



Arkansas Outdoors for January 30, 2008

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Commission renames Madison County WMA to honor McIlroy family

Negotiations with Forest Service for Camp Ouachita Special Use Permit underway

LITTLE ROCK - Commissioners from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission last week renamed the Madison County Wildlife Management Area to honor the previous owners of the land. The McIlroy family of Fayetteville owned about 15,000 acres in the county where the WMA is now located. The area will be known as the McIlroy Madison County WMA.

During the 1940s, 55 deer from Wisconsin and Sylamore, Ark., were released on the property. In 1957 the AGFC purchased just over 7,500 acres from the McIlroy family at a cost of \$10 per acre. The current WMA boundaries are almost exclusively within the original 15,000 acres owned by the McIlroys.

The area is typical rugged Ozark Mountain terrain with steep mountains and hollows. Elevations range from 1,100 to over 1,600 feet above mean sea level. The area is extensively forested in upland hardwood and shortleaf pine timber stands. Many small streams on the area are tributaries of the nearby Kings River which skirts the WMA's eastern boundary.



The Commission also approved a \$75,000 appropriation for repaving roads, parking surfaces, trails and other infrastructure at Camp Ouachita on Winona WMA in Perry County. The AGFC is pursuing a Special Use Permit with the USDA Forest Service to manage Camp Ouachita in the public trust as a conservation education center.

The camp is adjacent to Lake Sylvia and has camping facilities, a great hall, cabins and more than 10 miles of hiking trails. It is the last surviving Girl Scout camp in the U.S. built by Civilian Conservation Corps. The Forest Service and Department of the Interior recently spent more than \$2.5 million on restoration of the camp.

In other business, the Commission:

*Approved \$36,000 from the Marine Fuel Tax fund to renovate the boat ramp at Lake Millwood State Park in Little River County. The current ramp will be removed and the bank will be re-sloped where a wider ramp will be constructed.

*Heard a report from the 2007 elk hunting season. A total of 27 elk were taken during the season. The breakdown included 15 bulls and 12 cows. The largest of bull weighed 855 pounds, the largest antlers were an 8 X 8 and the largest cow weighed 553 pounds.

*Approved an \$82,800 budget increase to complete dam renovation on the AGFC's Lake Hindsville in Madison County.

*Honored wildlife officer Ken Key with the Shikar-Safari Wildlife Officer of the Year award. Key is based in Camden and patrols southern Arkansas. Award winners are selected on the basis of their professional relationships with hunters, anglers and landowners in their districts, their job performance, dedication to the wildlife law enforcement profession and participation in activities outside of daily enforcement work.

Mayflower firing range scheduled for maintenance

MAYFLOWER—Shooters who enjoy the Dr. James E. Moore Jr. Camp Robinson Firing Range in Mayflower may have to adjust their schedules during the next two months for scheduled maintenance work beginning Monday, Feb. 4.

"The construction will be handled in phases," explained AGFC Hunter Education Coordinator Joe Huggins. "First, we'll be repairing concrete and repairing the trap and skeet towers on the shotgunning section of the range. The pistol and rifle ranges will remain open during that time."

Once construction on the trap and skeet ranges is complete, those ranges will be open and the rifle and pistol range will be closed for renovation.

Huggins said the entire project should be complete by the beginning of April, weather permitting. Once construction is complete, all ranges will be open during regular business hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. Shooters can call ahead for range conditions at (501) 470-9904.



Young Iowa swans take to new winter homes in Arkansas

DARDANELLE - Arkansas's winter population of trumpeter swans increased a few days ago, but these new birds didn't have to fly hundreds of miles to the south. They rode in pet carriers on a trailer pulled by a mini-van.

All 18 were young swans. Called cygnets, they were born in the spring of 2007.

They are the first participants in an effort to restore the migrating instinct lost of most trumpeter swans that have been restored to the upper Midwest – Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa and a few in other states plus Ontario. An alliance of public and private groups hopes a multi-year experiment will help bring them back. The effort is a joint venture between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Trumpeter Swan Society, National Park Service and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Five young trumpeter swans were released last week at Boxley Valley in western Newton County near the upper portion of Buffalo National River. The five are siblings and were let go at the mill pond beside Arkansas Highway 43.



Thirteen more young trumpeter swans were released at Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge along the Arkansas River, a few miles downstream from Dardanelle. The hope is these young swans will return to Holla Bend next winter and, within a few years, bring their families. They were released on an oxbow lake off the river, near the refuge's observation tower.

Biologists from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission were on hand when the big birds from Iowa were released. Trumpeters may weigh up to 35 pounds and have 8-foot wingspans.

The process behind the release is called “reverse migration imprinting.” The idea is to bring south young birds that never have migrated and let them use their instincts to return to Iowa.



“The DNR has been releasing captive produced young swans on state wetlands since 1995,” said Ron Andrews, wildlife biologist with the Iowa DNR. “The goal of these efforts has been to reestablish a wild, free-flying population of trumpeter swans to Iowa. So far, the program has been successful to the point that we were able to inventory 30 successful nesting pairs in Iowa during 2007.”

Andrews said that Iowa’s trumpeter swan population is nearing a “threshold level” and will soon achieve self-sustaining numbers. In the meantime, biologists continue to bolster the flock with annual releases of more captive-produced birds. Scientists have noted, however, that young swans raised by wild, free-flying parents are enjoying a much higher survival than birds released from captivity.

“Trumpeter swans are extremely hardy birds and don’t normally head south until really severe weather sets in,” said Andrews. “Birds produced in the wild have the benefit of parental supervision. Families stick together through the winter and the adults lead the way south. By contrast, captive reared youngsters are out there, on their own. When wetlands begin to freeze tight, they’re forced to sort things out on their own. Without knowing where to go, many of those birds end up in trouble.”

“These young-of-the-year birds have been brought south, and we’ll see if they can get back,” said Karen Rowe, AGFC nongame migratory bird program coordinator. “We are using places that are not hunted, yet waterfowl-friendly.”

During the next three years, Andrews said, the Iowa DNR hopes to send more than 100 young swans to Arkansas wetlands. The cygnets are marked with green neck collars with white numbers that will help biologists keep tabs on the swans as they travel the flyways.

Workshop focuses on Santa Fe Reservoir

RUSSELLVILLE – The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will hold a public workshop at 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 7, to address short-term maintenance issues and long-term management options on the Santa Fe Greentree Reservoir on Petit Jean River Wildlife Management Area.

Because of problems with a water-control structure, the Santa Fe Greentree Reservoir in eastern Yell County was not flooded as typically occurs during the 2007-08 waterfowl season.

The meeting will be at the AGFC’s Russellville Regional Office, 1266 Lock and Dam Road. Call (877) 967-7577 for more information.

Boating education class schedule

Click here for boating education information: <http://www.agfc.com/education-class/boating-education.aspx>

Hunter education class schedule

Click here for hunter education information: <http://www.agfc.com/education-class/hunter-education.aspx>

What’s open for hunting

Current and approaching seasons in Arkansas:

Squirrel:
Statewide – Sept. 8-Feb. 29.

Rabbit:
Statewide – Sept. 1-Feb. 29.

Spotted Skunk, Weasel Hunting:
Closed.

Duck:
Jan. 12-Jan. 27

White-Fronted Goose:
Dec. 26-Feb. 3

Snow, Blue, and Ross' Goose:
Dec. 26-Feb. 3

Snow Goose Conservation Order:
Feb. 4-April 27

Statewide Canada Goose:
Dec. 26 – Feb. 3

Statewide Falconry:
Jan. 7-11 and Jan. 28-Feb. 17

Common Snipe:
Nov. 1, 2007 to Feb. 15, 2008

Deer Archery:
Oct. 1-Feb. 29 statewide.

Turkey Archery:
Oct. 1-Feb. 29 statewide.

Quail:
Nov. 1-Feb. 10 statewide.

Crow:
Sept. 1-Feb. 17 Thursdays thru Mondays only statewide.

Furbearers:
Furbearer trapping Nov. 17-Feb. 17 excluding coyote, beaver, muskrat and nutria.
Coyote trapping Aug. 1-March 31.
Beaver, muskrat, nutria trapping Nov. 17-March 31.
Gray fox, mink, opossum, red fox, striped skunk hunting Sept. 1-Feb. 29.
Raccoon day or night hunting Sept. 1-March 31.
Raccoon night hunting July 1-Aug. 31.
Bobcat and coyote hunting Oct. 1-Feb. 29.
River otter hunting Nov. 17-Feb. 29.
Muskrat, nutria and beaver hunting Sept. 1-March 31.
Badger, spotted skunk and weasel hunting is closed.

Coming up in the outdoors

Jan. 24 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting, 2 Natural Resources Dr., Little Rock, 9 a.m.

Jan. 25 - Bottomland Boss Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Brinkley Convention Center. For more information contact: Robbie Horton at (870) 946-5527 or by email at bubbagbi@hotmail.com.

Jan. 26 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Canada Goose Hunting."

Jan. 26 - Lower Arkansas Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Charles O Ross Center in Camden. For more information contact: Danny Young at (870) 231-5927.

Jan. 26 - Springlake Strutters Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, East End Elementary School in Little Rock. For more information contact: Michael Garner at (501) 888-7513.

Feb. 1-2 - Quail and Songbird Habitat Workshop, Petit Jean Mountain. Registration for the workshop is available online at www.uawri.org or by calling (866) 972-7778. Overnight accommodations are available. The registration deadline is Jan. 28. For more information about the workshop, contact Sandy Davies by phone at (501) 215-7990 or by e-mail at sdavies@uawri.org.

Feb. 2 - Delta Wings Chapter of Delta Waterfowl, Southland Park Gaming and Racing, West Memphis. For information, contact Gary Harlow at (870) 636-0551 or e-mail at gjharlow@aol.com.

Feb. 2 – Regional turkey calling championship, Arkansas State University Convocation Center in Jonesboro, 11:30 a.m. For more information go to www.arsportshow.com or contact Marvin Day at marvinday@cameronconstructionco.com or call (870) 932-1306.

Feb. 2 - Crowley's Ridge Strutters Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Forrest City Civic Center. For more information contact: Randy Baldwin at (870) 270-0050 or by email at randyb@arkansas.net.

Feb. 2 - Saline River Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Sheridan Community Center. For more information contact: David Hooks at (870) 942-4642.

Feb. 2 - Sebastian Co. Boss Gobblers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Fort Smith Knights of Columbus Hall. For more information contact: Bob Gleason at (479) 996-6800 or by email at naildriver2355@yahoo.com.

Feb. 2 - Chicot County Young Hens and Old Gobblers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Lake Village Country Club. For more information contact: Bobby Fisher at (870) 737-3088 or by email at fisherchannelcat@aol.com.

Feb. 2 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Winter Trout Fishing."

Feb. 2 – Perry County Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Perryville National Guard Armory. For more information contact: Tim Cates at (501) 727-5767 or by email at cates_@hotmail.com.

Feb. 2 – KZHE/Steve's Outdoor Sports Inc. Annual Crow Shoot. For more information contact KZHE at (870) 234-7790 or Steve's Outdoor Sports at (870) 234-2277.

Feb. 8 - Laigle Creek Longbeards Grand Prairie Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Hermitage Community Center. For more information contact: Grady Story at (870) 628-3142 or by email at jastory@seark.net.

Feb. 8-9 – Ozark Conference Center's Duck Calling Operations Seminar in Solgohachia. For more information call (501) 354-3959 or email: bobbie@ozarkconference.org.

Feb. 8-10 - Arkansas RV Show, Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock. For more information, contact: Denton and Griffey Attractions, Ken Griffey, (501) 225-6177 or (501) 765-1423.

Feb. 9 - Cane Creek Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Star City Civic Center. For more information contact: Bruce Morgan at (870) 628-1616.

Feb. 9 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Outdoor Photography."

Feb. 9 - Miller County Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Texarkana V. F. W. For more information contact: Jesse Whitehead at (870) 773-6720.

Feb. 15 – South Central Arkansas Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Sahara Center in Pine Bluff. For more information contact: Sam McBryde at (870) 535-7920.

Feb. 15-17 - Arkansas State Boat Show, Little Rock's Statehouse Convention Center. The show times are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday; and 12 noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Feb. 16 – Cleveland County Cutters and Strutters Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Rison school cafeteria. For more information contact: Terry Thompson at (870) 357-8346 or by email at tcat01@tds.net.

Feb. 16 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Snow Goose Hunting."

Feb. 16 – Crawford County Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Alma high school cafeteria. For more information contact: Roger Atwell at (479) 369-2055 or by email at ratwell@thermatru.com.

Feb. 16 – Northwest Arkansas Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Springdale Rodeo Grounds. For more information contact: Gary Cobb at (479) 659-3018 or by email at qt_cobb@msn.com.

Feb. 16 – Southeast Arkansas Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Lakewood Inn in Crossett. For more information contact: Mickey Pennington at (870) 364-9061 or by email at mpennington@alltel.net.

Feb. 16 – Sugarloaf Wild Turkey Hunters Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Cleburne County Fairgrounds in Heber Springs. For more information contact: Don Melton at (501) 362-5555.

Feb. 21 - AGFC Commission monthly meeting, Dumas.

Feb. 23 – Four Rivers Limbhangers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Arkadelphia National Guard Armory. For more information contact: Teena Bebee at (870) 245-6594 or by email at tbebee@summitinsurancedirect.com.

Feb. 23 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Late Season Squirrel Hunting."

Feb. 23 – Lafayette County Strutters Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Lewisville Middle School. For more information contact: Tony Wheelington at (870) 533-1349 or by email at wheel02@earthlink.net.

Feb. 23 – Lawrence County Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Hoxie Community Center. For more information contact: Bobby Tedder at (870) 892-3007.

Feb. 23 – Lower White River Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Arkansas County Fairgrounds in DeWitt. For more information contact: Walter Jones at (870) 282-8009 or by email at wjones011@centurytel.net.

Feb. 23 – Palarm Creek Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Sherwood Forest in Sherwood. For more information contact: Keith Brown at (501) 835-9546 or by email at brownkk@sbcglobal.net.

Feb. 24 – Tightlines Flyfishers outing, Beaver Tailwaters, 12 noon. For more information contact Ken Richards at (479) 531-5741.

Feb. 26 – Billy Mitchell Sr. Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Knights of Columbus Hall in Wynne. For more information contact: Robert Bassham at (870) 238-7570.

Feb. 26 – Spa City Spurs Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Elk's Lodge in Hot Springs. For more information contact: Darrel Sulton at (501) 844-7705.

Feb. 28 – East Arkansas Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Phillips Community College in West Helena. For more information contact: Terry Grubbs at (870) 995-2985 or by email at tgrubbs@cox-internet.com.

Feb. 29-Mar. 2 - Hot Springs Boat Tackle and RV Show, Hot Springs Convention Center, Hot Springs. For more information, contact: Denton and Griffey Attractions, Ken Griffey, (501) 225-6177 or (501) 765-1423.

Feb. 29 – Buffalo Island Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Cowboy Grill in Caraway. For more information contact: Billy Vanderbilt at (870) 273-8056 or by email at weatherlyburk@hotmail.com.

Feb. 29 – Tri-County Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Fordyce Armory Building. For more information contact: Burk Weatherly at (870) 687-3118 or by email at tc01@tds.net.

Mar. 7 – Annual Spring Conservation Banquet and Fundraiser, Fayetteville Town Center, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. For more information contact Keri Russell at (479) 640-8319.

Mar. 20 - AGFC Commission monthly meeting, 2 Natural Resources Dr., Little Rock, 9 a.m.

April 17 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting, 2 Natural Resources Dr., Little Rock, 9 a.m.

May 22 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting, 2 Natural Resources Dr., Little Rock, 9 a.m.

June 19 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting.

For the latest in Arkansas Game and Fish Commission information go to www.agfc.com or call the Wildlife Information Hotline, (800)440-1477.

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