



*The Black Bass Program was established to direct specific attention to Arkansas' most sought-after game fish: largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted (Kentucky) bass, collectively. The primary purpose of the program is to enhance black bass fishing opportunities for anglers through stockings, population monitoring and research, habitat improvement, and tournament assistance.*

### **July-Sept 06**

The Black Bass Program (BBP) stayed busy this Summer with numerous projects and activities that included: planting native aquatic vegetation at Bull Shoals and Greeson, attending meetings with the Arkansas Bass Federation (ABF) and Arkansas Bass Association (ABA), assisting bass tournaments on the White River, Arkansas River, and Lake Hamilton, assisting with fish population sampling at Cox Creek Lake and Crooked Creek, constructing tournament live-release trailers for Dardanelle and Greers Ferry, and assisting with a trash clean-up on the Arkansas River.

### **Habitat Improvement**

This summer, we were able to travel to Bull Shoals and plant approximately 1,000 plants on two different occasions. Last years plants seemed to be responding very well inside of our large  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre pens that we built last fall. This ongoing project is showing signs of success and we are getting closer to our goal of establishing large plant colonies that will fragment and spread seeds throughout the lake.



American pondweed spreading in pen at Bull Shoals

We also were able to travel to Greers Ferry and Greeson to conduct additional water willow plantings and evaluations. The BBP tried a new technique for establishing water willow on Lake Greeson and Greers Ferry this spring. The new technique involves taking water willow cuttings and laying them out in shallow water while rolling wire over the top of them and weighing down the fencing with rocks. The water willow is stimulated to produce roots at its nodes where it had been cut and will quickly root into the substrate. On Lake Greeson, after only two and a half weeks, the plants had rooted and started growing upward through the wire. It only took 14 days for the water willow cuttings to establish in Greers Ferry. We will begin using this new technique extensively in 2007 at Bull Shoals and Greeson, and at Greers Ferry with the volunteer help from local bass angler clubs.



Water willow cuttings taking root at Greers Ferry

## Tournament Assistance

The BBP assisted with the care and distribution of fish caught during three bass tournaments this summer including benefit tournaments at Batesville on the White River and at Little Rock on the Arkansas River for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. The BBP also assisted with the FLW Outdoors' (BFL Arkie Division) season ending tournament at Lake Hamilton.



We have also been working to complete a couple of tournament live-release trailers that will be located at Lakes Dardanelle and Greers Ferry. These two trailers are very similar to the ones we have available at Hot Springs, Hope, and Mountain Home.

Lake Dardanelle State Park has had a very nice weigh-in facility for several years that attracts a large number of tournaments each year. This new trailer will help provide a means for fish to be spread out to different areas of the lake rather than being stockpiled on the lower end of Lake Dardanelle. The Arkansas River Valley Fishermen Association is to be commended for their generous donation of \$500 to the BBP towards the construction of this new live-release trailer.

Greers Ferry is soon to be the new home of a weigh-in facility that is the product of a cooperative project

between the Corps of Engineers, the AGFC, and local bass club members. It is located at the Devil's Fork access area (below).



New tournament weigh-in facility at Greers Ferry

All the local anglers that volunteered their time and materials are to be commended for their hard work in constructing this new weigh-in facility.

The new Greers Ferry Lake live-release trailer will be kept at the new facility and used to recover and re-distribute tournament caught bass to various areas on the lake. The Greers Ferry Lake Bass Masters, Greers Ferry Anglers #1, and Greers Ferry Anglers #2 bass clubs are to be commended for their generous donation of \$500 each to the BBP towards the construction of this new live-release trailer.

### **Fish Sampling**

The BBP assisted District 8 Biologists Stuart Wooldridge and Brett Hobbs with a fish population sample on Cox Creek Lake in Grant County.

We also assisted Stream Biologist, Jeff Quinn, and District 2 Biologists, Ken Shirley and Stan Todd, with a mark-recapture electrofishing study on Crooked Creek in north central Arkansas.



Electrofishing on Crooked Creek

### **Agency Assistance**

We assisted with a litter clean up on the Arkansas River in Little Rock/ North Little Rock prior to the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.) Legends tournament. This was a collaborative effort between the Arkansas Bass Association, Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department, and the AGFC. A dump truck load of trash was picked up from Alltel to Murray Park in just a few hours in an effort to clean up this section of the river (below).



***The ABA and AGFC are planning another clean up on the river on Saturday October 28<sup>th</sup> out of the North River Landing Access (Alltel) from 8am until noon.***