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West Kentucky WMA hosts 2018 AKC National Retriever Championship

The American Kennel Club's National Retriever Championship (NRC) was held for the first time in Kentucky Nov. 10-18, 2018, on the West Kentucky Wildlife Management Area (WKWMA). This annual event rotates between the four U.S. time zones, and since 1950 had only been held at two sites in the central time zone before coming to Kentucky. Hosting this event on a wildlife management area that's also open for public hunting and fishing is a particular accomplishment for the KDFWR, as national events are typically on private lands managed specifically for retriever training and trialing.

Mitch Patterson, 2018 NRC President, worked with Public Lands Biologist Tim Kreher and First District Commissioner Dr. Harry Carloss for several years to arrange for this year's event to be at WKWMA. Several hundred people travel from more than 30 states to judge, work, and compete at the NRC, making Paducah's infrastructure of hotels, restaurants and service industries the perfect community to host the event. Since the event consists of 10 different tests over an eight-day period, WKWMA's landscape was ideal for the NRC, as it features a multitude of land sites with different terrains, natural cover and crops, plus ponds of all sizes and shapes. Ultimately, a partnership formed between the Paducah Convention



Judges Dr. Ed Aycock, David Opseth, and Charles Tyson, along with Alan Pleasant and Google.

and Visitors' Bureau, the KDFWR, and the retriever field trial community to host the event in Paducah, generating millions of dollars for Paducah's economy during the week of competition preceded by a full week of onsite preparation by trial workers and WKWMA staff.

The NRC is often described as the "Super Bowl" of the sporting retriever community, since a dog must win a week-end field trial and earn points in at least

one other in order to merely qualify for this event. Of the thousands of retrievers that run AKC field trials across the United States each year, only 118 qualified this year, and 106 of those participated in the 2018 NRC.

The NRC's 10 tests were a mixture of marked retrieves (bird falls being "marked down" and remembered by the dogs) and

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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

This letter was sent to Dr. Carloss, 1st District Commissioner:

"Good morning. My name is David Colwell and I was the chairman of the Grounds Committee for the National Retriever Championship (NRC). I wanted to take a moment to thank you, Tim Kreher and other members of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources for hosting the NRC. The West Kentucky WMA was in spectacular condition.

The past two weeks, I spent preparing the grounds for the NRC. This involved

walking, driving and four wheeling the WMA to set up the tests. I was extremely impressed with the condition of the WMA. The ground cover was in superb condition for the championship. It appeared to me and many others that great thought and care was taken in preparing and maintaining the grounds. Not only was the ground cover excellent, it was extremely safe. I walked out every test and never came across anything I felt was unsafe for the dogs or contestants. Finally, I was amazed at how clean the WMA was of trash. There was

virtually none. It was as clean of trash as many private grounds I have competed on.

Finally a special thanks to Tim. Not only did he do an excellent job in preparing and maintaining the WMA for the championship, he was an excellent host and representative for the state of Kentucky. Everyone I spoke too, including most of the contestants, were very complimentary of Tim and the facility. We all appreciated the effort Tim put forth.

Thank you again and I hope to return in the future."

KECC fundraiser a success

The Salato Breakout Game, a fundraiser for KECC, was a first-time success. More than \$115 was raised during the event. Puzzles and clues had to be solved in order to "save the snake."

All participants were able to save the snake within the allotted time but the winner was the group with the quickest

time. The winning time went to the R3 Group of Rachel Young, Olivia Dangler, Lisa Frye, Allysa Brady and Becky Wallen. They completed the task in 13 minutes and 17 seconds.

A big shout out to the Salato staff for their expertise and innovative ideas.

RESULTS for ALL TEAMS

R3 Group – 13:17
 CMC Group – 13:25
 HR Group – 15:12
 Parks Group – 17:43
 IT/KDSS Group – 17:56
 M. Trent's Group – 18:44



Habitat work completed at Kentucky River WMA Benjy Kinman Lake



Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' Fisheries staff completed the installation of rock reefs and spawning beds at Benjy Kinman Lake on the Kentucky River WMA. Crews used 60 tons of shot rock and No. 2 rock to complete the installation. These areas should continue to enhance the fishery and provide areas for anglers to target bass, crappie, bluegill and catfish. In addition, 100 tons of ag lime was washed into the lake to benefit water chemistry and fish production. The department's Engineering Division helped with the project by hauling material to the lake.

Fish and Wildlife officer makes arrests for illegal hunting, drug charges

Two Leslie County residents were facing multiple felony charges after an investigation by a Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Conservation Officer into reports of illegal hunting at night.

Zandall Wilson, 58, of Warbranch and Glenda Collett, 43, of Asher were arrested in the early morning hours Nov. 14 after officer Kyle Clark noticed spotlights shining out of the driver and passenger-side windows of the vehicle they were in.

As the officer approached the vehicle, he saw a semi-automatic rifle in the vehicle. A subsequent search found a concealed .22-caliber pistol, multiple spotlights, drugs, drug paraphernalia and a



large amount of cash.

The drugs and drug paraphernalia included more than 150 prescription pills, five bags of methamphetamine, four bags of marijuana, partially smoked marijuana cigarettes, a wood marijuana pipe, syringes, a tourniquet, crack pipe, metal spoon with drug residue, rolling papers and more than \$1,500. Collett also had an outstanding arrest warrant.

Wilson and Collett were taken to the Leslie County Detention Center and faced multiple charges, including hunting without a license or permit, illegal take or pursuit of big game and spotlighting. All

suspected drugs were sent to the Kentucky State Police lab in Frankfort for testing.

Kentucky's conservation officers are sworn law enforcement officers with a primary mission focus on hunting, fishing and boating enforcement. In their everyday role, conservation officers ensure compliance with hunting and fishing laws and ensure that the state's waterways are a safe place for all to enjoy by utilizing a two-pronged approach consisting of education and enforcement.

To report suspected illegal activity, call 1-800-25-ALERT or contact the nearest Kentucky State Police post.



OFFICER CARNEY HONORED

The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety (KOHS) honored more than 200 law enforcement officers from 175 agencies across the Commonwealth on Dec. 12 for their efforts to target impaired drivers. Awards were presented to officers with the most impaired-driving arrests in each agency and Highway Safety All-Star awards were presented to the top three in each division. Officer Zach Carney (back row, green uniform) received the 2018 Governor's Impaired Driving Enforcement Award. Officer Carney was recognized for excellence in enforcing boating under the influence (BUI). Officer Carney is assigned to the 9th Law Enforcement District and patrols Lake Cumberland.

KDFWR staff help with 7th Annual KU - Woodford Warriors Deer Hunt

The seventh annual Kentucky Utilities – Woodford Warriors Deer Hunt invited 18 participants to hunt the second weekend of modern firearms season on Kentucky Utilities Tyrone Plant. Local landowners also volunteered areas for hunting on their properties totaling almost 3,000 acres for the annual hunt. With the help of Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife staff, along with several volunteers, this hunt is made possible each year.

The participants were welcomed on Friday with a parade through Versailles, escorted by the Patriot Guard. A luncheon followed at a local restaurant. The hunters then proceeded to the Anderson County Sportsman's Club where KDFWR conservation officers Josh Robinson and Matt Hartley officiated a firearms safety range day and made sure the hunters' scopes were on target.

Hunters and their assistants then returned for dinner at the Woodford County Agriculture Resources Building where KDFWR wildlife biologist Joe Lacefield presented a hunter orientation presentation discussing their hunter packet contents, tagging and checking deer, safe shot selection and deer judging (comparing adult does to fawns and QDM goals of some of the landowners).

Clay Smitson, another KDFWR wildlife biologist, helped man the check station on Saturday allowing Lacefield to help some hunters with deer recovery and stand locations logistics.

"We had beautiful weather for a change and hunters had three hunting periods: Saturday morning, Saturday evening and Sunday morning concluding at 11 a.m.," Lacefield said. "Sixteen hunters actually hunted, harvesting 20 deer, eight of which were very nice bucks. Numerous volunteers and donors make this great event possible."



2018 Cooperator of the Year awarded

Charles Wilkins and his wife, Elsa Wilkins, were awarded the 2018 Cooperator of the Year by the Graves County Conservation District of Kentucky. They have owned and managed their farm for many years, now predominantly for wildlife species that rely on early succession plants.

The Wilkinses have recently established and managed more than 50 acres of native grasses and forbs through conservation incentive programs to improve habitat conditions for bobwhite quail, rabbits, songbird species, pollinators and other wildlife. They routinely contact and work with Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and Kentucky Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel to assess and improve these habitat conditions.

Charles Wilkins retired from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources several years ago. He and his wife received the award at the annual Christmas breakfast held by cooperators on Dec. 4 in Sedalia.



Pictured left to right: Richie Galloway (KYNRCS Commissioner), Susie Fenwick, Tyler Goodman (KYNRCS Commissioner), Cynthia Elder, Elsa Wilkins, David Ray, Charles Wilkins, Phil Holloway, Greg Smith, Ben Wilson and Todd Hayden (KYNRCS Commissioner)

I&E THANKSGIVING POTLUCK

The Information and Education Division had a staff Thanksgiving potluck at the Salato Center in November. Emily Hogue, acting director, made a special guest appearance ... as a Thanksgiving turkey. Staff had a good time taking "shots" at her using a nerf bow and arrow. Some friendly fire, but no serious injuries, were reported as she wobbled and gobbled her way through the room.



HABITAT PROGRAM TEACHES STUDENTS ABOUT ECOSYSTEM

Andrew Whittle, conservation educator, worked with a group of gifted and talented students in the first through fourth grade to learn about the health of the ecosystem. The program took place at Camp KYSOC in Carrollton. The day started with a hike on the Camp KYSOC grounds discussing the four attributes of good wildlife habitat: food, water, shelter and space. While on the hike, students collected leaves for a craft project. After the hike, Whittle talked to the students about things that hurt habitats such as poor logging practices, pollution, invasive species and coal mining waste. He also pointed out Kentucky Fish and Wildlife success stories that have had with wildlife such as the American Bald Eagle, American Black Bear, Elk, White-tailed Deer, Wild Turkey, Walleye and Peregrine Falcon. The students then took the leaves they collected and made wildlife art with them, creating their own habitats.





Overview of the marked retrieves in the 10th and final test of the 2018 NRC.



The seventh series water blind retrieve at the 2018 NRC, the bird is hidden below the crooked black post.

“Championship,” continued

blind retrieves (dogs being “handled” with remote whistle and hand signals to find a hidden bird) on land and water sites. Unseasonable cold and snowy conditions added difficulty to the challenging tests created by WKWMA’s habitat, particularly on the water tests. Each test eliminated a few competing dogs until the 10th and final series, when the winner was chosen from the 11 remaining dogs. This dog was National Field Champion, Amateur Field Champion “I’m Ur Search Engine,” commonly called “Google,” a male black Labrador retriever owned by Leon Stepanian from Virginia and trained and handled by Alan Pleasant from North Carolina.

All of the NRC contestants and participants had nothing but glowing remarks about the WKWMA, and the Paducah area in general. The WKWMA’s facilities and setting allowed the event to function well, even under challenging weather conditions, while the hotels and restaurants available in Paducah fulfilled the needs of everyone attending. The WKWMA staff received

the following in a letter from Charles Tyson, who traveled from California to judge the 2018 NRC. “I wanted to drop you a personal note to express my appreciation and gratitude for all you and the members of your state of Kentucky Wildlife Management Area team did to make the 2018 National Retriever Championship so memorable and successful.

The work you have done to develop the Wildlife Management Area for public use and at the same time preserving and enhancing the habitat should be replicated around the country.”

A promotional poster for a benefit show. At the top, it says "JERICHO WOODS" in large, stylized letters. Below that is a photo of two men, Dan Conn and Paul Priest, standing in front of a stone wall. To the left of the photo is a "Kentucky Wild" logo, and to the right is a "Country Boy Brewing" logo. At the bottom, the text reads: "JERICHO WOODS with DAN CONN Benefitting Kentucky Wild", "January 11th / 8pm / \$15 adv - \$20 door", "Odeon Louisville", and "Presented by KY Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources and Country Boy Brewing".

Josh Mitcham and Paul Priest of the band Jericho Woods are excited to be inaugural year sponsors of the Kentucky Wild program. “Paul and I are both Kentuckians and are proud of the vast landscapes and wildlife that Kentucky has to offer. We love the outdoors and are honored to partner with Kentucky Wild to make a difference for our state’s treasured wildlife and habitat,” Mitcham said. The band will host a benefit show for Kentucky Wild on Jan. 11 at Odeon in Louisville, Kentucky. Tickets are available [here](#)