agree the U.S. should reduce its carbon emissions that contribute to global warming and threaten fish and wildlife habitat.

Sportsmen strongly believe BP should be held accountable and fined the maximum amount allowed for the 2010 Gulf oil disaster (81 percent) and that those funds should be used exclusively to restore the fish and wildlife habitat of the Gulf of Mexico and its fishing and hunting heritage and not for infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, ports and convention centers (87 percent).

"The nation's fishermen and hunters are in the frontline of our field naturalists. Doing what they love best they see firsthand the impact of climate change on natural systems and our wildlife. Their conclusions are based on observations made over years spent in the out of doors," said sportsman and conservationist Theodore Roosevelt IV. "As poll shows, by substantial margins fisherman and hunters believe we have a moral responsibility to act as stewards to pass on to our children's children our magnificent public lands and waters."

Hunting and fishing are on the rise in America. From 2006 to 2011, hunting was up 9 percent and fishing is up 11 percent, according to a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report. In all, over 37 million Americans took part in hunting, fishing or both, spending \$90 billion.

"Protecting public lands and confronting climate change may not be priorities for political consultants in DC, but wildfires, drought, and extreme heat are threats to our way of life out west," said Kathleen Hadley, Western Vice-Chair of the National Wildlife Federation Board of Directors. "We can't destroy America's outdoor heritage and leave the mess

for our children and grandchildren to clean up."

"Sportsmen are on the front lines of global warming. From ducks short-stopping to cold-water fish stressed by rising water temperatures to coastal habitats being swallowed by sea level rise, we're already seeing changes where we hunt and fish," said Richard Mode, NWF affiliate representative from the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. "For those of us with boots on the ground, not in an office, these are literally kitchen table issues."

Read the poll memo and slide deck at <http://NWF.org/Sportsmen> and get more National Wildlife Federation news at <http://NWF.org/News>.

Poll background: This national public opinion poll conducted among 800 self-identified hunters and anglers was conducted by Chesapeake Beach Consulting from August 27 through September 1, 2012 for the National Wildlife Federation. The sample for this survey was randomly drawn from a list of self-identified hunters and anglers. To qualify, a respondent must have indicated they were a hunter, an angler or both as well as a registered voter. All interviews were conducted by telephone, including 15 percent of the interviews by cell phone. The margin of error for this study is plus or minus 3.2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

CATFISH

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believe the next state record is already swimming in Milford. Other reservoirs stocked with blue catfish include Tuttle Creek, El Dorado, Clinton, Perry, Melvern, Wilson, Cheney, John Redmond, Kanopolis, Lovewell and Glen Elder. It's too early to tell if blue cats will thrive and grow in other reservoirs the way they have in Milford, but if they do, anglers better hang on to their rods.

New report shows rise in hunting, fishing and wildlife-related recreation in 28 states

By Outdoor Hub

Participation in wildlife-associated recreation increased in 28 states since 2006, according to the findings of the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation State Overview Report released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today. The State Overview Report is the second in a series of reports to be released by the Service over the next few months highlighting results from the National Survey.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar released the first report on August 15, 2012. The National Survey, conducted since 1955, measures participation in these activities and related spending on trips and equipment across the nation and in individual states. The 2011 National Survey data show that hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers spent \$145 billion last year on related gear, trips and other purchases such as licenses, tags and land leasing or ownership.

“Hunting, fishing and wildlife watching are part of our national heritage, and the trip and equipment-related spending of participants’ forms significant support for local economies across the country,” said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. “These survey results are good news for the small businesses and rural communities who depend on wildlife-related tourism, and it shows an encouraging increase in personal investment of citizens in the future of wildlife and wild places.”

Public lands managed by federal and state agencies support much of the fishing, hunting, and wildlife-associated recreation that Americans enjoy. The State Overview, released today provides national survey data on wildlife-related recreation at the state level, which helps state natural resource agencies to plan and provide wildlife-related recreation opportunities.

“The State by State data from the National Survey is where the rubber meets the road for state fish and

wildlife agencies,” said Dr. Jonathan Gasset, Commissioner of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Resources Commission and President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. “These results help each state set the course for future fish and wildlife conservation and they help quantify the results of investments that each state has made in its wildlife-related recreation programs, especially hunter and angler recruitment and retention programs.”

Highlights from this overview include the following information:

Of the 28 States with increases in the number of wildlife-related recreation participants from 2006 to 2011, the largest percentage increases were seen in Alaska (47 percent) and Louisiana (40 percent).

South Dakota had the highest proportion of state residents who hunted—21 percent.

Alaska had the highest proportion of state residents who fished—40 percent.

Vermont had the highest proportion of state residents who wildlife watched—53 percent.

Overall, the 2011 Survey found that 38 percent of all Americans 16 years of age and older participated in wildlife-related recreation in 2011, an increase of 2.6 million participants from the previous survey in 2006. Participation in recreational fishing increased by 11 percent and hunting was up 9 percent. This increase reverses a trend over previous Surveys showing a 10% decline in hunting participation between 1996 and 2006. The 2011 Survey reports a corresponding increase in hunting equipment expenditures, which are up 29 percent from 2006.

Through landmark conservation laws supported by American sportsmen and women, funds collected by states through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses are combined with federal funds from excise tax on sport weapons and ammunition and on angling equipment to pay for fish and wildlife conservation and associated recreational opportunities. Together, these laws

support the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, first established 75 years ago. Since then, hunters and anglers have paid more than \$11 billion in excise taxes on purchases of firearms, ammunition, archery, fishing and boating equipment toward thousands of conservation projects, wildlife-associated recreational opportunities and access, and sport shooting ranges around the nation.

The National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, conducted every five years since 1955, has become one of the most important sources of information on fish and wildlife recreation in the United States. Federal, State, and private organizations use the rigorously-compiled and detailed information to manage wildlife and wildlife-related recreation programs, market products, and forecast trends in participation and economic impacts.

The 2011 report was requested by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Survey Branch of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, and administered by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau conducted detailed interviews from individuals at 48,627 households across the country to obtain samples of sportspersons and wildlife watchers. Information was collected through computer-assisted telephone and in-person interviews. The Survey is funded through a Multi-State Conservation Grant from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program.

The Survey is being released in phases – the first report was issued in August 2012 and presented data for the nation as a whole. The final national report will be available in November 2012, and the detailed state reports will be issued on a flow basis beginning in December 2012.

The full State Overview Report can be downloaded at <http://library.fws.gov/Pubs/natsurvey2011-prelim-state.pdf>.

THERAPY

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moods or bad times that may be going on for me. Some people go to church and some people go to a therapist but for me, when it comes to a mental cleansing and reboot, there is nothing that compares to a few hours of solitude in the deer woods. It's amazing the things I can think about and take care of as I scan the woods looking for deer. Things just aren't as big of a deal when I'm out enjoying nature and taking in the things going on around me.

People, both hunters and non hunters alike, are always asking the question "what do you like about hunting". My answer to that question tends to change a bit depending on who's asking, but one thing that

never changes is my love for simply being out there. There is something really enjoyable for me in the simple act of blending in with nature and letting it go on around you.

Make no mistake, the actual hunting is a huge, huge part of what I love about deer hunting but I can't tell you how many times I've stopped looking for deer and just spent 5 or 10 minutes watching the sun set or rise from my stand. Or how many times a deer has snuck up on me as I watched a squirrel, bird, chipmunk or some other animal go about its daily routine.

I've spent time on my stand thinking about lost family members, lost loves, lost opportunities and lost money. I sat one year and wondered what it would be like to be a father. I then sat the next year and thought about how crazy it was to now be

a father. I've come up with songs, made up jokes and laid out ideas for blog entries. I've thought way too much about some things and have also sat and thought about absolutely nothing for hours on end. I've listened to all kinds of animals and critters and have also listened to silence until it became deafening.

If you're reading this blog you're likely a deer hunter and are most probably nodding your head in agreement with some of the stuff written above. I'm sure you will also agree with me that it's been a long summer and it has been far too long since you last hit the deer woods.

Take solace in the fact that hunting season will be here before you know it, but in the meantime that rush of adrenalin that will fuel your soul is no more than a cool crisp August morning away.

CONSERVATION

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defined the maximum amount allowable for the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil disaster and that the funds should be used to restore fish and wildlife habitat along the Gulf and not for infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, ports and convention centers.

The poll was taken Aug. 27-Sept. 1 of self-identified hunters and anglers who are also registered voters. It has an error margin of 3.2 percent.

"Hunters and anglers are the original conservationists," said John Gale, a representative for the National Wildlife Federation. "They have an intimate level of understanding that when you take care of fishing and hunting habitat, hunting and fishing can largely take care of themselves."

Sportsmen, particularly hunters, tend to be classified on the conservative side and usually vote Republican; 42 percent of those polled said

they were from that party.

"It is great to see political partisanship doesn't really play a role here," Gale said. "Hunters and anglers are putting conservation and public lands stewardship first, at least in this poll. They are increasingly upset about impacts on their opportunity to hunt and fish and the issues that threaten the future of hunting and fishing for their children."

Gale hopes the numbers in this poll will help more sportsmen get involved in efforts to protect the hunting and fishing heritage in North America.

After years of decline a recent survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed a national increase in hunting (up 9 percent) and fishing (up 11 percent) from 2006 to 2011. Overall, 37 million Americans hunted or fish, or both and spent \$90 billion doing it.

"Through shifting political winds, sportsmen have not flinched in their conservation values," Larry Schweiger, president and CEO of the

National Wildlife Federation, said in a prepared statement. "Candidates at all levels should answer this simple question: 'What's your plan for protecting our outdoor heritage for our children's future?' These are ethics that sustain America's wildlife, outdoor economy and healthy families."

Results of a new poll that shows sportsmen prioritize protecting public lands — with support even as strong as that for gun rights — really came as no surprise to Ken Theis.

"There is an awareness creeping into the ultraconservative community that has been supporting gun rights forever as they realize that if they don't start looking at the environmental conditions of habitat that the only reason to have firearms is for self-protection," said Theis, Utah coordinator for Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

"We have destroyed a lot of habitat and hunting and fishing opportunities are diminishing as a result. It is encouraging to see an attitude that habitat matters."

HUNTERS

Continued from Page 2

on a well-charted long, slow multi-decade decline. Much like the chickens themselves, those who grew up hunting chickens are becoming fewer each year. Coincidence that with the fact there are simply fewer new or younger hunters out there now who hunt any upland birds and you start chasing the demographic dragon.

I grew up always wanting to hunt lessers, but by the time I got around to actually attempting it, Oklahoma's chicken season was history due to the continued decline of chicken numbers and chicken hunters. This formerly popular and populous prairie gamebird effectively reduced to the status of recreational extinction.

I've been to a number of regional stakeholder meetings about the lesser prairie-chicken, and by and large, hunters aren't really represented at these meetings. It amazes me that we're on a precipice, the very edge of losing an iconic species and no one really knows about it. And part of that ignorance, I think, stems from the fact that no one really knows just how few lesser prairie-chickens are left.

So it was with a great deal of interest that I read a press release yesterday that, for the first time, put an empirical number, a baseline on the current number of lesser prairie-chickens left in the wild.

From a press release from the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife

Agencies:

The lesser prairie-chicken is an iconic grassland grouse species native to parts of Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma. However, long-term population declines have brought state and federal agencies together in an attempt to better manage lesser prairie-chickens and their habitats. Through a multi-state collaborative effort, the first statistically-valid, range-wide population estimate for the lesser prairie-chicken has been produced, according to the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (WAFWA) Grassland Initiative. The range-wide lesser prairie-chicken population is estimated at 37,170 individuals.

While the lesser prairie-chicken population estimate may appear low, biologists are encouraged by what they found. The surveys this spring detected several previously unknown leks, despite severe drought conditions across the region last year. They also discovered leks in Kansas beyond what was thought to be the northern limit of the historic range of the species. Lesser prairie-chicken 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. Biologists believe this expansion may represent a northward shift in the population of the species caused by climatic conditions associated with changing precipitation patterns.

"Historically, we saw habitat conditions like we are observing now in the 1930s, and we thought the species went

extinct," said Bill Van Pelt, WAFWA Grassland Coordinator. However, with habitat conservation programs being implemented through various Farm Bill programs and Candidate Conservation Agreements under the Endangered Species Act, we are seeing lesser prairie-chickens maintaining themselves and even expanding into new areas in some parts of their range. This definitely boosts our confidence in coming up with a plan to maintain this species", concludes Van Pelt. The final survey report is available at <http://www.wafwa.org/html/aerial-surveys.shtml>.

So at least now we know. From literally millions to some 37,000 birds hanging on at the very margins of sustainability. It is, I suppose, cause for both hope and despair.

The lesser prairie-chicken's survival parallels another historically significant and once-populous species that recently made the news: the greenback cutthroat trout. Turns out the fish many of us thought were native greenbacks are in fact a different strain of fish, according to Kirk Deeter's recent FlyTalk blog. I found the story incredibly poignant. To think that the entire remaining population of true native greenbacks can now be found in one tiny creek. That's it, no more, anywhere.

Now there's the possibility of no more greenbacks and lesser prairie-chickens. The similarity in the arcs of their respective stories, is sadly telling. But at least now, with both species, we know exactly what we have to work with, and what we need to do. Here's hoping we actually do it.

LAND

Continued from Page 13

and long-term regulatory certainty is in everyone's best interests. Secretaries Vilsack and Salazar should be commended for taking this bold step forward in the

name of conservation and sportsmen."

"The Grouse Partnership is encouraged to see the NRCS and USFWS work together to conserve grouse," said Dr. Terry Riley, director of conservation policy for The Grouse Partnership, a TRCP partner group. "We hope this cooperative effort will result in more and better grouse habitat and more opportu-

nities for grouse enthusiasts."

"This is the quintessential 'win-win' proposition for wildlife and private land owners - ball caps and cowboy hats will be waving across the country," concluded Williams. "I applaud the ingenuity and partnership-building efforts of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service."

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