



[Education](#)



November 30, 2005

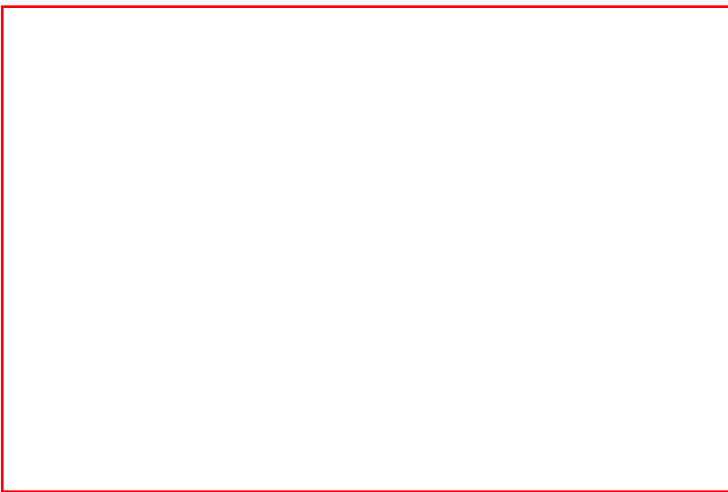
[| Back to Index |](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [License Info](#)
- [Rules and Regulations](#)
- [Services](#)
- [Quick Links](#)

Navigate:

Congressional legislation brings minimum flow to Arkansas' world-famous trout fisheries

FLIPPIN -Through the efforts of congressmen John Boozman and Marion Berry, as well as former Arkansas Game and Fish Commission chairman Forrest L. Wood, language in the Energy and Water Appropriations Act for FY06 will move White River Minimum Flow toward implementation on the White and North Fork rivers, pending completion of an environmental impact study due for completion in July 2006.



During a press conference today in Flippin, the group thanked all the Arkansas Game and Fish Commissioners and staff, especially those involved early in the process, for a team effort resulting in a major win for Arkansas. The bill, which passed the House Nov. 9 by a vote of 399-17, will modify the operation of the lakes to include water storage to improve tailwater trout fisheries on the White and North Fork rivers, and includes language to provide for construction of a fish hatchery at Beaver Dam.

The White River minimum flow issue is an old one, dating back nearly half a century when trout were stocked in the White River below Bull Shoals Dam and the North Fork River below Norfork Dam as a replacement for the native warmwater fishery wiped out by the dam's cold-water release system.

Bull Shoals and the other dams of the White River system were built for flood control and power generation. Ensuing years have brought a recreational trout fishing industry to Arkansas that has grown to international renown, bringing with it millions of dollars to the Arkansas economy.

When water flows are nonexistent, multiple problems arise - low food production (chiefly aquatic insects), habitat destruction, difficult small boat navigation and increased water temperatures. When there is no generation or flood release, only water that leaks through the dam reaches the river. What the trout fishery needs is an adequate minimum flow for temperature control, food production and angler access.

Adequate minimum flow is the release of water through the dam when no hydropower is being generated and no floodwater is being evacuated. Minimum flow would maintain a small flow in the river (greater than what exists) from which power would be generated even if there were no demand for peak power. Adequate minimum flow releases are designed to sustain the tailwater fishery when low-flow conditions occur after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Southwestern Power Administration normally stop water releases. The improved trout habitat resulting from the adequate minimum flow releases will more closely resemble a natural trout stream and river flow conditions before the dams were built. Trout food producing areas also will be enhanced and expanded.

While the physical effects on anglers fishing the rivers won't be dramatic, adequate minimum flow will have a much more dramatic effect on a trout fishery already considered among the best in the world. Studies by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and trial runs implementing minimum flow unequivocally demonstrated the environmental improvements to the tailwater ecosystem and the trout fishery that could be achieved under very modest increases in minimum flow. After much study by the Corps of Engineers, minimum flow has been determined to be technically sound, environmentally acceptable and economically justified.

According to Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Director Scott Henderson, Congress recognized the tremendous benefits to be derived environmentally and economically from improved river flows. "They were sensitive to avoiding significant impacts to other lake uses, including hydropower. We will continue to work with the Corps of Engineers and Southwestern Power Administration in the spirit of cooperation as we move forward on this important issue," Henderson said.

Wildlife officers give special deer hunt to handicapped



OZARK - On a cool, crisp November weekend, eight physically disabled hunters were able to take part in an Arkansas tradition.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission wildlife officers from seven of the state's 12 enforcement division districts nominated a physically disabled hunter to participate in a hunt at Contran Corporation, a privately owned recreational resort nestled in the Ozarks of northwest Arkansas. All of the hunters harvested a doe over the three-day hunt.

This special hunt began seven years ago when Contran Corporation manager, David Kinney, called Arkansas Game and

Fish Commission wildlife management division and asked for help with the overpopulation of doe on the 3,200-acre property. Contran was given extra permits to harvest the doe.

AGFC wildlife officer Lt. Charles Bonner knew Kinney from working in the surrounding district and suggested that Contran and the AGFC host a physically disabled hunt with some of the permits. "This all came about because the private land owner and wildlife officers had a working relationship," Bonner said. "We cannot express how much we appreciate the land owner for his cooperation with these hunts."

The Fraternal Order of Police Wildlife Officers Lodge 41 and the Arkansas Wildlife Officers Association also assisted the hunt by donating \$600 to help three of the families with travel and lodging expenses

This was the first time for most of the hunters to have a chance to harvest a deer. Only one had harvested deer before an ATV accident left him paralyzed.

"Under normal circumstances a lot of physically disabled hunters will not have the opportunity to harvest deer, " Bonner said. "This hunt helps the landowner control the population and in return, provide a safe, quality hunt for physically disabled people.

Shawn Bonner, 19, of Walnut Ridge, harvested his first doe, weighing 125 pounds, during the hunt.

Shawn was injured in a four-wheeler accident in May this year. The accident left him a quadriplegic. "This feels wonderful," Shawn said. "You dream of coming to a place like this and getting the opportunity to hunt.

The hunters, along with their guide and their parent or guardian, set up in blinds on the property and waited for the right moment. After a harvest, Contran employees field dressed, collected biological data, checked, tagged and packed the deer meat for the hunters to transport home.

The hunt is more than just trying to keep the deer population under control.

"We would rather see the deer go to someone who has never harvested a deer or had the opportunity to shoot a deer," he said. "To see their smile brings a great deal of enjoyment to us."

Seasonal trout stocking returns to West Memphis

WEST MEMPHIS - For the second year in a row, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Urban and Community Fisheries Program is partnering with the West Memphis Parks and Recreation Department to bring trout fishing to east Arkansas.

Three years ago, the AGFC kicked off the urban trout program in Little Rock. That initial program was so successful that it was offered in other cities around the state.

The program starts with trout fishing clinics, according to Christopher Racey of the AGFC's Family and Community Fisheries Program. "We will host a beginner fishing clinic on Thursday, Dec. 1 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Eugene Woods Civic Center in West Memphis" Racey said. "The first 50 children 15 and under that attend the clinic will receive a certificate for free rods and reels at Saturday's event," he added. There is no cost for the trout clinic.

The trout derby will take place on Saturday, Dec. 3 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the West Memphis City Park Pond in the Tilden Rogers Sports Complex. There will be door prizes and gifts for participants.

The program is an effort by the AGFC to provide inner city children with the opportunities to explore nature outside of city sidewalks and rain filled ditches. In just the first year of the program, about 1,000 children in Little Rock experienced first hand the pure excitement of trout fishing on just the first day of the stocking.

The West Memphis pond will be restocked monthly through late March, according to the AGFC's Family and Community Fisheries biologist Clifton Jackson. "This put and take fishery will provide convenient and exciting outdoor recreational opportunities for families and friends in eastern Arkansas," Jackson said. "The AGFC fisheries division is committed to ensuring that ample fishing opportunities will be presented at this location all winter long. Our Jim Hinkle/Spring River Hatchery will bring a fresh supply of adult rainbow trout about every three to four weeks throughout the winter months," he explained. "Please bring your own gear and plenty of bait as these fish normally provide plenty of winter time action," he added.

A fishing license is required for persons 16 years of age or older to fish and a trout permit is required for anglers 16 and over to harvest trout. There will be a five fish limit of trout.

For more information on the trout program, call the AGFC fisheries division at 501-223-6371.

Related Links:

[Home](#) | [Site Map](#) | [License Info](#) | [Rules & Regs](#) | [Services](#) |

AGFC Logo

Education

AGFC Logo

November 30, 2005

[| Back to Index |](#)

[Home](#)

[Site Map](#)

[License Info](#)

[Rules and](#)

[Services](#)

[Quick Links](#)

Navigate:

16 permit winners to participate in December elk hunt

COMPTON - Sixteen Arkansas hunters will be in the rugged Buffalo River country seeking elk Dec. 5 through Dec. 9. They are the winners among over 9,000 Arkansans who applied for the free permits this year.

There will also be elk hunting on some private lands in the area in Newton, Boone and Carroll counties.

There is a quota of five elk for the private land hunt, with permits issued through a different process. The period for applying for both types of elk permits ended earlier this year.

The elk hunting will be on public lands of the Buffalo National River and the AGFC's Gene Rush Wildlife Management Area, as well as adjacent private lands within Elk Zones 1 through 4.

The closely monitored limited permit hunt is part of Arkansas's elk restoration success story.

Elk were native to Arkansas but were wiped out more than a century ago by land clearing and by settlers using them for food. In 1981, the late Hilary Jones of Pruitt (Newton County) led an effort to bring the big animals back to Arkansas. Over several years, 112 elk were imported, mostly from Colorado but a few from Nebraska. They have increased to an estimated 450 elk, with limited hunting since 1998 helping to keep their numbers within the capacity of the land along the Buffalo River.

Of the 20 permits authorized each year for public land hunting, two are issued through fund-raising activities of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, with most of the proceeds returned to Arkansas for elk program work. Applications for the other 18 permits are free, as are the permits themselves, but many hunters support the program by sending along donations designated for elk project work. These donations do not improve a hunter's chance of winning a permit.

On the private land hunt, applicants for permits must first obtain written permission of a landowner who owns land within the private land zone. These permits cost \$35.

Youth Elk Hunt Permit Winner:

* Cole Ellison, Winslow, Zone 3

December Bull Elk Hunt Permit Winners:

* Kenneth Oliver, Rosston, Zone 1

* Brian Smoke, Bismarck, Zone 2

* William Smith, Texarkana, Zone 4

December Antlerless Elk Hunt Permit Winners:

* Larry Fletcher, Timbo, Zone 1

* Leslie Johnson, Mammoth Spring, Zone 1

* Mark Zimmerman, North Little Rock, Zone 1

* Edgar Hill, Warren, Zone 2

* Gerald Yanker, North Little Rock, Zone 2

* Paula Scott, Waldron, Zone 2

* Kevin Sears, Jacksonville, Zone 3

* Manny Sepulveda, Rogers, Zone 3

* Ronnie Doyle, Diaz, Zone 3

* Celeste McCollum, Alma, Zone 4

* Claude Glen McCool, Prattsville, Zone 4

* Charles Gann Sr., Clinton, Zone 4

Presentation on ivory-billed scheduled at Hot Springs



HOT SPRINGS - The Nature Conservancy of Arkansas and the City of Hot Springs are hosting a presentation on the recent rediscovery of the ivory-billed woodpecker in the Big Woods of east Arkansas.

The free event, which takes place at 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2, in Room 207 of the Hot Springs Convention Center, will feature presentations by

Hot Springs resident Gene Sparling, whose initial sighting led to the search and confirmation of the bird. David Luneau, a professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock who captured a video of the ivory-billed, and Scott Simon, the director of the Conservancy in Arkansas, will also be present.

"We've given ivory-billed presentations around the U.S. - from Seattle, Wash., to Washington D.C.," Sparling said. "It's going to be nice to talk to folks from my hometown. This is an amazing story of what people working together can achieve through conservation, and I'm always excited to share it."

Sparling said he will give a detailed account of his initial sighting, and added that Luneau will show and discuss his video during the presentation.

While kayaking through the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in February 2004, Sparling spotted an ivory-billed woodpecker. A few days later, two experts who'd come to investigate the incident confirmed Sparling's report when a bird flew in front of them in what they both described as an "unmistakable sighting of an ivory-billed."

Within weeks, The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology were leading what would become the largest team ever assembled to search for a rare bird. During the 14-month search, the team produced 16 sightings by 18 individuals, Luneau's video and dozens of sound recordings that researchers believe to be those of the ivory-billed. The best evidence was submitted to the journal of *Science*, a peer-reviewed publication, which published the paper online on April 28, 2005, the day the research team announced their findings, and again as the publication's June cover story.

And recently, after extensively reviewing evidence of the ivory-billed woodpecker's continued existence in Arkansas, the Bird Records Committee of the Arkansas Audubon Society voted to change the status of the bird in Arkansas from "extirpated" to "present."

The winter 2005-06 search for the ivory-billed, which began in November, involves some 30 full-time searchers and dozens of volunteer searchers. This year, agencies and organizations such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission and Audubon Arkansas, are playing integral roles in the search for the ivory-billed. More information is available online at www.nature.org/ivorybill and at www.agfc.com.

| [Page 1](#) | [Page 2](#) | [Page 3](#) |

Related Links:

[Home](#) | [Site Map](#) | [License Info](#) | [Rules & Regs](#) | [Services](#) |