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News

Arkansas Outdoors for March 19, 2008

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Today's Topics

[Moro Big Pine Natural Area WMA receives special tourism award](#)

[New deer plan addresses the elusive human element](#)

[Top outdoorsman towns named by Outdoor Life magazine](#)

[Youth fishing derby planned at Lake Village State Park](#)

[Fishing in Arkansas is topic of 'Outdoor Hotline'](#)

[GreenTrees conference highlights beneficial landowner program](#)

[Boating education class schedule](#)

[Hunter education class schedule](#)

[What's open for hunting](#)

[Coming up in the outdoors](#)

Moro Big Pine Natural Area WMA receives special tourism award

HAMPTON - Moro Big Pine Natural Area Wildlife Management Area recently received a Crystal Award during the Henry Awards ceremony at the recent [34th annual Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) in Rogers.

The Crystal Award is a special award presented periodically for great success in forwarding the development and promotion of tourism in Arkansas. Governor Mike Beebe presided over the event and addressed more than 675 attendees concerning tourism issues in Arkansas.

Moro Big Pine is a 15,923-acre cooperative project of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, The Nature Conservancy, Potlatch Forest Holdings Inc., and the Arkansas Forestry Commission. It was opened to public use last year.

Located in Calhoun County between El Dorado and Hampton, Moro Big Pine protects a large remnant of Arkansas's pine flatwoods. It is covered mostly by loblolly and shortleaf pine trees. The site also has about two dozen red-cockaded woodpeckers, a cardinal-sized bird that's been on the U.S. Endangered Species List since 1970.

The Moro Big Pine partners have developed a forest management plan for the area that includes a natural area section, a wildlife section and guidelines for harvesting timber. The plan allows for traditional forest uses, such as timber operations and hunting, that are both ecologically sustainable and economically viable.



New deer plan addresses the elusive human element

LITTLE ROCK – Any mention of deer in Arkansas is closely followed by comments relating to people. These may be hunters, landowners, gardeners or suburban residents proud of their azaleas.

Now in effect, the new Strategic White-tailed Deer Management Plan of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission addresses the deer-human issue as one of six categories, labeling it Sociological. The other categories of the plan are Resource, Education, Communication, Habitat and Enforcement.

The plan was approved by AGFC's commissioners at their February meeting in Dumas. It was created with the assistance of several dozen private citizens who participated in idea and planning sessions, and their influence is reflected in many of the plan's objectives.

The plan supplants a 1999 deer management plan for Arkansas. It is called the 2007 plan because most of it was constructed last year.

Today's focus is on a summary of the Sociological portion of the plan.

Wildlife managers for decades have said the hardest part of managing deer and other wild creatures is the human element. The new AGFC deer management plan leads off its sociological category with the succinct phrase "Sociological goal: Be responsive to public concerns."

Hunting is included here, but the details and intricacies of seasons, bag limits, antler restrictions and gender rules are not. These are not covered in the management plan but are left to yearly study and action by the AGFC staff and its commissioners.

In the Sociological Goal, the plan says AGFC will "provide assistance to the public regarding deer/human conflicts. Some conflicts are ongoing, such as vehicle collisions with deer on public roads.

The plan suggests continued work through the media to distribute information over the state about deer and people conflicts. As Arkansas' population grows in urban areas, these expanded into deer habitat, bringing forth the need for managing urban deer populations, and this can be sharply different from managing deer in forests and remote rural sections of Arkansas.



Depredation permits are issued on an as-needed basis to remove deer when they are nuisances to farmers and other businesses.

Another element in the Sociological Goal is to continue the deer advisory groups "as a tool for gathering public opinions." The advisory groups will also be an avenue for the AGFC to tell the public about various deer issues and the assorted management options that could be employed to meet these issues.

And also in the Sociological Goal is hunting. The goal is to "increase the availability and quality of public hunting opportunities," the plan says.

The growing Arkansas population has another effect in that it reduces the land where deer can be hunted. The AGFC for years has used a policy of increasing the amount of public lands open to hunting and other recreational uses by purchasing, leasing and conservation easements. The latter is usually a partnership arrangement. An example is the new Moro Big Pine Wildlife Management Area in Calhoun County, 15,923 acres that was opened last year.

The plan calls for wildlife management areas to be worked to meet "public expectations, habitat composition and deer populations."

The complete deer management plan can be found online at:
http://www.agfc.com/hunting/deer/deerplan_revision.aspx.

Top outdoorsman towns named by Outdoor Life magazine

Mountain Home takes top honors

NEW YORK - Outdoor Life magazine ranks the top towns for hunters and anglers to live in its April 2008 issue, on newsstands this week. The magazine used extensive data to score 200 towns on available sporting opportunities and quality-of-life. The north Arkansas town of Mountain Home, population 12,215, took top honors on the magazine's "Best Places to Live" list.

This was the second time this year Mountain Home had been honored for its outdoor opportunities. Field and Stream magazine featured the town prominently in its February issue as the second best fishing town in America. Field and Stream staff identified what they believe to be the 20 best fishing towns in America. Towns were judged on the availability of year-round fishing opportunities, cost of living, fishing culture and outdoor-related economy, quality of life and diversions other than fishing.

Outdoor Life noted several of the same activities in its article. "There are a lot of outdoorsmen looking to put down roots in an area with more campsites than condos," says Todd Smith, Editor-in-Chief of Outdoor Life. "We went straight to facts when putting this list together to make sure we got the best options. With hard data backing our rankings I know sportsmen aren't going to be disappointed."



Mountain Home, scored the top spot on the list. Mountain Home is the eastern most town to break into the top 10, with a high percentage of Rocky Mountain locations dominating the list. Mountain Home's score was elevated by its close proximity to world-class warm and cold water fishing in the White River and Bull Shoals Lake and turkey, deer and bear hunting in the nearby Ozark National Forest. According to Outdoor Life, Mountain Home was also bolstered by a low cost of living, excellent schools and hospitals, and a vibrant retail economy.



According to Outdoor Life, the leading appeals for Mountain Home were world-class fishing for trophy largemouth and striped bass, walleye, slab crappies and whopper trout in the White River and nearby Bull Shoals and Norfolk lakes. Turkey, squirrels and whitetails-even timber ducks and black bear-occupy the Ozark National Forest.

Henry Seay, owner of Rim Shoals Resort, was interviewed for the story and said the first time he fished northern Arkansas's White River he knew he'd buy a house nearby. That was seven years ago. Seay still fishes the White River twice a week and adorns the walls of his business with evidence of his success, including mounts of brown trout pushing 30 inches.

The article stated that trout fishing in north-central Arkansas rivals any Rocky Mountain destination. “The White, Little Red and North Fork rivers boast hundreds of trout per mile thanks to the coldwater habitat below the region’s bottom-release dams. Mineral content in the water fuels growth rates. The North Fork River gave up a 38 1/2-pound brown trout two decades ago and the constellation of fly shops in the area are decorated with photos of 5- to 8-pound trout,” the article said. “Warmwater anglers have a playground west of town on Bull Shoals Lake, where walleye, bream, bass and crappie are caught in flooded timber and off rocky points. Norfolk Lake’s striped and hybrid bass reach 30 pounds of scrappy, reel-screaming action,” it stated.

Youth fishing derby planned at Lake Village State Park

LAKE VILLAGE - For anglers ages 15 and under, the annual Youth Fishing Derby at Lake Chicot State Park in Lake Village is scheduled Saturday, April 5. Participants should bring their own baits and poles – but only one pole per person. For more information, call Lake Chicot State Park at (870) 265-5480 or visit www.ArkansasStateParks.com.

Fishing in Arkansas is topic of ‘Outdoor Hotline’

CONWAY – It may be hard to imagine after last week’s snow storms, but springtime fishing is just around the corner. During its periodical AETN Outdoor Hotline, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will be talking about fishing for fun and food.

A crew of AGFC fisheries biologists, wildlife officers and license personnel will be in the AETN studios to take calls beginning at 7 p.m. on March 27.

“We’ll be focusing on topics such as the best places and times to fish, best baits and a whole lot more,” said Steve “Wildman” Wilson, AGFC public affairs coordinator. “Make sure you tune in and give us a call during the show,” Wilson added.

Just call (800) 662-2386 to ask questions, or e-mail questions to outdoors@aetn.org.

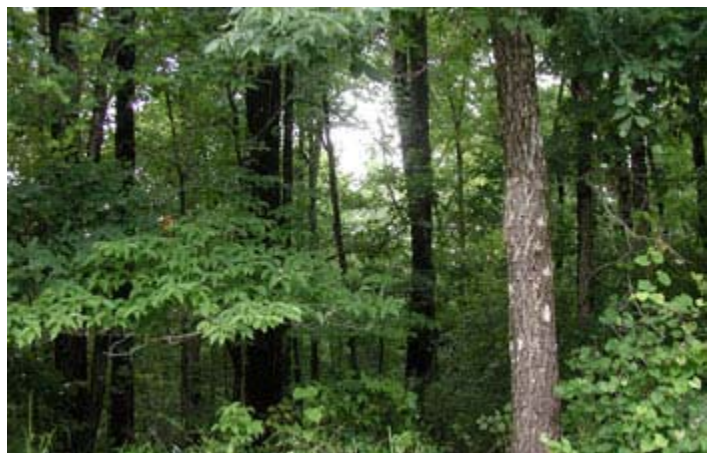


GreenTrees conference highlights beneficial landowner program

BRINKLEY - Delta landowners who are interested in creating additional economic and environmental value on their acres through reforestation are encouraged to attend The GreenTrees Conference, scheduled for April 2, at the Brinkley Convention Center.

The GreenTrees Conference in Brinkley will cover a variety of topics, including conservation provisions in the 2008 Farm Bill, an overview of all currently available financial opportunities from Arkansas conservation programs, an update on the demand for carbon and biomass supplies from new reforestation versus existing forestry, and details of the GreenTrees program, including financial incentives, all income opportunities, and its silviculture and establishment practice.

Conference presenters include Conservation, Fish and Wildlife and GreenTrees representatives. The Landowner Conference will begin at 9 a.m., adjourn at 3:30 p.m. and include lunch. Limited seating is available.



The GreenTrees program combines fast-growth cottonwood trees with an identical number of slower growing mixed hardwoods. This unique inter-planting is also an acceptable option in USDA's Conservation Reserve Program. Landowners enrolled in GreenTrees and CRP, for example, receive all of GreenTrees' income opportunities in addition to and independent of annual CRP payments.

Advance cash payments per acre provide immediate first-year income and help pay for necessary treeplanting costs. Dense and fast-growing trees created from GreenTrees produce higher quality, verifiable carbon credits, a commodity that is in growing demand, and GreenTrees sells those commodities directly.

With fast-growing cottonwood trees, wildlife habitat develops quickly in the first few years, providing landowners the opportunity to lease their acres for hunting rights and enjoy the land for their own benefit.

This unique land option also provides more leisure time for landowners. Landowner participation simply requires watching your trees and investment grow together. New reforestation efforts have taken shape through a number of government programs, such as CRP. The addition of carbon-based income and other incentives from GreenTrees are designed to tip the economic scales for landowners and accelerate the healthy landscape restoration of pastures, marginal farmland and retired crop acres for the long term. GreenTrees is committed to reforestation at a scale necessary to return the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley to previous levels of high biological diversity and value.

For more information on the conference or to RSVP, please call 662.754.6905 or email Doreen@tktpublications.com. For more information visit www.green-trees.com or call 501-371-TREE (8733).

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:

Spotted Skunk, Weasel Hunting: Closed.

Snow Goose Conservation Order: Feb. 4-April 27

Spring Turkey:

Zones 1, 2, 3, 4B, 5, 5B, 6, 7, 7A, 8, 9, and 10 - April 12-May 2

Zones 1A, 4, 4A, 5A and 9A - April 12-25

Zone 17 - April 5-27, 2008

Spring Turkey Youth Hunt:

Zones 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 4B, 5, 5A, 5B, 6, 7, 7A, 8, 9, 9A and 10 - April 5-6

Zone 17 - March 29-30

Furbearers:

Coyote trapping Aug. 1-March 31.

Beaver, muskrat, nutria trapping Nov. 17-March 31.

Raccoon day or night hunting Sept. 1-March 31.

Raccoon night hunting July 1-Aug. 31.

Muskrat, nutria and beaver hunting Sept. 1-March 31.

Badger, spotted skunk and weasel hunting is closed.

Projected opening dates for the upcoming 2008-09 deer hunting season.

Archery - Oct. 1

Muzzleloader - Oct. 18

Modern Gun - Nov. 8

Coming up in the outdoors

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

March 20 - Toad Suck Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, sponsor meeting, The Old Gin in Conway. For more information call Craig Hilburn at (501) 837-1524 or email at chilburn@ducks.org.

March 20 – Poinsett County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, sponsor meeting, Trumann Country Club. For more information call Chris Gairhan at (870) 530-2899 or email at cgairhan@yahoo.com.

March 22 – Crooked Creek Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Comfort Inn in Harrison. For more information contact: Steve Jackson at (870) 365-9797 or by email at stjackson1@ritternet.com.

March 22 - 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 Falconry."

March 22 – Flatland Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Southland Greyhound Park. For more information contact: Jackie Dixon at (870) 732-1484.

March 22 – Kings River Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, American Legion Post 137 in Huntsville. For more information contact: Joe Norman at (724) 910-9366 or by email at

droptine_trophy_guide_service@yahoo.com.

March 22 – Ouachita River Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Malvern Senior Adult Center. For more information contact: Mark Badgewell at (501) 844-5044.

March 22 – Ozark Ridge Runners Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Baxter County Fairgrounds in Mountain Home. For more information contact: Bob Tedder at (870) 491-7484.

March 25 – Hot Springs Village Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, membership meeting, Coronado Center in Hot Springs Village. For more information call Debbie Atchison at (501) 922-7670 or email at debrasueatchison@aol.com.

March 27 – Rice n' Wings Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, sponsor meeting, Ridgepointe Country Club in Jonesboro. For more information call John Hardin at (870) 268-2449 or email at john.hardin@morganstanley.com.

March 27 – AETN Outdoor Hotline, 7 p.m. Topic of the hotline is Fishin' for Fun and Food. Call (800) 662-2386 to speak with AGFC fisheries biologists, wildlife officers and license personnel about the best places and times to fish, best baits and more.

March 28 – Holland Bottoms Limbhangars Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, First Baptist Church in Cabot. For more information contact: Jack Young at (501) 680-6028 or by email at hjyoung66@aol.com.

March 28 – Hogskin County Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation meeting, Hampton High School Cafeteria. For more information contact: Keith Coleman at (870) 798-4084 or by email at kcoleman@sat-co.net.

March 29 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Calling All Turkeys."

March 29 – Little Red River Spring Cleanup. Participants should meet at the Little Red Fly Shop located at the Swinging Bridg around 8 a.m. to get river area assignments and collection bags. All the "collectibles" should be returned to the shop about noon for proper disposal. If you have a boat, please bring it or plan to use it. The Little Red River Action Team chapter of Trout Unlimited will provide free lunch for all the workers at the pavilion in JFK Park between noon and 1 p.m.

March 29 – Twin Lakes Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, membership meeting, Big Creek Country Club in Mountain Home. For more information call Shane Williams at (870) 421-5746 or email at shaneawilliams@eaton.com.

March 29 - Greenbrier Gobblers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation-Hunting Heritage Banquet and Art Auction at the Greenbrier Events Center in Greenbrier. Doors open at 6 p.m. For more information call Dave Smith (501) 335-7240.

March 31 - Crawford County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, sponsor meeting, The Light House Restaurant in Fort Smith. For more information call David Martin at (479) 474-6334 or email at huntnduc@yahoo.com.

April 5 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Turkey Season Forecast."

April 5 - Free Men's Wild Game Dinner at 6 p.m., Central Baptist Church, 5200 Fairway Avenue, North Little Rock, Jon Paul Moody of Harvest Ministries will be the speaker. For more information call (501) 771-1125.

April 12 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Lookin' for Lunkers."

April 13 - Arkansas Catfishing Association "First" Tournament at Lake Dardanelle in Russellville at the State Park weigh-in pavilion. 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, contact ACA president James Freeman of Pocahontas at (870) 810-3294 or by email at big_vato98@yahoo.com, or Lee Fields of Russellville at (479) 331-0399 or by email at leefields@centurytel.net, or Ben Purtle of McRae at (501) 268-7263 or by email at benpurtle@yahoo.com.

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

April 18-19 – The seventh annual Great Cotter Trout Festival will celebrate trout fishing on April 18-19 in the Big Spring Park in Cotter. It will feature trout fishing programs, the popular "kids fishing hole," exhibits, arts and crafts, and great food and entertainment for the whole family. The festival opens at noon, April 18 and runs into the evening barbeque dinner with entertainment. The festival opens at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 19, which is Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Appreciation Day and will conclude with an evening fish fry with entertainment. For more

information call (870) 435-6144.

April 19 – Old Fort Chapter of the Friends of the NRA will host a fund-raising banquet at the Fort Smith Civic Center. Doors open at 5 p.m. For more information call Howard Robinson at (479) 928-5659. Money raised goes to education and range development. Programs such as Youth Hunter Education Challenge are funded by this program.

April 24 – Poinsett County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, ladies wine tasting party, Sidelines Bar and Grill in Trumann. For more information call Kimberly Stewart at (870) 483-1774 or email at duckdaddystew@yahoo.com.

April 29-30 – Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Youth Expo at Lake Sylvia in Perry County, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information or to sign up a fifth-grade class, contact Eric DeVries at (501) 223-6402 or efdevries@agfc.state.ar.us or Mendy Boyles at 501-821-6884.

May 2 – Scout Night at the Travelers game at Dickey-Stephens Park in Little Rock. AGFC fish tank and Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs truck will be on display at the game. The first 500 kids will get a free keychain light. For more information, contact the Traveler's office at (501) 664-1555 or email at travs@travs.com.

May 3 - Johnson County Razorduck Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, sponsor meeting, Johnson County Fairgrounds in Clarksville. For more information call Cheryl Feikema at (479) 754-3924 or email at cherdene@suddenlink.net.

May 8-9 - Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Youth Expo at the Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center in Fort Smith, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information or to sign up a class, contact Kelly Mulvihill at (479) 452-3993 or kjmulvihill@agfc.state.ar.us.

May 10 - Arkansas Catfishing Association Tournament at the Arkansas River in North Little Rock at the Alltel Arena access. 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, contact ACA president James Freeman of Pocahontas at (870) 810-3294 or by email at big_vato98@yahoo.com, or Lee Fields of Russellville at (479) 331-0399 or by email at leefields@centurytel.net, or Ben Purtle of McRae at (501) 268-7263 or by email at benpurtle@yahoo.com.

May 13 – North Little Rock Chapter of Ducks Unlimited meeting, Hooter's in North Little Rock. For more information call Pat Mahan at (501) 743-6154 or email at pmahan000@centurytel.net.

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

June 7 – Marion Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, Motorcycle Poker Run, Barton Ag Center. For more information call David Jett at (901) 848-9720 or email at jfastlog@comcast.net.

June 7 - Arkansas Catfishing Association Tournament at Lake Norfolk at the Gamaliel Access. For ACA members: rod and reel, catch and release, and alive and well. Launching behind the Highway 101 Grocery and Bait and sponsored in part by the Lake Norfolk Chamber of Commerce. For an ACA application form, constitution and bylaws, local conditions and information along with the rules and regulations, contact ACA president James Freeman of Pocahontas at (870) 810-3294 or by email at big_vato98@yahoo.com, or Lee Fields of Russellville at (479) 331-0399 or by email at leefields@centurytel.net, or Ben Purtle of McRae at (501) 268-7263 or by email at benpurtle@yahoo.com.

June 10 – Deadline for application for AGFC conservation scholarships. Considering a career in conservation? Many fields of study can lead to a career in conservation. Education in law enforcement, fisheries management, wildlife management, public relations, environmental education and interpretation and many other fields is always a benefit to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. The Conservation Scholarship Program uses funds from the sale of conservation license plates to let students reach their potential and create tomorrow's conservation professionals. Minimum Requirements: Applicants must be Arkansas high school seniors or Arkansas college undergraduates pursuing a career in the field of natural resources conservation with a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (4.0 scale) the first year. A 3.0 GPA will be required thereafter, beginning with 2009 fall semester renewals. Applicants must not have received a full scholarship or grant from another source. Only resident students paying in-state tuition may apply. Selections are based purely on merit, without discrimination to race, sex, religion, age, color or national origin. Minorities are strongly encouraged to apply. Completed applications must be postmarked by June 10, 2008, for the fall semester and by February 15, 2008, for the second semester. Successful applicants will be notified by July 15, 2008. Application forms and instructions may be downloaded at <http://www.agfc.com/education-class/programs/conservation-scholarship-program.aspx>.

June 19 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting.

July 26 - Arkansas Catfishing Association (ACA) Tournament at Bull Shoals (night) 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, contact ACA president James Freeman of Pocahontas at (870) 810-3294 or by email at big_vato98@yahoo.com, or Lee Fields of Russellville at (479) 331-0399 or by email at leefields@centurytel.net, or Ben Purtle of McRae at (501) 268-7263 or by email at benpurtle@yahoo.com.

Sept. 20 - Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Youth Expo at the Forrest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center in Jonesboro, For more information or to sign up a class call Shaun Merrell at 870-933-6787 or email at atscmerrell@agfc.state.ar.us.

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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