



U.S. Interior Secretary lauds Kentucky outdoor recreation projects in report

Just days before the release of a 50-state report outlining some of the country's most promising ways to reconnect Americans to the natural world, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar highlighted two projects in the state of Kentucky that will be included in the final report.

The report represents what states believe are among the best investments in the nation to support a healthy, active population, conserve wildlife and working lands, and create travel, tourism and outdoor-recreation jobs across the country.

The extension of the Kentucky River Water Trail and Dawkins Line Rail-Trail are among 100 projects nationwide highlighted in the report – two in every state – as part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to establish a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda and reconnect Americans to the outdoors.

The report is a result of 50 meetings with governors and stakeholders held by Salazar and other senior Interior officials to solicit ideas on how to best implement AGO in their states. These projects were identified for their potential to conserve important lands and build recreation opportunities and economic growth for the surrounding communities as part of close engagement with Gov. Steve Beshear and the state of Kentucky, as well as



private landowners, local- and tribal-elected officials, community organizations and outdoor recreation and conservation stakeholders. The full 50-state report will be released in the coming weeks.

"Under the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, we are listening to the people of Kentucky and communities across America and working with them on locally-based projects that will conserve the beauty and health of our land and water and open up more opportunities for people to enjoy them," Salazar said. "My staff and I have been asking each governor for the most promising projects to support in their states, and we will do all we can to help move them forward."

The two projects in Kentucky highlighted by Salazar in the forthcoming report are:

Kentucky River Water Trail

The Bluewater Trails Program of Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources has designated 10 state water trails throughout the Commonwealth, including the Kentucky River Water Trail southeast of Lexington. A 19-mile section of the river was designated a state water trail and a National Recreation Trail on National Trails Day in 2011.

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky River-

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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

The following comes from Steven R. Miller of St. Louis, Missouri:

"I was in Paducah this past weekend to judge a Retriever Field Trial competition that was held at the West Kentucky Wildlife Management Area (WKWMA) and, as always, had a wonderful time while in the Paducah area. I hope that the businesses and residents of the area realize what a terrific facility the WKWMA is and the economic activity that it generates for the area.

Tim Kreher, the Area Manager, has worked tirelessly for years to continually make improvements to the area that benefit both the human users of the area and the various species of wildlife that live there. As a result of the efforts put forth by Tim and his staff, the WKWMA is now one of the premier venues in the country for dog competitions and a favorite destination for competitors like myself.

The grounds offered at the WKWMA are better than any other "public" grounds that I've seen throughout the country. I travel to Paducah at least twice a year for events at the WKWMA and most weekends of the year there is some sort of dog competition or other event held there.

These events typically draw people from all over the Midwest region. This past weekend there were over 150 dogs entered in the event with all of their owners and handlers staying in the area. Next weekend there is a Hunt Test scheduled with over 600 total entries over a three day period, one of the single largest dog events to be held in the country, and several of the area hotels are completely booked.

The WKWMA has improved so much under the management of Tim Kreher that this past weekend there was a lot of desire expressed about moving the National Open Championship to Paducah in the upcoming years.

The National Open Championship, when in the Central Time Zone, has been held in St. Louis since the 1940s but because of an ongoing lack of support from the Missouri Department of Conservation for maintenance of the grounds it will probably never return.

In fact, the event that is scheduled to be held this coming weekend is being co-hosted by the Bootheel Retriever Club based in the Cape Girardeau, Missouri area, but they chose to hold their event at the WKWMA because the grounds are so much better than anything the Missouri Department of Conservation can provide. I hope the Kentucky Division of Conservation will continue to support the WKWMA and Tim Kreher's efforts there.

Thanks again for everything that the State of Kentucky has done so far, and keep up the good work!"

USDOD recognizes KDFWR Law Enforcement

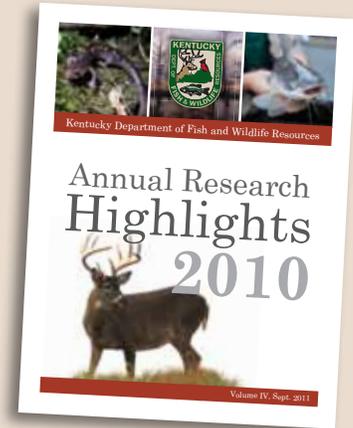
The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Division of Law Enforcement was recognized as a "Patriotic Employer" by the U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

The Division received a framed certificate of recognition dated Nov. 15, 2011, for "contributing to national security and freedom by supporting employee participation in America's National Guard and Reserve Force."

Since 2005, the department has joined with other employers in recognizing that the Guard and Reserve are essential to the strength of our nation and the well-being

- of our communities, and in pledging to:
- Fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
 - Our managers and supervisors will have the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.
 - We appreciate the values, leadership and unique skills service members bring to the workforce and will encourage opportunities to hire Guardsmen, Reservists, and Veterans.
 - We will continually recognize and support our country's service members and their families in peace, in crisis, and in war.

NOW AVAILABLE!



The KDFWR Annual Research Highlights document (Volume IV) is now online: fw.ky.gov/pdf/researchhighlights2010.pdf

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this document, and a big thanks to Obie Williams for his excellent layout and design work. Please take a moment to look through this document to see what KDFWR and our partners are doing to achieve goals of KDFWR's Strategic Plan and Kentucky's Wildlife Action Plan.

New hires and promotions

Charlie Plush comes to the KDFWR by way of Raleigh, North Carolina, where he recently completed his Master's in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology at North Carolina State University in August.

He began working as the Wetland Reserve Program Biologist out of the Madisonville USDA-NRCS office in mid-October of 2011.

For his master's degree, Charlie investigated the wildlife use of field borders planted as beneficial insect habitat in North Carolina farmlands. A primary focus of his research involved examining the value of beneficial insect habitats (i.e. borders planted in prairie flowers and native warm-season grasses) as northern bobwhite brood habitat.

Charlie was born in Wichita, Kansas, and grew up in three different states including Oklahoma and Georgia. He completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management at the University of Georgia in 2008.

He and his wife, Brit-tany, now live in White Plains, Kentucky, with their two beloved hunting dogs, Bea and Maple. When time permits, he enjoys hunting, fishing, vegetable gardening, training hunting dogs, and backpacking with his wife.

John Goodin recently joined KDFWR as a farm bill biologist and will be working out of the Hart County USDA office.

He graduated from Murray State University in December of 2005 with a degree in wildlife biology. He worked for Hardin County Conservation district during 2005-06 and

just returned from living a year in South Dakota. He is married but does not have children.

Randall Alcorn joined the department as a farm bill biologist for area 3 and will be working out of the London NRCS office. He is a 2005 graduate of Berea College with a degree in Agriculture and Natural Resources and is a graduate from Eastern Kentucky University in 2008 with a degree in Wildlife Management.

Since October of 2009, Randall has been a seasonal wildlife technician for the Clay Wildlife Management Area located in Nicholas County.

Jacob Stewart also recently joined the Farm Bill Program staff as a farm bill biologist. Jacob's primary responsibilities will focus on the promotion and implementation of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in eastern Kentucky (NRCS Area 3), an area with significant potential for this important conservation program. Jacob has worked for KDFWR since March 2006. After seven months as a Wildlife

Technician, Jacob was promoted to Wildlife Biologist.

For 3.5 years he excelled as the department's LIP biologist (Landowner Incentives Program), overseeing the allocation of grant funds and technical guidance for habitat improvement projects focused on threatened and endangered species in eastern Kentucky. These projects included practices such as stream stabilization, timber stand improvement, reforestation, ephemeral pools, and native warm-season grass plantings.

Then in March 2010 Jacob began working with the department's habitat team that conducted habitat work on WMAs across the state. His duties included managing project logistics, supervising technicians, writing federal grant reports, and maintaining equipment.

A native of Anderson County, Jacob graduated with a B.S. in Wildlife Management from Eastern Kentucky University.

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NEW LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPTAIN IN 1ST, 2ND



Commissioner Dr. Jon Gassett and Captain Myra Minton pin captain rank bars on Rick Mehlbauer's uniform collar after promoting him to law enforcement supervisor for the First and Second Fish and Wildlife Districts. Captain Mehlbauer began his career with the Department of Fish and Wildlife as a seasonal creel clerk. He later became a full-time technician with Fisheries Division before joining Law Enforcement Division in 2001 as an Officer Recruit. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2009.

Wildlife Division establishes new research program

KDFWR is excited to announce a new program within the Wildlife Division. We have high hopes for program development over the next 5 years. Initial goals for the new Research Program include:

- Work with field and program staff to identify agency-wide wildlife research priorities
- Coordinate and implement projects identified as agency priorities
- Provide a centralized hub to coordinate study design, implementation, analysis, and product delivery for both internal and external (contract) research projects
- Coordinate with field and program staff to critically review ongoing research and monitoring projects, compile/analyze data, and discontinue, add, and/or revise

projects as necessary

- Coordinate research and management publications

Dr. Danna Baxley will be the Program Coordinator for the newly created Research Program. Over the next few months, Danna will be reaching out to field staff, and program staff to compile a list of the most pressing research needs for KDFWR's Wildlife Division. These coordinated efforts will ultimately provide direction for this new program and for the agency as a whole.

Danna joined the Wildlife Division in 2007 as the State Wildlife Grant coordinator, where her primary responsibilities included oversight and implementation of the federal State Wildlife Grant Program.

Originally from Malvern, Arkansas, Danna earned her Ph. D. at the University of Southern Mississippi where she studied black pine snakes and habitat associations of reptile and amphibian communities in longleaf pine ecosystems.

Danna has spent the past decade working in the field of natural resource management and has been employed by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, private consulting firms, and the Appalachian Trail Conference.

In her free time, Danna is an avid backpacker and outdoor enthusiast.

Kenny Atha is new Technician Supervisor

The Fisheries Division is pleased to announce that **Kenny Atha** has recently been promoted to a Fish and Wildlife Technician Supervisor at the Forks of Elkhorn – Fish Transportation Section. Kenny had previously been employed as a Fish and Wildlife Technician III.

Kenny has been with the Department eight years, of which the last five years have been with the Fish Transportation Section. He started working for the Department in 2003 as a seasonal worker at the Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery while pursuing his degree in Biological Sciences at Cumberland College.

Upon obtaining his degree, he returned to work with the Department with the Central Fisheries District. In September 2006, Kenny was promoted to a Fish and Wildlife Technician II at the Forks of Elkhorn - Fish Transportation Section.

In 2007, he was promoted to Fish and Technician III. Kenny's diverse background with the Department makes him a valuable asset to the Fisheries Division



and the Fish Transportation Section.

He is a model employee and is always willing to lend a hand, whether it be in harvesting fish from ponds, helping collect fish from the front of an electrofishing boat, removing fish from a gillnet, or

transporting and stocking fish throughout the Commonwealth.

Kenny is an avid outdoorsman and resides in northern Franklin County where he enjoys spending time with his wife Cara and his young son Riley.

“Report,” continued

keepers, and the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program are partnering to extend the water trail upstream with an eventual goal of a water trail along all 400 miles of the river. The water trail currently includes Pool 9 and will eventually reach Pool 14 in Lee County. The Commonwealth of Kentucky highlights this water trail as one of Kentucky's wild-adventure tourism attractions.

Dawkins Line Rail-Trail

The proposed 36-mile-long Dawkins Line has the potential to become the Commonwealth of Kentucky's longest rail-trail, doubling the miles of rail-trail in the Commonwealth.

This unused rail corridor stretches from West Van Lear in Johnson County, through Magoffin County, to Evanston in Breathitt County. It was named after the former Dawkins Lumber Co. This scenic, heavily-wooded corridor features 35

trestle bridges and a pair of tunnels – the 662-foot-long Gun Creek Tunnel and the 1,555-foot-long Carver Tunnel.

The Commonwealth purchased the corridor from the R.J. Corman Railroad Group in spring 2011. Kentucky State Parks will manage the rail-trail and has some funds to develop the trail. Additional funds are needed to complete planning for the extension of the trail.

When completed, this rail-trail will bring tourism to Eastern Kentucky and provide invaluable recreational opportunities for residents in an area with a high rate of obesity, diabetes, and heart and vascular disease.

The report will also include potential actions by Interior and its bureaus to support the projects identified. In Kentucky, for example, the Department could provide planning and technical assistance through the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program for the next phase of the Dawkins

Line Rail-Trail.

The Department could also provide planning and technical assistance to extend the Kentucky River Water Trail from Pool 10 to Pool 14. This section could be designated as a National Water Trail. The Department may support financing for the construction of boating infrastructure at access sites along the trail.

The Department of the Interior will work with each of its key bureaus – including the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – to direct available resources and personnel to make these projects a reality. “The America's Great Outdoors Initiative turns the conventional wisdom about the federal government's role in conservation on its head,” Salazar said. “Rather than dictate policies or conservation strategies from Washington, it supports grassroots, locally driven initiatives.”

Hunters applying now for sandhill crane permits

Kentucky's first sandhill crane hunting season will open soon. Hunters began applying for permits Nov. 15 and the application period continues through Nov. 30. The drawing is scheduled for Dec. 5.

Applications are only available online at the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources website, fw.ky.gov. Each application costs \$3 and a hunter may only apply once.

The department will use a random computer drawing to select up to 400 hunters. Applicants must have a valid Kentucky hunting license or be license-exempt at the time of application. Results will be available to individual applicants online following the drawing.

The hunting season for sandhill cranes will begin Dec. 17 and continue through

Jan. 15, 2012, or until hunters take 400 cranes, whichever comes first.

Successful applicants must complete and pass an online identification exam before receiving a permit. Each permitted hunter may take up to two sandhill cranes. Hunters must use the departments Telecheck system to register each crane on the day the bird is taken.

Hunters will also be required to monitor the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website daily for notices of season closure and notifications of the presence of whooping cranes in Kentucky. For additional information, visit the departments website, or call the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Information Center at 1-800-858-1549 during normal weekday working hours.

“Hires,” continued

He lives in Richmond with his wife and two kids.

Shannon MacDonald joins the Department as the new Internal Policy Analyst III for the Kentucky Wetland and Stream Mitigation Program in the Fisheries Division.

Shannon is originally from Frankfort and played softball for Franklin County High School. She graduated with Honors obtaining a B. A. degree from Kentucky State University where she majored in Business Administration.

Shannon currently resides in Frankfort with her husband Jason and 3-year-old son, Macayne. She is very happy and excited about the opportunity to work with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Her first day on the job was September 1. Please welcome Shannon to her new role with KDFWR.

Conservation officers team places fifth in Kentucky Officers Fitness Challenge

A four-man team representing the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Division captured fifth place overall in the inaugural Kentucky Officers Fitness Challenge hosted by the Lexington Police Department in October. Conservation officers took several individual honors as well.

The event is designed to encourage physical fitness within the law enforcement community while having some fun at the same time. The four-person team challenge was the main event.

“Team Gobblers,” made up of Fish and Wildlife sergeants **David Marques** and **Damon Foster** and officers **Jarad Northern** and **Bill Spears** placed fifth



Officer McCoy clearing the 6' fence.

overall in the event that covered 1.1 miles through fields and woodlands and included 25 obstacles.

The officers crawled through culverts obstacles that challenged participants physically and promoted teamwork.

There was also an individual challenge course that consisted of many of the obstacles in the team event. Second District officer **BJ McCoy** joined Marques, Foster, Spears, and Northern of the Sixth District in the individual challenges.

McCoy placed fourth in the individual challenges and Marques fifth. They each finished first in their respective groups.

All events had prize packages ranging from \$25-\$1,000 and participants were given T-shirts and training bags filled with items for participating, as well as food and drinks throughout the day.

It was a great event to promote physical fitness in law enforcement and to encourage networking with other officers from around the state.



Above: Sgt. Marques and Officer Northern get ready to lift the 175 pound dummy into the hurdle obstacle. Right: Officers at the finish line. (L-R) Officer BJ McCoy, Officer Bill Spears, Officer Jarad Northern, Sgt. David Marques, Sgt. Damon Foster.

Annual Grayson Lake WMA youth hunt successful again

Eighty-nine youth took 27 deer during the annual Grayson Lake WMA youth deer hunt over the Nov. 5-6 weekend.

The hunt was open for either sex deer, but 20 of the deer taken were antlered bucks indicating the rut was well underway.

Large bucks were not in short supply either, as seven had eight or more points or

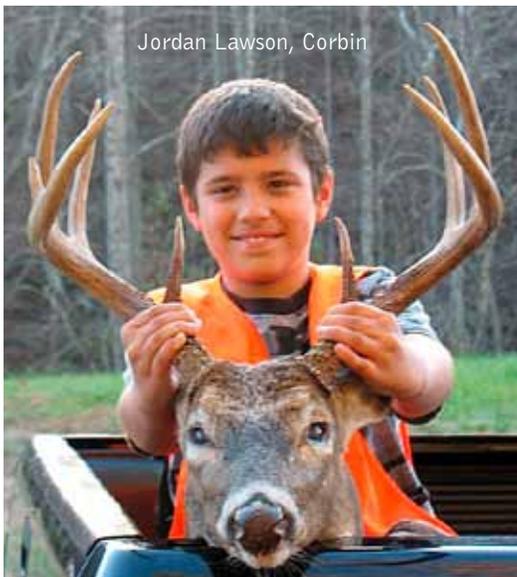
antler spreads of 15" or larger. The largest buck taken was a nine-point with a 17.25" antler spread killed by Jordan Lawson of Corbin, Kentucky.

The great majority of youngsters participating saw deer while hunting and many fond memories were made. The hunt is open to youngsters under 16 who are accompanied by an adult.

Youths under 12 are not required to

purchase a hunting license or deer permit and do not have to have passed a hunter safety course to be eligible for the hunt.

The hunt is open sign-up with no qualifying youngster turned away. Ample acreage is available in the hunting area and all youngsters are invited to participate next year when it is once again expected to be held the first weekend in November.



Jordan Lawson, Corbin



Trevor Mobley, Rockcastle Co.



Clayton Wiles,
Somerset



Hailey and Vernon
(father) Johnson,
Floyd Co.



Logan Noel, Rockcastle Co.



Brittany Lunsford, Bourbon Co.