



Kentucky Fish and Wildlife joins fight against wildfires

Twenty Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources wildlife biologists and technicians joined about eight other agencies this month in helping Division of Forestry (KDF) fight wildland fires that burned more than 41,000 acres in east Kentucky.

Conservation officers also joined the effort early to provide a law enforcement presence that helped police illegal burning, outdoor fires and arson.

“Before fire season actually began, KDF and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) initiated a Memorandum of Agreement that enlisted the assistance of the latter’s law enforcement agents in investigating suspected arson-related fires,” wrote Division of Forestry Director Bill Steele in his blog on his agency’s website.

“Once it was learned that many of its (other) personnel actually had received S-130 and S-190 training due to their par-



Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources wildlife biologist Chris Grasch is lit by a Harlan County wildfire burning in the night. Grasch was one of 20 Fish and Wildlife personnel fighting the wildfires.

ticipation in prescribed burning, those who were interested were invited to participate in fire suppression,” he added.

The Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet and the Office of the State Climatologist issued a Level 1 drought declaration this month for 117 Kentucky counties in coordination with the Kentucky Drought Mitigation Team.

Gov. Matt Bevin declared a statewide

emergency and urged all citizens to refrain from outdoor burning and use extreme caution during outdoor activities.

More than 100 counties also have issued burn bans as a result of the wildfire activity and drought conditions.

Police charged a McCreary County man with setting a brush fire after a Fish

[See “Wildfires,” page 12](#)

INSIDE:



4 Beaver Lake access



7 Wildlife center



9 Carp blitz

WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

Commissioner Johnson recently received a letter from KSP Lieutenant Jerry Handy. Lt. Handy wrote, "I wanted to write you in order to bring to your attention the exemplary service I witnessed of one of your officers.

I am involved with a charity group called Kidzoutdoors. We are new to Kentucky and held our first event recently for the Kentucky youth only firearm deer season. The night before opening morning we held a banquet for the kids to allow them to meet their guides for the hunt and talk about safety. This banquet was held in Williamstown (Grant County). We wanted to have an officer from Fish and Wildlife attend if possible and speak with the kids and parents about important issues.

Due to circumstances beyond anyone's control the local officer was not available. However, at the last minute your officer assigned to Bracken County, **James Beckett**, stepped up to assist us. The banquet started at 5 pm. I told him if he could just be there by 6 pm to talk to the kids that would be perfect.

Officer Beckett was there not just at 5 pm for the start of the banquet, but arrived early and was set up and ready by 5 pm. He interacted with the adults and parents and was a very positive addition to the event. His presentation on safety and respecting land owners was top notch. He was obviously well prepared and it showed. He stayed after his presentation and continued to interact with the people and made the experience very positive for everyone involved.

I hope that given a similar situation one of the Troopers under my command would handle themselves in a similar fashion. He represented not just your agency, but law enforcement as a whole in a professional and caring manner. The majority of the public will only interact with law enforcement in a situation that will be negative due to the very nature of the job. Many parents and

children walked away from that banquet with positive memories of a caring and professional officer. This is very important in today's political environment.

Please express my gratitude to Officer Beckett for his service and professionalism."

We received the following email through the Info Center email system. "Recently, my girlfriend and I completed our homemade boat, and I would like to thank Kentucky Fish and Wildlife for their efficiency, overly accommodating services, and passing our first homemade boat. **Captain Mehlbauer** and **Officer Casper** went above and beyond all expectations, answered all of our questions, even the ridiculous ones, and addressed issues

we hadn't even thought of but should have. Wonderful officers and I hope one day we are lucky enough to meet them again, even for an on the water inspection, live well check, or license check. Thank you again Capt. Mehlbauer and Officer Casper."
– Keith and Olivia

Wayne Curtis with Fox Hollow Retrievers, Mondovi, WI, sent the following email. "We ran an AKC licensed field trial on the wildlife area grounds (West Kentucky WMA) and just wanted to say what great grounds you have there. Thank you so much for allowing these field trials there. Look forward to running more there."

[See "Mail," page 4](#)



KENTUCKY FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Members of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Commission joined Commissioner Gregory K. Johnson (standing at left), for a photo after committee meetings this month at Hazard Community College. Seated from left are Commission Members Kevin R. Bond, Fifth District; Jimmy Bevins, Sixth District; Dr. Rusty Gailor, Third District; Frank Williams, Second District; and Dr. Harry W. Carloss, First District. Standing are Johnson, Paul B. Horn, Seventh District; Barry Stotts, Fourth District; Richard M. Storm, Eighth District; and Dr. Karl D. Clinard, Ninth District.

Charlie Logsdon retires

More than 70 friends, family, and peers gathered to celebrate the career and retirement of **Charlie Logsdon** at YMCA's Camp Piomingo on Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area on Nov. 15th.

Attendees included the local Judge Executive, the Fort Knox Garrison Commander, representatives from the Derby City Fly Fishers, and many agency administration and staff.

Charlie began his career with KDFWR in January of 1981 as a seasonal wildlife technician at the Sloughs WMA. His 32-year career then included service as a waterfowl research intern on Swan Pond at Ballard WMA, an administrative assistant in the deer program to former deer biologist John Phillips, an assistant district biologist, as area manager at West Kentucky WMA, as an elk research and



restoration biologist in east Kentucky, before finishing up his career as the area manager for the Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area.

Logsdon took the helm of the newly acquired Otter Creek and opened the area in May 2011, establishing the beginning of

KDFWR's maiden ownership and operation of an Outdoor Recreation Area.

Under his guidance, the area has improved its economic efficiency. Annual visitation is stable at about 25,000 visitors annually, and another 6,900 sportspersons who use the area to hunt, fish and shoot.

Dale Lynch retires after 32 years

Dale Lynch, WMA Foreman at Mill Creek WMA, retired October 31, with 32 years of service. Dale began his career in natural resources with the U.S. Forest Service and was hired as a KDFWR wildlife technician for Mill Creek WMA in 1984. He was promoted to WMA Foreman in 1999.

Aside from WMA management duties, Dale assisted with many projects throughout his career, including grouse trapping, deer trapping, turkey trapping, and a raccoon tagging project. He also made 3 trips to Cumberland Island, GA to assist with a



bobcat restoration project.

Dale was also instrumental in shaping the careers of some of our current administrators and biologists, who started their careers as seasonal technicians at Mill



Creek, including **Chris Garland** and **Wes Hodges**. Dale's vast knowledge of farming and habitat management, as well as his wit and humor will be greatly missed in the Southeast Region.



Beaver Lake pre-2014 (top left), 2014-2015 (top right) and currently (below).

Beaver Lake access improved

A paving project was completed at Beaver Lake in an effort to improve boating and fishing access. This project added paved parking for 9 vehicles with trailers, 11 single vehicles and 2 ADA spots.

This project was a collaborative effort between Engineering for the design and preparing the site for paving, FILO for their assistance in the removal of debris and concrete structures, Central Fisheries District personnel and administrative staff.

The Department has received many compliments for the improvements made at Beaver Lake.



“Mail,” continued

The following email came to Private Lands Biologist **Bill Lynch** after a Nature Field Day event. Sheila Rush, Manager of the Old Mulkey Meetinghouse State Historic Site wrote, “I want to “THANK YOU” for participating in the recent 2nd grade Nature Field Day. The students all loved your station! One of your student

volunteers said to me later, “He made me step out of my comfort zone.”

I said, “What do you mean?”

She said, “He looked at me and said, “Please pass this around,” as he handed me an animal skin!”

I said, “What did you do?”

She said, “I passed it around! I don’t touch stuff like that but I did it and it was okay.”

I might add that my grandson who is homeschooled crashed the event. He couldn’t say enough about your station and regretted that he couldn’t spend more time with you. Speaking of time, I’m sorry that I didn’t have more time to visit with you. There just wasn’t enough of me to go around that day. But please know that I truly and sincerely appreciated your being here.”

New hires / promotions

Chase Wininger is a new employee with Kentucky Afield Television as Associate Video Producer I. Chase grew up hunting and fishing, and has been an avid outdoorsman for most of his life. He spends the spring chasing turkey and catching smallmouth bass and his summer's wade-fishing creeks all over the state. In the fall he's in a tree stand looking for whitetail or chasing small game with his beagle "Hunter." And in the winter he's controlling the predator population by hunting coyotes every chance he gets.

Originally from Shelby County, Chase is a two-time EKU graduate and is extremely excited to be putting his skills to work for Kentucky Afield. "This job is a dream come true. What could be better than combining my greatest passion (the outdoors) with one of my favorite hobbies (capturing and editing video)?"

When he's not in the field Chase enjoys hiking, trail running, playing basketball and other sports. Additionally, he's stated that anyone who wants to "hit the creek" or "do some coyote hunting" should get in touch with him to set it up. He loves "slaying the smallmouth" and "busting some dogs."

Cody Rhoden is the Small Game Program's new Wildlife Biologist. He hails from Illinois where he grew up on a family farm - a strong connection to agriculture is invaluable towards managing small game.

He holds wildlife degrees from Purdue University (BS) and the University of Illinois (MS). His thesis work was titled "The Use of Right of Ways by Primary Burrowing Crayfishes in the Ouachita Mountains Ecoregion of Arkansas." Through this work, he gained exceptional large project management experience as he led multiple state agency personnel that assisted in data collection.

Cody was also a Research Technician on the Peabody WMA Bobwhite Project with the University of Tennessee. He trapped and radio-tracked bobwhite

for 7 months providing a unique perspective on bobwhite behavior, survival, and habitat use. During that tenure, he assisted the Small Game Program on the bird dog field test research project where he was able to interact with sportsman volunteers and KDFWR program staff.

Cody has a rare combination of land management, project management, research, and small game experience making him an outstanding addition to the program. Please join us in welcoming him to our team!

We would like to welcome **Tyler Fitzgerald** and **Travis Williams** to the Fisheries family. They started October 17 as a Fish & Wildlife Tech 1 and are the newest members of the Forks of Elkhorn Fish Transportation Crew.

Tyler was born and raised in Owen County where he graduated from Owen Co. High School. Tyler worked for Southern States Co Op for 10 years. He enjoys

hunting, and fishing and all outdoor activities. He resides in Owen Co. with his wife, Kenzie, and their dog, Boomer.

Travis was born and raised in Harlan County where he graduated from Harlan Co. Independent High School. Travis also graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor Degree in Forestry. Travis worked for Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery as a seasonal for 3 years before being hired full time at the Forks. He enjoys hunting and fishing and all outdoor activities. Travis resides in Fayette Co with his wife, Julie, and their two sons, Rylee 8, and Colton, 3.

On October 16, the Information and Education Division welcomed **Lindsey Evans** as a new Conservation Educator in the 7th district.

Lindsey will present in-school conservation programs to students in Johnson,

[See "Hires," page 6](#)

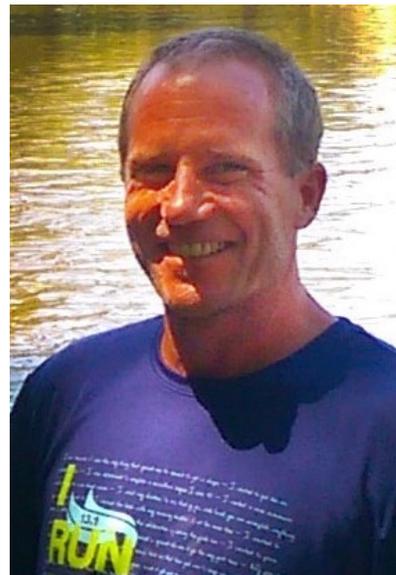
Buser wins 100k in Cloudsplitter 100

Bluegrass Region Public Lands Biologist **Scott Buser** won the 100k race in the Cloudsplitter 100 last month.

The Cloudsplitter is an ultra-marathon up, down and along Pine Mountain deep in the heart of central Appalachia. Elevation change is significant.

Buser won the 100k (roughly 62 miles) segment with a time of 14 hours, 1 minute, 48 seconds.

The 100k is part of Kentucky's only 100-mile trail race. The out and back



course, as well as the accompanying 100k, 50k and 25k distances, wind along the rugged, rocky and remote Pine Mountain Scenic Trail through Pike and Letcher counties in southeastern Kentucky.

Although parts of this region have been developed, strip mined or logged, Pine Mountain remains relatively untouched, and it is home to the greatest diversity of

plant life in the Commonwealth, making it a true ecological treasure.

ELK SEMINAR



Wildlife biologist Will Bowling speaks to members of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission and the public during a seminar about Kentucky's elk herd earlier this month at Hazard Community College. Biologists told the commission and others that Kentucky's wild elk numbers continue to grow, but are becoming more wary of the public and difficult to view.

"Hires," continued

Lawrence, Martin, Magoffin, Knott, Floyd and Pike counties and will recruit campers to attend Camp Robert Webb. Lindsey is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University with a degree in Biology.

Before accepting this position, she worked as a counselor supervisor at Camp Earl Wallace teaching archery, boating, casting/fishing, gun safety, nature, outdoor survival, and swimming. In addition to her seasonal work experience, Lindsey is a volunteer hunter education instructor and has assisted with Hunter's Legacy mentor hunts.

Her current certifications include: Hunter Education Instructor, Basic Archery Instructor, and American Red Cross First Aid/CPR. In her spare time, Lindsey enjoys hiking, hunting, and fishing with her family.

Eagle Watch Weekends available at Kentucky State Parks

Eagle Watch Weekends, a unique Kentucky State Park tradition, will be offered once again in January and February 2017.

The park system will sponsor this wildlife-watching opportunity as bald eagles gather around the major lakes of western Kentucky looking for food. The park tours allow guests to observe and learn about these beautiful birds of prey.

For four decades, the Kentucky State Parks have offered Eagle Watch Weekends, a chance to view the eagles from land and water and learn about the national symbol and other wildlife.

The tours take place at three state resort parks during weekends in January and February, on an excursion yacht and by van. They are led by state park naturalists and staff from the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

Ticket prices for the weekend tours range from \$25 to \$65 a person. Most tours last from three to 3½ hours. The



weekend tours include evening programs on Friday and Saturday. Kenlake State Resort Park is also offering brunch cruises on Feb. 5 and 11.

The parks, phone numbers and dates for the 2017 Eagle Watch Weekends are:

Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park (800-325-0146): Jan. 21-22. Yacht tours and van tours to the Ballard Wildlife Management Area.

Lake Barkley State Resort Park (800-

325-1708): Jan. 28-29. Yacht tours and van tours to the Land Between The Lakes.

Kenlake State Resort Park (800-325-0143): Feb. 4-5 Yacht tours. Feb. 5 & 11, brunch cruises.

A special educational opportunity is being offered on Feb. 3 for public, private and home school students aboard the CQ Princess. In addition to wildlife viewing, there will be environmental education activities on the yacht. The fee is \$15 per student. The trip is only for student groups and teachers and will start and end at Kenlake State Resort Park. Call Carey Ruff at 502-564-8110, ext. 150 or email carey.ruff@ky.gov.

Guests should bring warm clothes, rain gear and binoculars. These trips can take place under extreme weather conditions. The resorts offer lodges, cottages and restaurants. Registration is required for the Eagle Watch Weekends. Call the parks for registration, details and fee information or visit www.parks.ky.gov.

Gov. Bevin, Congressman Rogers announce \$12.5 million grant to develop Appalachian Wildlife Center

Gov. Matt Bevin and U.S. Rep. Harold “Hal” Rogers announced earlier this month that the U.S. Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE) has approved a \$12.5 million grant for the development of the Appalachian Wildlife Center in Bell County, Kentucky.

The money will fund the wildlife center that, when opened to the public in 2019, would contain a museum of natural and regional history, a theater, a hall dedicated to the natural history of elk, bird watching, an astronomy pavilion and a 15-mile, self-guided scenic loop road for wildlife viewing.

The center will be located on 19 square miles along the Cumberland River and is expected to attract 638,000 visitors annually by the fifth year of operation.

The grant is part of the \$30 million in federal grant money that was made available from the U.S. government’s General Fund through the 2016 AML Pilot program for projects in Appalachian counties that have the potential to create long-term economic benefits. To that end, the Appalachian Wildlife Center is projected to generate more than \$1 billion in regional economic activity over the first 10 years of operation.

“This pilot program provides an exciting opportunity for our leaders in Appalachian counties,” said Gov. Bevin. “By leveraging some of Kentucky’s greatest competitive advantages – magnificent natural beauty, abundant wildlife and a strong sense of history and place – this program will help to create future opportunities for Kentuckians across the region.”

Rep. Rogers, Chairman of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, who worked to secure the funds through the FY 2016 Omnibus appropriations bill, said the AML pilot project will be a double



Seventh District conservation officers joined Commissioner Gregory Johnson, Col. Rodney Coffey, and Cabinet for Tourism, Arts and Heritage Deputy Secretary Regina Stivers for the Appalachian Wildlife Center announcement. Major Shane Carrier and Ninth District Capt. Doug Vaughn also were in attendance.

win for Eastern Kentucky by reclaiming and redeveloping abandoned mine land to spur economic development where it’s needed the most.

“The new wildlife center will highlight the natural beauty of our region and provide up-close tours of the thriving wildlife now repopulating our mountains,” Rogers said. “It will also promote environmental education and economic development in the heart of the coalfields.”

The Center is projected to cost \$24 million, and will be developed over a five-year period. Revenues from admission

fees and on-site spending are projected to make it financially self-sustaining in the second year of operation, while generating funding for scholarship, research and land conservation programs.

While fundraising efforts are ongoing, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) announced this week that the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation was awarded a \$1.8 million grant under

See “Center,” page 8



Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet and Dr. Karen Waldrop, Deputy Commissioner, Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

David L. Ledford, Chief Executive Officer of the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation, said the ambitious project will need

“Center,” continued

the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative. The money will be used to install water infrastructure at the future site of the wildlife center.

The AML Pilot project is a joint effort by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, the Department for Local Government, the Kentucky Tour-

ism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet and the Energy and Environment Cabinet, Division of Abandoned Mine Lands.

Making the announcement Tuesday with Gov. Bevin and Congressman Rogers were Charles Snavelly, Secretary, Energy and Environment Cabinet, Sandy Dunahoo, Commissioner, Department of Local Government, Greg Johnson, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regina Stivers, Deputy Secretary,

additional funding, through donations from individuals, foundations and businesses.

“The Center will lead the way in developing and demonstrating ecological restoration and sustainable land uses for coal mines throughout Central Appalachia,” Ledford said. “The visitors it attracts will demonstrate the value of ecotourism and begin to create that new economic paradigm in Kentucky’s elk country.”

West Virginia using LBL elk to start its own wild herd

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources is rounding up 20 elk from the captive herd at Land Between The Lakes (LBL) that will become the beginning of the state’s elk herd.

“The U.S. Forest Service now owns LBL, so the deal is a cooperative venture between the U.S. Forest Service, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and the State of West Virginia, Department for Natural Resources (DNR),” said Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Gregory Johnson. “Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is not part of this agreement, and no elk are coming from our wild herd in east Kentucky.”

The LBL elk will become the first elk to roam free in West Virginia in nearly a century. West Virginia DNR personnel



in West Virginia’s Elk Reintroduction program.

Johnson said West Virginia has been

preparing for several years to establish a wild herd similar to Kentucky’s, and it is part of a greater vision of a “southern Appalachia-wide herd over several states.”

“They sought our assistance in getting elk from Kentucky, but due to our previous agreement with Wisconsin and the emergence of the Appalachian Wildlife Center, we were not in a position to provide more to them at this time,” said Johnson. “We did, however, help facilitate their agreement with the U.S. Forest Service for the LBL elk. Our expert elk biologists are advising West Virginia on how to hold, transfer and successfully release these elk.”

ASIAN CARP BLITZ

Fisheries Division conducted its "Asian Carp Blitz" on Kentucky Lake earlier this month. It was a multiagency effort including Tennessee's TWRA, Tennessee Tech, Murray State, the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

They hoped to establish baselines for future sampling, provide fish for processors, gather information about the efficacy of a future fish distribution partnership, provide fish for telemetry projects examining movement patterns and habitat, and examine alternative methods for harvesting Asian carp. They hope also to research the effectiveness of using electrofishing gear in conjunction with netting, and let the public see that KDFWR (and now Tennessee) continue to provide leadership concerning states' efforts to work towards getting control of Asian carp in the two reservoirs with the eventual goal of helping the industry expand throughout the Mississippi River basin.





Hunting bobwhites on Blue Grass Army Depot

The abundance of turkey and deer on portions of the Blue Grass Army Depot's 10,000 acres of grasslands is clear. Even more impressive sight are the large swaths of remnant native prairie throughout the landscape.

These naturally occurring grass and wildflower areas are a recent result of the hard work and management of wildlife biologist **Tom Edwards** and technician **Marcia Schroder**.

The Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD) historically was managed as a typical central Kentucky cattle farm.

The property was designated a Quail Focus Area in 2008, and since then the team at BGAD has been hard at work transforming an over-grazed fescue desert into native prairie stands for bobwhite quail habitat.

They utilized burning and herbicide applications to remove the fescue and the seed bank has responded with a gradual expansion of native species. Cedar removal was also utilized to aid in the response from native grasses.

They incorporated rotational grazing of cattle across these native prairie stands as a management tool for quail habitat.

Late last month, BGAD hosted its first quail hunt in almost a decade. Four groups of hunters were selected to hunt the property on a dry and unseasonably warm Saturday morning.

Included in the hunting groups were students from Eastern Kentucky University, participating in a mentor hunt sponsored by the Ruffed Grouse Society. Despite poor scenting conditions, hunters flushed six

coveys of quail and harvested seven birds.

Hunters responded positively about habitat at BGAD for bobwhites. The students from Eastern Kentucky University witnessed their first covey rise and were able to shoot at quail for the first time.

In all, the hunt was a great success. This success could lead to BGAD enticing similar habitat work on other Department of Defense lands, of which there are 14.4 million acres across the United States.

Through hard work and active management, the BGAD quail model could be applied to many of these lands to generate huntable populations of quail for use by the public.

The BGAD experience also demonstrates this can be done alongside livestock activities on a previously degraded landscape.



COMMITTEES MEET IN HAZARD

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Commission conducted its committee meetings in the Seventh Fish and Wildlife District earlier this month. The Wildlife Committee, Fisheries Committee and Administration, Education and Policy Committee met in Hazard and heard testimony on myriad topics that may be discussed before the full commission at its December meeting.

Creative HQ pumpkin artists raise \$253 for KECC

Halloween provided the perfect opportunity to raise money for the Kentucky Employee Charitable Campaign (KECC).

Twenty-three Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife (KDFWR) employees at Headquarters participated in a pumpkin decorating and judging contest that raised \$253.00 for KECC. Salato donated the pumpkins.

The winning pumpkin was decorated by **Terra Coffey**, IPA I in the Administrative Services Division. Terra created Yoda.

The second place pumpkin – in this instance two pumpkins – created an “ice cream” cone.

The ice cream cone was created by **Tanya Wilson**, HR Specialist in the Administrative Services Division.

Some pumpkins were carved, others



Painted. The only required criteria was to decorate a pumpkin. KDFWR certainly has some creative employees.

The pumpkins decorated the lobby of the Arnold Mitchell building where the judging occurred from October 24-26th. Following the contest, pumpkins were moved to Salato to decorate for the “Walk with the Animals” fund raiser sponsored by the Department and the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation. After the event, pumpkins were fed to the animals or composted after Halloween.

Salato manager **Brent McCarty** reports that each year pumpkin seeds from the compost pile germinate and produce pumpkins that are used to decorate Salato the following year.



Nature hike at Buckley Wildlife Sanctuary

Private Lands Biologist **Joe Lacefield** led the second annual “Bluegrass Forest Foray” last month at the Buckley Wildlife Sanctuary in Frankfort.

This free event, held in cooperation with University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension and Life Adventure Center, drew an impressive crowd aging from one

to 80 who were eager to learn about edible mushroom identification, tree identification, and wildlife habitat.



“Wildfires,” continued

and Wildlife Captain **Stuart Bryant** saw him igniting leaves in a Whitley City ditch. Forestry officials said the man, 48-year-old Charles Logan Watters II of Whitley City, was the first person cited in connection with a string of more than 180 wildfires across southeast Kentucky.

Conservation officers on patrol went on to issue at least 59 citations to persons starting illegal fires, according to Forestry officials. The violations can call for fines of as much as \$500 each plus court costs.

The two, 10-person fire suppression crews each spent seven days in the Harlan area fighting the wildfires. Department staff fighting the wildfires included **Clinton Abney, Jason Scott, Madeleine Pratt, Tyler Reagan, Scott Buser, Josh Lillpop, Chris Grasc, Dave Frederick, Tom Edwards, Zach Beyer, Wayne Tamminga, Thomas Young, Andrew Horvath, John Morgan, Cody M. Rhoden, Alan Shillington, Brian Wagoner, Savannah Dyer, Alexis Wood and James Woods.**

