

QUWF



Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation

Making a Difference for Wildlife and Clean Streams, One Acre, One Stream, at a Time



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Conservation act: Chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Congressman Bruce Westerman (AR), introduced Feb. 29 the America’s Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act (AWHCA), a comprehensive bill that seeks to enhance fish and wildlife habitat across the country, **Page 2**

Shooting sports junior

Olympics: The Hillsdale College John Anthony Halter Shooting Sports Education Center will host 2024’s Junior Olympic Development Camps. The camps, which are open to intermediate-to-advanced trap and skeet shooters ages 12-20, will take place from July 14 to 19 (Trap) and from July 21 to 26 (Skeet), **Page 19**

For all your chapter needs, please call Leslie Casanova [direct](#) at Sportsman Insurance Agency at 1-800-925-7767.

In most cases, Leslie can have your insurance the same day!

Also, any questions concerning banquets and/or vendor programs, please call the QUWF National Office at (417) 345-5960.

THE HABITAT GUIDE

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation

Notes from the Dashboard: The two-fer month: Our intern’s first paper and spring chemicals



By Craig Alderman — Everyone likes positive firsts and the beginning of new things, efforts and experiences. In this guide, you will read the first feature article by our intern Calvin Chainey. Calvin is our social media manager and research assistant currently attending the College of the Ozarks in Missouri for wildlife management.

Thanks to the partnership of the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the QUWF

Private Lands Chief Jason Jenson and the AFC, our student is beginning to spread his wings in the world of wildlife conservation through private lands management.

His first published paper in this month’s Habitat Guide (**find it on page 25**) covers the critical information on lime use for crops and food plots. Please give it a read; in our bias opinion, he did very well indeed! Now, on to chemicals.

Chemicals - spring preparation

A scary part of wildlife conservation is chemicals - any chemicals used and applied. Scary because of the cost - they are unbelievably high in cost. Scary because they can cause injury to you, others around you, livestock and more. Then there is knowing which to choose, proper preparation, application and clean up. Be scared, cautious and well prepared.

I’m not delving into chemical choices. You need to get expert assistance from the various agencies like state private lands agent, the NRCS or FSA or other experienced NGO biologists based on your goals. Chemicals target a pest, whether it be thistle, multiflora rose, invasive trees or troublesome trees like Locust whose thorns destroy tires or unwanted woolyboogers (bugs, my professional term).

Once you decide on the right chemical or combinations, the homework begins. First job, the most important job and the job that can save you and your efforts is all located in the label on the chemical container.

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Continued from Page 1 — Don't just read the label, sit in your big chair with the label (If you are human, print off a copy online to be able to not get a headache from the micro print size.) off the container of course, and really read through it. Highlight your intended uses, areas you want to use it and when you want to use it.

The label gives you the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you must have to mix, pour or use the chemical. It varies depending on the chemical but safe to say, long sleeve shirts, pants, socks, boots, safety glasses or goggles (if you wear glasses) and the one item that can help in most every exposure, [proper fitting nitrile chemical gloves \(preferably long cuff\)](#). For most, a good box of disposable nitrile chemical gloves will do. [Make sure you have them before twisting a cap.](#)

The label will tell you if others should stay away when you spray, and what equipment to use or NOT use.

The label describes the locations it should be used in, what it should be used for, how much to use, where it should NOT be used, like near domestic water supplies, within XX distances of wells and streams, effects and restrictions on animals, livestock, hay and what NOT to do.

The label covers the conditions needed to properly apply the chemical, wind speeds (drift characteristics), temperature inversion warnings, temperatures etc. Read the label!

The label will tell you how long to stay out of the area, if required, after spraying.

The label tells you how to clean equipment after spraying, and how to dispose of the flush materials.

The label tells you how to store it, where and at what temperatures.

The label suggests first aid for you if you get a chemical in your eye (do you carry bottled water to flush your eyes, several bottles may be required).

All of that and more will be in the label booklet. If you have old eyes, as I said, you can get online and print out a human version. [Read each chemicals booklet you will use, and review every year before starting.](#)

If you use a Restricted Chemical, you will need a license and are required to keep accurate records of use. Chemicals like Tordon 22K are restricted.

Bottom line, the use of chemicals should be only as needed and under the total direction of "the label, the label, the label." Catch you across the creek.

Craig Alderman is the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation executive director.

House committee introduces wildlife conservation act

Chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Congressman Bruce Westerman (AR), introduced Feb. 29 the America's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act (AWHCA), a comprehensive bill that seeks to enhance fish and wildlife habitat across the country.

"The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies appreciates Chairman Westerman's commitment to providing funding to state fish and wildlife agencies for wildlife habitat restoration in the America's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act (AWHCA)," said Chuck Sykes, Director of the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and President of the Association.

The AWHCA would authorize \$300 million in annual funding for the next five years to each state and territorial fish and wildlife agency as well as the District of Columbia to help conserve and manage fish and wildlife species, including at-risk species and those already listed as threatened or endangered. States have developed comprehensive conservation plans that outline important habitat projects and actions that will aid in species recovery. The bill also encourages states and federal agencies to work collaboratively with private landowners to achieve positive conservation outcomes.



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Continued from Page 2 — “The America's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act will empower states and local communities to use proven practices to restore and maintain habitat, which will benefit species in their state’s wildlife action plans. Good habitat management is integral to wildlife management and without it, species have little chance of maintaining sustainable populations and surviving. By strengthening relationships between states, tribes, private landowners and the federal government, we can empower them to implement proactive habitat conservation that will make a difference where it counts: on the ground across our abundant outdoors. I’d like to thank my colleagues who have supported this logical and forward-thinking legislation, and I look forward to working with them and members across the aisle to move this commonsense, financially responsible bill through the legislative process and ultimately into law.” – House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.)

“This bill is a positive step forward to providing funding that state agencies can use to deliver habitat conservation for fish and wildlife on public and private land,” added Sykes. “It is clear that the Chairman has a vision for conserving habitat, and we appreciate that his legislation will provide states with a set of tools to help us accomplish this work.”

Training course offered for new hunter ed instructors

Editor’s Note: We at QUWF believe hands on training, in person, with experienced trained instructors still creates the best grounded hunter’s or outdoorsman. Kudos to Vermont for choosing the pro-active (old) path.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is offering a New Instructor Training Course for people interested in volunteering to teach Hunter Education courses in Vermont.

The training will take place Saturday, April 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the at R.E.C. Zone, 94 Harvest Lane, Williston, VT 05495.

All applicants must complete their instructor paperwork and online homework before attending the course. Instructor application paperwork can be found at: www.tinyurl.com/2pfr7c44

or call 802-828-1193 prior to the course date.

Policies and procedures, field techniques and teaching methods will be covered to give instructors the tools to teach future hunters how to have a safe and enjoyable experience. Lunch will be provided. Be prepared to be outside for at least part of the day.

Applicants are required to pass a background check with a Vermont State Game Warden and apprentice-teach with a chief instructor before they will receive their full State of Vermont Hunter Education Instructor certification.

“Our hunter education instructors are all volunteers, donating their time to pass on a cherished Vermont tradition,” said Hunter Education Training Coordinator Nathan Lafont. “The hours our instructors put in will leverage federal dollars that enable the Hunter Education Program to function.”

Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities are available for free upon request. Requests should be made as early as possible. Please call the office staff at 802-828-1193 (voice) or 1-800-253-0191 (TTY).



QUWF has four landowner coops: The Grouse Coop and the Niangua Coop in Missouri, and the Catskill Mountains Wildlife and Oregon Joint Wildlife coops. Interested in forming a coop? Email Craig Alderman at admin@quwf.net.

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Alabama agencies meet to work on feral swine solutions

Anyone who has explored Alabama's great outdoors or spent time on a tractor cultivating an agricultural crop knows how destructive feral swine can be on the landscape.

Because of the prodigious reproductive capacity of these wild hogs, controlling the populations is difficult at best, and many researchers believe that total eradication of this invasive species is not a viable option.

Some are looking to methods other than hunting or trapping to control the hog numbers, and Texas recently approved the use of a warfarin-based toxicant called Kaput against the burgeoning swine population in that huge state. This action has spurred renewed discussion on the research and developments surrounding various types of feral hog toxicants.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI), the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Wildlife Services Division, and the Soil and Water Conservation Committee met recently and came away with a unified position against approving any



Trapping the whole sounder (family group) is currently the best method to reduce feral swine numbers. ADCNR photo

toxicant, including Kaput, in Alabama at the current time. These entities will continue to stay up-to-date on the latest research and real-world usage of toxicants and periodically revisit the issue.

“Since feral swine are such a huge issue, we thought it best to have a meeting of the top agency leaders for departments that are working in this space to make sure we are all in agreement with what is best for Alabama moving forward,” said Conservation Commissioner Chris Blankenship. “We had an open and frank discussion about the issue, and all agreed that, based on the information we have right now, Kaput was not the best toxicant for feral hog control in Alabama. I appreciate Commissioner (Rick) Pate and his staff, Director (Chuck) Sykes and the others who are very well versed on this issue. I think all of us coming together to discuss this and hearing all perspectives was very helpful.”

ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Director Sykes said at the present time he is not sold on the idea that Kaput is the best solution to a difficult problem.

“Based on the data we have now, I’m not in support of it,” Director Sykes said of the use of Kaput. “There are a lot of questions about the use of toxicants. We’ve been working with the USDA for more than five years on the use of sodium nitrite.”

The warfarin-based toxicants rely on blood-thinning effects to dispatch the hogs. However, the hog may have to ingest the Kaput bait multiple times over a long period before it kills the animal. Sodium nitrite affects the hog's ability to transfer oxygen in its system, and it works quickly. Director Sykes said the sodium nitrite bait is going through the licensing process, and he hopes it will be approved in the next couple of years.

“Sodium nitrite has proven to be very lethal, very effective and very humane in the way it dispatches the hogs during trial usage in Alabama, so we know it works here,” Director Sykes said. “And it doesn't continue to kill on down the food chain line. The pig just eats the product, gets sleepy, lies down and doesn't wake up. The product depletes the oxygen in the bloodstream.”

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Continued from Page 5 — Director Sykes said the sodium nitrite is administered through a peanut butter-based bait that won't be available to the general public.

“Toxicants won't be something that will be available on the shelf at the local co-op for everybody to use,” he said. “This will be for trained, licensed applicators, federal agencies and state agencies to use.”

ADAI Commissioner Pate said any toxicants like Kaput or sodium nitrite will have to be licensed by his agency before they become legal to use.

The ADAI's current stance on a warfarin-based toxicant is:

- There remains insufficient data to justify registration in Alabama considering the toxicity of the product and the known issues that may potentially result from its use.
- There are significant differences in the environmental landscape and environmental conditions that exist between Alabama and Texas, where the product is registered for use.
- The label and the ability of the applicator to follow the instructions on the label are of great concern.
- There appears to be a level of training and education (product specific) that would need to take place, especially in the case of private applicator use of the product.
- Hogs need to feed multiple times to get the desired result.
- The potential for sub-lethal dosing and resistance remains a concern.

“We don't want to minimize the (hog) problem, because we know it's huge,” Commissioner Pate said. “The problem is real. We want to take out as many pigs as possible, but we want to do it the right way. We don't want to jump the gun on this toxicant and regret it down the road. Smart people are working on solutions. We're trying to do as much as we can as fast as we can.”

Leif Stephens with the USDA Wildlife Services office at Auburn said his agency is working diligently on solutions to the feral hog problem.

“The USDA Wildlife Service remains committed to seeking a suitable feral swine toxicant that is highly effective and humane and also poses low risk to non-target species, coupled with cost effectiveness, storage stability and efficient applicator use,” Stephens said. “Those are the key boxes that we want to check when it comes to utilizing toxicants.

“We recognize the warfarin-based toxicant Kaput was recently registered in Texas. Currently, the data on the use of this product does not support our operational needs as a rapidly acting control method, coupled with a low operational cost. Those boxes I mentioned earlier are not being checked at this time.”

Stephens said Wildlife Services has several employees who are tasked with controlling feral swine and the damage they cause throughout the State of Alabama.

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Continued from Page 6 — “This is something we deal with on a daily basis,” he said. “It’s in our face every day, all day, it seems like. It’s important to maintain a variety of control methods to combat these invasive species. No one method will solve feral swine issues. There is not a silver bullet per se. Utilizing multiple control techniques in the management plan is the best way to control feral swine.”

Stephens said the use of a bait with sodium nitrite shows promise, but it needs further refinement before it is approved.

“The sodium nitrite bait offers a lot of hope,” he said. “Right now, we’re trying to reformulate the toxicant so it would minimize the effect on non-target species. When you’re putting toxicants on the landscape, you don’t want to have it out there for a long duration of time. You want something that’s cost effective and very efficient when it’s being applied and humane as well.”

According to the USDA, feral hogs cause more than \$1.5 billion in damages to property, crops, timber, livestock, native wildlife, ecosystems and cultural and historic resources nationally each year. Damage from feral hogs in Alabama is estimated at \$50 million annually.

“Right now, we have hogs in all 67 counties,” Director Sykes said. “Of course, some are a lot worse than others. Most people with hog issues are doing everything they can to keep the numbers in check. We need to get control of the numbers and keep them from exponentially multiplying.

“What the Department has done is to have very liberal seasons and bag limits where you can hunt hogs year-round during the daytime. There’s no daily bag limit or season bag limit. From February 11 to October 1, you can buy a nighttime feral swine and coyote license and hunt them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Throw a baiting license in and you can hunt them over bait.”

Director Sykes said while providing great opportunities for Alabama’s hunters, shooting feral swine is not the best current method to control the herds. Trapping the whole sounder (family group) is the best way to reduce hog numbers.

“You can trap hogs 365 days a year with no season or daily bag limit,” he said. “Removal of the whole sounder is the best tool that we have at our disposal right now. We’re employing that on a lot of state-owned property.”

Recently, the Forever Wild Land Trust Board of Trustees voted to spend up to \$1 million on feral hog removal efforts on Forever Wild properties. The Forever Wild program is administered by ADCNR’s State Lands Division.

Director Sykes also said WFF offers assistance with crop depredation permits where warranted.

“For producers who have hog damage in their agriculture processes, we do offer crop depredation permits even during deer season,” he said. “The producers let the district office know they have issues. We send a biologist out to verify. If the damage is confirmed, permits will be issued to help producers.

“We want everybody to understand that when considering depredation permits, we have to work in a way where we are not putting undue pressure on some of our native resources. If it’s a producer who has significant damage, we have permits for that. Also, we want to give everybody, like a recreational shooter, the opportunity to take hogs, which is why we have liberal seasons and bag limits. We teach trapping classes to educate landowners and managers on the proper techniques. We’re doing what we can to deal with the feral hog problem.”

Arizona: CWD not detected in deer, elk populations

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) has announced that Arizona continues to be clear of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal wildlife disease that affects the nervous system of deer and elk.

Department officials did not find any cases of CWD in the 1,235 deer (mule and white-tailed) and elk that were sampled in 2023. AZGFD collected 431 samples from animals that were harvested and voluntarily submitted by hunters, and another 732 samples through partnerships with game processors and taxidermists. An additional 72 samples were obtained from animals that were involved in vehicle collisions or subject to other fatalities.

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Continued from Page 7 — AZGFD has been testing for the presence of the disease in Arizona since 1998. While CWD has been found in the neighboring states of Utah, New Mexico and Colorado, the disease has not been detected in Arizona. CWD has not been documented to cause disease in people.

AZGFD appreciates the assistance of hunters who submit deer and elk heads for testing, as well as the cooperation of game processors and taxidermists. For more information about CWD, visit www.azgfd.com/healthy.



OK wildlife commission updated on pronghorn study

Oklahoma's pronghorn population has declined, according to statistics presented by Dallas Barber, Big Game Biologist for the [Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation](#), to members of the [Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) at their regular meeting March 4.

Aerial survey results in 2019 showed 2,088 pronghorns throughout Texas and Cimarron counties. That number decreased to 800 pronghorns counted this year. Hunters reported harvesting about 90 pronghorns in 2023, down from about 150 the previous year.

In response to the trend, the Wildlife Department two years ago contracted with the [Oklahoma Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit](#) to conduct a four-year study of pronghorn in Oklahoma. Graduate student researcher Matt Turnley gave a status report to the Commission.

By putting radio collars on captured pronghorns, Turnley said researchers can track animal movement and survival. He said preliminary results to this point indicate nearly all pronghorn born in the Oklahoma Panhandle spend their entire lives there. And the survival rate is about 75% annually for adult pronghorns and about 11% after about six months for fawns.

He said the study is also looking into nutritional quality and predation as contributors to the declining pronghorn population.



Indiana youth reserved turkey hunt apps open now

Youth younger than age 18 on the day of their hunt may apply March 18-28 for reserved youth turkey hunts on DNR properties during this year's youth turkey hunting season, which runs April 20-21.

Interested youth hunters or an adult representing them must register in person or by phone during regular office hours for the property they wish to hunt.

More information about the participating properties and youth turkey hunt regulations is at bit.ly/3Zquj5y.

Hunters are allowed to register for only one property. Limits are placed on the number of youth hunters allowed to hunt a respective property each day. A drawing will be held on Monday, April 1, at properties where the number of registered hunters exceeds the spots available. A youth hunter may be drawn for one or both hunt days, depending on the number of applicants. All applicants will be notified of the drawing results by mail.

To register a youth for a hunt, the following information is needed:

- Hunter's name
- Type of license and license number
- Hunt date(s)
- Mailing address
- Phone number
- Parent or guardian's name, address, and phone number

To purchase a hunting or hunting apprentice license, visit on.IN.gov/inhuntfish.



TrueTimber partners with Perfect Pattern Sportcoats

Editor's Note: Step up your camo attire!

INMAN, S.C. – March 13, 2024 – TrueTimber, the world's best-selling camo brand, has announced a partnership with Perfect Pattern Sportcoats with their introduction of an all-new Strata camo blazer. Perfect Pattern Sportcoats is a company dedicated to providing high-end menswear in patterns tailored to showcase the customer's love of the outdoors.

"We are excited to partner with a fellow South Carolina based business on these jackets and give TrueTimber fans yet another reason to wear our Strata camo," said TrueTimber CEO Rusty Sellars. "Perfect Pattern took an idea that every hunter has had at one point or another and made it a reality for all of us. The quality of the product is quickly noticed, and we are excited to see these start popping up at events across the state and nation."

The Perfect Pattern Strata blazer is available [here](#) for \$349.00, and features the following:

- Two Button Notch Lapel
- Double Rear Vent
- Modern Fit
- Silky Rich 100% Spun, Year-Round, Polyester Fabric

To learn more about Perfect Pattern or view the full Perfect Pattern product line, visit PerfectPatternSportcoats.com. To learn more about the entire TrueTimber product line, and see all available gear and apparel, visit TrueTimber.com. Details about future product launches can be found on TrueTimber's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.



Ruger introduces American Rifle Generation II models

Sturm, Ruger & Company, Inc. (NYSE: RGR) is excited to announce 36 new configurations of the Ruger American® Rifle Generation II, which includes 18 configurations of the new Predator variant of this popular rifle. Predator rifles are available in the full Gen II caliber assortment, from traditional predator calibers like .204 Ruger up to .300 Win Mag.

Generation II Predator models feature a durable, Burnt Bronze Cerakote barreled action and an attractive green stock textured with black and bronze splatter for excellent grip and control in the field. The longer 22" medium contour, cold hammer-forged barrel features deep spiral fluting on most models, improving the balance of the rifle without sacrificing rigidity or accuracy. The threaded muzzle features a factory-installed radial muzzle brake.

The American Gen II builds on the reliability and accuracy of the original Ruger American Rifle with its improved ergonomics, 3-position safety with locking bolt, stainless steel bolt, and more rigid stock. The newly introduced Predator rifles, combined with the launch of 11 new Standard models and seven new Ranch models in various desirable calibers, round out the American Rifle Gen II lineup, which now includes a complete array of Standard, Ranch and Predator models in 47 configurations and 20 calibers.

For more information on the Ruger American Rifle Generation II or to learn more about the extensive line of award-winning Ruger firearms, visit Ruger.com, [Facebook.com/Ruger](https://www.facebook.com/Ruger) or [Instagram.com/Rugersofficial](https://www.instagram.com/Rugersofficial).



ALPS OutdoorZ introduces hunting Summit Trail Seat

Hunters know how good it feels to plop onto the ground after hours of trekking through the wild lands. They also know that it doesn't take long for that relaxing sit to become irritating as the hard ground, rocks, sticks, and dampness put a crimp in the comfort. That's why ALPS OutdoorZ, the premiere manufacturer of extreme-duty hunting packs and outdoor gear, developed the all-new Summit Trail Seat.

The Summit Trail Seat is a self-inflating cushion that is ultralight, compact, and easy to carry in the field. The seat boasts a durable yet soft 30D elastic fabric top cover that ensures maximum comfort and eliminates slippage on uneven ground. The puncture-resistant bottom fabric can easily withstand hard field use while providing a 5.3 R-value insulating and waterproof barrier, making it ideal for sitting on wet, snowy, and cold ground. Anti-slip dots are incorporated into the bottom panel to help keep the seat from sliding on grassy, leafy, and rocky surfaces.

The Summit Trail Seat is also diverse. Deep backcountry hunters can use it as a self-inflating pillow, thereby saving pack bulk and carry weight.

Measuring 16x12x2 inches and weighing a mere 7 oz., the Summit Trail Seat uses a two-way valve for rapid self-inflation and deflation. When it is time to move, simply open the valve, roll up the seat, and stow it in the included stuff sack. The sack features elastic compression straps and comes with a repair kit.



Notes from the Road:

A word many of us like to hear - Spring is here once again



By Nick Prough — Yes, spring is finally here for many of us around the country, or at least the beginning signs of spring are approaching. As I write this, it is 22 degrees with a wind chill of 18 outside my window. After the winter season comes to an end soon, spring is always welcomed by many creatures both man and wildlife alike.

Signs of warmer temperatures are beginning to show up. New plants (great wildlife food sources) are beginning to grow and bloom and spring habitat projects are now in full swing. In talking with a landowner earlier this week, he was checking on his sprayers he carefully winterized last fall making sure everything was ready to go and winterized as planned,

lining out his chemicals and reviewing the labels for invasive sprayings to come later this spring and looking once again at how his existing habitat conditions fared after the winter season.

Spring is always a very busy season for anyone doing wildlife habitat management on their farm or lands they are managing, and this spring season will be no different for all of us. As we enter April, make sure to look at some of the invading cool season grasses such as fescue that has crept into your edge feathering areas you completed the past couple years and be sure to spray under those to remove any unwanted dense grasses from taking over under those vitally important early successional growth areas where more wildlife friendly plants and food sources can thrive.

While at it, April is an excellent month to spray any cool season grassy problem areas that have also begun to invade any of your Native Warm Season Grass (NWSG) seedings along the edges or areas that tend to be problem areas and while the cool season grasses are growing actively before you move onto your invasive plant and tree control sprayings later this spring and summer.

Also, you don't want to forget that the bobwhite quail "Bobs" will be starting their annual "Whistling Tour 2024" very soon and carrying that great sound well into the summer season. Be sure to stop and take a few minutes of your busy schedule at your favorite habitat projects for a few moments now and then to listen for that great sound coming from around those habitat areas. Spring whistling locations and observations can be a very useful tool for a landowner and land manager to get additional information on top of the fall counts they conduct on some of the areas the quail are most utilizing as mated pairing begins as well as locating quail presence on certain tracts of land that you may or may not have heard during your fall covey counts.

As always with anything, this can be another tool in your toolbox to help you in your decision-making process as you plan further habitat projects on various tracts of land. Remember they are not always whistling every day and weather conditions and other factors will affect the process, so be patient and be sure to listen at multiple times of the day and for a few moments of time when you stop and not just a single day thinking then in your mind were did all my quail go.

As with most landowners I visit and talk to throughout the year, if you are spending a significant amount of time on a certain tract of land doing various management efforts you too will probably hear that great sound of spring reverberating thru the fields and forest edges of your land very soon and that can lead to possibly yet another excellent nesting and brood rearing season to follow as we start the process all over again.

Keep up all the great work out there that each of you, your landowners, your chapters and conservation partners are doing on crucial wildlife habitat projects, youth field day events, as well as all your other conservation outreach efforts, you are working on in your local communities each and every day, as you are definitely ... **"Making a Difference for Wildlife One Acre at a Time!"**

Nick Prough is the QUWF chief wildlife biologist and landowner liaison.

ALPS OutdoorZ introduces first hybrid dog stand

They give us their all and never complain, so it is understandable that we want to keep our dogs as safe and comfortable in the field as possible. That is why ALPS OutdoorZ, the premiere manufacturer of extreme-duty hunting packs and outdoor gear, developed the industry's first Hybrid Dog Stand.

Whether you are hunting in a dark flooded marsh, working a dry field, or hunkered knee-deep in reeds, the new Hybrid Dog Stand provides the stable, sure-footed support your dog deserves. Secure it to a tree, free-stand it above the waterline, or set it up in the blind or field for training. With its innovative and adjustable leg supports and integrated cleat-and-ratchet system, the Hybrid Dog Stand is the one-and-done solution for K9 comfort and all-day peak performance.

The heart of the Hybrid Dog Stand is its durable, powder-coated aluminum frame construction with a 26x24-inch platform. Covered with rugged TechMesh for quick water pass-through, the platform also includes Hypalon strapping — a tough CSPE synthetic rubber that provides maximum traction for your dog to launch and to easily catch themselves for mounting. These anti-slip surface strips provide the grip your dog needs, even in wet or frosty conditions.

The platform frame is supported by dual folding and adjustable legs. A clevis system is used to adjust the platform height from 24-36 inches, and each clevis is secured to the frame to prevent accidentally dropping them in the water or muck. The bottom of each leg has a wedge profile so you can easily push them into the ground for increased free-standing stability in sand, dry soil, or subsurface.

For flooded timber use, the Hybrid Dog Stand comes with four tree cleats welded to one side of the platform frame and includes a removable safety cap secured to the frame to prevent loss. Welded-on D-rings provide the anchor points for the 137-inch ratchet strap with gated clips. With this system, the Hybrid Dog Stand can be secured to trees with 45-142 inches of circumference. Because the front and rear legs of the stand can be independently deployed, the front legs can be shoved into the ground for rock-solid stability and safety.

Furthermore, the Hybrid Dog Stand is designed to facilitate carry into and out of the field. The hinged legs fold flat beneath the platform frame, allowing hunters to use the included removable shoulder strap or the integrated handle strap for easy transport.

Overall weight of the Hybrid Dog Stand is 10 lbs., 3 oz. and the MSRP is \$179.99.

For more information about this and other innovative products from ALPS OutdoorZ, visit alpsoutdoorz.com.



Take precautions: Black bears are active and searching

Editor's Note: Though for our Mass Eastern members, being bear aware, no matter where you live if the black bear is present, is important. In Missouri their numbers are increasing and they are posing the same concerns. Check out the information and laws regarding black bear in your state to be sure you understand the information.

Mass Wildlife officials are reminding the public that March is when hungry bears emerge from their winter dens and seek out food. If you live in northern Middlesex County, Worcester County, western Massachusetts, or other areas where bears have been spotted, take these steps to prevent conflicts with black bears:

1. **Take down your bird feeders.** Natural foods, such as acorns and other nuts, are usually available on the ground, but last year's fall hard mast crop was meager. Bears will often ignore seasonally available natural foods, like skunk cabbage, in favor of an easy meal at a backyard bird feeder. Other species, including wild turkeys and coyotes, may also frequent bird feeders which can lead to more human-wildlife conflict. If you enjoy watching birds in your yard, Mass Wildlife suggests adding a water feature or growing native plants, shrubs, and trees to attract birds.?
2. **Secure other human-associated food sources on your property.** Store garbage in closed containers in a garage or outbuilding and put it by the roadside the morning of pick up. Individuals should also secure [bee hives](#), [chickens](#), and [livestock](#). Coops and chicken wire provide inadequate protection from black bears. *Properly installed and maintained [electric fencing](#) is the only way to protect chickens or bee hives from bears.*
3. **Protect your pets.** The presence of a dog could trigger a bear to be aggressive. Check your yard for bears before letting your dog outside. Keep dogs leashed when they're outdoors and never let dogs chase or interact with bears.

There are at least 4,500 black bears in Massachusetts and their range is expanding eastward. Take action by educating yourself and your neighbors about proactive measures to avoid conflicts with bears. For more information, visit mass.gov/bears.

North Dakota nonresident any-deer applications available after April 15

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will have 337 any-deer bow licenses available to nonresidents in 2024.

Applicants [can apply online](#) after April 15 on the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov. The deadline to apply is May 15.

Up to five hunters can apply together as a party. A lottery will be held if more applications are received than licenses available. A total of 2,124 people applied in 2023.

The number of nonresident any-deer bow licenses available is 15% of the previous year's mule deer gun license allocation.



Idaho F&G proposes to cut antlerless deer, antelope hunts

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission originally cut deer and pronghorn controlled hunt tags in May 2023 due to winter severity in the Southeast and Upper Snake Regions.

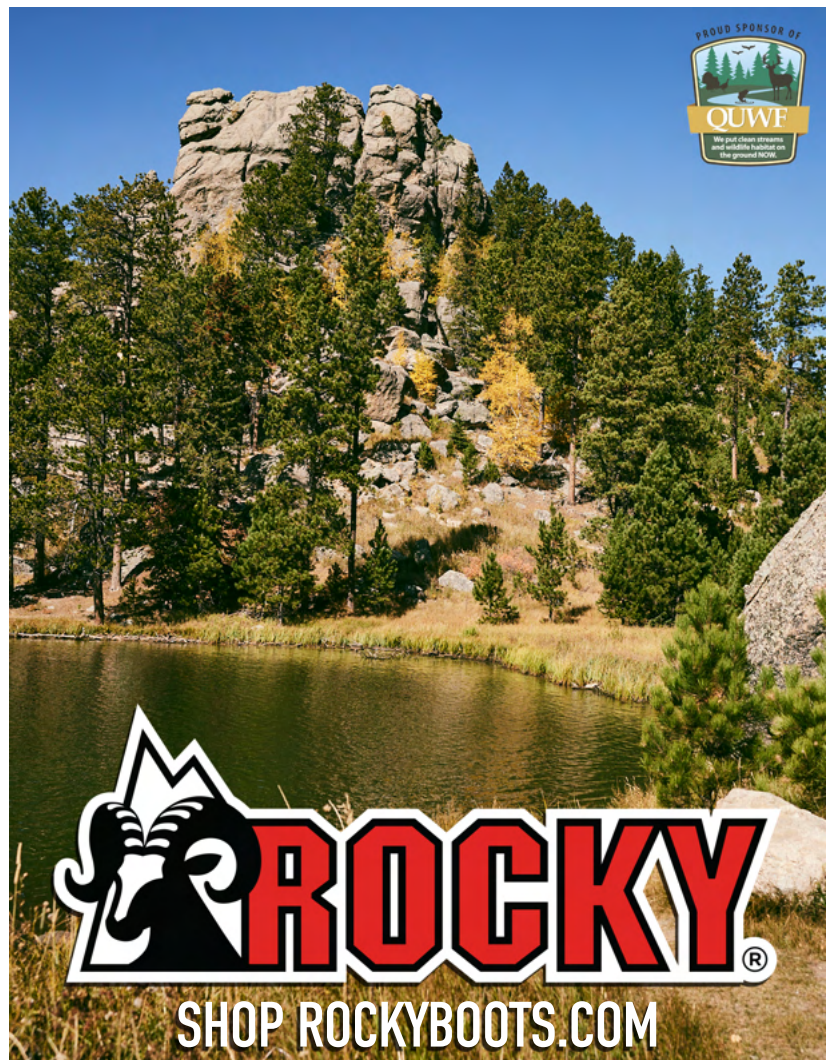
Remember winter 2023? For those who’ve been enjoying the far milder winter this year, recalling the severity of last year’s winter—particularly in the eastern part of the state—might seem like forever ago.

To recap, heavy snows and prolonged cold spells proved to be incredibly detrimental to wintering deer and pronghorn in 2023, and as a result, [Idaho Fish and Game wildlife staff in conjunction with the Fish and Game Commission made the choice to modify](#) (and in some instances, eliminate entirely) many 2023 antlerless mule deer and either-sex pronghorn hunts in eastern Idaho.

Fast-forward a full year, Fish and Game staff are still taking into account herd health and are proposing to make the same alterations to the 2024 hunting season, plus a few more, to give recovering mule deer and pronghorn additional reprieve.

“We recognize the sensitivity of antlerless mule deer hunts, and have also heard concerns from hunters,” said Toby Boudreau, Fish and Game’s Deer and Elk Coordinator. “Despite a much-needed mild winter this year, we still want to give east Idaho’s mule deer and pronghorn populations some more recovery time.”

Fish and Game wildlife staff will be proposing its modifications to the 2024 hunting seasons at the [March Commission meeting](#) on March 20 in Boise. The proposed changes include several controlled hunts and landowner appreciation (LAP) hunts.



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ALPS Mountaineering adds Genesis sleeping bags

ALPS Mountaineering, manufacturer of performance gear for wilderness adventures, exploration, and family camping, continues to move forward with the company’s commitment to providing high-quality, high-performance outdoor products through low-impact manufacturing with the introduction of the all-new Genesis line of sleeping bags.

The Genesis 0° and Genesis +30° mummy bags enter the ALPS Mountaineering lineup as part of the ALPS R3 initiative. R3 stands for Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and that is precisely what the Genesis series bags deliver.

Each bag is constructed of a 100-percent recycled polyester ripstop outer fabric and a recycled polyester inner fabric. Furthermore, the high-loft insulation is comprised of recycled TechLoft Micro insulation. The combination of recycled outer/inner shell and insulation results in bags that will keep you warm and withstand years of backcountry adventures while making a positive impact on the wild country we seek to preserve.

Available in regular (80L x 32W inches) and long (86L x 34W inches) sizes, the Genesis-series bags come with a two-way, full-length separating zipper that, unlike most mummy bags, continues across the foot box for maximum ventilation and versatility. A shorter off-side two-way zipper provides full upper torso ventilation and allows the user to sit comfortably upright.



Continued on Page 16

QUWF welcomes All veterans. All the time.

The Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation was formed to focus on and help veteran landowners, veteran sportsmen, and all veterans who are interested in the great outdoors.

QUWF staff will help all veterans find and get benefit assistance through the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) or other resources.

You are NOT alone.

Veterans who served our country honorably deserve and have earned the right now to enjoy its freedoms and receive the support and benefits they deserve.

We are the ONLY VETERAN FORMED and managed national wildlife and conservation organization in the U.S. QUWF and our chapters support veteran businesses as well. Let us know.



Continued from Page 15 — Both bags come with compression stuff sacks to minimize carry bulk. They are offered in the spruce/iceberg green color scheme representative of all ALPS Mountaineering’s R3 sustainable material products. The MSRP for the Genesis 0° is \$129.99, and for the Genesis +30°, it is \$99.99.

For more information on the new Genesis sleeping bags and other camping gear from ALPS Mountaineering, visit alpsmountaineering.com.

Michigan: Buy ORV license and trail permit today

Editor’s Note: Many today are enjoying another use of their hunting ATV, UTV and side by side explosion and enjoying additional trail riding in the great outdoors. Many private and public parks are open and opening, covering thousands of acres of outdoor habitat. Find the local ORV Parks near you, many have great outdoor family activities schedules.

With April 1 marking the start of the 2024-25 ORV season here in Michigan, now is a great time to purchase your license and trail permit. You'll have access to 4,000 miles of state-designated ORV trails and scramble areas, eligible county/national forest roads, state forest roads (open to ORV use) and more.

These licenses and trail permits are valid for one year, which begins April 1 and ends March 31 of the following year. **BUY TODAY**



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Sea turtle nesting season arrives along Florida coasts

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is sharing the reminder that sea turtles are starting to nest on our beaches. Residents and visitors can play a big part in helping to protect vulnerable nesting sea turtles this spring and summer while visiting Florida’s coastal habitats.

Because our state’s shorelines provide important nesting habitat for several species of threatened and endangered sea turtles, beachgoers can have a significant impact on their nesting success. To help nesting sea turtles, people can take easy steps to protect them, including giving them space, minimizing disturbances and keeping beaches clean and dark.



Clear the way at the end of the day: Female sea turtles expend large amounts of energy crawling out of the surf and far enough up the sand in order to dig and lay nests in spots that are less vulnerable to the tides. Obstacles on the beach can entrap and prevent them from nesting as they crawl across the sand to lay their eggs. Trash, holes in the sand and other obstacles can also prevent sea turtle hatchlings from reaching the water

Continued on Page 19

An advertisement for Alps Outdoorz. The background is a photograph of a hunter in a field of tall grass, wearing a red jacket and a backpack, holding a rifle. The text is overlaid on the image. In the top left, there is a brown leather-like banner with the text "QUALITY GEAR TRIED & TRUE A LIFETIME OF RESEARCH BY A FAMILY OF HUNTERS". In the top right, the website "ALPSOUTDOORZ.COM" and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are displayed. On the left side, the text "YOUR HUNT DEPENDS ON GREAT GEAR" is written in large, bold, white letters, with "PACKS | FURNITURE | HUNTING BLINDS" in smaller text below it. At the bottom, the "ALPS OUTDOORZ" logo is shown in orange and white, with the tagline "EXCEED YOUR EXPECTATIONS." below it.

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ALPS Mountaineering
Leisure - Teal
Product No. 8151928



ALPS Mountaineering
Nalgene bottle - Clementine Sunset
Product No. 7090110

Review all products online at www.alpsbrands.com

Continued from Page 17 — once they emerge from their nests. Food scraps attract predators, such as raccoons and crows, that prey on sea turtle hatchlings. Litter on beaches can entangle sea turtles, birds and other wildlife. What can you do to help? Properly stash or recycle all trash, fill in human-made holes in the sand, and remove all beach toys, gear and furniture from the sand before sunset. Fishing line can be deadly to sea turtles, waterbirds and other wildlife, so be sure to dispose of it properly. To find a monofilament recycling station near you, visit mrrp.myfwc.com.

Lights out: Any lighting can misdirect and disturb nesting sea turtles and their hatchlings, leading them away from the ocean and toward potential danger. To prevent this, beachgoers should use natural starlight to see when on the beach at night and avoid using flashlights or cellphones. Anyone living along or visiting Florida beaches can do their part by putting porch, parking or deck lights out and closing curtains after dark to avoid disorienting nesting and hatchling sea turtles on the beach. If lighting could still be visible from the beach, be sure it is **long, low and shielded**.

Admire from afar: While it can be exciting to witness sea turtles on the beach, getting too close (50 feet or less) to nesting sea turtles can cause them to leave the beach before they complete the nesting process. If an animal changes their behavior, you're likely too close. Remember – it is illegal to harm or disturb nesting sea turtles, their nests and eggs, or to pick up hatchlings.

Sea turtles typically return to nest in March along Florida's southeast Atlantic coast from Brevard County south to Broward County, while nesting begins on Gulf Coast or north Florida beaches in April or May.

For more information about nesting sea turtles and how you can help, visit MyFWC.com/SeaTurtle or see the FWC's "[Be a Beach Hero](#)" brochure. Other ways to help sea turtles include reporting those that are sick, injured, entangled or dead to the [FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline](#) at 888-404-FWCC (3922).

Hillsdale College announces upcoming development camp

The Hillsdale College John Anthony Halter Shooting Sports Education Center will host 2024's Junior Olympic Development Camps. The camps, which are open to intermediate-to-advanced trap and skeet shooters ages 12-20, will take place from July 14 to 19 (Trap) and from July 21 to 26 (Skeet).

The Junior Olympic Development Camps are designed to help promising young shooters advance in the Olympic shotgun disciplines, providing Olympic hopefuls with advanced training from national team members, former Olympians, and world champions. "These are some of the most promising young shooters in the country — maybe even the world," said Caitlin Connor Royer, assistant program development and competition manager for Hillsdale College's Halter Center and multi-time World Cup Medalist. "These camps provide them with the coaching and mentorship they need to take it to the next level. USA Shooting is already one of the top programs in the world. Events like this ensure it will become even stronger."

Following each camp, the Halter Center will host the Junior Olympic Championships for each respective discipline, meaning camp attendees — should they choose to compete — will have the opportunity to test their mettle against one another on the national stage. Some may even qualify for the Junior Olympic team. "The Halter Center really is the perfect place to host these events," said Royer.

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Continued from Page 19 — “Its shooting sports facilities are state-of-the-art, and lodging, meal, and transportation accommodations provided by Hillsdale College help everyone to concentrate on what they are here to do — shoot.”

About the John Anthony Halter Shooting Sports Education Center

The Halter Center is a state-of-the-art shooting facility located five miles from the Hillsdale College campus. Opened in 2008, the Center aims to introduce individuals to shooting sports and encourage interest across all levels of experience. The Halter Center also serves an educational purpose by promoting the principles of the Constitution and teaching beginner and experienced shooters in various classes. Home to Hillsdale College’s collegiate shooting teams and the USA national team, the Halter Center is also a resource for the public through camps, conferences, and other programming. For more information, visit? shootingsports.hillsdale.edu.



Hillsdale College has been the home of the USA Shooting National Team since 2019 and has hosted the Junior Olympic Nationals in shotgun, Senior Nationals in shotgun, the Para Grand Prix in shotgun, Part One Olympic Trials for the 2024 Olympics, and Junior Olympic Trap and Skeet development camps and championships. The Center boasts 113 range acres, four international skeet fields, a 22-station sporting clays course, five international bunkers, a small arms range, an action shooting range, a five-stand range, an international archery range, nine American Trap fields, and an AcuSport lodge and grill.

Bobwhite quail back in PA, according to game commission

A wildlife species native to Pennsylvania but long missing is back home again.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission today released 50 bobwhite quail on the grounds of Letterkenny Army Depot in Franklin County. That brings to 76 the number of bobwhites planted on site in recent weeks, with one more release to go.

The birds – which should increase their numbers exponentially over the course of the spring breeding season – are the final brick in a foundation the Game Commission began laying more than a decade ago.

“This is an exciting time, the next chapter in a story of wildlife restoration,” said Game Commission Executive Director Bryan Burhans. “It’s difficult – not impossible, but difficult – to take any species that’s disappeared and bring it back again.

“But Pennsylvania has a proud history of doing just that. White-tailed deer, elk, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, all were gone or nearly so from our borders and now are thriving across Pennsylvania. With today’s release, maybe, just maybe, bobwhites are on the same path.”

Bobwhites are by nature a boom-and-bust-type of species, incredibly productive breeders, but with short lifespans and prone to dramatic population swings. In good habitat, though, they can survive all that long-term.

They certainly did in Pennsylvania, for a long time. The Keystone State had quail in all 67 counties in the mid-1800s, and they remained abundant in many of those places into the mid- 20th century.

But land use changes not necessarily friendly to quail changed everything.

Bobwhites, as well as other grassland birds, require what’s known as “old field” habitat that provides food, nesting cover and shelter. Pennsylvania once had lots of it in the form of small family farms. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Keystone State had 202,250 farms in 1920, covering 61% of the state’s total land mass.



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Continued from Page 20 — Many of those disappeared over the ensuing decades, though. NASS's latest, just-released U.S. Census of Agriculture says Pennsylvania had just 49,053 farms in 2022, covering less than 25% of the state.

Not surprisingly, quail disappeared as those farms did. The Game Commission officially declared them extirpated – gone from within our state borders – after conducting extensive surveys in 2013 and 2014. But it's likely they were lost even earlier, in the late 1990s or early 2000s, said Andrew Ward, the Game Commission's quail biologist.

In the years since, the Game Commission has been working to bring them back. Step one was finding a potential restoration site and creating as much bobwhite quail habitat there as possible.

Enter Letterkenny. Starting in 2017, the Game Commission and Letterkenny began mowing, seeding, disking, burning, herbiciding and otherwise managing about 2,700 acres of the U.S. Army installation focused on the repair and modernization of air and missile defense systems.

Todd Black, Deputy to the Commander at Letterkenny, said today's quail release wouldn't have been possible without those countless hours spent developing the Bobwhite Quail Focus Area – the only of its kind in Pennsylvania.

“The release of northern bobwhite quail into their new home highlights how Letterkenny takes proactive measures and works with our partners in the Game Commission to adapt operations and steward Army lands,” Black said. “Our investment in species habitat not only ensures mission access and flexibility of use but contributes to our overall readiness as an organization.”

Letterkenny and the Game Commission put all that work up for review, too. Bobwhite experts from around the state and country were brought to Letterkenny at multiple times in recent years, to first assess the site's habitat potential and then grade the work being done to improve it. In 2023, 65 such pros from the National Bobwhite and Grasslands Initiative's technical committee declared the site ready for birds.

“We now have warm-season, bunch and clump grasses to provide nesting cover,” Ward said. “We have forbs and legumes to provide brood habitat as well as food. And we have shrubby, woody cover that offers protection from the elements as well as from predators.”

Quail were the last missing piece. The Game Commission has secured them from three sites: 11 so far from Fort Barfoot, an Army National Guard installation in Virginia; 15 from Fort Knox, another Army site in Kentucky; and 50 from Tall Timbers, a Florida-based land trust.

Another trapping effort is planned next week at Fort Barfoot, with the birds subsequently released at Letterkenny.

Combined, those quail are enough, in cases captured from source sites as close to Pennsylvania as could be arranged, to make a successful restoration possible, Ward added.

Possible, but not guaranteed. The bobwhites released this spring still need some attention and help. The plan is to provide it.

“We're not just dropping these birds and walking away,” Ward said. “We will continue to support, monitor and study them.”

For starters, the Game Commission, Letterkenny and other conservation partners will continue to remake and sustain suitable habitat as outlined in a quail management plan that runs through 2030.

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Continued from Page 21 — Beyond that, two graduate students from the University of Delaware will be on site this summer to see how well the quail – and other grassland species in decline over the long haul for the same reasons – are faring.

Every quail released at Letterkenny this year was given a leg band. A subset was also outfitted with radio collars. One graduate student will, using small electronic devices located in a grid pattern across Letterkenny, track them to track survival, habitat use, nesting success, movement and more.

The other student will examine how additional grassland birds – which are, as a whole, are the most-imperiled type – are using that same habitat. Already there are encouraging signs, though. Yellow breasted chats, bobolinks and horned larks, along with the Pennsylvania-endangered Dickcissel, have been seen for the first time or in increased numbers at Letterkenny in recent years.

In the meantime, there will be no hunting of bobwhites at Letterkenny anytime soon. Restoring populations to huntable levels is not even a goal right now, Ward said. Rather, the intent is that bobwhites and all those other species will not only thrive at Letterkenny, but expand into the surrounding countryside, as well.

Even that may take some time. Restoring eagles to their current abundance, for example, was a decades-long process. But the bobwhite's return is at long last underway.

“This is an opportunity to help bobwhites in ways we never have before,” Burhans said. “I can't wait to see where this project takes us.”

BLM proposes stronger sage-grouse conservation plans

Editor's Note: One portion totally ignored in this plan is predators. Coyotes are one of the significant predators of sage grouse LEK areas and can wipe out a nesting area. This ignorance of the true total environment will make any success hard to reach. To say climate change is the overriding factor seems a political answer to a multifaceted problem, which in fact may NOT be correct.

Analysis uses best available science and lessons learned to benefit species and western communities

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is announcing a draft plan to strengthen greater sage-grouse conservation and management on public lands, informed by the best-available science and input from local, state, federal, and Tribal partners. The draft plan is built on decades of partnership, research, and on-the-ground knowledge and experience in maintaining, protecting and restoring healthy sagebrush habitats.

Greater sage-grouse rely on sagebrush lands for all aspects of their life cycle to meet seasonal needs for food, cover and reproduction. A local population may need up to 40 square miles of intact landscape to stay healthy. Populations once in the millions now number fewer than 800,000, largely due to habitat loss exacerbated by climate change, such as drought, increasing wildfires, and invasive species.

Protecting and restoring sagebrush on BLM-managed public lands across the West is critical not just for greater sage-grouse, but also for the health of western communities and other iconic Western species that rely on healthy sagebrush, including mule deer, pronghorn, and the pygmy rabbit. Additionally, these collaboratively developed landscape level plans will ensure that other multiple uses of BLM sagebrush lands – including clean energy projects – move forward in a manner that limits impacts to sensitive resources and can also help combat climate change—the main driver of greater sage-grouse habitat loss.

“The majesty of the West and its way of life are at stake. Sagebrush lands are places where people work and play, and they are the headwaters for the West's major rivers,” said **BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning**. “Joint efforts to conserve the greater sage-grouse and its habitat led to the largest collaborative conservation effort in our history, and we are building on that work, together with our partners, to ensure the health of these lands and local economies into the future.”

The BLM manages the largest single share of sage grouse habitat in the United States—nearly 67 million acres of 145 million total acres.

Continued on Page 23

Continued from Page 22 — The draft plan offers a range of alternatives for sustainable management of these lands. Balancing a consistent management approach across the range while addressing conditions and policies unique to individual states, BLM will be able to work more effectively with state and local managers to protect and improve sagebrush habitats on public lands.

Alternatives in the proposal build on the most successful components of the plans that the BLM adopted in 2015 and updated in 2019. The draft plan incorporates new sage-grouse conservation science and lessons learned, accommodating changing resources conditions while increasing implementation flexibility. The agency considered nearly 1,900 comments gathered during an initial public scoping period and information shared by state, local, federal, and Tribal partners in more than 100 meetings.

The BLM will hold 13 public meetings to answer questions and take further comments on the draft alternatives and analysis. Information on public meetings will be posted in the events column on the main page of the [BLM website](#).

In addition to actions guided by the greater sage-grouse management plans, the BLM is actively restoring and conserving sagebrush habitat across the West through the Biden Administration's *Investing in America* agenda. Annually, the BLM invests approximately \$35 million of its congressional appropriation in sagebrush ecosystem projects, supplemented by \$123 million from President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and complemented by investments by state and local governments, Tribes, stakeholder groups, and private landowners.

The draft environmental impact statement and plan amendments will open for public comment on March 15, 2024. The comment period will end on June 13, 2024. More information on how to comment on this draft will be posted at <https://www.blm.gov/sagegrouse>. A final environmental impact statement is expected this fall, followed by Records of Decision in each state.

Cabela Foundation, Order of T. Roosevelt announce partnership

Scottsdale, Ariz. — The International Order of T. Roosevelt (IOTR) and the Cabela Family Foundation (CFF) are announcing a new partnership that aims to propel conservation efforts into the national spotlight while bolstering species throughout North America. As part of the partnership, IOTR will be the exclusive supporting partner on CFF's TV series, "Hard Truths of Conservation," which currently airs on History Channel, Hulu, and other outdoor channels and streaming services.

"By partnering with CFF, we will reach new audiences of both hunters and non-hunters to grow our movement to protect our sport.

Continued on Page 24



Continued from Page 23 — With radical activists attacking our hunting traditions and hunters leaving in droves, this partnership is a perfect counterpoint to reach new audiences about the importance of hunting to preserve wild game,” said Luke Hilgemann, Executive Director of IOTR. “Our heritage should be cherished. In order to reach new audiences, we need to spread the good news about how hunting and conservation in America are intrinsically linked.”

“IOTR is the perfect partner for CFF. Through our ‘Hard Truths of Conservation’ series, we will reach new audiences and cultivate new ways of thinking about hunting,” said Dan Cabela, Executive Director of CFF. “Together, we will show the world what it means when we say hunters are the best conservationists.”

As part of the partnership, IOTR and CFF will work on initiatives in North America that meet both organizations’ shared vision for bolstering species through real conservation measures. These projects will be featured on the TV show, which reaches more than 8 million viewers across all platforms. The partnership is set for a total of six seasons, with two seasons airing each year. IOTR will serve as Hard Truth’s exclusive supporting sponsor of the show.

From the director: Timber Supply Shortage

Yesterday on Capitol Hill the American Forest Resource Council urged the Pacific Northwest’s Congressional Delegation in Washington, DC to address challenges the region’s forest and wood products sector that supports more than 150,000 private sector jobs in Oregon and Washington.


This industry provides critical infrastructure for the federal government to improve forest health, reduce wildfire risks on federal lands, and help meet growing demand for carbon friendly wood products. Western Oregon has experienced the closure or curtailment of three wood product mills since the beginning of the year, and additional closures and curtailments in the Pacific Northwest are likely to occur.

The common thread is a diminishing timber supply to the region’s wood products manufacturers. The three Western Oregon mills that announced closures or curtailments purchase and rely on public timber to operate and sustain workforces. As regional mills continue to experience closures, curtailments and layoffs, millions of acres of federal lands are at imminent risk from catastrophic wildfires, insects, and disease.

In the Black Hills of South Dakota, Ben Wudtke, director of the Black Hills Forest Association, explained that as a result of the falling timber sale volumes from the Black Hills National Forest, they are losing the forest products industry that has made [post-pine beetle and wildfire] success stories possible.

Two mills in western South Dakota have closed since the most-recent Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic ended in 2016 — Hills Materials in Spearfish and Rushmore Forest Products in Hill City. There are no sawmills waiting to reopen. Unfortunately, when the sawmills close, they're gone. The skilled labor is gone. They don't come back. Meanwhile, lumber prices have slowly been inching up.

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Utah: Wildlife related laws passed during 2023 legislative session

Editor's Note: Many new laws are passed each year in many states regarding wildlife and conservation but here is one in Utah that caught our attention.

HB382: Wildlife Amendments

This new law also makes several wildlife-related changes, including:

- **New development:** This portion of the law designates that after May 1, 2024, anyone involved in new development in Utah is considered infringing on existing wildlife habitat, and if that individual makes a wildlife damage or nuisance claim related to the new development, they may not qualify for a wildlife damage or nuisance claim against the state or a political subdivision.

There may be others, but this clearly begins to give the message if you expand into wildlife habitat, the risk is yours if there are any incidents involving wildlife damage or nuisance claim. *It should be made mandatory to list this in all new land deeds so purchasers know and assume the risk.* We hope other states begin the same process to protect wildlife habitat and agricultural practices that integrate with wildlife and conservation. Good Work Utah!

Chainey: Crop or food plot planning - about lime

By Calvin Chainey — As spring approaches it is the time to start considering crops or food plot options for wildlife. Choosing the correct mix of seed, fertilizer and lime that best suits your soil, goals, and budget is important. Along with planting the correct crop, it is just as important to properly prepare the soil in which you want to plant. Determining the characteristics of your soil is important for success of your crop or food plot work integrating with your wildlife goals.

The first consideration is to choose a good location to place your field or plot and the size you are going to make it. Calculations of seed, fertilizer, lime, equipment and time all are based on this. Generally, one acre of planted food plot attracts game from forty acres around it. Qualities to look for are well-drained soil, accessibility to sunlight via forest cover (east-west orientation allows more sunlight), wind direction, and wildlife accessibility to water. Note here, prevailing winds during the fall or winter will be different than at your preparation and planting times. Don't forget the access and egress by whatever equipment you may use and for hunting season access. These considerations will help with planting success, wildlife use and hunter success.

Once a field or plot is located and its size determined, it is important to take a soil sample and determine your soil type. Knowing soil type and makeup will help you determine how and what to plant. Thanks to modern technology, soil type can be done through websites such as Web Soil Survey. Other options include county soil survey books. Through the web soil survey, you can find the soil type along with the best choice of plants for your field or food plot.

Utilizing the University of Missouri Laboratory for soil testing is a great option. The laboratory provides quality testing and unbiased, research-based recommendations to clients for economically viable and environmentally safe nutrient management practices. There is a small fee of \$15 for each sample. It is well worth the money for all the information you receive about your soil. Specific directions to conduct a soil sample can be found at the University of Missouri Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory website.

Your soil test will come back from the lab with all sorts of information that can be useful for choosing your investments. Lime recommendations should be a primary focus for crops or food plots.

Lime is very important for the soil since it ultimately neutralizes the soil and allows better nutrient uptake. Another benefit from lime treatments includes better root growth. The plant's roots will not be exposed to harmful acidic soils that are caused by the presence of excess hydrogen and aluminum cations in the soil. Adding lime will infiltrate the soil and neutralize those cations.

There are different types of lime and each infiltrates the soil differently. Types of lime consist of powdered, pelletized, and liquid.

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Continued from Page 25 — To measure the ability of lime to reduce acidity a rating system was developed. The rating system is called the Effective Neutralizing Material (ENM). All lime sold in Missouri must have an ENM rating. ENM considers the purity of the liming material as well as other factors such as particle size. The smaller the particle size, the more effective and quicker it will react in the soil. All variations are subject to ENM ratings. The higher the ENM rating the better results of the lime applied. Always review the ENM rating.

Powdered lime can be purchased normally by the ton, check for delivery criteria, at local agricultural material distributors or some farm stores. Powdered lime is cheaper than pelletized and liquid versions. Liquid lime is more expensive than powdered lime but is more efficient at infiltrating the soil. The only factor that affects the infiltration is evaporation.

Pelletized lime is more efficient for smaller areas like food plots, has a high purity rating, and is good at infiltrating the soil even though it typically is more expensive. It is the best for getting what you pay for in the ground and adjusting your pH level. For small areas this may be the best option. Pelletized lime is normally sold in 50-pound bags and is easier to spread and works a little faster in the soil than powdered.

Lime is one of the most important considerations for crops or food plots since it is crucial for the best plant growth. Soils in forested areas are typically more acidic requiring lime for productive food plots. Considering lime applications this spring will increase the soil pH and lead to bigger and fuller crops this fall to meet your wildlife goals. Further references are listed below.

Calvin Chainey is the QUWF social media manager and research assistant intern and a student at College of the Ozarks. This feature is presented by QUWF and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Choosing lime: <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g9493>

What does lime mean here in Missouri: <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g9107>

Soil Report: <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/mp188>

Lime rate per acre, purity of lime: <https://www.thesoildractor.com/>



NSSF praises WY gov. for protecting second amendment privacy

WASHINGTON, D.C. — NSSF, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, praised Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon for signing the NSSF-supported Second Amendment Financial Privacy Act, [Senate File 105](#). This law protects the privacy and sensitive financial information of people purchasing firearms, firearm parts and ammunition in Wyoming.

The law prohibits credit card processors from using firearm or firearm-related Merchant Category Codes (MCCs) when citizens make lawful retail purchases of firearms, firearm parts or ammunition with credit cards. The law also prohibits government or private entities from keeping any registry of privately-owned firearms or the owners of those firearms created or maintained through the use of a firearm-retailer specific MCC.

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“Wyoming is showing, again, that ‘woke’ Wall Street gun control ideas won’t infringe on the rights of its citizens. Free exercise of Second Amendment rights can only be assured when leaders step in to guarantee those lawfully purchasing firearms and ammunition can do so without interference from financial institutions colluding with government agencies,” said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF Senior Vice President & General Counsel. “NSSF thanks Governor Gordon for signing the Second Amendment Financial Privacy Act to protect the rights and privacy of Wyoming citizens.

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Continued from Page 26 — No American should fear being placed on a government watchlist simply for exercise their Constitutionally-protected rights to keep and bear arms.”

NSSF worked closely with Wyoming legislators to protect private and legal firearm and ammunition purchases from political exploitation. The Second Amendment Financial Privacy Act is designed to protect the privacy of lawful and private firearm and ammunition purchases from being abused for political purposes by corporate financial service providers and unlawful government search and seizure of legal and private financial transactions.

The U.S. Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) [admitted](#) to U.S. Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) in a letter that it violated the Fourth Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens that protect against illegal search and seizure when it collected the credit card purchase history from banks and credit card companies of individuals who purchased firearms and ammunition in the days surrounding Jan. 6, 2020. Treasury’s FinCEN had no cause, and sought the information without a warrant, to place these law-abiding citizens on a government watchlist only because they exercised their Second Amendment rights to lawfully purchase firearms and ammunition.

The idea of a firearm-retailer specific MCC was borne from antigun New York Times’ columnist [Andrew Ross Sorkin](#) and Amalgamated Bank, which has been called “[The Left’s Private Banker](#)” and bankrolls the Democratic National Committee and several antigun politicians. Amalgamated Bank lobbied the Swiss-based International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for the code’s creation. NSSF has called on Congress to investigate Amalgamated Bank’s role in manipulating the ISO standard setting process.

Sorkin [admitted](#) creating a firearm-retailer specific MCC would be a first step to creating a national firearm registry, which is forbidden by federal law.

Wyoming joins Indiana, Utah, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Texas and West Virginia with laws protecting citizens’ Second Amendment privacy. Several other states are considering similar legislation. U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik introduced [H.R. 7450](#), the [NSSF-supported Protecting Privacy in Purchases Act](#) in the U.S. House of Representatives. California’s Gov. Gavin Newsom [signed a law](#) requiring the use of a firearm-retailer specific MCC and Colorado [is considering](#) similar legislation.

NSSF launches new project ChildSafe website

WASHINGTON, D.C. — NSSF®, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, has re-launched [ProjectChildSafe.org](#), a newly redesigned website with comprehensive educational materials and practical resources for gun owners on how to securely store firearms when not in use to prevent firearm accidents, suicides and thefts.

The site has a new, modern look and enhanced site navigation, and will continue to serve as a comprehensive online resource hub for a variety of audiences

looking for firearm safety educational materials. The new Project ChildSafe® website features

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downloadable toolkits for parents of young children

and teens, hunters, law enforcement officers, safety instructors, educators, non-profit groups, organizational supporters and more – equipping them with easy-to-use secure storage resources and tools to discuss firearm safety with their families and communities. Some of the site’s key features include:

- Audience-specific [downloadable toolkits](#) located on the homepage
- [Mental health resource page](#) for parents and teen-adjacent adults, developed in partnership with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- [Project ChildSafe Focus Communities page](#) featuring an interactive map of Project ChildSafe's impact across the country
- [Enhanced educational video and materials library](#)
- [Future Hunters Pledge & Walk-Through Module](#) that parents can explore with young children

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Continued from Page 27 — “Offering free educational resources to demonstrate the importance of firearm safety and to encourage secure firearm storage are vital aspects of our program’s success,” said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF President and CEO and Chairman of the Project ChildSafe Foundation. “We are always looking for new ways to provide our partners with resources to promote responsible gun ownership – this new site will play an important role in educating gun owners and helping to prevent firearm accidents, thefts and misuse.”

“No one wants their firearms accessed by an unsupervised child or a teen or adult in crisis,” said Bill Brassard, NSSF’s Senior Director of Communications. “The new website educates gun owners on options for safe, responsible storage, which is the number one way to help prevent firearm accidents, suicides and thefts.”

As always, gun owners can [request](#) a free firearm safety kit on the website, which includes a free cable-style gun lock. Law enforcement partners can request locks for their communities through the [law enforcement gun lock request form](#). The safety kits are provided to law enforcement agencies across the country at no cost – NSSF provides these locks as a public service, including the cost of shipping.

Project ChildSafe is the largest and most comprehensive firearm safety education program in the US, created for gun owners, by gun owners. Since its launch in 1999, Project ChildSafe has distributed more than 41 million firearm safety kits that include a gun lock and partnered with more than 15,000 law enforcement agencies across the country to promote secure firearm storage practices. As the program celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, NSSF and Project ChildSafe remain committed to educating and providing resources to gun owners and non-gun owners alike.

Individuals and organizations can [contact](#) Project ChildSafe or visit ProjectChildSafe.org for more information on secure firearm storage, learn how to get a free gun lock, inquire about partnering with the program or [donate](#) to support Project ChildSafe’s efforts.



Veterans keeping us safe:

Navy SEALs on snowmobiles raced across the frozen Arctic

- US Navy SEALs and allied soldiers successfully executed a first-of-its-kind Arctic Circle drill.
- Over 400 special-operations soldiers delivered a package to the USS Hampton, a Navy submarine.
- The drill tested combat readiness amid increasing concern over potential Arctic conflict.

Deep in the Arctic Circle, US Navy SEALs and allied soldiers recently raced across the frozen ground on snowmobiles to link up with a surfaced submarine that had busted through the ice in a historic training exercise that put the sub-zero skills of the special-operations forces to the test.

Last week, over 400 special operations forces, including Navy SEALs, US Army Green Berets, US Army 160th SOAR crews, as well as foreign partners, participated in drills as part of the broader Arctic Edge 24 training event.

This was the first time special-operations personnel, special-operations aircraft, and snowmobiles have worked together to execute an operation involving a submarine that had surfaced through thick ice so deep in the Arctic Circle.

The training was carried out as a way to prepare for threats. Previously, the US had less focus on the Arctic, but with Russia and China having an [increased presence](#) in the region, the US now has more interest in pursuing Arctic training.

Special notices to all veterans:

We want to inform all veterans of important information with regard to their benefits, medical and support information. Please read and let other veterans know.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that all veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military — at home or abroad — will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care beginning March 5, 2024. This means that all veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11 will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States will also be eligible to enroll. Read the full announcement from the VA here: <http://dav.la/3po>.

Special chemical updates for veterans: Here are three categories of chemicals veterans may have been exposed to at the bases they served in the ground water (drinking water) and the effects they may have on humans exposed over the long term. These are gathered from EPA, CDC, NIH, WHO reports and scientific research papers on chemicals reported in the base drinking water or soils. Please check your former bases for any Superfund Cleanup and reports of toxic chemicals (Google EPA Superfund on military bases) while serving. Contact your local Disabled American Veteran's Service Officer or Veteran Service Officer for benefit application.

Priority 1: Above all, if you served in the military, you are entitled to receive your full medical records. Complete a standard VA form 180 with your service officer or directly and obtain your records. Check the box to receive any hospitalization records as well. Review them closely. More to come.

Eye Deterioration, hearing and balance: Naphthalene 91-20-03, Tetrachloroethylene

Sleep Apnea (Severe): Trichloroethylene

Hypertension: Tetrachloroethene – TCE, Bromoform, Trichloroethylene, Arsenic, Lead

If you were exposed, almost without question this chemical information, effects and impacts are NOT in your military medical records, and you will need to get them entered yourself.

DID YOU KNOW: Your active-duty military medical records are not accessible by your current VA doctors, or private doctors unless you do it yourself. Get your full medical records today with the form 180, review and copy and get them added to your current VA records and or private health care records.

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