



Mussel salvage  
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## Holiday Greetings from the Commissioner's Office



**2**016 is just about behind us and our staff has accomplished many great things. Things from the opening of the new Hatchery Creek project, to Quail Restoration efforts, new and improved Boat Ramps, another capacity Conservation Camp season, successful Hunting Seasons for all species, and great Fishing success just to name a few.

All of our success and efforts come from staff who are passionate about the fish and wildlife resources of our great Commonwealth. For the most part, our constituents are happy and appreciative of what we do on a daily basis. Don't let negatives influence you. Keep doing what you are so good at doing. It does make a difference!

From all the Commissioner's Office staff to you and your families, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year!

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## New hires / promotions

The Wildlife Diversity Program welcomes **Zach Couch** as their At-Risk Species Biologist. Zach has been employed by the State of Kentucky for 11 years, first as an Endangered Species Biologist at the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, and most recently at the Kentucky Division of Water as the Wild Rivers Program Coordinator.

Zach received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky in Natural Resource Conservation and Management (2005) and a Master's degree in Biology from Eastern Kentucky University (2010).

Away from work, he enjoys spending time in the outdoors with his family where he can usually be found unsuccessfully trying to keep his 5 and 3 year old children quiet enough in the hunting blind to harvest deer and turkey. Welcome Zach!

**Jessica East** has taken a position as Environmental Biologist Specialist with the FILO program effective December 1st. Jessica comes to KDFWR with an impressive record of education and experience.

She holds a B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin in Conservation Zoology and a Master of Science degree in Wildlife, Aquatic, and Wildland Science Management from Texas Tech University. Jessica's breadth of experience includes macroinvertebrate and pike studies in Wisconsin, trout and stream studies in Idaho, Chinook salmon and trout migration in Oregon, and riparian habitat work in Texas.

She has worked for universities, natural resource agencies, and the U.S. Forest Service in such places as Green Bay of Lake Michigan, the Sawtooth National Forest in the northwest, and the Pecos River in Texas.

Her previous jobs have required her to work extensively with the public, private landowners, and government agencies, including negotiating public access leases and developing riparian habitat restoration plans with private landowners. This experience in combination with her knowledge of stream

biology and habitat assessment will serve her well in her new job of finding and developing stream and wetland mitigation projects.

Please welcome Jessica East to Kentucky as we look forward to the important contributions she will make to the FILO program.

**Leah Godlaski** is a new employee within the KFW Marketing Division. She is a graduate from the University of Kentucky and has spent the last seven years managing the graphics and marketing for the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Center on UK Campus. There she coordinated the delivery of their message of hope, advocacy and support for community members impacted and involved with

the prevention of interpersonal violence.

Born and raised in Winchester, Leah is thrilled to be here and help share the great work of the department with fellow Kentuckians.

Besides waffles, Leah enjoys doing anything outside, fixing and riding old bikes, baking desserts and making art.

Leah has been practicing her casting techniques since her father taught her to hold a fly rod as a kid, and sometimes she gets lucky and hooks a nice one. She really enjoys fishing Hatchery Creek for trout and has introduced others to the sport of fly fishing on that remarkable stream.

Please welcome Leah to our Fish and Wildlife family.

## WE GET MAIL

### *Letters to the Commissioner's Office*



Commissioner Johnson received the following note from Scott Martin with the Parklands of Floyds Fork group. "Thank you and your team so much for recognition as your 2016 Business Partner of the Year. We cannot think of an agency that has been more supportive of our ef-

forts at urban conservation and outdoor recreation than KFW.

We are planning for the long term here and we look forward to decades of work ahead with y'all as we connect urban Kentucky to our Commonwealth's great outdoors and wildlife resources."

# RECRUITING



Law Enforcement Division is working with Marketing Division to seek out new recruits. They gathered this month at Cedar Creek Lake to create brief video spots that showcase the division and conservation officers contacting hunters and anglers in the field. The videos will be used in multiple media platforms.



# Parmley, Alley recognized for boating safety enforcement

Kentucky Conservation Officers **Matthew Parmley** and **Jerrod Alley** were recognized at the Governor's Impaired Driving Awards banquet in Lexington this month for their efforts on keeping our Kentucky waterways safe.



This is the first time a Kentucky Governor has honored a Kentucky Conservation Officer with this Award that recognizes their efforts to provide a

safe environment for our families and the millions of visitors to Kentucky waterways each year. They were joined in the photo by Division Director **Col. Rodney Coffey**.



## Mussel salvage after Green River Lock and Dam #6 failure

**D**uring Thanksgiving weekend, Lock and Dam #6 (LD#6) failed on the Green River. Water now flows under the dam near the lock.

The result of this breach is a tremendous amount of exposed river bed. Although plans have been underway to facilitate the removal of this particular dam for a number of years, the sudden failure has created new circumstances.

Fresh water mussels were exposed.

Last week biologists and staff from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, Mammoth Cave National Park (MCNP), and Division of Water, and permitted volunteers began collecting mussels exposed by the falling waters.

They discovered and collected more than 2,000 live mussels that included at least 32 species, including the federally endangered Sheepsnose and Fanshell. Most



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## Grouse habitat work days on Daniel Boone National Forest

U.S. Forest Service and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife staff recently teamed with volunteers on a habitat improvement project in the Cumberland Ranger District of the Daniel Boone National Forest.

The goal was to plant native shrubs and trees in log landings to improve cover and food for grouse and other wildlife, shifting away from a traditional cover of perennial cool-season grasses, which provide low-quality habitat and require frequent maintenance.

Despite cold temperatures and sleet, volunteers from the local Morehead community and the Kentucky River Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society turned out to work on Saturday, November 19th.

The work involved hand-planting containerized seedlings in landings ad-

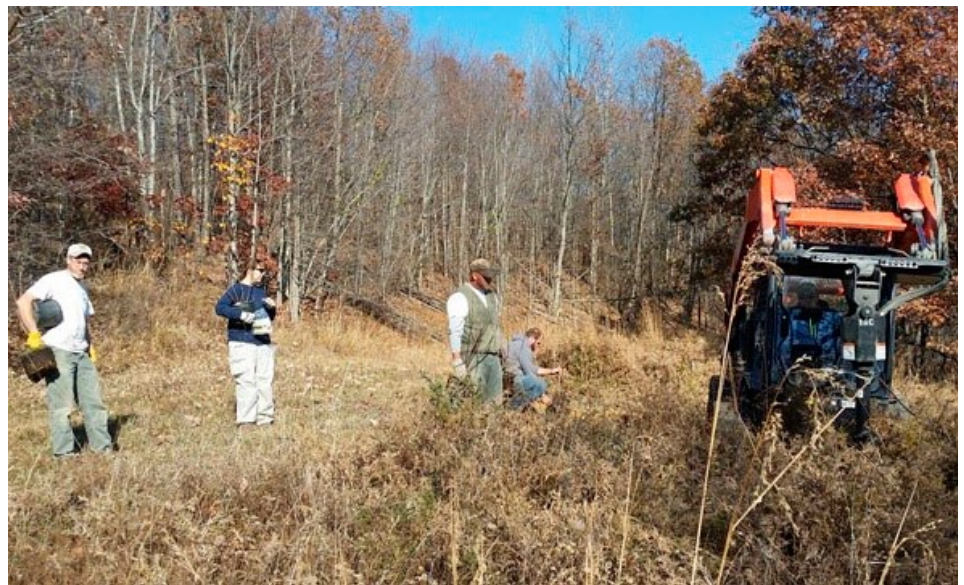
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Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) seedling hand-planted by volunteers at a planting site. *Zak Danks photo*



Volunteer planting crew for habitat work day in the Big Perry Grouse Area, Cumberland Ranger District, Daniel Boone National Forest, on Saturday, November 19, 2016. Pictured left to right are Charles and Brenda Stamm, Rowan County Wildlife Club; Nathan Gregory, KDFWR Regional Coordinator; Brian French, Kentucky River Chapter RGS; Walt Rybka; Christy Wampler, USFS District Biologist; Dave Scott, Kentucky River Chapter RGS. *Zak Danks photo*



Department and Forest Service staff planting native shrubs in the Big Perry area of the Cumberland Ranger District, Daniel Boone National Forest. Pictured left to right are Wes Mattox, KDFWR; Christy Wampler, USFS; Jacob Stewart, KDWR; Ben Limle, USFS; Carey Loomis, USFS (operating skid-steer). *Nathan Gregory photo*

## “Salvage,” continued

mussels were returned safely to deeper water, but a rare find – a Round Hickory Nut – was gravid and was brought to KDFWR's Center for Mollusk Conservation where it will be used for propagation.

With the Green River listed as one of the most biologically diverse rivers in the world, efforts to survey and salvage stranded mussels are important. Biologists have the opportunity for the first time in decades to access the river bed and search for some of the rarest animals in the world.

Fisheries and Wildlife Division personnel began a major survey and salvage effort this month. The unusually low water levels for this time of year along with the breach allowed them to move up salvage efforts considerably.



Biologists hope to find the critically endangered Ring Pink (*Obovaria retusa*). “They have been searching for this animal in the Green River over the past 14 years, and only a few individuals have ever been found,” said Wildlife Diversity Coordinator **Sunni Carr**.

They are among several species that would be collected and brought back for propagation attempts by **Dr. Monte McGregor and his staff**.



## “Grouse,” continued

adjacent to a recent timber harvest. Earlier in the week, Department staff from the Northeast Region assisted the Forest Service in planting larger advanced shrubs from 3-gallon pots. Both entities provided equipment and a work force to get the shrubs planted.

Native seedling species planted included rusty blackhaw, carolina rose, American plum, elderberry, flowering dogwood, red chokeberry, black chokeberry, persimmon, black gum, and

roughleaf dogwood.

The grouse program and northeast region thank the volunteers and staff for their help!



One of several log landing planting sites. *Zak Danks photo*



Volunteers Dave Scott (foreground) and Brian French from the Kentucky River Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society planting shrubs. *Zak Danks photo*



## “Laura B” sighted near Boston after 11 years off the grid

Information and Education Division Assistant Director **Laura Burford** spends much of her time coordinating the Department’s conservation camp program, but a little over two decades ago as a young wildlife biologist new to the Department, she headed up Kentucky’s Peregrine Falcon restoration program.



As with several other native wildlife species, peregrine falcons had disappeared from Kentucky’s landscape, and were federally listed as a threatened and endangered species.

Burford took over Kentucky’s fledgling, year-old falcon restoration program in 1994 and headed it until 2001. She worked with national groups and coordinated the release of young falcons into fabricated nest boxes located on tall buildings in cities. They hoped the falcons would return as adults to raise their offspring.

Falcons have recovered enough today to be removed from the list, but KDFWR continues to monitor the productivity

and survival of this rare species through banding and resighting individual birds.

In 2005, a young falcon was hatched at the LG&E Trimble County Generating Station in Bedford. Department biologists named the youngster “Laura B” in recognition of Laura’s early restoration efforts.

But when “Laura B” learned to fly and left the nest, she disappeared.

Gone for 11 years. Off the grid. They feared the worst.

Until recently.

A birder near Boston, Kim Naggy, photographed “Laura B” at Plum Island Refuge just north of Boston.

Kentucky biologists say most Kentucky falcons tend to remain in the Kentucky-Indiana-Ohio area, and the sighting of “Laura B” in the northeastern U.S. is a unique occurrence.

## Wiard elected to KPPA Board

Purchasing and Property Branch Manager **Tim Wiard** was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Public Procurement Association (KPPA). KPPA is an association of State and local public purchasing professionals. He will serve a two-year term.

Tim still finds time to get out and catch a nice largemouth bass.





## Field to Fork



Some of the more recent Field to Fork (FTF) events over the past three months organized by Hunter's Legacy Program in conjunction with Mossy Oak attract-ed Eastern Kentucky University and Western Kentucky University students and other developing hunters.

Six recent events attracted more than six dozen participants. Many were introduced to hunting and other practical field skills such as pre-hunt scouting and field dressing deer, crossbow deer hunting and quail hunting for the first time.

Programs included events at Camp Webb, Taylorsville Lake WMA, Central Kentucky WMW, Bluegrass Army Depot and Otter Creek Park.





## Grayson Lake WMA habitat project completed

**N**ortheast regional staff recently pulled together to complete an 18-acre habitat project on Grayson Lake WMA.

Using “Hack and Squirt” herbicide application employees reverted forest succession in old field habitat.

This treatment creates increased light at ground level encouraging a new flush of both herbaceous and woody vegetation.

As trees begin to decay and decom-

pose many will provide nesting cover for song birds as well as valuable roost sites for many bat species. The goal of the project was to increase the availability of dense cover on Grayson Lake WMA.

The completion of this project will likely provide increased small game hunting opportunities as well as nesting cover for wild turkeys, bedding areas and

fawning cover for white-tailed deer, and in the coming years provide suitable cover for ruffed grouse.

This project is the first of many on Grayson Lake WMA that will focus on providing early successional habitat essential for game and non-game wildlife in eastern forests.



## ARSON JOINT TASK FORCE

Marketing Division Director Brian Blank talked over details of an informational video the division is producing to inform Kentucky citizens about the Arson Joint Task Force, consisting of Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, Kentucky Division of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service. The video is designed to raise awareness about irresponsible burning during wildfire season. With Blank, from left, are Forestry’s Brandon Howard, Capt. Richard Skaggs and U.S. Forest Service enforcement officer Tom Grooms.

## KCOA sponsors conservation camp scholarships

The Kentucky Conservation Officers' Association makes a presentation during the December Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting in Frankfort.

Conservation Officers **Thomas Blackwell** and **Steve Combs** presented a \$13,400 check to the department to sponsor youth with the opportunity to attend one of the department's three conservation camps this summer.

Commissioner **Gregory Johnson**, Information and Education Division Director **Tim Slone** and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Chairman **Jimmy Bevins** accepted the donation.

This is one of many ways that the Kentucky Conservation Officers' Association works with our youth to invest in our future.



## Webb Companies is 2016 Peregrine Falcon Cooperator of the Year Award recipient

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife has recognized The Webb Companies, located at the Lexington Financial Center, for their exceptional cooperation with Kentucky's peregrine falcon program.

Each year, KDFWR recognizes a person or group that has gone above and beyond for Kentucky's peregrine falcons.

This was the first time a pair of peregrine falcons successfully nested in downtown Lexington.

This year's nesting success can largely be attributed to the many people involved in the monitoring efforts and accommodations provided for the falcons on the World Trade Center Building. The Webb Companies provided KDFWR with access and assistance whenever needed.

Our sincerest thanks to the Webb Companies and their involvement in the 2016 falcon nesting season in Lexington.



Cooperator of the Year Recipients: (from left) Mitzi Smith – The Webb Companies, Loren Taylor – KDFWR, and Nick Schwendeman – The Webb Companies