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Deer, ducks dot Beryl Anthony Lower Ouachita WMA

FELSENTHAL – Two of the most significant assets of Beryl Anthony Lower Ouachita Wildlife Management Area aren't always apparent.

It is 7,020 acres of prime bottomland hardwoods, and this is the type land that makes Arkansas a national leader in management of wetlands wildlife habitat.

One of its strong points is location. Beryl Anthony Lower Ouachita is a key link, the center piece, in the south Arkansas-north Louisiana wetlands chain along the Ouachita River. Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge joins it to the north. Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge joins it on the south, with the Louisiana state line separating the two tracts. Combined, the three provide major wintering grounds for ducks and other migrating birds.

Another feature of Beryl Anthony Lower Ouachita is its aesthetics. Biologist Brady Baker of the Arkansas Game



and Fish Commission summed it up by saying, "This is a pristine area. It is just beautiful."

Bottomland oaks, tall pines and many old cypress trees lead the varied forests of the management area, which is on both sides of the Ouachita River. About half is in Union County and half in Ashley County. Nearest towns are Felsenthal and Huttig on the Union County side, and the northern boundary of the WMA is within a stone's throw of Felsenthal Dam.

The dam with its lock was one of several built on the Ouachita River to allow barge traffic. An effect of the dam was flooding of the lowlands to the north, the area where the Saline River joins the Ouachita at the three-way merger of Union, Ashley and Bradley counties.

When the need for a link between the two federal refuges was realized, the Game and Fish Commission stepped in and bought the land for a management area, paying it out over several years. The management area was named for Beryl Anthony Sr., a former AGFC commissioner and long-time leader in south Arkansas's lumber industry.



Deer and turkeys live on the WMA, along with squirrels, other small game plus raccoons and other furbearers. In late fall and winter, when water is backed into the hardwood bottoms, the ducks come in good numbers. If water isn't up, the ducks are virtually absent.

Management of hardwood timber is a focus for the AGFC. To sustain the habitat, the work protects the existing young hardwood forest from disease and from year-round inundation caused by beavers and their dams, Baker said.

Access to the WMA is limited. A gravel road runs south from Felsenthal Dam along the Ouachita River on the west half of the WMA. Visitors who have found ways to get around often go to Steep Bank Creek on the Union County side, an area of old cypress trees and some surprisingly productive fishing.

Because of the difficulty in travel, deer hunting is mostly by area residents. Beryl Anthony Lower Ouachita is heavily used by waterfowl, so hunters going after squirrel and

other small game are required to use only non-toxic loads, like steel, in their shotguns.

Songbirds, both resident and migrating, are abundant in the management area. Baker said a special attraction for bird enthusiasts is the large number of prothonotary warblers, the brilliant yellow and black wetland dwellers.

A boat launching ramp is at Felsenthal Dam on the Union County side, and small boats are launched on primitive dirt ramps at several other points on the river. There are two designated primitive camping areas along the access road on the west side of the WMA.

Commission looking for old water wells and cisterns

LITTLE ROCK - While many people know that Arkansas bats mostly live in trees in the summer and either hibernate in caves or migrate south for the winter, not many have heard that several bat species have been found living in old, hand-dug water wells and cisterns in south Arkansas.

One of these is the Rafinesque's big-eared bat, which sleeps in hollow trees or abandoned houses in bottomland hardwood forests during the summer, but often moves to old wells in the winter. Because of the soil around these deep shafts, temperatures inside the wells are usually relatively warm, making it a good place for this species to find refuge when night-time temperatures dip below 40 degrees.



The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission is working to protect wells and cisterns used by bats. Last



fall, in conjunction with Bat Conservation International, the AGFC installed steel covers on three wells on private land in Lafayette and Nevada counties that keep people from falling in or throwing trash down the wells while still making it possible for the bats to use them.

Landowners with large, old water wells or cisterns in southern Arkansas that would be interested in having covers placed on these wells at no charge should contact Blake Sasse, (877) 470-3650.

Old Christmas trees improve Greers Ferry fish habitat

GREERS FERRY – Old Christmas trees, just like yesterday’s newspapers, can be recycled for beneficial additional uses.

At Greers Ferry Lake, fish habitat has received a boost from the cooperative effort of public agencies and volunteers. Christmas trees, weeks after the holiday, have been bundled and put into the lake to provide refuge to young fish and baitfish, while creating prime areas for anglers for years to come.

Matt Schroeder, district fisheries biologist for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, said Harold McFarlin of Heber Springs donated about 500 Christmas trees for use as fish habitat on Greers Ferry Lake

Getting the trees was the first step. Some intensive labor came next in tying the trees into bunches, loading them on a special vessel then sinking them in three areas that fisheries biologists found needing additional habitat underwater.

Schroder and fellow AGFC staff members Tom Bly, Matt Horton, Mike Story, and Mike Shamoon joined Jason Presley, Jeff Price, David Shoults and Bill Fulford of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and members of the Greers Ferry Bassmasters, Tim Marshall, Jeff Stevenson and Rick Cothren, to complete the project.



A key tool was a front-loading dump barge donated by Bass Pro and also used for habitat work on Beaver Lake, Table Rock Lake, Bull Shoals Lake, and Lake Norfolk.

The 500 Christmas trees were placed in groups of 20 near three access areas on the lake for a total of 25 brush piles. The Sandy Beach, Devil’s Fork and Frontier Canyon areas received eight, 10, and seven brush piles, respectively.

The positions of these brush piles were logged with Global Positioning System (GPS) units by the crews and will be available to the public through the Corps of Engineers.

The clusters of trees under the water provide shelter for newly born fish and also for minnows and shad that are food fish for bass, crappie, walleye and other game species in Greers Ferry Lake. The trees are far enough below the surface so they don’t interfere with boat traffic, even when the lake is low.

Over 176,000 fish stocked in state’s waters

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Game and Fish Commission crews stocked over 176,600 fish in Arkansas lakes and rivers during February, according to Mike Armstrong, chief of fisheries. The total stocking of fish weighed in excess of 90,800 pounds.

February stockings:

Amon’s Lake, Baxter County, 600 catchable rainbow trout
Lake Atalanta, Benton County, 1,700 catchable rainbow trout

Beaver Tailwater, Carroll County, 3,500 catchable rainbow trout

Bobcat Pond, Prairie County, 166 catchable channel catfish



Bobs Pond, Prairie County, 166 catchable channel catfish
Boyle Park Pond, Pulaski County, 400 catchable rainbow trout
Bradley County Lake, Bradley County, 155 catchable channel catfish
Brown Pool, St. Francis County, 178 catchable channel catfish
Cabot Community Pond, Lonoke County, 1,500 catchable rainbow trout
Calion Lake, Union County, 2,200 yearling grass carp
Cane Creek Lake, Lincoln County, 942 catchable channel catfish
Cane Creek Lake, Lincoln County, 13,170 yearling grass carp
Lake Catherine, Garland County, 12,103 catchable rainbow trout
Cherrywood Lake, Pulaski County, 1,000 catchable rainbow trout
Lake Columbia, Columbia County, 3,480 yearling grass carp
Cox Cypress Lake, Arkansas County, 244 catchable channel catfish
Craighead Forest Kids Pond, Craighead County, 900 catchable rainbow trout
Cypress Bayou Pond, Lonoke County, 160 catchable channel catfish
Dewitt City Lake, Arkansas County, 453 catchable channel catfish
Doe Pond, Prairie County, 155 catchable channel catfish
Entergy Park Lake, Garland County, 470 catchable rainbow trout
Family Park Lake, Garland County, 360 catchable rainbow trout
Field Trial Pond, Prairie County, 155 catchable channel catfish
Flowers Lake, St. Francis County, 155 catchable channel catfish
Lake Hamilton, Garland County, 6,713 catchable rainbow trout
Hickson Lake, Monroe County, 178 catchable channel catfish
Interstate Pond #2, Monroe County, 200 catchable channel catfish
Interstate Pond #4, Monroe County, 160 catchable channel catfish
Kiwanis Park, Pulaski County, 500 catchable rainbow trout
Little Missouri River, Montgomery County, 3,529 catchable rainbow trout
Little Red River, Cleburne County, 14,370 catchable rainbow trout
Little Rock AFB Lake, Pulaski County, 1,250 catchable rainbow trout
MacArthur Park Lake, Pulaski County, 500 catchable rainbow trout
Mamas Pond, Prairie County, 162 catchable channel catfish
Mammoth Pond, Prairie County, 189 catchable channel catfish
Marion McCollum Lake Greenlee, Monroe County, 865 yearling Florida bass
Martin Luther King Park, Jefferson County, 500 catchable rainbow trout
Mike and Janet Huckabee Kids Pond, Hempstead County, 200 catchable rainbow trout
Mirror Lake, Stone County, 1,000 catchable rainbow trout
Murphy Park Lake, Washington County, 800 catchable rainbow trout
Narrows Dam Tailwater, Pike County, 19,716 catchable rainbow trout
Norfork River, Baxter County, 8,400 catchable rainbow trout
Ouachita River, Hot Spring County, 1,691 catchable rainbow trout
Pheasant Pond, Prairie County, 155 catchable channel catfish
Pine Tree Station, St. Francis County, 178 catchable channel catfish
Pleasant View Park Pond, Pope County, 400 catchable rainbow trout
Pond F-1, St. Francis County, 178 catchable channel catfish
Quail Pond, Prairie County, 178 catchable channel catfish
Rabbit Pond, Prairie County, 166 catchable channel catfish
Rattlesnake Pond, Prairie County, 166 catchable channel catfish
Rich Mountain Community College Pond, Polk County, 300 catchable rainbow trout
Robe Bayou, Monroe County, 333 catchable channel catfish
Rock Creek, Pulaski County, 500 catchable rainbow trout
Salem City Lake, Fulton County, 800 catchable rainbow trout
Spring River, Fulton County, 3,860 catchable rainbow trout
Springdale Lake, Washington County, 800 catchable rainbow trout
Tri County Lake, Calhoun County, 1,280 yearling grass carp
Lake Valencia, Pulaski County, 1,000 catchable rainbow trout
War Memorial Park, Pulaski County, 400 catchable rainbow trout
Ward City Lake, Lonoke County, 178 catchable channel catfish
Wells Lake, Sebastian County, 1,700 catchable rainbow trout
West Memphis City Park Lake, Crittenden County, 750 catchable rainbow trout
White Oak Lake Lower, Ouachita County, 3,024 yearling grass carp
White Oak Lake Upper, Ouachita County, 2,192 yearling grass carp
White River, Izard, Stone, Marion and Baxter Counties, 52,586 catchable rainbow trout
Wilkins Pond, St. Francis County, 155 catchable channel catfish
Wrape Plantation Lake, Arkansas County, 153 catchable channel catfish

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:

Projected opening dates for the 2009-2010 deer hunting season.

Archery: Oct. 1, 2009

Muzzleloader: Oct. 17, 2009

Modern Gun: Nov. 14, 2009

Snow goose Conservation Order: Feb. 2-April 25 with no bag limit.

Spotted Skunk, Weasel Hunting: Closed

Furbearers:

Coyote trapping: sunrise, Aug. 1-sunset, March 31.

Beaver, muskrat, nutria trapping: sunrise, Nov. 15-sunset, March 31.

Raccoon day or night hunting: Sunrise, Sept 1-sunset, March 31.

Raccoon night hunting: Sunset, July 1-sunrise, Aug. 31.

Bobcat hunting: First day of spring turkey season through June 8.

Coyote hunting: First day of spring turkey season through June 14.

Muskrat, nutria, beaver hunting: sunrise, Sept. 1-sunset, March 31.

Badger, spotted skunk and weasel hunting: Closed.

Squirrel

Statewide: May 16-June 14, 2009.

Coming up in the outdoors

March 19-21 – Sowbug Roundup fly-tying show, Redeemer Lutheran Church Family Life Center, 307 W. North St. in Mountain Home, 9 p.m. to 4 pm. Demonstrations by more than 100 expert tyers, seminars, tying and casting instruction. Admission for adults is \$5 for all three days.

March 21 - Antique Fishing Tackle and Lures Day at Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

March 21 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Snakes of Arkansas."

March 26 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m. Topics include the 2009-2010 general hunting regulations approval.

March 26 - "2009 Spring Turkey Season Predictions—the Good and the Bad" program at the Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center in Little Rock, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

March 28 – Greenbrier Chapter of The National Wild Turkey Foundation annual fundraising membership drive, dinner and auction at the Boy Scout Camp in Damascus. For more information call: Dave Smith at (501) 335-7240.

March 28 - Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game Banquet, Robinson Center/Doubletree Hotel in Little Rock. Doors open at 5 p.m. For more information call (501) 516-0439 or bettynjackt@gmail.com.

March 28 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show

will be "Looking for Longbeards."

April 4 – Twin Lakes Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Banquet at the Big Creek Country Club in Mountain Home. For more information call: Shane Williams at (870) 421-5746 or shanewilliams@eaton.com.

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

April 11 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Best Baits for Bass."

April 16 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

April 18 – Main Street Siloam Springs will be hosting "Capturing Nature on Film: A Photography" seminar by Charles Alsheimer at Community Christian Fellowship in Siloam Springs. The seminar will run from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the chapel and is limited to 50 participants. Charles Alsheimer is a nationally known, award-winning outdoors writer, photographer and lecturer. His photography has been published in Outdoor Life, Field and Stream, and Sports Afield magazines. Tickets are \$40 per person and must be purchased in advance at Local Flair Art Gallery in downtown Siloam Springs (116 North Broadway), or by contacting Main Street Siloam Springs, Inc. at (479) 524-4556. For more information contact Shelley Simmons, Main Street Executive Director, at (479) 524-4556 or visit www.charleslasheimer.com. Later in the day, Main Street Siloam Springs will be hosting the first Siloam Springs Whitetail Expo at the Community Christian Church in Siloam Springs. The evening will start at 5 p.m. with a deer hunting vendor expo, silent auction and Kenn Young's Monster Whitetails of Arkansas display. Beginning at 6:30 p.m. Charles Alsheimer, senior editor of Deer and Deer Hunting magazine, will present his "Ultimate Deer Hunting Seminar." Alsheimer is a nationally known outdoor writer, photographer, lecturer and whitetail consultant. Tickets will be \$10 per person (children under 12 free) and can be purchased at the door or by contacting Main Street Siloam Springs at (479) 524-4556.

April 18 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "All About Bird Dogs."

April 18– Arkansas Catfishing Association tournament at Lake Maumelle launching from the Jolly Roger Marina. For ACA members: rod and reel, catch and release, and alive and well. For an ACA application form, constitution and bylaws, local conditions and information along with the rules and regulations view our website at http://arkcats.org/Home_Page.php or Lee Fields of Russellville at (479) 331-0399 or (870) 577-7289 or by email at leefields@centurytel.net, or Paul Schweyer of Barling, paulschweyer@sbcglobal.net at (479) 452-1652 or (479) 719-0474.

April 25 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Fishin' and Giggin' for Frogs."

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

May 8 - 2009 AGFC Scout Night at Dickey-Stephens Park. For more information contact Paul Allen at the ballpark at (501) 664-1555 or at paul@travs.com.

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

May 18 – Outdoor Legacy Dave Duncan Memorial Golf Tournament, County Club of Arkansas in Maumelle. The four-man scramble gets underway at 11 a.m. For more information call Steve "Wildman" Wilson at (501) 821-8887 or Charlie Wilson at (501) 779-1976.

May 21 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

June 5-7 - The 6th annual Arkansas Casting for Recovery Retreat will be held at Gaston's on the White River. This is a two-and-a-half day retreat is provided free of cost to 14 breast cancer survivors in Arkansas who are randomly selected after an application process. The women selected for this retreat will be given the opportunity to learn how to fly fish from well known female fly fishing instructors. Fly-fishing has been known to provide a gentle form of upper extremity mobilization and exercise while allowing for a healing connection to the natural world and relieving everyday stressors. The retreat also offers medical and psychosocial support and allows the participants to focus on wellness while providing an avenue for social support. To apply for this retreat, fill out an application form from www.castingforrecovery.org or call (888) 553-3500. The deadline is March 27. For more information, call the state coordinator Kerri Russell at (479) 640-8319.

June 6 - Benton County Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation Heritage Banquet at the Northwest Arkansas Quails Unlimited Building, Highway 72 West in Bentonville. Doors open at 4 p.m. There will be archery, the Daisy BB

gun trailer and other opportunities for young people and others a like. For more information call James Barger at (479) 531-2359 or Bobby King (479) 295-1911 or Chris Hinkle at (479) 790-3260.

June 13 - The Friends of the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery will again sponsor the annual Kids Fishing Derby at Quarry Park below Norfolk Dam on Saturday, June 13. This is the AGFC free fishing day and AGFC staff will be in attendance on the day of the derby to help out. We will have a prize for every child who fishes. The derby is open to all kids between the ages of 3 and 15. Lunch will be provided.

June 25 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting in Lake Village. Topics include the early migratory bird season proposals.

Aug. 8 – Scimitar Shrine Director's Staff Bass Tournament, Arkansas River behind Alltel Arena, 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. Entry fee is \$150 per boat with 75% payback. For more information call Chris at (501) 749-3025 or Tom at (501) 834-6005.

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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