



Giles owns new state bull elk record



It's official. Lexington banker David Giles owns the new Kentucky state record bull elk. Giles made a 322-yard shot in Knott County on the opening day of the 2015

rifle season to bring down the 9 x 8 record bull. Department Elk Program Coordinator **Gabe Jenkins** scored Giles' bull at a Boone & Crockett gross 406 inches. Its net (and official) final score of 377 5/8 eclipsed the previous record held by Terrell Royalty of Lawrenceburg by almost five inches. Royalty also took his bull in Knott County, and his record had

stood since 2009. "Things are great in Kentucky's elk herd," said Jenkins. "Hunters placed two bull elk in our all-time top 10 this year, and that's after they did the same thing last season. Our top ten is getting bigger, and that's clear evidence of our herd's health and quality." Bill Krider, of Wellington, took the other monster animal. He also took his bull in Knott County.

Department Wildlife Biologist **Dan Crank** scored the 8 x 7 elk. It placed fourth in Kentucky's all-time top 10 with a gross measurement of 397, which netted out at 368 4/8.

INSIDE:



3 Farmer retires



5 Wildlife awards



7 Meldahl access

WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

The following letter came from Stephen R. Fox of Shelbyville. He wrote, "I am writing to commend one of your employees – **Jason Nally** in Taylorsville. Mr. Nally, along with a representative of the Forestry Division, responded to my request for consultation on habitat and condition of the forest on a small plot of land that I own in Spencer County.

Mr. Nally was courteous, extremely knowledgeable and helpful. He was an excellent representative of your department and an excellent example of service to the public."

Dazed, not down

No, the Salato Center doesn't have a new Robin to be used in education programs.

Educator **Geoff Roberts** came upon this bird after it had collided with a window at the black bear exhibit.

He promptly got the bird upright and gave it time to regain its bearings. After a short while, he released it back into the wild.

This isn't the first bird that's needed attention this season.

"Just this year I've revived a hummingbird, a red-bellied woodpecker, a magnolia warbler, and this robin," he said. "We're aware of a few windows that seem



Mindy Rose photo

to be in high traffic areas for these guys and we're going to 'collision-proof' them the best we can this winter."



Indiana hunters getting into some Kentucky mallards

The Department's State Migratory Bird Coordinator **John Brunjes** received the following note and photos from an Indiana duck hunter this month:

"Hello John, this is Mike Wright of Seymour, IN. My 9-year-old son, Michael, shot a mallard hen last Saturday that you

banded on 2-20-2015 near Smith Mills, Kentucky (Sloughs WMA).

We were hunting on private property in the Tampico bottoms in Jackson County, Indiana. It was a rainy and very good morning for waterfowl hunting. We must have seen nearly 1,000 birds.

We thought that you might like to see a photo of the bird. See the attached... This is our second year of duck hunting, and we were very excited to have gotten a banded bird already. Thanks for what you do.

And... a bonus photo of our 11-month-old, Dukey on his first hunt!"

20-year Kentucky Afield TV Host Tim Farmer retires

Twenty years ago, viewers of Kentucky Afield tuned their televisions to a most unusual sight: a new, unknown host named **Tim Farmer** pulling back a bowstring with his teeth and shooting a shotgun one handed, hitting his targets with ease.

On Dec. 31, Farmer, the high energy, folksy host who never let his injured arm hold him back, will retire from the show after decades of bringing the best of the state's outdoors to viewers every week on Kentucky Educational Television (KET).

Fans will still be able to see him on Kentucky Afield until his replacement is named. Viewers can also catch his two other shows, Tim Farmer's Country Kitchen and Tim Farmer's Homemade Jam, both airing on KET.

When Farmer started his television career with Kentucky Afield in 1995, he did so with a sense of apprehension. After all, he was going from a fisheries technician who worked outside of the spotlight to hosting one of the most popular shows on the state's public network.

"I took my job interview light heartedly because I knew they weren't going to hire me anyway," Farmer recalled. "I was cutting



up and acting goofy. Then I got the job."

The news stunned him. "I thought, what am I going to do?" he said. "I know I put in for it, but I didn't think I'd get it."

He sought out Byron Crawford, an experienced television journalist who was just starting a show called Kentucky Life on KET. "I asked Byron for some advice," Farmer said, "because I knew I could do the hunting and fishing, but I wasn't sure about the rest of it. He said, 'You should be you.' He told me that when I looked at the camera, I should pretend that I was talking to my grandmother."

Kentucky Afield has followed its own path among outdoor shows since then. There's no blaring rock music or competition to get the

biggest fish or game. Instead, the show focuses on everyday folks just enjoying the outdoors.

"A lot of the outdoor shows are about chasing big deer or some other trophy that most of us will never have an opportunity to see, let alone take," said **Scott Moore**, who became Kentucky Afield's executive producer in 2005. "Tim Farmer opened the outdoors for everyone to enjoy, whether they take home something or not."

The formula works. In the past 10 years, Farmer has won five coveted Emmy Awards.

The popularity comes with a price, however. It's rare that Farmer can go anywhere without someone stopping him to chat or take a selfie. Farmer, who is keenly aware of his fame but never considered himself a star, obliges.

"I never saw a time when Tim Farmer wouldn't stop to return a conversation with someone or have his photo taken with someone – ever," said Moore. "It's difficult for him to go to the grocery store to pick up a can of tomatoes, knowing he will be there an extra 30 minutes."

"My job," Farmer said, "is not to be a rock star, but to relay the department's message. We never wanted to be arrogant or self-serving."

He takes his fame in stride, even when his co-workers have some fun at his expense. "Sometimes I'll go in a store with him and yell, 'Hey there's Tim Farmer!'" Moore said. "Then I'll run off and have a good laugh about what happens next."

Farmer receives so many questions about his injured right arm that he's taken to telling tall tales about what happened to it. Sometimes it's the result of a stage collapse at a clogging contest. Sometimes it's a shark bite.

Always, he comes around to the real



See "Farmer," page 4

Indian Creek FILO project recognized

The FILO project on East Fork of Indian Creek in Menifee County in the Red River Gorge recently received a regional award in the category of Restored and Resilient Landscapes.

This is the second U.S. Forest Service regional award earned by the FILO program. The award was given to **Rob Lewis**, engineer in the FILO Program, and presented by U.S. Forest Service hydrologist Jon Walker.

The project entailed the removal of dysfunctional concrete stream crossings that presented barriers to fish movement as well as restoring habitat along eroding reaches of the stream. This is a popular trout stream that hosts numerous campers and trout anglers each year.



Rob Lewis (left) receives the Regional Award from U.S. Forest Service hydrologist Jon Walker.

“Farmer,” continued

story; it was injured during a 1984 motorcycle wreck.

Much of Farmer's best work occurs quietly off camera, however. He stands as an example of what people can accomplish despite fierce obstacles. He's volunteered for the patients and as a fund-raiser for Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital in Lexington. He routinely helps people with missing or lifeless limbs find a way to enjoy the outdoors again.

His return to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center several years ago to help wounded soldiers proved bittersweet. Farmer, who was serving in the U.S. Marines when he crashed his motorcycle, recovered from his accident there.

“Hospitals are scary places for me,” Farmer said. “When I was at Walter Reed before, there really wasn't anybody else there, and no one to talk to me about



adaptive equipment. So I went there with great fear.”

Eighty patients – pale from their extended stays inside – showed up that day to watch videos of Farmer showing how adaptive equipment could allow them to enjoy the outdoors again. He gave the soldiers hope and encouragement. “I wanted

to let them know whatever they wanted to try, there was a way,” he said.

It's another accident, however, that's spurred Farmer's decision to retire at the end of the year. His wife, Nicki, suffered a broken neck during a traffic accident in the summer. It's been a long recovery.

The effects of Farmer's own motorcycle wreck continue to linger. The pain in his arm is nearly unbearable

at times, especially in the winter. He believes that it's time to pass the torch to someone else.

“How do you leave the best job in the world? You don't want to leave your friends and your buddies,” he said. “I've just decided that I want to stay closer to home.”

WILDLIFE DIVISION AWARDS

Wildlife Division recognized Kentucky landowners, conservationists and employees who excelled in their conservation efforts this year at the annual awards dinner.



Jason Miller, Conservationist of the Year



Above: Kris Hayden was Bluegrass Region Landowner of the Year. Other Landowners of the Year, from left to right: Burchel Blevins, Southeast Region; Gale Roberts, Purchase Region; and Bill Bedini, Northeast Region.



Clockwise, beginning above, Connie Morton was recognized as the Division's Administrative Support Employee of the Year. Commissioner Greg Johnson and Division Director Steve Beam presented Chris Mason as Wildlife Biologist of the Year, and also recognized Chris Garland with the Wildlife Director's Leadership of the Year award. They recognized John Zimmer as Wildlife Rookie of the Year and Scott Ferrell as Management Foreman of the Year.



New hires and promotions

Effective December 1, **Vera King** will be starting her new duties as the Branch Manager over the KDSS Licensing Branch. Vera has worked in the licensing area of the department for well over 20 years and was on the initial team for the KDSS help desk.

Please join us in congratulating Vera as she embarks on her new position.

Melissa Trent has been appointed as Administrative Services Division Assistant Director. Melissa joined the Department in 2004 as an Internal Policy Analyst I for

wildlife grants.

Melissa Trent steps into the position immediately and will oversee the division's accounting and grants branches. They include accounts payable, accounts receivable, pro-cards, and federal grants.

Prior to coming to KDFWR she served in several accounting & auditing capacities, most notably with the Kentucky Department of Revenue and with a private Certified Public Accounting Firm, J. Sutherland, CPA.

She has a BA in Business Administra-

tion with a concentration in Accounting from Kentucky State University. She is also a Certified Public Manager with the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Melissa has a vast amount of experience and training in grants, accounting and auditing.

Melissa has over 13 years' experience with state government, serving the past 11 with the department in our grants branch. Her in-depth knowledge and experience with federal grants and accounting will be a tremendous asset to our customers and serve her well in her new position.

Melissa currently resides in Shelby County with her husband, Scott, and their two children Loran and Gavin. They raise Gelbvieh beef cattle and honeybees on their family farm.

We would like to welcome **Michael Peach** and **John Mitchell** to the Fisheries family as now permanent members of the Division.

Michael Peach will be working at the Forks of Elkhorn Fish Transportation Crew. Michael started May 1 as an Interim Fish & Wildlife Technician I with Fish Transportation and was hired to a full time merit position effective November 16. He was born and raised in the Shelby/Spencer County area where he graduated from Spencer County High School.

He enjoys the outdoors, hunting, fishing and UK sports. He resides in Shelby County with his wife Jennifer and his son Evan.

John Mitchell was hired as a F&W Technician II responsible for equipment maintenance at the Pfeiffer Hatchery. John grew up in Lexington and Lawrenceburg, and now lives in Frankfort with his wife Christie and daughter Anna, 11. He also has a son Chayse, 21.

John went to college for architecture design, then served in the US Army from 2000-2004. He was deployed to Kuwait and Iraq for Operation Iraq Freedom. He

See "Hires," page 7



LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION RECOGNITIONS

Law Enforcement Division officers and staff were publically recognized earlier this month at the annual Commission and Awards dinner at the Salato Wildlife Education Center. Seated are NASBLA Boating Educator of the Year Zac Campbell, Quality Deer Management Association National Wildlife Officer of the Year Sgt. Scott Herndon, and the Conservation Officers Life-saving Award recipient Capt. Garry Clark. Standing are Shikar Safari Officer of the Year Steve Nelson, Mississippi Flyway Officer of the Year Dustin Mullins, National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year Tracy Bell, NASBLA Boating Officer of the Year Rodney Milburn, and Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Officer of the Year Dustin Mullins.



New Meldahl fishing access

A new recreational facility associated with the Meldahl Hydroelectric Project officially opened for public use on October 27, 2015.

The facility is located at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Meldahl Locks and Dam on the Ohio River (RM 436.2) in Bracken County, Kentucky. Anglers now have improved recreational facilities and access to the tailrace area of the hydroelectric facility and the Big Snag Creek Sandbar Area.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a License to construct and operate the Meldahl Hydroelectric Project. Pursuant to Federal regulations, licensees are required to ensure

that recreation resources are consistent with recreation needs in that area. The licensees of the hydroelectric project developed the recreation plan in consultation with the Environmental Section of the KDFWR.

The recreation improvements include a fishing pier, multi-level fishing platforms, ADA compliant multi-level walkways, paved parking areas, public restrooms, and picnic areas.

The fishing pier is a 150-foot steel catwalk structure that was designed and constructed to withstand high flows. Anglers can use this structure or any of the grouted walkways to fish the Ohio River and tailrace area of the hydroelectric

facility.

The grouted walkways along the tailrace area are five feet wide and include two different levels to allow anglers to fish during normal and high flows. Shoreline undulations approximately 50 feet apart were constructed upstream and downstream of the fishing pier to create current breaks and enhance fish habitat.

Just downstream of the tailrace recreational area is the Big Snag Creek Sandbar Area. This area was enhanced with a paved parking area, picnic tables, and a 4-foot wide grouted walkway to access the sandbar. The public will have 24 hour access, seven days a week, to the fishing pier and walkways.

“Hires,” continued

has worked for KDFWR at the Pfeiffer Hatchery since 2011 as an interim and GFTL.

I & E Division welcomes **Justin Hamilton** and **Brandon Sawyers** to the animal care team for the Salato Center.

Justin has been on board with the agency as an interim in animal care, and became full-time as a F & W Tech, while Brandon moved over from the Engineering Division headquarters grounds crew.

The animal care team is responsible for the 7-day a week health and welfare of all the captive wildlife and fish on exhibit in-

door and out, along with numerous program mammals, herps and birds of prey housed at the center. They also assist with many maintenance activities and special events.

We appreciate the work this team does every day, all year round in every type of weather, to keep our animals and their habitats in good shape for the public to enjoy.

Fish and Wildlife presentation a hit at KTCC STEM event

Girls, third grade through high school, gathered to learn about STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) at the "STEM for Girls" event at West Kentucky Technical and Community College in Paducah November 12th.

Jodie Swain, Wildlife Management Area Foreman at West Kentucky WMA, joined other area female presenters, including doctors, veterinarians, engineers, chemists, and IT specialists.

The event is designed to promote interest in STEM careers for female students. It was the organization's largest STEM event to date, with approximately 200 young girls that participated.

Jodie spoke of the many conservation tasks she performs, their impact on wildlife and conservation and about how she got started in the field. The presentation then introduced girls to migratory birds and duck banding.

She and Fish and Wildlife Technician **Madeleine Pratt** concluded the presentation by bringing out live ducks for the students to see and touch. They instantly became the "Stars" of the event.



NORTH JACKSON ELEMENTARY YOUTH

It was lots of fun and hands-on education when Fourth District Law Enforcement Division Captain Brett Zalla visited Mrs. Denise Rose's pre-school class at North Jackson Elementary School in Barren County recently. He spoke about fish and wildlife conservation, boating safety and proper use of equipment, and various duties of Kentucky conservation officers. And then they toured the patrol boat, even getting to "check in" with the State Police dispatcher on the boat radio.