

April 2012

—VOL. 7 NO. 4—



When Our Partners Are Strong, We Are Strong

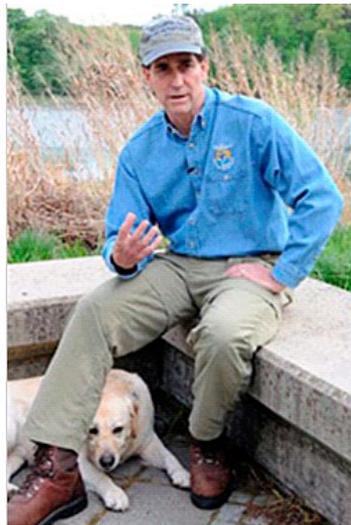
Reprinted from original posting:
March 26, 2012 11:57 AM

By Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view - until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." – Atticus Finch, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

This past week, Monday through Wednesday (March 19-21), I had the opportunity to walk around in the skin of Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFW) Director, **Dr. Jon Gassett**.

Jon is currently also serving as President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). He had the idea that we should shadow one another, to hopefully better understand and appreciate



Dear KDFWR Staff:

Last month, at my invitation, Kentucky was honored to host a visit from USFWS Director Dan Ashe. We visited many parts of Kentucky, touring both state and federal lands and facilities. He posted the following on his blog, reprinted here, a few days after his return home.

That he devoted so much time to us in his visit is clear evidence of Kentucky's new fish and wildlife prominence on the national stage, and that bodes well for Kentucky. Again, thank you for all you do each day in helping us be the best stewards of Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources that we can be. – Jon Gassett

what each of us, and our respective agencies, do day-in-and-day-out.

It was a wonderful experience. I visited an outstanding KDFW team that is working to culture and restore endangered fresh water mollusks. On a shoestring budget, they are doing cutting edge science, like designing technology to culture mussels without fish as intermediate hosts.

They are monitoring reintroductions and adapting as they learn from failure and success. Without State Wildlife Grant funding, this work would not be possible.

I visited another state facility, being renovated with the help of Sport Fish Restoration (Dingell-Johnson) funding,

where catfish and sauger are raised for recreational fishing enhancements alongside alligator gar and ESA-listed sturgeon.

I sat in on a KDFW Commission meeting to finalize new regulations for black bear hunting. The state's growing bear population now supports a very short, 3-day season with maximum, 10-bear harvest. The new regulations deal with training seasons and limited harvest for chase with dogs.

It was a meeting marked by strongly diverse public opinions, but all were expressed, and received, with a refreshing sense of respect and dignity.

We had the blessing of a helicopter for two days, which allowed us to travel from Frankfort, KY, along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, to the farthest western reaches of the state. Along the way we flew over and stopped at several wildlife management areas.

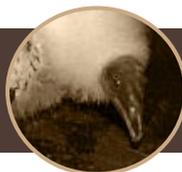
We saw sand bars where KDFW and

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INSIDE:



4 FINs stockings



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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

We received the following email from Ron Gagliardi about **Lee McClellan**, "On behalf of Long Run Sportsmen Club, I want to extend our thanks and appreciation for your outstanding presentation at our meeting last night (March 13). Your passion for fishing was evident, and seemed to really fire our anglers up – a number of folks are planning to take advantage of the Elkhorn Creek Bluewater Trail you outlined!"

The following email came from Kyle McKune. "My name is Kyle McKune and I am a KY NASP Regional Coordinator for the Kentucky Archery in Schools Program. I host an annual Regional Archery

tournament that serves 900 students. I would like to recognize **John Akers**, **Amy Glass**, and **Katie Haymes** for their services at this year's Regional Tournament. All three spent 2 days and worked as tournament officials, and went out of their way to meet the demands of hosting a great tournament. They were instrumental in running a very professional and positive tournament. I am thankful to have their services and just want to share with you the quality work that they contributed. You should be lucky to have them as KDFWR employees."

The following came through our Info Center email, from Harry Pelle of Bradfordsville, KY. "I attended the Town Hall meeting last night in Campbellsville and found it very informative. It was a great atmosphere, with lots of information passed on to hunters and fishermen and a good open question and answer session that all in attendance learned from. I know that

takes a lot of effort on the departments behalf to get so many of its people there. Thank you very much for a very good presentation and the open and honest exchange of ideas. Great Job guys."

The Commissioner's Office received a phone call from Morgan County Judge Executive Tim Conley. He stated that he used to think of the department as just game and fish laws and enforcement but since the disaster they experienced in Morgan County with the tornado, he now thinks of us differently.

Officer **Dean Kennard** has been a very important part of recovery during the disaster. Judge Conley said he had nothing but high praises for the Department and staff. Every Fish and Wildlife employee that he has encountered has bent over backwards to help, and he wanted to relay his compliments and thanks to all who have assisted in any way.

Clark, Fitzgerald, Gutzeit help make Boy Scouts MBU successful

From Robert A. Meek, Scoutmaster, Boy Scout Troop 868 of Shepherdsville, KY:

"Dear Deputy Commissioner Hank Patton:

I want to thank you and the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources for the tremendous support provided to our annual Boy Scout Merit Badge University program in Shepherdsville on Saturday, February 25.

Three department employees spent their day counseling various Boy Scout merit badges, as follows:

Brian Clark, Environmental Science Merit Badge; **Joyce Fitzgerald**, Nature Merit Badge; **John Gutzeit**, Fish & Wildlife Management Merit Badge.

The experience and resources that these three people were able to bring to our program were tremendously beneficial.

In case you are not personally familiar with the MBU program, permit me to de-



scribe the purpose and nature of the event. MBU is always held on the last Saturday of February. Boy Scout Troop 868 hosts the event. 2012 was our 10th anniversa-

ry. We recruit experts in various fields to come and counsel Boy Scout merit badge-

See "Scouts," page 9

Senate confirms new appointees to Fish and Wildlife Commission

The Kentucky Senate officially confirmed all three of Governor Steve Beshear's 2011 appointees to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission. The Senate took the action at 11:55 p.m. of this session's last day.

In November, Gov. Beshear appointed **C.F. "Frank" Williams**, of Madisonville, to represent the 2nd Fish and Wildlife District, **Voncel Thacker**, of Hindman, to represent the 7th District, and **Christopher Godby**, of Somerset, to represent the 9th District.

"Frank" Williams is the owner of



New members of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission, from left, Chris Godby (Ninth District), C.F. "Frank" Williams (Second District), and Voncel Thacker (Seventh District) repeated the oath of office to Franklin Circuit Judge Thomas Wingate at the start of the December Commission meeting at Headquarters.

Ronald Johnson and Associates, PSC, a Madisonville engineering, surveying and construction firm. He currently serves as the City Engineer for Dawson Springs,

Earlington, Hanson, Greenville and Cadiz. He also is the Hopkins County Engineer.

Voncel D. Thacker partners with his father in owning and operating Hindman Promart Home Center in Hindman. He also is construction supervisor of Elk Glen, LLC, where he oversees all construction and maintenance of The Meadow Subdivision near Hindman.

Chris Godby is a real estate developer, and owns an extensive rental company, Godby & Godby Properties. He started the Godby & Godby Steam Team with his cousin, Josh Godby in 2009 that specializes in water restoration, carpet, tile and vent cleaning. In 2011, with two other partners, he started Palmetto Properties LLC, which offers rental properties.

New hire

Caleb Switzer has joined the Wildlife Diversity Section as an interim technician, working with Peregrine Falcons and other avian nongame projects. Caleb is from Cynthiana, KY and graduated from UK in 2010 with a BS in Natural Resources Conservation and Management. In his spare time, Caleb enjoys kayaking, hunting, hiking, and anything outdoors.

NEW CONSERVATION OFFICERS



Todd Jones, Barry Norton, Tim Humble and Todd Johnson took the oath of office before District Judge Donna Dutton earlier this month. The four, who recently completed the Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Academy, were already state certified law enforcement officers and are now working with fish and wildlife field training officers. Jones will be assigned to Union County, Norton to Oldham, Humble to Livingston and Johnson to Meade.

Spring fish stockings at FINs lakes in full swing

By Dane Balsman

The unusually warm March lured anglers out in droves to fish at the Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) lakes.

Anglers need not worry, as there are plenty of hungry fish to go around.

We have kicked fish stockings at the FINs lakes into high gear. We stocked trout the last two weeks of March on top of some fish still remaining from the February stockings.

Children from Emma B. Ward Elementary School (Anderson County) display their catch as a result of the FINs program.

Ryan Oster photo

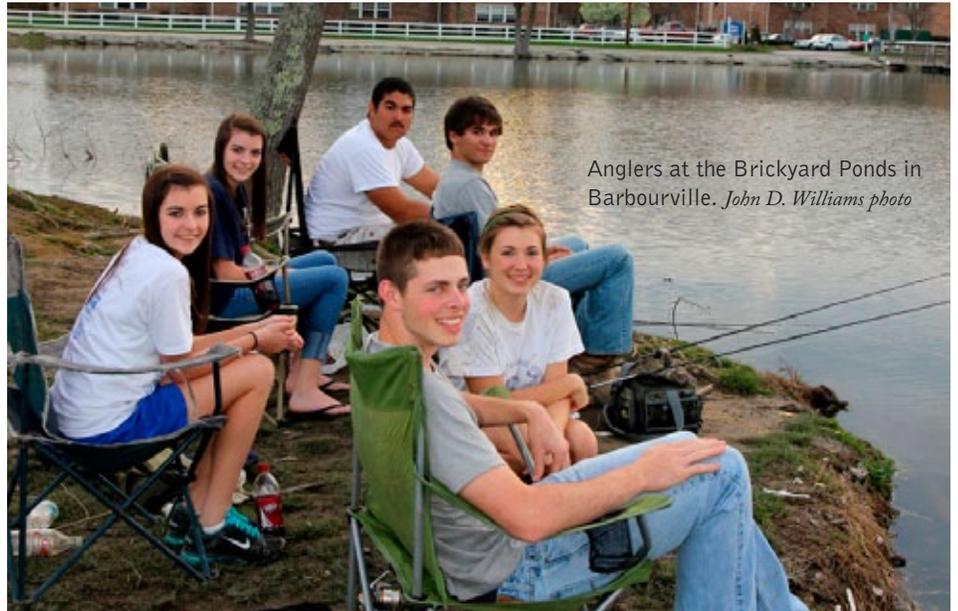


We put catfish from Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery in all of the FINs lakes the first two weeks of the month. Additional catfish stockings will occur in April, May and August. In 2012, more than 230,000 fish will be stocked in the 35 FINs lakes: 132,500 9-12-inch rainbow trout and 98,650 12-16-inch catfish. These fish are large enough to be harvested at the time they are stocked.

An exploitation tagging study and creel surveys at the FINs lakes are revealing that most of the stocked fish are being utilized by anglers. Creel surveys at several lakes indicate many fish are being caught multiple times before ultimately being harvested by anglers. The amount of fishing pressure at some of these small lakes is phenomenal, and anglers maintain a high



Forks of Elkhorn fishery technicians Steven Hilton and Jeff Croxton stock rainbow trout at the Anderson County Community Park Lake as part of the Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) program. The trout were reared at the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. *Jeremiah Smith photo*



Anglers at the Brickyard Ponds in Barbourville. *John D. Williams photo*

success rate.

Angler attitude surveys at the lakes are procuring some interesting findings. We found that the FINs program is attracting new anglers as well as recently lapsed anglers. Surveys reveal that 10 percent of anglers fishing at the FINs lakes had never before purchased a license, while an additional 24 percent of anglers had not purchased a license the previous year.

We also learned the program is attracting families, with 32 percent of anglers under 16 years of age. Angler satisfaction is exceptionally high with 85 percent of anglers rating their fishing experience as "good" or "excellent."

There are currently 35 lakes in 22 counties enrolled in the FINs program.

See "FINs," page 5

DU presents Tucker with Moynahan Award



Kevin Tucker recently received the Jim Moynahan Award from Ducks Unlimited for his contribution to waterfowl and wetland activities in Kentucky.

Kevin has been involved with Private lands work for 15 years and has worked in Wetlands with the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) exclusively for seven years.

In that time he has helped establish 117 permanent easements in WRP, cost share four projects through WRP, and affected 17,923 acres. Of those 17,000 acres one is the largest in the state encompassing 1,358 acres.

A couple of the WRP projects also involved KDFWR property at Doug Travis WMA and Obion Creek WMA. He also has worked with the Kentucky Partners for Wetland Wildlife (KPWW) program enabling private landowners to be able to install water control structures/pipe on their property. This has affected approximately 2,200 acres with cooperating landowners/projects totaling 110.

Congratulations Kevin on receiving the award.

“FINs,” continued

Nearly half the population of Kentucky resides in those 22 counties. Plans are currently in the works to add a lake in Lexington to the FINs program. However, further lake additions are unlikely the next few years as the program has reached the saturation point for the number of fish that can be produced at our hatcheries.

The hatcheries and transportation section do an outstanding job of raising the fish and making sure they arrive at the lakes in a timely manner. A lot of hard work goes on behind the scenes raising fish for the program and coordinating stockings. The FINs program wouldn't be possible without the tireless efforts from the hatcheries and transportation section.

For more detailed information on the FINs program, including lake maps and directions, fish stocking schedules and fishing regulations, visit the department's website at fw.ky.gov and click on the “Fishing in Neighborhoods” logo. For questions or comments regarding the FINs program please contact Dane Balsman at (502) 564-3400 ext 4480.

EAGLES AND HAWKS AND OWLS AND THINGS...

Graphic Artist Adrienne Yancy, lead designer for Kentucky Afield Magazine, proofs new life size wingspan signage she designed for the Salato Wildlife Education Center. Salato visitors will be able to get perspective about actual sizes of various birds' wingspans. Adrienne also designs the Commissioner's Newsletter each month. She puts her imagination to work daily. On any given day, she also may be putting together the new Kentucky Fish Identification booklet, tweaking a license plate design or designing posters for special events.

Obie Williams photo.



Taylorsville Lake bank fishing area opens in time for white bass runs

Wildlife, Engineering, Law Enforcement, and Fisheries Divisions staff are pleased to announce that the repairs to Old River Road are now fully completed and the area opened to the public just in time for this year's white bass run in the Salt River above Taylorsville Lake.

These repairs accommodate anglers by allowing them access to prime sections of the Salt River where white bass make their spawning runs. The repairs included the construction of ten concrete pad crossings, one culvert replacement and the two gravel parking areas that will accommodate 8-10 vehicles.

Several single vehicle pull-offs were also constructed at regular intervals along Old River Road. Additionally, gravel was placed along Old River Road to improve the existing base so that both regular passenger cars as well as trucks will be able to traverse the roadway. All said and done, this current round of repair work has opened up almost two miles of roadway along the Salt River.

Spring white bass runs historically have provided some of Kentucky's most fantastic early season fishing opportunities throughout the state.

What makes these spawning runs outstanding is the fact that they provide both boat and bank anglers an opportunity to some of the great-



Newly improved Old River Road allows bank anglers access to the Salt River during the spring white bass fishing season.

Bill Mitchell photos

est fishing of the season. When timed right, it's not uncommon for anglers to catch upwards of 30, 40, and even 50 fish per day.

Bank anglers can access Old River Road by turning onto Palmer Road from KY 1579 (just west of Glensboro). Palmer Road will dead-end at Old River Road. Once anglers reach Old River Road, they can choose to either turn right and fish downstream closer to the lake or turn left and fish more upstream.

In years of high rainfall, where the Salt River is up and flowing, anglers should expect white bass to travel further upstream. Meanwhile during years of low rainfall, spawning white bass may not travel far from Taylorsville Lake.

The Old River Road bank fishing access area is scheduled

to be opened to the public annually from March 15 until the day before Kentucky's statewide spring turkey season. The gate at the intersection of Palmer Road and Old River Road will be opened each day at 7:30am and remain open until dark during this period.

The project installed 11 concrete culvert crossings, repaired two miles of River Road and two new parking areas, created four gravel pull-offs adjacent to River Road, and installed fishing regulation signage.

White bass anglers are pleased and catching fish with participation by elderly and youth alike.

The Fisheries Division would like to thank **Bill Mitchell** (Taylorsville Lake Wildlife Management Area Foreman) for



See "Bank access," page 7



TAYLORSVILLE LAKE WMA STAFF REMOVES MORE THAN 3 TONS OF SCRAP METAL

Taylorville Lake WMA Foreman Bill Mitchell and Interim employee Doug Goodlett have removed 5600+ pounds of scrap metal and associated refuse from the Briar Ridge unit of TLWMA. Included in the "pile" were one car body/frame, numerous refrigerators, freezers, washing machines and some truck axles. We still have approximately 1,000 pounds sitting in a field edge to remove once the rains stop and the ground firms up some.



"Bank access," continued

helping to spearhead and coordinate this project. Other staff that were instrumental in getting this work completed were **Eric Brooker** and former Department employee **Bob Scott**, both from the Engineering Division.

We would also like to thank **Sgt. Scott Herndon**, **Sgt. Phillip Crane** and **Officer Darvin Chesser** from the Law Enforcement Division who are helping to coordinate the daily opening and closing of the gate to the bank fishing area. This project is another excellent example of the power of interdivisional cooperation.

Bank anglers taking advantage of the recent roadway improvements at Taylorville Lake WMA during the spring white bass fishing season. *Bill Mitchell photo*



A beauty in the beholder's eye

The old axiom about beauty being only skin deep resonates with KDFWR wildlife biologist **Bill Lynch**, at least with respect to turkey vultures.

Lynch recently was featured in an interview about vultures for a weekly podcast from The Wilderness Center – a nonprofit nature center and land trust in Ohio – during which the biologist discusses a variety of interesting features of the species, arguably an under-appreciated member in its class.

For example, did you know that turkey vultures harness their incredible sense of smell to detect minute concentrations of chemicals in the air that arise from animal carcasses hundreds of feet below on the ground?

You may have seen vultures perched on trees or utility poles with their wings outstretched on a cool, damp morning; they do this in order to warm up their bodies and dry out their feathers. Ever wonder how these birds can eat decaying meat without adverse effects to their gastro-intestinal health? They are immune to a variety of pathogens found in carrion that would render most constituents in the animal kingdom ill...or worse.

In addition to their ecological, aesthetic, and other values to humans, wild things like turkey vultures afford us opportunity to learn such things that could lead to breakthroughs in medicine or other arenas.

People often refer to vultures indiscriminately as “buzzards,” but Lynch points out that we actually have two distinct species in Kentucky: turkey and black vultures.

At close range, the two are easily distinguished by the coloration of their heads: black vultures' are colored as their name implies, whereas turkey vultures have bare, red heads (resembling a male wild turkey's during the spring breeding season).

Soaring at a distance, the two vultures can be distinguished by wing-tip color and tail lengths. From below, turkey vultures'

wingtips have a bronze to silvery sheen and a comparatively longer tail, whereas black vulture wing-tips are white and accompany a stumpy tail. Interestingly, black vultures are not able to smell rotting flesh and either follow turkey vultures to food sources or find their quarry by sight.

Notably, Lynch was the first to observe, record and publish an article about a particular vocalization of turkey vultures. He currently serves as president of The Turkey Vulture Society, an organization founded to study and protect the important biological recycler whose distribution extends from southern Canada through South America.

Lynch first became interested in vultures while an undergraduate student at Berea College, observing the creatures while hiking at Indian Fort Mountain.

Turkey vulture chick, 6 weeks old, Mammoth Cave National Park.
Bill Lynch photo



He went on to study them as part of his Master's degree research project at Eastern Kentucky University.

He continues to pursue his interest in vultures as opportunities arise both on his own time and through his work, whether assisting private landowners with land management activities or conducting wildlife surveys in south-central Kentucky.



SALATO BLUEGRASS PRAIRIE EXHIBIT TAKING SHAPE

Artist Patrick White (right) and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife employee Rodney Smith use a backhoe bucket to help install bolts on a 20-foot wide stainless steel hawk sculpture installed April 9 at the Salato Wildlife Education Center. The sculpture is part of the Salato Center's Bluegrass Prairie Exhibit, which is set to open May 2 and was funded by the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation. *Dave Baker photo*

Kentucky National Archery in the Schools tournament results

Mary Aldridge of Bondurant Middle School in Franklin County and Bradley Long of Caudill Middle School in Madison County were the top overall archers at Kentucky's National Archery in the Schools (NASP) state tournament for elementary, middle school and high school students held April 2-3 in Louisville.

Aldridge finished with a score of 298, hitting the bull's eye 28 times out of 30 shots. She was the top overall archer in the tournament.

"It makes me feel very accomplished," Aldridge, an 8th grader, said. "I am planning on shooting a 300 at the world competition."

Long, the high overall male archer, shot 27 arrows in the 10-ring bull's eye, and three arrows in the 9-ring, for a total of 297 points.

More than 2,900 students from 154 schools across Kentucky competed in the



Middle school shooters took NASP State Tournament top individual awards earlier this month. Mary Aldridge, of Frankfort's Bondurant Middle School, and Bradley Long of Madison County's Caudill Middle School were first and second overall, scoring 298 and 297 respectively out of a possible 300. Fish and Wildlife Commission Chairman Steve Glenn and members Stuart Ray and Dr. James Rich help present the trophies. *Lee McClellan photo*

tournament. After practice rounds, each competitor shot 15 arrows from 10 meters and 15 arrows from 15 meters. Competitors shot additional rounds to break any ties.

The top finishers in the team and individual standings qualify for the 2012

NASP Nationals, to be held in Louisville May 11-12.

A complete list of all archers and their scores are posted at nasptournaments.org/VTRResults.aspx?tid=70, the NASP on-line tournament website.

"Scouts," continued

es in those fields. At MBU 2012 we had a faculty of nearly 200 such experts and offered scouts a choice of 81 different merit badges.

MBU is open to any registered Boy Scout from any troop. MBU is not just for boys residing in Bullitt and Jefferson Counties; scouts from throughout the state attend. We had units from Lexington, Richmond, Frankfort, Bowling Green and dozens of other Kentucky cities and towns. In total, over 1,200 Boy Scouts participated.

Our Merit Badge University program is the largest single-day event for Boy Scouts in the state of Kentucky and one of the three largest programs of its kind

in the entire United States. In order to secure sufficient classroom space to teach all the various merit badge classes that are offered, we occupy four Bullitt County schools and more than a dozen off-site locations for the day.

The Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources is not the only government agency to support the program. Your department is in the company of the Bullitt County Sheriff's Department (that supplies offices to teach Fingerprinting, Crime Prevention, and Traffic Safety), the National Weather Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Shepherdsville Fire Department, and Bullitt County Fiscal Court.

Counseling merit badges at MBU affords your department an excellent oppor-

tunity to inform and educate middle and high-school aged boys about its mission and goals in the area of wildlife management and benefits the scouts in their advancement in the process. Participating in MBU is truly a win-win situation for all parties.

As Deputy Commissioner, I realize it's not possible for you to know all the good things your folks are doing out in the field, so I wanted to bring this contribution to your attention, because it provides a rather unique and bona-fide teaching opportunity.

Please accept our thanks to your department and to Brian, Joyce and John for their contributions to MBU 2012. We look forward to having them, and possibly other folks from your department, assist with MBU 2013 next February."

Sign Me Up! Free Licenses for NASP® Participants

Through a special offer, National Archery in the Schools Program® (NASP®) participants will be eligible to receive free Kentucky Youth Sportsman's Licenses at the 2012 NASP® National Tournament.

To receive their licenses, participants must first obtain a hunter education certification and then personally sign-in at the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife booth. Up to 1,500 youths may redeem the offer, which will only be available on-site during the nationals, held at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, May 11-12.

Participants will also be able to sign up for a free mentored hunt for squirrels or doves during fall 2012. Sportsmen's clubs and conservation groups have partnered with KDFWR to offer the mentored hunts. Other partners are also providing funding and other support to make this special promotion possible.

Outdoor Roadmap is waiving the fee for its online hunter education class; students may complete the "classroom" portion online free at www.ormtraining.com using the promotion code KYNASP52012, then print their completion certificate and affidavit and bring them to the NASP® 2012 National Tournament.

Crosman® is providing air rifles for an indoor shooting range, which will be supervised by a Kentucky hunter education



Katie Haymes, KDFWR's Explore Bowhunting coordinator, explains the free license offer to a shooter at the 2012 NASP® State Tournament, held recently in Louisville. *Brian Clark photo*

instructor. Students who have completed the classroom portion of hunter ed using ormtraining.com may complete their live-fire portion at the special range to obtain their hunter ed certification, then get their free license.

KDFWR launched the archery in the schools program (which later became NASP®) in 2002 to increase youth participation in archery – an activity anyone can do. NASP® is now taught in about 1,000 schools in the Bluegrass

State, reaching 350,000 students. The two-week physical education curriculum is now used in 46 other states and five other countries.

KDFWR is pilot-testing this special licensing promotion for recruiting new hunters. Hunting and fishing license sales have declined for over 20 years nationwide. Kentucky is no exception to this trend. Without reversing this trend or securing other funding, the Department's fish and wildlife conservation and recreation programs will face significant changes or cuts in the years ahead.



Fisheries transportation staff constructs fish habitat in spare time

By Mark Roberts

The need for aquatic habitat improvement is an ever growing and ever changing facet of the job with the Fisheries Division. This is largely due to our aging reservoirs and smaller impoundments that are experiencing declining natural habitat.

The decline in natural habitat is resulting in less productive spawns and less opportunity for younger fish to survive. In an attempt to mitigate for this ongoing loss of critical spawning, nursery, and foraging habitat, the Fisheries Division is working to restore and increase habitats and create opportunities for tomorrow's fisheries.

Recently, the Fisheries Transportation (Forks of Elkhorn) and the Urban Fisheries staffs constructed several styles and types of habitat structures which will be placed into our department managed reservoirs and urban lakes. The materials were obtained from generous donors throughout central Kentucky and Southern Indiana.

Donors have stepped up to support the habitat project. These donors include Southern States in Winchester; Best-Made Pallet

1. Fisheries staff Kenny Atha and Don Bunnell pour concrete in cut portions of plastic barrels. These will be used as bases for stakebed construction.

2. Fisheries staff insert wooden stakes into concrete bases as part of the construction of various fish habitat structures.

3. Completed wooden stakebeds ready for deployment throughout the state.

Dane Balsman photos



Company of Shepherdsville; Industrial Container Company in Clarksville, IN; and Harrod Concrete in Frankfort. Once all materials were obtained, Forks supervisor **Mark "Slick" Roberts** and Assistant Supervisor **Kenny Atha** devised a plan on how the structures should be constructed and when the building would take place.

Before construction began the Forks crew cut plastic barrels into four sections for bases on the stake beds and cut wooden stakes down to a shorter length to insert into wet concrete inside the base.

Construction was completed by the Forks crew that included "Slick," Kenny Atha, **Jeff Croxton**, **Steve Hilton**, **Anthony Godbey**, **Raymond Atchison**, **Larry Watts**, **David Hale**, **Josh Mangan**, **Jason Fitzgerald**, and **Dane Balsman**, **Don Bunnell**, **Ryan Kausing**, **Andy Redden**, and **Paul Wilkes**.

The completed projects included 86 stake beds, seven buoy anchors, and 24 bass spawning beds.

The first habitat structures were placed in the upper Sportsman's Lake by Forks staff Steve Hilton, Jason Fitzgerald, **Jeremiah Smith**, and Urban Program Coordinator Dane Balsman and included stake

See "Habitat," page 12

Stream restoration at Curtis Gates Lloyd WMA

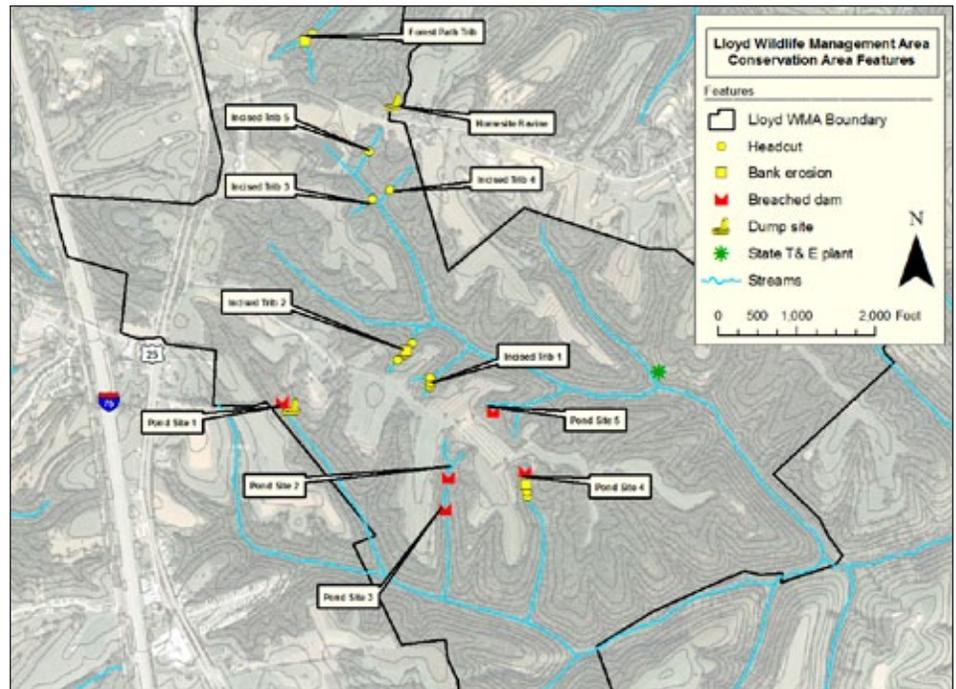
By Josh Lillpop

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Northern Kentucky University Center (NKU) of Applied Ecology have partnered together in an effort to improve water quality, prevent erosion, and repair ephemeral and intermittent stream channels on the Curtis Gates Lloyd Wildlife Management Area.

The project will be funded through the In-Lieu Fee Program which helps compensate for the permanent loss or damage of stream and wetland habitat due to various activities such as road and highway construction, urban and commercial development, or mining operations.

The project will address issues affecting stream quality in the tributaries of the North Middle Fork Grassy Creek and North Fork Grassy Creek which both flow into Grassy Creek and then continue to the Licking River and ultimately into the Ohio River.

The Licking River is considered a focus area watershed and has been designated as an Exceptional Use Waterway in part because of the diversity of mussels and amphibians found there, several of which are classified as threatened and



endangered species.

The project will provide 605 linear feet of ephemeral stream rehabilitation, 370 linear feet of intermittent stream rehabilitation, 170 linear feet of intermittent stream re-establishment, 70 linear feet of perennial stream rehabilitation, and 0.75 acres of wetland stabilization.

There are also two historic dumps located in drainages that include old car parts, tires, and household items that directly affect the tributaries of Grassy Creek that will be cleaned up as part of the rehabilitation.

Construction will begin in the sum-

mer of 2012 and should be completed by May of 2013. The goal is to restore the stream channels and pond dams to a state such that the system is able to prevent further degradation of stream channels and loss of the valuable wetland habitat. NKU will continue to monitor the project for several years afterwards to ensure that all goals and objectives have been met.

The project area is owned by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and will be protected under the property deed which imposes use restrictions that will help preserve these drainages.

“Habitat,” continued

beds, plastic pallet structures, and wooden pallet rows.

Best-Made Pallet Company donated stakes for the stake bed structures as well as wooden and plastic pallets for the habitat efforts. The pallets were used as structure in a string of three triangular structures in a row to form cover for various species. Staff obtained approximately 1,100 wooden pallets for structures.

Best-Made also donated wood strips

from pallet construction and about 2,500 stakes to aid in the habitat project.

Harrod Concrete played a pivotal role in completing the habitat structures and is continuing to help create the structures as efficiently and cheaply as possible. Harrod delivered concrete to the Forks Facility where structures were built.

The Forks was also a drop-off point for recycled Christmas trees following the Christmas holiday season. In total, they obtained 150 trees from local residents as well as the City of Midway. These trees

were sunk into some of the KDFWR managed water bodies in the state with concrete blocks purchased from Lee Brick and Block.

The habitat projects in the winter of 2011-2012 were placed in Green River Lake, Nolin River Lake, Prisoner's Lake, and Pollywog Lake. With the various contacts and knowledge acquired from this habitat construction and implementation, the future looks bright for the upcoming lakes that are on the docket for this fall/winter 2012-2013.

2011 bass tournaments results nearing completion

The results of the 2011 bass tournament summary are nearing completion and should soon be available to the public.

First implemented in 1999, the bass tournament reporting system was originally designed to gather information and data from anglers concerning their experiences and catch rates of black bass in tournament settings across the Commonwealth.

As the program evolved, it paved the way for the development of a free, online registration and reporting system that not only provided information to the Department, but also provided tournament directors and anglers a platform by which tournaments could be scheduled in order to minimize conflicts and overcrowding at boat ramps throughout Kentucky.

Here is a quick, sneak peak at the summary results of what 2011 looked like for black bass tournaments throughout the state. You will quickly see that despite record rainfall and even short periods of some reservoirs being closed, that tournament fishing for black bass in Kentucky was as popular as ever and continues to be recognized throughout the Southeastern U.S.



Tournament anglers prepare tackle and baits while awaiting a fog delay at one of Kentucky's many bass tournaments. *Gerry Buynak photo*

Anglers registered 671 fishing tournaments through the KDFWR online registration system. Tournament catch data was supplied by 350 tournaments from 30 different water bodies including 14 large reservoirs greater than 1,000 acres, 11 impoundments smaller than 1,000 acres, and five river systems (Ohio, Kentucky, Green,

Cumberland, and Tennessee).

Most of Kentucky's bass fishing tournaments were held during the spring (40.3%), but 40%, 17.3%, and 2.4% were held during summer, fall and winter, respectively. Tournaments reported that a total of 17,093 anglers weighed in 26,440 bass that weighed 61,853 pounds (31 tons of bass). This was an increase of 683 anglers that reported data in 2010. Twenty-five percent of all anglers/teams reported weighing in a full daily limit during tournaments in 2011. This number increased from the previous two years (18.7% and 14.2%).

The full report highlighting the 2011 black bass tournament season should be completed by May. Once completed, results will be posted on the Department webpage. Free copies will also be supplied to all tournament clubs that provided catch data as part of the registration process.

For copies of the 2011 black bass tournament results or questions concerning any of the data and analyzes, please contact Chris Hickey, Fisheries Black Bass Program Coordinator, at 800-858-1549 ext. 4467.



Fisheries Assistant Ichthyologist Stephanie Brandt displays a quality largemouth bass collected during routine sampling. Kentucky's black bass fisheries are doing exceptionally well based on field sampling and tournament catch data. *Danny Duwall photo*



IN THE FAMILY



Hunter Snow, (top left) 11, son of USFWS Special Agent Bob Snow, took this Anderson County gobbler during the Youth turkey weekend with his bow. Katie and Will Grasch, 13 and 15, (above center and right), daughter and son of wildlife biologist Chris Grasch, each took Franklin County gobblers. Amber Ferrell, (left) 11, daughter of Kleber WMA foreman Scott Ferrell, also found success with this 23-pounder. Braden Burford, son of I&E Assistant Director Laura Burford, took his first gobbler as well in Scott County.



Herpetology Weekend at Natural Bridge State Park

Kentucky's reptiles and amphibians are often poorly understood, frequently unappreciated, and sometimes persecuted, but they are without question a fascinating and diverse group of animals.

If you would like to learn more about these creatures, with which we share our world, consider attending Herpetology Weekend at Natural Bridge State Resort Park on May 11-12, 2012.

Herpetology is the study of reptiles and amphibians, and experts in the field will be on hand to give informative and entertaining programs related to these animals,



including numerous field trips designed to provide the public with an opportunity to view reptiles and amphibians in their natural habitats.

Evening presentations begin at 7:30 pm on May 11th at the Natural Bridge State Resort Park's Woodland Center. There is an on-site registration fee of \$10/adult, \$3 for ages 13-17 and no charge for ages 12 and under.

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is a proud cosponsor of this long running event. For more information, contact Tyler Morgan at (606) 663-2214 or tyler.morgan@ky.gov.

Cleaning it up at Peabody WMA

The 2012 Commonwealth Cleanup Day for the Kentucky Division of Waste Management's Madisonville Regional Office was held on March 20 at the Sinclair Unit of Peabody Wildlife Management Area in Muhlenberg County.

Personnel from the Divisions of Waste Management and Water, in conjunction with Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Peabody WMA staff, cleaned 14.3 miles of WMA roads and nine boat ramps/parking lots. They hauled 55 bags of trash, 23 tires and a pickup bed load of miscellaneous items to the convenient center.

Peabody WMA staff would like to thank John Rundle, Kentucky Division of Waste Management, for coordinating the event, Larry Tichenor (Waste Management) for providing lunch and Muhlenberg County officials for providing waste disposal.



Eric Williams photos



SALATO WORKOUT

Boy Scouts from Lawrenceburg's Troop 37 joined Manager Laurie Davison (above) and other volunteers last Saturday in a massive effort to remove invasive plant species such as bush honeysuckle, build waterbreaks in walkways and repair creek crossings at the Salato Wildlife Education Center.





Anderson County Sportsman's Club youth turkey hunt

Twenty youth ages 10 through 15 participated in the annual Anderson County Sportsman's Club Youth Turkey Hunt April 7-8, organized by Sixth District Conservation Officers **Sgt. Phillip Crane, David Goodlett** and **Jason Wells**.

Six of the youth were successful in taking gobblers.

This event was a great opportunity for the youth to experience hunting and the great outdoors in Anderson County. The youth enjoyed this time as they watched and listened for turkeys.

"It is truly a joy to watch their excitement as they had the opportunity to harvest a turkey," said Goodlett. "In today's time it is not as easy to find places to hunt or people to take them. We would like to thank our experienced guides, generous landowners and sponsors that provided us with the means to hold this event for our youth."



Chris Pool took this 26-pounder with his dad serving as his guide during the youth hunt.



“Partners,” continued

FWS are working to recover Least tern. High waters prevented a boat trip to see invasive Asian carp. We spent a night at a Kentucky state park facility, landing after dark. The pilot was nervous about the tightness of the proposed landing zone, and we circled like ducks around a spread of decoys. As so often happens with ducks, the pilot decided discretion was the better part of valor, and we retreated to another site with better spacing.

At the head of Lake Cumberland is Wolf Creek Dam, a U.S. Corps of Engineers' facility. Below the dam is USFWS's Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. We had breakfast with the hatchery staff, and a quick tour from Manager James Gray. It's a beautiful facility, and one that clearly works as well as it looks.

While we were touring, no fewer than 5 KDFW trucks were loading up trout for KDFW's Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINS) program, which is helping urban youth connect to the outdoors. The Wolf Creek hatchery is right in the middle of our ongoing effort to find alternative funding for “mitigation” hatcheries, and seeing the facility made me feel good about the \$4.3 million that

we have secured in the USCOE budget for FY 2013.

We flew east along the spectacularly mountainous border with Tennessee to the coal country of eastern KY, where KDFW has reintroduced elk. The elk are thriving among the grasslands of reclaimed mines, along with Grasshopper sparrow and those



View from the helicopter of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

Project Leader James Gray, Director Ashe, KDFWR Commissioner Jon Gassett, Deputy Commissioner Benjy Kinman, Fisheries Director Ron Brooks.

previously mentioned Black bear. Along this route, we flew over Harlan, KY, the home town of former FWS Director and friend, Dale Hall.

We saw mountaintop removal and valley fills, sobering reminders of the immensity and impact of our dependence on fossil fuels. It made me proud of the work we have done to produce guidelines for wind energy that will hopefully work to lessen that dependence.

We released the final guidelines on Thursday, to strong accolades from the American Wind Energy Association and the Audubon Society. Another job well-done, and one well-worth the hard work and commitment required to get it done.

Outside of Hazard, KY, I sat in on a meeting with KDFW employees from that region, met with coal company officials, and that evening, attended a public “Town Hall” meeting. Director Gassett and his staff sat with their constituents, well into the night, dutifully and professionally answering their questions and respectfully listening to their concerns and criticisms.

It was a great and memorable trip. An important reminder of the crucial relationship we have with our state agency partners. A reminder of why I tell people that when our state agency partners are strong, the USFWS is strong; when they are successful, we are successful.

In the end, “we” are like the left- and right-hands of conservation; important and unique in ourselves, but when held palm-to-palm, like mirror images. I saw those reflections, clearly and powerfully, this past week.