

QUWF



Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation

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

THE HABITAT GUIDE

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation

Notes from the Dashboard: Planning and preparing - Equipment TLC



By Craig Alderman — There is no doubt many are feeling much better about the future of our country, its agriculture, and life in general after the elections. Still be cautious in your planning and prioritize the things that are important, especially your family being number one.

After family, dealing with agriculture in landowner projects and goals means equipment TLC. There is no better time than winter and early spring to get the

implements in for service and repaired. Make a checklist of items, and add or subtract as needed, but make sure you get everything.

Here at QUWF, we just completed a full service on our tractor (including front tires, ouch), the backhoe, a side by side, trailers, and the truck. The truck was not by choice but from rodents who in winter decide to host themselves in engines and wiring harnesses. If you do not take care of this issue it can cause immense expenses at the wrong time.

The first thing to watch is batteries. Check that all are full of water (used distilled water if you need to add). We put trickle chargers with monitors for temperature on all that will be used little or never over the winter like the ZMower. I know it is not cheap, but if your larger truck, tractor, or dozer batteries are 5 years old or older, replace them or during the first real cold snap, no cranking. We included that in the tractor service; it turns out the battery was actually 10 years old. I was really lucky in finding that now rather than when I needed to plow with no battery.

Get all the tool batteries out of the shop for winter. Freezing temps will destroy them.

Winterizing your sprayers and checking anti-freeze should already be done. We use RV antifreeze in the sprayer tank and lines, and keep a few 50/50 premix jugs on hand for the radiators. We test them for -30 below zero.

Check wipers on the trucks and cars, and replace them if they show any wear, because the first freeze with ice will tear them up. I save a set of old boot socks to put over the wipers if the truck is outside and use a windshield protector as well.

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.

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Continued from Page 1 — Change the wiper fluid to winter non-freezing fluids.

Fuel: During cold winter months, rotate getting a tank of hi-octane (91 or higher, no ethanol) for your gas engines every other fill up. The car or truck will run better, start easier, and in most cases will improve gas mileage. **ONLY** use high octane, no ethanol fuel in your chain saws and small engines. Ethanol is a carburetor killer in small engines. For diesels, keep a container of fuel anti-gel with you. Most states add an additive in November to the diesel sold in state, but it is not checked and rarely does its job (It's supposed to work down to 10 degrees.) except for cutting your fuel mileage down.

Winterizing also includes greasing (use good all-weather grease, too, it is a better choice), checking oil levels and taking care of exposed metals to the elements. We wipe down exposed metal like the tractor forks, plow shares, etc., with mineral oil. It also helps a lot on the PTO shafts.

All this requires a good set of tools. This time of year is outstanding for getting good deals (major discounts), on everything from HD sockets, battery HD torque wrenches, drill drivers, hammer drills, wrenches, pliers — just about everything including storage racks and rolling tool boxes. But here again, it means you need to take time to review and organize your tools to see what you need and write it down. Don't forget the grease cartridges. I keep a parts pad in the shop so if I break something, lose it or need supplies, I write it down and if time and urgency permits, wait for the sale prices to purchase anything. I think this has saved us 25 to 30% in supplies and tool expense, sometimes up to 50% on tools.

Have a wonderful Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May God's blessings include good health, happiness, and prosperity in the new year. Catch you next year.

Craig Alderman is the QUWF executive director.

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.



Let's talk about winter bird feeding

Turn your backyard into a bird B&B with these helpful wintertime bird-feeding tips

We all know that neighbor that takes bird feeding to Olympic games-level extremes. With tree limbs sagging under the weight of countless feeders and a back lawn that looks like it was ripped straight from Augusta Country Club, they stand out on their back porch with arms outstretched as a myriad of birds swoop in to feed directly from their palms.

That may be a bit of an exaggeration, but you don't need to be Snow White to attract backyard birds. Many species — including finches, chickadees, jays, nuthatches, sparrows, doves and more — may very well settle on your backyard bed and breakfast with a proper bird-feeding setup this winter.

Usually, [feeding wild animals is not a smart move](#). Feeding birds, however, is a special case, since they don't often become dependent on feeders alone, and instead use feeders to supplement their daily natural diet. Winter feeding also gives a little assistance to our feathered friends during the harsh, colder months.



Here are a few ways to spice up your bird-feeding buffet and enjoy an enchanting opportunity to observe wildlife right in your own backyard.

Seed. It's what's for dinner

Before you go hanging your feeder (or feeders) all across your backyard, you'll need some seed. Depending on the types of birds you're hoping to attract, there are many feed and feeder options available.

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Ask Alexa to play 101.3 Real Country or AM 560 in the Morning, or go online and download the **free app**.

Continued from Page 3 — For instance, hanging-style feeders can attract songbirds, such as house finches, chickadee, jays, nuthatches, and others. Thistle feeders can bring goldfinches, siskins, and house finches, and suet can attract woodpeckers, chickadees, and nuthatches.

There are many kinds of birdseed out there on the market. Be sure to source your birdseed from reputable sources to avoid dust, insects, weed seeds, or any other impurities from making their way into your feeder. Black-oil sunflower seed is a favorite of many species. Millet and cracked corn are favorites for many ground-feeding birds. Finches and siskins love nyjer thistle.

To avoid freeloaders like squirrels, rats, and mice ruining your supply, store birdseed in tight, waterproof containers. This will also help prevent mold.

Feeder placement

Birds don't have the same pleasures that we do when it comes to drive-thru windows. Placing a bird feeder too close to hazards can end up doing more harm than good. Avoid placing feeders near windows or doors, and keep placement height and accessibility in mind. Predators such as hawks or free-ranging house cats can quickly become uninvited backyard dinner guests when feeders are put out in the open or near low-hanging ledges.

Wash it all down

A hearty meal wouldn't be complete without a drink. Birds utilize birdbaths throughout the year not only to stay clean but to keep themselves hydrated—a luxury we humans *should not* try in our baths at home.

If possible, include a birdbath in your backyard bed and breakfast. There are several types on the market, but you can't go wrong with a simple clay potting saucer.

This time of year, however, it might be a little troublesome keeping that bath ice-free.

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Continued from Page 5 — There are a couple solutions, including special birdbath heaters, to help keep their baths from freezing over. And no, they don't come with little mini Whirlpool jets and colored LED lights.

Sanitation

A bird's bath or feeder only does its job when it's clean. Imagine inviting over the whole cul-de-sac for a hot tub party and leaving the chlorine float in the garage.

It's very important that backyard bird enthusiasts keep their feeders and birdbaths tidy and disinfect at least once a month to prevent the spreading of diseases.

Along those lines, aim for using perch-style feeders rather than open, saucer-style feeders. Because of their openness and contamination from bird feces, open feeders and baths can become a breeding ground for disease.

To clean your feeders, make a household bleach solution using one part household bleach mixed with nine parts lukewarm water. Make enough solution to immerse an empty, cleaned feeder completely for two to three minutes, then air dry.

No beak, no feathers, no service

Remember that feeding wildlife (other than birds) is not recommended. Birds are unique in that they don't solely rely or become hooked on free, backyard birdseed.

The same cannot be said about other wildlife. If food set out for birds is being eaten by other wildlife, move the feeder to a safe location or discontinue feeding.

Feeding birds is a gratifying experience that can be enjoyed by anyone. So pull out the binoculars and the bird-watching guide and enjoy this simple pastime all year round right from the comfort of your backyard.

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Trail reminders for your cold weather adventures

Editor's Note: We enjoy riding our RTV side by side in the fresh snow (if we get them) and are always staying on the marked trails, including those of our farm and our neighbors who allow us the privilege to ride and we reciprocate the privilege. We also help to mark the trails, keep them clear, put up boundary signs, fix gates and fences. How about you?!



Winter is off to a snowy start, providing lots of opportunities to embrace the elements and take to the trails. It's also a good time to remember ways to ensure your outdoor exploring is as safe and enjoyable as possible. Here are a few reminders before you head to your favorite pathway:

Snowmobiling

Buy your trail permit, check conditions. Michigan's 6,000-plus miles of DNR-designated snowmobile trails, public roads and public lands (only where riding is authorized) are open Dec. 1-March 31, and trail grooming occurs when there is enough snow on the ground. Purchase your trail permit and find maps at [Michigan.gov/Snowmobiling](https://www.michigan.gov/Snowmobiling). Be sure to check [trail reports](#) and [trail closures](#) while planning your excursion, and follow [Ride Right](#) safety precautions, including staying on the right side of the trail.

ORV riding

Know where you can go. [Off-road vehicle riding](#) is allowed on all county roads that are open in the summer as well as all DNR-designated multiuse trails; note that ORV trails in the Upper Peninsula are marked by letters. Snowmobile-only trails, however, are closed to ORV use Dec. 1-March 31, and snowmobile trails are identified by numbers only on diamond-shaped signs.

In addition, highway rights-of-way are closed until May 1 and therefore are not open to ORVs. (These are areas where the trail runs on the side of state and U.S. highways allowing a trail to connect.) Always be aware of icy sections, especially on morning and evening rides, and ride in a manner that minimizes trail damage given that some trails' terrain may be soft.

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Continued from Page 7 — In-the-woods exploring

Wear blaze orange, practice trail etiquette. With the new extended late antlerless firearm season Jan. 2-12 in the southern part of the Lower Peninsula, as well as archery deer hunting season remaining open until Jan. 1, be sure to wear your blaze orange while on the trails. For more details on these seasons, see Michigan.gov/Deer.

Also know when to yield and how to interact with other trail users by practicing [trail etiquette](#). Remember that courteous communication is often the safest way to pass when interacting with others on the trail. Also stay on marked trails, respect trail conditions and closures, and leave no trace – pack it in, pack it out, and if you see litter, please pick it up.

Questions? Learn more at Michigan.gov/DNRTrails or contact [Tim Novak](#) at 517-388-8347.

X-Vision Impact 350 named best new thermal sight

Editor's Note: Many states are allowing night vision for night predator hunting, check this out if this applies to you and your state regulations.

X-Vision Optics is thrilled to announce that its Impact 350 Thermal Scope has been honored with the prestigious *Best New Thermal Sight* award by *Outdoor Life*, a leading authority in outdoor gear and technology reviews.

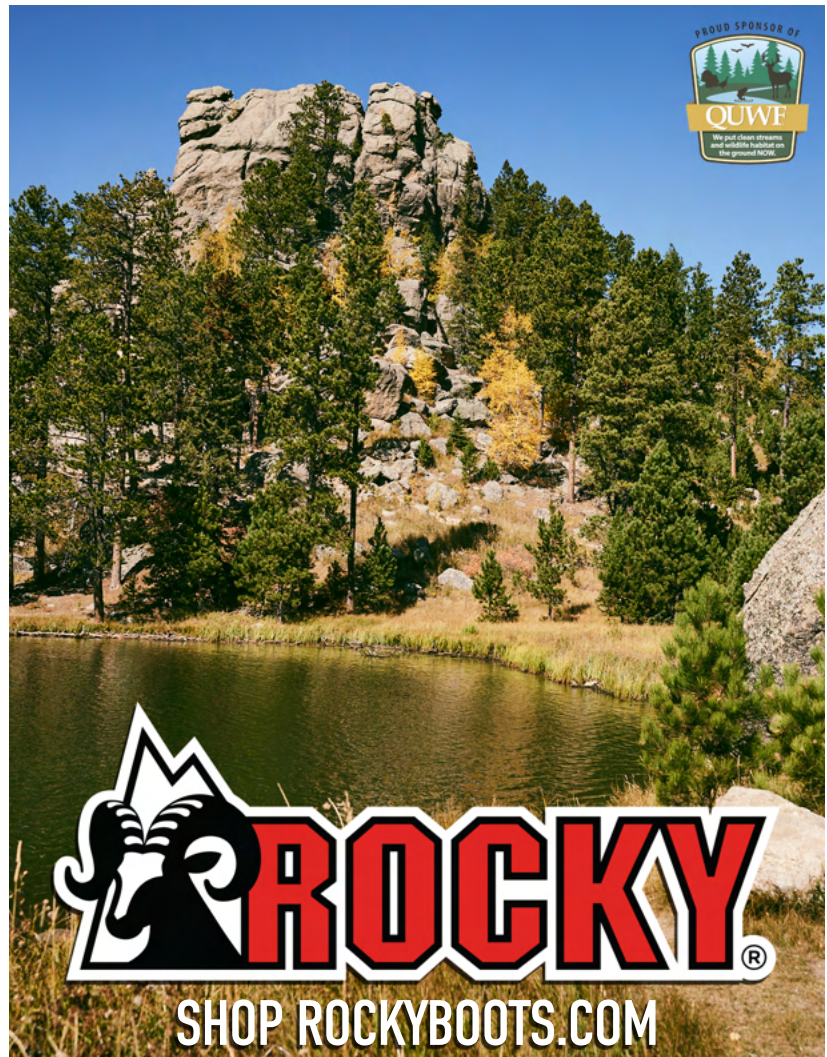
This accolade highlights the Impact 350's innovative features, exceptional performance, and superior value in the thermal optics category. Designed with hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, and professionals in mind, the Impact 350 stood out in *Outdoor Life's* rigorous evaluations for its impressive imaging clarity, ease of use, and rugged durability.

“We are deeply honored to receive this recognition from *Outdoor Life*,” said Mari Bodensteiner of X-Vision Optics. “The Impact 350 Thermal Scope represents our commitment to pushing the boundaries of optical technology and providing our customers with reliable, game-changing equipment for their outdoor pursuits.”

The X-Vision Optics Impact 350 Thermal Scope is engineered to elevate performance in the field, offering:

- **Exceptional Detection Range:** Spot objects up to 1,800 yards away, with detailed thermal imaging for identifying targets in total darkness.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** Intuitive controls and customizable settings ensure seamless operation in any environment.
- **High-Resolution Display:** A crisp 1024 x 768 HD display for superior clarity and precision.
- **Durable Design:** Rugged construction to withstand extreme conditions, including weather and heavy recoil.
- **Versatile Applications:** Ideal for hunting, search and rescue, and tactical operations.

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Continued from Page 8 — The *Outdoor Life* team noted the Impact 350’s standout value and ability to deliver premium features at an accessible price point, making it an indispensable tool for outdoor adventurers and professionals.

The *Best New Thermal Sight* award reinforces X-Vision Optics’ reputation as an innovator in the optics industry, dedicated to empowering users with advanced tools for success in the field.

For more information about the X-Vision Optics Impact 350 Thermal Scope, visit www.xvisionoptics.com

For more information about *Outdoor Life*’s testing and reviewing of thermals for 2024, visit www.outdoorlife.com

About X-Vision Optics:

Experience your nighttime hunts in a whole new light with X-Vision Optics. Every time you head out, you’ll own the night with a powerful combination of advanced technology and unmatched performance.



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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AZGFD asks hunters to help keep CWD at bay

Editor’s Note: The actions to remain CWD Free in AZ are very good by monitoring. The only issue we take with their release, they do receive millions in Federal funds from the PR Bill and the DJ bills for there wildlife efforts. That portion is a little misleading.

Arizona remains CWD-free due to surveillance efforts

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) is asking hunters to continue doing their part to help keep Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) at bay. CWD is a fatal wildlife disease that affects the nervous system of deer and elk.

All successful deer and elk hunters are encouraged to bring the head of their harvested animal — especially bucks and bulls — to any **department office statewide** between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The department is requesting that hunters call in advance before delivering a head for sampling.

The preferred method for storage is to place the head in a heavy-duty plastic trash bag, and keep it cold or frozen until it can be sampled.

The department also requests hunters to provide accurate hunter information (name, telephone number), as well as hunt information (hunt number, game management unit in which the animal was harvested, state, and hunting license number). This information is crucial should CWD be detected in a sample.



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Notes from the Road:

Helping get the next generation value wildlife and its habitat



By Nick Prough — Many times, at the end of each year we often reflect on the past year and what we have accomplished in our personal lives, our jobs, on our farms, etc. And while that is certainly a good task to tackle this time of year, I thought I would look at another task that in many areas of our lives is often the case and in habitat conservation that is certainly no different.

We all need to continue to help the next generation value wildlife and its habitat as much as many of us have and do in our lifetimes. With the technological boom and everything moving at such a rapid pace in society these days, much of society can begin to just take for granted many things, including wildlife habitat out on the landscape. In fact, while there are quite a few of us “old timers” out there still to help to remind the others how it got there in the first place and that it took a lot of hard work, sweat equity, manpower, and \$\$ to install, maintain and improve that wildlife habitat, each and everyone of us needs to continue to impress that on the younger generations of our kids and grandkids who are eventually going to be the next land stewards on the landscapes we all live on.

Many of you reading this column have spent a majority of your lifetimes trying to improve habitat for wildlife on your various farms, habitat projects, focus on areas your local cooperatives have chosen to work on, and we all have made some tremendous strides in not only maintaining that wildlife habitat but also improving it to pass on to the next generations that will follow us. This is the key point — not only have we tried to pass it along a little better than when we found it, but also, we have to help the younger generations “value it as much or more than we did.” This is not a small task with all the distractions out there in today’s world competing for their time, their efforts, and their hard earned \$\$.

But this is vitally important for wildlife and wildlife habitat in the next 10-15 years’ time period. In fact, over 35% of America’s Farmland is expected to change hands in the next 15 years due to an aging landowner population and a very substantial retirement of today’s farmers, ranchers and land managers. When you add in decision makers on farms and ranches, that number is over 50% of the landscape available for wildlife habitat and conservation will have a different decision maker on the farm whether by sale or by taking over within the families the decision-making process in just the next 10-15 years. That is a staggering number and one that has never been seen or experienced before, and that is why we all must continue to do our part to help the next generation be prepared as they can be to tackle these and many other decisions they will be facing.

We have all done a ton of youth outdoor camps, youth hunts, and youth conservation field days, and those have all continued to be very helpful in this monumental process that is coming, but we can’t stop now. Those 10 years are coming faster than we can all truly imagine or even want to think about, but the fact is then the new farmers, ranchers, land managers, and decision makers will be on the landscape making those critical decisions and hopefully improving and conserving the very same landscapes that we have over many of our lifetimes. I will leave you with this quote:

“Man cannot truly own wild land, to own wild land you must blanket it in concrete, cover it with buildings, stack it with houses so thick, people can smell each other’s supper, they must use it up to then sell it, raw land, wild land, free land can never truly be owned, but some men pay dearly for the privilege of its stewardship, they will suffer and sacrifice, to live off it and live with it, and hopefully teach the next generation to do the same, and if they falter, find another willing to keep the promise.”

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, nest predator removal, 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.

Continued from Page 10 — As an alternative, hunters can view an instructional video on how to collect their own samples on AZGFD’s website (www.azgfd.com/healthy), then bring those samples to any department office statewide.

AZGFD is hoping to sample 1,500 deer and elk this season.

Department officials have not detected any cases of CWD in the 750-plus deer (mule and white-tailed) and elk that have been harvested by hunters and voluntarily submitted for testing this fall. Game and Fish 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.

CWD is transmitted and spread by animal movement and direct contact, which means the illegal importation of a cervid carcass or parts with brain or spinal column tissue of an infected animal could introduce the disease into Arizona. For that reason, AZGFD urges hunters who return to Arizona with a harvested deer or elk from another state to follow these guidelines:

- Boneless portions of meat, or meat that has been cut and packaged.
- Clean hides and capes with no skull or soft tissue attached.
- Antlers, clean skull plates or skulls with antlers attached with no meat or soft tissue remaining.
- Finished taxidermy mounts or products (hunters may ship their harvested animal to a taxidermist).
- Upper canine teeth with no meat or tissue attached.
- Do not bring the brain, intact skull or spinal column of a deer or elk harvested in another state back into Arizona.


It may take longer than a year before an infected deer or elk develops symptoms of CWD, which can include drastic weight loss (wasting), stumbling, being unaware of its surroundings, and other neurological symptoms. CWD can infect deer and elk animals of all ages, although it’s most frequently noticed in older animals. CWD is fatal, and there are no treatments or vaccines.

All hunters are advised not to shoot, handle or consume any animal that is acting abnormally or appears to be sick. Wear latex or rubber gloves when field dressing deer or elk. All hunters are asked to contact the department at 623-236-7201 if they see or harvest an animal that appears to be sick.

For information about importation of harvested animals in other states, contact that state’s wildlife management agency. For more information about CWD, visit www.azgfd.com/healthy.




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Review all products online at www.alpsbrands.com

New product alert: Rhino Auto Tie Down Straps

We seldom mention new products we use regularly but this one deserves a special call out, the RHINO Auto Tie Down Straps. These we purchased and are not in any way provided to QUWF.

We all haul ATVs, RTVs, various equipment like Z-Mowers, sprayers etc. on our trailers. Using tie downs normally is a bit of a pain as tying up the excess strap never seems to fully work when the wind hits the straps. Enter RHINO.

These tie downs have a built-in retraction system / storage by the push of a lever, come in various sizes and colors, originate from a very good family owned company. Push the level and let out the strap. Attached the ends, push the button to retract and it takes up all slack. Then give them a few cranks and you are done.



Each set also comes with extra looped tie down straps, making finding the right spot a lot easier, and a storage bag.

They are a bit pricey, available direct from RHINO or Amazon, various colors and sizes, the ease of use is exceptional. I purchased the 2-inch x 10-foot version to try for use on the RTV on the trailer. The real problem, they sell out fast! When I ordered the second set, they were gone from all sources.

My next test will be how they perform in freezing weather.



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