



TEXAS CHAPTER NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER NO. 39 - JUNE 2017
EDITOR - DALE BOUNDS

<http://www.nwtf.org/about/state/Texas>
<http://www.facebook.com/TexasNWTF>

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Passing on the Hunting Tradition . . .



Photo by Ben Stanford

See story on page 4

Our Mission:

**Dedicated to conservation of the wild turkey
and the preservation of our hunting heritage**

SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL RENDEZVOUS

5555 FINANCIAL PLAZA | SHREVEPORT

July 28-29, 2017 • Louisiana

Costume theme this year
will be *Medieval Times*

Registration Friday at 3 p.m.
Friday night greet at 6 p.m.



For more information or
registration please contact
your regional director

You will receive an itinerary in your welcome package



NWTF
Conserve. Hunt. Share.



From your Texas State Chapter President... **Craig White**

Hello fellow NWTF members!

It's an honor to reassume my position as your State Chapter President after taking a few months off to recover from heart surgery. To say the least, this year has been a heck of a ride so far, but I am nearing 100% again and have never felt

better!! I am looking forward to what the future holds for me and the National Wild Turkey Federation. I hope you all had time to squeeze in a little turkey hunting this spring. From the looks of my Facebook page, many of you harvested some very nice gobblers!! I was blessed with the opportunity to take my nephew Travis King on his first turkey hunt in Marble Falls. With a stroke of luck and a David Halloran box call, I was able to call in two very nice toms and we were able to double on our first morning hunt!! It was definitely a great time as we had just gone skydiving the day before!! What better way to bounce back from surgery. Those are the memories worth hanging on to!

January and February were filled with not only banquets, but awards for Texas!

Our Texas State Awards Banquet was held in College Station on January 21st, and we had a great turnout. Congratulations to all state level award winners! See the attached list and pictures of our award winners (pages 2-3). We look forward to hosting our next awards banquet and hope that you can make plans to attend! Look for details in our next newsletter.

February once again hosted our National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. As always, we had a great representation of delegates attend from Texas and we even brought back some awards! If you have never attended the National Convention, it is truly a sight to see as thousands of NWTF members gather to see the biggest NWTF show imaginable!! Go to nwtf.org and look for information on our next convention.

Our year as a state chapter is on a roll... We have released another big group of Eastern Wild Turkeys in East Texas as we continue to try and establish a healthy turkey population. If our efforts pay off, we will be able to take our children and grandchildren turkey hunting all over East Texas for years to come! I would like to extend a special thank you to Jason Hardin and our TPWD team for coordinating the catching, transportation, and releasing of these birds.

East Texas stays in the spotlight for a bit as we welcome new Regional Director Jackson Harris to our team. Jackson has a very strong background in the NWTF and is already making himself a huge asset to Texas. Help me in making him feel at home in our great state as he comes to us from Alabama. Find his write up in this newsletter and learn a little about Jackson!!

SCRR!! The next event we have coming up is our annual South Central Regional Rendezvous and this year's costume theme is Medieval Times!! This is a fun-filled gathering of members and



*Kneeling, left to right: Mike Shouse, Mitchell McManus, Marsha Hines, Lou Von Woglom, Tom Isaacs
2nd row: Stuart McManus, Gene T. Miller, Kelly Jacob, Aubrey Luce, Tammy Womack, Ken O'Rear,
Dr. Sam McManus, Dr. Bob Linder, Annie Farrell, Tim Webster, Robbi Vincent
3rd row: Brandon Jacob, Eddie Hines, Chris Womack, Barry Woods, Shawn Coleman.*

volunteers as we learn more about the NWTF as an organization, tricks of the trade on how to put on better banquets, and more importantly.... meet new friends that share the same interest!! This event will be held in Shreveport, Louisiana this year on July 28-29, 2017. Make sure to tweak your costumes to perfection as we will be judging for the best dressed! See the flyer in the newsletter for more information. Contact Regional Director Robbi Vincent if you are interested in registering. rvincent@nwtf.net

Your Texas State Board of Directors will meet June 24th and I look forward to updating each of you on our progress as we continue to leave our mark in 2017. Thank each and every one of you for your contribution and dedication to the National Wild Turkey Federation.

We would not be able to accomplish our mission without all of you!!

NWTF TEXAS

AWARDS DINNER AND CASINO NIGHT!

FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

2016 Best of the Best...

L.A. Dixon Award



Pineywoods L.A. Dixon, Outstanding Texas NWTF Chapter 2016 (from left to right) Dale Bounds, Gary Brock, Louie Short, James Morgan, Kathy Braden, President Richard Capps, Aubrey Luce, Claire Garrett; kneeling RD Robbine Vincent. Pineywoods Chapter Awards: Outstanding Texas Chapter L.A. Dixon Trophy, Highest Net Dollars Award, Highest Sponsors Membership Award, Best Wheelin' Sportsman Event (shared with April AWOL)



Dr. Sam Award, Brandon Jacob Volunteer of the Year and Dr. Sam McManus – Houston Chapter.



April AWOL – Tiffany Gleis, Million Dollar Club, Highest Net to Gross, Highest membership and Best Wheelin' Event.



Lance Gray – South Texas Volunteer of the Year.



Central and North Texas Volunteer of the Year, Peter Cornell.



Panhandle Volunteer of the Year Jennifer Ramply.



East Texas Volunteers of the Year, Chris and Tommy Womack, Justin Curry, Kyle Verner (not present).

2016 Texas State Awards Winners



Houston Chapter – Highest Net Income Left to Right – RD Mike Shouse, Mitchell McManus, Stuart McManus, Larry Noble, Dr. Sam McManus, Norm Wade, Lou Von Woglom, Steve Peters, Tom Grahamann.

HIGHEST GROSS INCOME

April Awol
Pineywoods Chapter
Alamo Chapter

HIGHEST NET INCOME

Pineywoods Chapter
April AWOL Chapter
Houston Chapter

HIGHEST NET TO GROSS

Houston Chapter
Pineywoods Chapter
Big Thicket Chapter

HIGHEST MEMBERSHIP

April AWOL
Pineywoods Chapter
Alamo Chapter

HIGHEST SPONSORSHIP

Pineywoods Chapter
April Awol Chapter
Northeast Texas Chapter

BEST JAKES

Alamo Chapter
Kaufman County Double
Beards Chapter
Pineywoods / April AWOL Chapters

BEST WITO

Northeast Texas Chapter WITO
Tri-County Chapter WITO

BEST WHEELIN

Pineywoods/April AWOL
(**2 awards with both names on it)

BEST OVERALL TEXAS CHAPTER FOR 2016 “L.A. DIXON AWARD”

Pineywoods Chapter
April Awol Chapter
Houston
Big Thicket Chapter
Alamo Chapter

MOST IMPROVED CHAPTER 2016

Hopkins County Longbeards Chapter

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Panhandle Region – Jennifer Ramply
Central and North Texas – Peter Cornell
South Texas Region – Lance Gray
East Teaxs Region – Justin Curry, Kyle Verner , Chris and Tammy Womack

THE DR. SAM MCMANUS AWARD

Brandon Jacob



Most Improved – Hopkins County Longbeards Pres. Dale Thompson, and committee member Judy Machen.



Best WITO Event – Northeast Texas Chapter, Dorothy and Dick McCarver.



Million Dollar Club – Linda Klecka, Alamo Chapter.

Experience the American Wild Turkey Year-Round

By Ben Stanford



For true turkey hunters, our season lasts but a few weeks. But the hunting, and learning of the species, can continue year-round with a camera. My interest in learning the behavior of America's largest game bird, the American Wild Turkey, is a year-round experience.

God's grace has allowed me all 4 species of North America's wild turkey. The Eastern, the Osceola in Florida, the Rio Grande in Texas, and Merriam's from the New Mexico mountains; plus, the Gould from deep within old Mexico, as well as the Oscillated species from the lower jungles of the Yucatan. The Grand, Super, and World Slam, right? Yea, big deal you might think. But, for those of us who live and breathe Turkey, we are of a different breed. The learning curve doesn't stop at the end of one's season. Nor, our personal quest of learning more of this most elusive creature.

I love nature photography, and thus, take time to hunt turkey year-round using photography. Photographing wild turkey in their natural settings can not only impart their seasonal behavior, but, also help learn their natural behavior year-round, which will make you a better hunter. On any given turkey hunt, congratulations, and no doubt, it's a great hunt to call in a Gobbler and take him with shotgun at 25 yards. However, it's their year's journey of learning their year seasonal behavior that can make you a better hunter. My photographic sessions are set up identical as if I were hunting in Spring. First, locate and find the birds. This could be your deer lease, National Forest, etc. Foremost and most important; is your setup! Cover yourself, and camera, tripod, long lens, and be completely camouflaged, head to toe. This is more tedious than only concealing yourself. But, take the time and set it up properly, preferably sun at your back. Calling in birds is no different than Spring hunting. Use your slate, box, or mouth call, even the old wing bone. Whichever you control the best according to wind and weather. Be very patient, don't move, listen at each pine needle hitting the ground, and at the first sound of a turkey, be it hen or



Photos by Ben Stanford

Tom, face yourself in that direction. Camera settings must be preset. My preference is auto ISO, F8, and 1/1000th of a second, and set to 10 frames per second. If your camera doesn't have these setting, set to 1/1000th second and use the best you have. It's horrible to get a great capture, only to find a blurred file, or their eyes closed or miss the strut drum and full fan scene. Focus on the eye or head by using the smallest spot metering focus your camera allows. When the birds come in, wait for that interactive moment. Something special, not walking or pecking bugs, but that moment when they go on alert, fight, go into full strut, or gobble. This will portray to your viewer a sense of something is about to happen. Photos can be taken with any camera. However, to get that quality shot of a lifetime, that no city dweller ever imagines, a long lens of 200-600 MM will bring them in, up close and personal. Questions? I look forward to assist in any way possible for our National Wild Turkey Federation.

Ben Stanford – bendstanford@gmail.

Research Update: Wild Turkey Research Texas

By Dr. Bret Collier

We have a pretty extensive update on all the turkey research over the past year in Texas. We have several projects that have wound down and several new projects that are just now coming online on a variety of topics. So, I am going to hit the highlights of several ongoing projects and provide a few updates on some new work we are initiating in Texas. It is an exciting time to be a turkey biologist working in Texas.

First, Texas A&M graduate student Luke Scroggs has finished all his field research and is completing his Master's thesis on the ecology and management of Rio Grande wild turkeys in the Cross Timbers region of Texas.

Louisiana State University graduate student's Jacob White and David Moscicki in collaboration with Texas Parks and Wildlife are continuing the research in the Oaks and Prairies region focused on Rio Grande wild turkeys in areas with different bag limits to look at whether any differences existed in survival or reproduction. Summarizing 2016, they captured 55 turkeys in 3 counties (Lavaca, DeWitt, and Jackson) and deployed 35 GPS units. Nesting activity occurred primarily between March 27 and July 16 and they documented a total of 18 initial nesting attempts and 9 re-nesting attempts. Nest success was low with 1 successful nest and an average nest incubation length of 14 days. During the 2017 trapping season, they captured 61 turkeys across six counties (Fayette, Caldwell, Lavaca, Jackson, DeWitt, and Gonzales) and deployed a 53 GPS transmitters (50 female, 3 male). To date they have documented 27 total nesting attempts (8 currently incubating, 18 failed, 1 successful hatch).

The statewide banding program in collaboration with Texas Parks



Rio Grande wild turkeys under drop net.

and Wildlife personnel is going strong. We are focused on capturing and banding male and female Rio Grande wild turkeys to better estimate harvest rates and to determine if we can use the rate of harvest, combined with the number harvested, to estimate what the population size of wild turkeys is in Texas. This spring, Texas Parks and Wildlife banded well over 1000 turkeys, so, keep your eyes open on those trail camera's for banded birds the next few years.

Overall, it has been an exciting time for the research and habitat management activities that the TPWD and NWTF supports here in Texas. We are thrilled to continue our research to better understand wild turkeys and improve habitat for future generations of turkey hunters.

Poteet Receives Wildlife Manager of the Year Award

In recognition of Micah Poteet's dedication to wild turkey research and management, he received the National Wild Turkey Federation's Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year Award at the 41st annual NWTF Convention and Sport Show.

"I am fortunate to be in a profession that enables me to engage in many activities I am passionate about, and [I am] very grateful and genuinely honored to have been selected for this recognition," said Poteet, a technical guidance biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). "I appreciate the efforts of the National Wild Turkey Federation to make this award available."

The Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year Award is named in honor of the former Georgia Department of Natural Resources wildlife chief for his leadership and the vital role he played in improving wildlife management. Kurz also was a principal figure in wild turkey trap-and-transect programs across North America.

Poteet, of Lufkin, Texas, began his career with TPWD in 1993 and participated in much of the early Eastern wild turkey restoration efforts in the state. His perspective provided guidance for the 21st century approach to restoration used in Texas today. His observations detected shortcomings in the old methods of habitat assessment and led to TPWD's new Eastern Wild Turkey Habitat Suitability Index.

"Micah has had a passion for the wild turkey and has championed Texas Parks and Wildlife efforts to restore this species to the forest in east Texas. He has been a working partner with the Texas NWTF and demonstrated a professional expertise". He also is spearheading new research efforts to examine the behavior of wild turkeys relative to the scale and season of fire in Texas. Last winter, researchers outfitted more than 80



TPW Commission Vice Chairman Ralph Duggins, NWTF Interim President Larry Noble, 2016 Joe Kurz Winner Micah Poteet, TPW Wildlife Director Clayton Wolf and TPW Executive Director Carter Smith.

Eastern Wild Turkeys with a combination of VHF and GPS transmitters to provide knowledge on habitat management recommendations for years to come. These 80 Eastern Wild Turkeys were released on the Angelina National Forest and data is being collected now to assist researchers in this study conducted by the University of Georgia and LSU .

"Micah's dedication to quality habitat needed by wild turkeys and other species is exemplary," said Becky Humphries, NWTF Chief Executive Officer. "His work has notably helped to advance Eastern wild turkey restoration and management in East Texas for present and future generations," she added.

Mid-South Director of Development Report



By Luke D. Lewis
NWTF Mid-South Director of Development
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I hope each of you reading our latest TX Chapter newsletter had a great spring turkey season. Some of my immediate family and a new hunter Judge Jeff Cox had a great opening weekend in Foard County harvestings several long beards. As I was considering some development thoughts to you as volunteers and partners, I could not help be coming back to a recent donation from one of your fellow Texas volunteers and TX State board member. I have tried to capture this Texas couple's spirit in "giving back" to NWTF and conservation.

I met T.W. and Claire Garrett at my first state board meeting in January of 2016 in Fredricksburg, TX. I was taken right off by his engaging personality and his forthright approach to philanthropic giving. T. W. and Claire by nature are giving people volunteering time for civic groups, nursing homes, their church, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (National BOD), and NWTF State board of director. They are first a team, both have a heart for helping people, and love giving back to their community and to conservation.

T.W. has given philanthropically to NWTF during recent years in an upper level capacity and he engaged me right off about how we could grow this program for Texas the focal landscapes found in our state. His goal was to find ways to leverage any dollar given to NWTF conservation projects and stretch his philanthropic gift to help our "Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt" efforts. As we continued future talks and visits we discussed how an upper level donation could help Texas. So at the end of 2016 calendar year he and Claire decided to make a restricted gift toward the Piney Woods Focal Landscape region in east Texas. With several grants through TPWD, NRCS, and USDA Forest Service Stewardship dollars we could assure the Garrett's that for every dollar given could be leveraged at a 3-4 to 1 match with their gift.

The Garrett's \$20,000 gift to NWTF as a 401 C3 was used to offset personal taxes in 2016 that would have been sent to the Federal Government after a timber sale conducted in 2016 on their land in Alabama. Once this gift was made at the end of the 2016 calendar year T. W. invited me to take some vacation time to join him in January

on a late deer season hunt in Alabama. Although I did not take a deer during the time, we were there spent several days reviewing his property and discussed his timber and wildlife plans to improve his habitat and landscape. There may be some future opportunity to consider restoring Long leaf pine to his property in Alabama after some future timber sales. This will improve habitat immediately for wild turkeys and deer, and with the use of fire the restored longleaf stand will never be out of turkey habitat. In the short term we discussed his current management strategy for helping wildlife on his land.

This example of establishing a friendship, developing a management strategy for timber and wildlife, coupled with a generous desire to support NWTF conservation efforts through a tax deductible donation is a perfect example of how NWTF can leverage our volunteer's dollars to help the wild turkey in the future. What a great example T. W. and Claire Garrett symbolize in giving back to something they care for deeply. If you're curious of how you can consider a year end monetary tax gift to NWTF contact our organization. You might want to cash, tangible personal property, securities, life insurance, revocable trusts, or through your Will upon death to support NWTF.

Please feel free to call (318-423-7777 cell) or email me (llewis@nwtf.net) to discuss your interest or people you know who have the ability to give philanthropically and desire to help our conservation efforts. Thank you all who support NWTF and make our organization special by providing your gifts of time, and your financial contributions that have made a real difference and allowed us to accomplish some great work together. So when you ask yourself why should I support NWTF "Do it for the Gobble!"



T.W. and Claire Garrett



South Texas

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So far 2017 is kickin' in the Southern Texas region! Waterfowl, deer and quail season ended with a bang; and we moved into a solid spring banquet season. Experienced chapters Houston, Alamo, Williamson County, Highland Lakes, Tri-County, and Lone Star continued their legacy by hosting rockin' banquets. Our Texas A&M chapter put on a great sporting clay event with the winning pair hitting 115 clays out of 120! My daughter teamed up and were out of the money, but had a great time. Gig 'EM!

And best of all, two new chapters hosted their first successful banquets.

Michael Page is the fearless leader of our new Texas A&M

Kingsville. Darrion Crowley, David Campbell, Austin Killam, Taylor Shirley, William Robert, Humberto Perotto and Kelley Wood rounded an awesome committee that put a great inaugural gig down in South Texas. Remember these names cause you can expect to see many of these folks across the state as several represent the next generation of game wardens and biologists!

Keith and DeAnna Saenger, Eddie and Marsha Hines, Mike



(Continued on page 16)

Texas Gun Calendar 2018

A reminder that we will be doing another Gun Calendar Raffle this year. This year they will again only be \$50 for all 52 weeks of guns!!! Drawing again using the Texas Lottery Pick 3 numbers on Wednesday evenings.

Please let your RD know how many you or your chapter would like to reserve before they are all gone. As of 5/25 already 850 of the 1000 were spoken for, so when they are printed they may all be gone!!!

If we have enough demand, we looking to do a second calendar set, but that is a risk you don't want to take.

Special thanks to Lee Hoffpauir for helping to underwrite our calendar this year.

And through his generosity, we are going to be able to raffle off a UTV later in this year donated by Hoffpauir Auto & Oudoors.



Drop by one of Hoffpauir's many hill country locations and say thanks!

SAVE THE
HABITAT.
SAVE THE
HUNT.



Photo Credit: Stephen Voelkel

East Texas Natives Project

East Texas Natives is seeking partners and collaborators to launch a locally-sourced native seed program in East Texas. Modeled after the largely-successful South Texas Natives, the project will focus on collecting, growing, and commercializing large scale supplies of seeds of important native plants for use in restoration projects. “Through this initiative, we hope to raise awareness of the importance of native plant communities to the region, their value as the basis of productive wildlife habitat, and as a critical component of a sustainable ecosystem,” said Forest Smith, Director of South Texas Natives and Texas Native Seeds.

Large scale availability of native seeds will provide landowners, agencies, and industry with a critical tool necessary to minimize the impact of past and future land disturbance. Robert Sanders, Director of Forest and Wildlife Management for the TLL Temple Foundation’s Boggy Slough Conservation Area is helping to spearhead the effort. “We are excited to see this program come to this part of the state. Locally-sourced native seeds are a valuable resource for private landowners. We look forward to seeing this program help landowners improve their ranch, timber, and pastureland, and support wildlife such as northern bobwhites and wild turkeys,” said Sanders.

Regionally-adapted sources of appropriate native seeds may be particularly useful for longleaf and shortleaf pine understory restoration initiatives, and for efforts to reseed and restore native

prairies to historic crop fields and non-native grass pastures.

The East Texas Natives Project is a collaborative effort, and it will only be successful with the partnership, contributions, and collective expertise of a wide range of East Texas constituents. The project will be spearheaded by the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute through its Texas Native Seeds Program. For more information about the East Texas Natives Project, please contact Forrest Smith, (361) 593-4525 or forrest.smith@tamuk.edu



North Texas

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As we all reflect upon a great Turkey season and we look to the next of season and the next hunt, I cannot help but think of this video with the words of the speaker.

And God looked down on his planned paradise and said, “Now that I have a caretaker...I need a protector.” So God made a Hunter. Someone who can feed people in times of famine, flood and drought, lands of infertile soil, ice and snow. Someone who will provide warmth and protection in the harshest of climates. Someone who will travel far from home to pursue food and materials that doesn’t grow from the earth. He must be cunning and brave and use the same steady hand to slay his food...as he extends to feed and clothe his family. A man who can protect his race with meat on their tables, furs on their backs, hides on their feet and walls...someone who will define himself as head of the food chain. So God made a Hunter.” –Author Unknown

We thank each and every volunteer for their personal efforts to preserve our hunting heritage. We all work tirelessly to Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt. Thank you for all you do. Look forward to seeing you all along the journey.

If you build it, they will come!



Winston Timber land, Nacogdoches County Eastern Wild Turkeys.

This is a 20-acre native Texas grass pasture with over 25 seed types located in the heart of our 3500 acres of pine timber.

We burn this pasture annually however the 3-5-foot dried Switchgrass remains standing. Feeling that it would both look better aesthetically and provide lower vertical habitat for insects to locate and then be consumed by turkeys we mowed this to ground level this year for the first time. Other grasses and flowers now better compete for sunlight with the Switchgrass cut providing more grazing choices for deer as well as the turkeys as you can see. We are also able to see them better and witness there socializing as well as them being able to better see any predator threats that may be present. This group stayed over 20 mins and seemed contented and relaxed throughout the stay.

Picture and writing by Paul Wood, 8:30 am on March 2, 2017



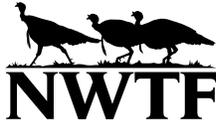
SAVE THE HABITAT. SAVE THE HUNT.



East Texas Report

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There's a moment when you're standing in the middle of a scenario that has been cut through mature planted pine trees just a few years away from harvesting for timber in the backwoods of south Alabama, where I grew up. The moment comes right after you sound off an owl hoot into the pre-dawn silence, or tap the box call just slightly while the fog slowly lifts off the well-worn ruts in the path in front of you. It's a moment when your middle tenses up a bit

and you hold a half-breath and use your ears to scan through the tall silhouettes of longleaf, slash, and loblolly that rise around you like church spires.

It's that moment when you know he's out there and he's about to holler back. He's about to sound off like a cannon blast and the reverberations are going to knock the morning chill off of your legs and the race will start. If you're lucky, you'll be in position and hunkered down by the time he decides to chopper down into the leaves beneath his roost like it was the MASH 4077th. He'll be coming right at you, if you've done every single thing correctly. Or maybe you'll do every single thing correctly and he'll strut the other direction because he's still the boss. But not right now, not in this moment, in this spring moment that I know well, you're ready and focused and he hasn't made a sound. But he's about to and you know it in your gut. This is the moment.

I'm new to Texas. I have a lot to learn and I'm going to make a lot of mistakes while I'm learning. I don't know where each and every chapter is located just yet, and I'm still figuring out how to order the necessary inventory for upcoming banquets. There's a lot I don't know. Just a few weeks ago, I packed up as much of my stuff as I could get into a Dodge 1500, leaving room for myself and my dog,

Loretta. I drove west 500 miles into this role as Regional Director for the National Wild Turkey Federation in East Texas knowing that I have a lot – a whole lot – to learn.

It is humbling and a great honor to be given the opportunity to work each day for a group of volunteers who I have watched and admired my entire life. Our volunteers are hard-working and fun-loving citizens of a country that they love. They give their time and treasures to something much larger than themselves or even their own family. Our volunteers are women and men who care about providing opportunities for generations of people they'll never meet and working to solve problems that they didn't create. Those are people that any man would be lucky to work among. That part, I don't have to learn. I've known that for a long time already.

I've never lived in a house that didn't have a frame of NWTF art hanging on the wall above my bed. I've never driven a truck that didn't have an NWTF volunteer decal on the back window. I can't remember a February when I didn't attend my local chapter Hunting Heritage Banquet or the NWTF Convention & Sport Show in Nashville, Tennessee. Organizations like the Boy Scouts of America and the National FFA Organization helped me pay for my degree from the University of Alabama and thanks to the NWTF Scholarship program, volunteers and supporters of wildlife and habitat conservation also helped send me to college. I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Community Development and studied on exchange at Oklahoma State University to earn a minor in Agricultural Education. I've previously served as a National Officer for the National FFA Organization, traveling the country and the world representing American agriculture as well as career and technical education. During my freshman year at Alabama. I served on the founding committee of the U of A collegiate NWTF chapter, and I've been a member of the Barbour County NWTF Chapter in Alabama from JAKES on up.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who have already been so welcoming to me here in East Texas. Your patience and optimism is deeply appreciated. I'm going to make mistakes, but I'm going to learn from each and every one. I'm going to work hard to serve the volunteers that have all been doing meaningful work in this part of the country for a long time, and I'm going to tear up the highways striving to recruit new hunters and volunteers into our community of conservationists. I look forward to meeting all of you very soon; it is an honor to be a part of this team.

There's a moment, you know. This is it.
I'll see you out there.

Texas Parks & Wildlife Spring Turkey Report



The 2017 spring turkey season has ended and Texas hunters reported 159 Eastern turkeys through TPWD's My Hunt Harvest App. Harvest reporting is down 15% from last season despite lots of early gobbling activity prior to opening day. It also isn't a

surprise to see harvest reporting drop somewhat considering TPWD closed all of the old physical Check Stations in 2016 and went exclusively to the harvest reporting app. Fortunately, harvest reporting through both TPWD's My Texas Hunt Harvest App and the TPWD website (www.tpwd.texas.gov/turkey) worked well again this year despite a few hiccups on opening day. Keep spreading the word about the new harvest reporting requirements through the My Texas Hunt Harvest App.

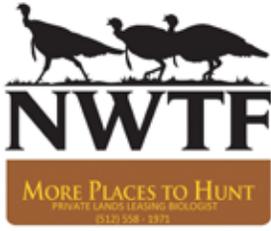
Rio Grande turkey hunters found a mixture of birds across the Rio Grande range. In some area, gobblers responded well to calling

and in others they didn't. Some area were covered up with Jakes and some saw only a few. Hunters in the south zone experienced good hunting early in the season, but then tailed off as hens became receptive to breeding. The north zone started off slow with lots of henned-up gobblers, but as hens began incubating eggs later in the season gobblers were more willing to come to the call. TPWD expects to have great carryover of mature toms going into the fall and 2018 spring season.

One general theme across the vast majority of the Rio Grande turkey range is that numbers are up considerably over the past few years. Another mild winter coupled with timely rainfall again this spring has once again set the stage for great nesting and brood-rearing cover, which should lead to another good year of recruiting young Rio Grande turkeys into the Texas population.

(Continued on page 16)

Private Land Leasing Program



By Terry Turney
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Well, what can I say, this has been an interesting period in my life and in Texas! Had a little glitch, doctor ordered, in my life in January. Far less than some of us' ordeals that we know, I now can't go through airports without alarming TSA or in Mexico having the Federales point guns at me because of the new titanium in my knee!

Enough of that, it's been a tough leasing season for me with the new knee and thousands of people moving to Texas each day, all right in my backyard here in Central Texas! I've lost potential properties and lost three established leases to development this year. My thanks goes out to the landowners that are sticking with the Program and continuing to lease to TPWD. Also, I'd like to thank the members and the Board for their support and encouragement of the Program and the Leasing Biologists. We will continue to chase leads on properties all over the State. If you all know of some good habitat or just a place to get in the woods, let one of us know and we'll check it out, track down the landowner and hopefully work something out!

Thanks to my compadres, our access acreage should increase this year, my lease acreage is comparable to last year. We have a few weeks to go so wish us luck and help out with those leads. We won't steal your honey hole but we'd like to lease the place next door! We try for 100 acres or more but will lease smaller places if there are other hunting spots within 30 minutes or so. The average lease runs TPWD around six dollars an acre but we've paid as much as twenty-two dollars an acre with the usual lease period running the first segment of the zone dove season, two months only, so great "Christmas" money to the landowner.

Panhandle Private Lands Hunting: Waterfowl is King!

By Shawn Coleman

I hope this update find my fellow NWTF'ers doing well as Spring unfolds across Texas. As many of you will remember, I represent the NWTF as the Private Lands Leasing Biologist based in Lubbock and I spend my time scouting and leasing land for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Private Lands Hunting Program. The



Program has been gaining traction with hunters over the past few years in the Panhandle, and I am proud to report this past hunting season saw high numbers of hunter success and involvement. This success is something NWTF can be proud of, as my position (as well as Terry Turney's in San Marcos and Tom Isaacs' in Ft. Worth) and the leases we acquire, would not be possible without the financial support of our NWTF Texas family. This past season, over 450 dove hunters used the private lands NWTF helped lease in the Panhandle, and the lands averaged 4 birds per hunter over both splits of the dove season. That average may seem low, but we all know how hard dove hunting is after the first few major cold fronts!

Quail hunters were able to access 6 newly leased quail hunting properties and we saw almost 300 quail hunter visits with an average of 2 birds taken per hunter. The quail leases started off slow, but the numbers of visits jumped as the season went on and,

almost assuredly, as word got out about their existence. Quail numbers had been in decline for the past decade or so with the drought, but their numbers were strong this year. TPWD surveys showed record high quail numbers across the state. With the return of the quail, the return of those who chase them is also increasing. I expect these leases to gain in popularity next year.

The real success story for private lands leases this past season in the Panhandle were the waterfowl leases. Although only 2 new leases were added, those 2 leases saw great hunter success. Almost 200 hunters visited the properties outside of Tahoka, and they averaged nearly 2 birds per hunter. Of note is the groups of hunters these lands attracted. Repeated visits by all-women groups from Amarillo and Midland not only helped spread the word about public waterfowl hunting near Lubbock, but also caught the eye of the producers of Lone Star Law. Keep an eye on your tv to see these women hunter groups taking full advantage of the newly leased properties. I've included a picture to show their ingenuity in taking advantage of flood damaged trees to build a rather large blind at one of the properties.

I'm sure I speak for Terry and Tom when I say 'thank you' for the support you have shown us and your assistance in allowing NWTF to be a proud sponsor and supporter of public hunting in Texas.

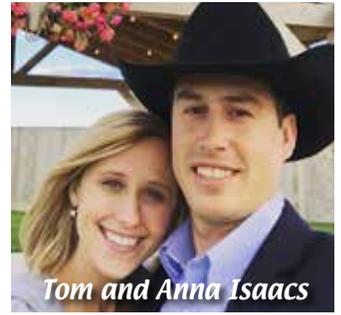
Isaacs named Private Lands Leasing Biologist

By Tom Isaacs

Texas Private Lands Leasing Biologist

Greetings NWTf'ers! My name is Tom Isaacs, and I am very excited to have begun working for NWTf in January as a Private Land Leasing Biologist based out of Fort Worth. I was raised on a commercial cow/calf ranch in Canadian, Texas where the Isaacs Family settled in the late 1800's. I attended Montana State University and worked as a professional guide after graduation, taking hundreds of clients from around the world on big game hunting and fly fishing trips on public lands in Montana. The years I spent working in the outfitting industry gave me an acute appreciation for the importance of public access and the necessity of getting youth in the field for the future of hunting. My wife Anna and I moved back to Texas in 2015 so she could finish her medical training and I could attend and complete the Texas Christian University Ranch Management Program. I am filling one of three Private Land Leasing Biologist positions which are supervised by Gene Miller, District Biologist for West Texas and Oklahoma. I joined Shawn Coleman and Terry Turney in the PLLB program which has been very successful in opening private lands to public hunting and is made possible through our partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife.

The past five months have been busy as I have been scouring North Texas for potential hunting leases for the 2017 hunting season. My primary source of success for leasing access has been to spread the word about the TPWD Public Hunting Program to groups of landowners, community groups, and local media outlets to create awareness of the need for public access in North Texas for future generations. I started with two leases that the PLLB team had put together last year. I have worked to expand around these by developing contacts and following leads for possible leases. I am proud to announce that we have acquired 7 new leases for the upcoming hunting season in North Texas. This effort would not have been possible without the support of NWTf and TPWD. I would like to thank each and every one of you for the warm welcome and opportunity that you have empowered me with to give back to Texas hunters. I look forward to meeting more of the NWTf flock and working to grow the public hunting program across region. I hope to see y'all in the field this fall!



Lone Star Land Steward Awards: *Texas NWTf is a proud sponsor*

This group of NWTf Biologists, Regional Directors and State NWTf leaders were in attendance on May 18th in Austin for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Lone Star Land Steward Awards 2017 Reception & Ceremony at the Four Seasons Hotel. The prestigious landowner recognition program recognizes exemplary efforts by Texans who restore vital woods and waters, help bring back diverse wildlife species ranging from rare species to popular game animals, share their knowledge with neighbors, and open their gates to youth groups and researchers. These awards are bestowed annually by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the non-profit Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation in partnership with the Sand County Foundation, headed by the family of Aldo Leopold, noted founder of wildlife management in North America.

Award recipients representing six ecologically diverse regions of the state were present during the annual banquet. The prestigious Leopold Conservation Award, the highest honor awarded in the program, was presented by the Sand County Foundation to the statewide award winner, Dixon Water Foundation, with ranches from northcentral Texas to the Trans-Pecos Region.

Started in 1996 by the TPWD Private Lands Advisory Committee, the Lone Star Land Steward Awards Program recognizes the important role private landowners play in the future of Texas natural resources by honoring them for their accomplishments in habitat management and wildlife conservation. Because more than 97 percent of Texas lands are privately owned or operated, private landowners are the key to effective habitat management across the state. Since the program's inception 21 years ago, over 200 landowners have been honored for conserving more than three million acres of fish and wildlife habitat.

"This year we will recognize properties around the state ranging in size from over 26,000 acres down to 50," said Justin



Photographed by Dan Johnson (not in photo)

Left to Right: Annie Farrell, Tom Isaacs, Gene T. Miller, Robbi Vincent, Terry Turney, Shawn Coleman, President Craig White and Melissa Vaughn.

Dreibelbis, director of TPWD's Private Lands and Public Hunting program. "These landowners and managers come from different backgrounds but what they all have in common is a love for the land and a desire to make it the best functioning system that it can be. The clean air, water, food and fiber that come from these properties is important to all Texans and we are honored to be able to recognize this group of land stewards for their efforts." "National Wild Turkey Federation is proud to be a Bronze Level Sponsor in Texas," said President Craig White of Nacogdoches. "We are so appreciative of our volunteers and the State Board of Directors for supporting this special recognition for landowners who are doing their part to "Save the Habitat" in Texas," he added.

West Texas District Biologist Report



By Gene Miller
District Biologist – Western Texas
(806) 803-0180 • gmiller@nwtf.net

Photos by Gene T. Miller, NWTF

Greetings and I hope everyone who reads this has had a great spring turkey season! We had another excellent year for ground-nesting birds with all the timely rains in 2016. With a good production year to build on, we could be setting up for another spectacular year for quail and wild turkeys in the West Texas region during 2017. We are hearing some reports of Eastern wild turkey production as well on restoration areas, but I'm sure that East Texas Biologist Dan Johnson and Jason Hardin, TPWD will elaborate more on that.

NWTF's Save the Habitat. Save The Hunt. - NWTF's national habitat and hunting heritage initiative continues to move forward in the Lone Star State with habitat acres accruing in some of your NWTF Focal Landscapes and beyond from west to east, and north to south. This year we expect to tally ~3,000-15,000 acres conserved/enhanced in the West Texas region, and much of that will depend on projects completed within the Oaks & Prairies Joint Venture area of Central Texas. Wildlife Biologist Annie Farrell will report on a hunter access improvement project at Lake Ray Roberts; and, Private Lands Leasing Biologists Terry Turney, Tom Isaacs, and Shawn Coleman have been aggressively leasing more tracts for inclusion in TPWD's Public Hunting Program.

Oaks & Prairies Joint Venture - We've helped secure a new \$2.95M grant from USDA-NRCS on behalf of the Oaks & Prairies Joint Venture to treat ~60,000 acres of grasslands and oak savannah habitat in Central Texas and Oklahoma. Total value of the 5-year project is \$6M including private landowner contributions, and habitat for grassland birds including northern bobwhite, white-tailed deer, Rio Grande wild turkeys will result chiefly from invasive woody plant removal and promotion of Rx burning/grazing to enhance land for wildlife and livestock. This work will occur in partnership with state and federal agencies, plus other conservation organizations like Pheasants Forever, Inc./Quail Forever, Quail Coalition, and the Noble Foundation. NWTF will employ a new Wildlife Biologist/Range Specialist to be located in an NRCS Field Office within southcentral Oklahoma who will be co-supervised by me and an OPJV Conservation Delivery Specialist.

Caddo-LBJ National Grasslands 5 Year Challenge Cost Share Agreement - National Wild Turkey Federation is in the middle of Year 2 working on the LBJ (Wise County) and Caddo (Fannin County) National Grasslands through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement. We are thankful for this opportunity to partner with U. S. Forest Service and proudly acknowledge Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M Forest Service as excellent cooperators in this work. We impacted ~550 acres of work on the ground in 2016 and expect to do about that much again this year, followed by much Rx burning on a continual basis. The U. S. Forest Service came behind all the mechanical work done in 2014 and 2015 on LBJ National Grassland, and last year's work on Caddo National Grassland WMA and burned upwards of 3,800 acres in October 2016! That is getting some good habitat reclamation work done for sure! National Forests & Grasslands in Texas has just added another \$31,000 to the agreement and we will contract GIS, archeology, and biological services for them that otherwise might not happen due to



Caddo NG woodlands open for Eastern wild turkeys after brush removal and Rx fire applied.

administrative and budgetary issues.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work with TPWD at Lake Granger and Lake Ray Roberts - At Lake Granger, one contractor project was presented for payment in this quarter for a total of \$19,770 (fireguard development) and should allow more habitat enhancement. At Lake Ray Roberts, in addition to the \$67,500 in TPWD funding available to address the needs of all 7 access areas planned, Texas State Chapter of the NWTF added \$5,000 from their Save the Hunt line item in the FY17 Super Fund Budget to enable the project to go forward with desired outcomes by the partners and to realize a common goal of improving public hunting access for Texas sportsmen. That is a 13.5% match for your Super Fund dollars! As well, TPWD agreed to pay for coop signage now being developed. The project has started and is on schedule... your places to hunt and mentor youth! Again, Annie will elaborate so I do not want to steal her thunder here.

Final ramblings - I always offer my personal thanks to all our Texas NWTF staff, state board, and all of you volunteers for what you do each day to further our mission. Without you, we would not have an NWTF. If any of you members have questions for me, please contact me at gmiller@nwtf.net and 806/803-0180 (office) and we'll visit. Until next time, be well, be safe, and good hunting!



Native pecan grove improved as roosting and loafing cover after removal of brushy understory on LBJ Unit 31

East Texas District Biologist Report



By Dan Johnson

District Biologist – Eastern Texas

(406) 239-6454 • djohnson@nwtf.net



Cooper WMA - Post enhancement activities.

NWTF Family, I hope the spring has treated all of you well and you were able to capitalize on some of the amazing work that has been put in place with the support of your effort and dedication.

We are extremely fortunate here east of I-35 to have two new co-workers on the NWTF team. Annie Farrell is our new Wildlife Biologist and is helping carry out the implementation of projects here in eastern Texas and in some of the western Texas district. Additionally, Mr. Jackson Harris has joined as the new Regional Director in northwest Texas.

These additions to the team are needed, and possible to fill, due the increasing number of projects and work here in Texas which are in play because of the volunteer participation. The Superfund dollars are helping promote the eastern wild turkey population in the eastern district through habitat enhancement and superstocking activities. This year has been a showcase of the opportunities we are able to capitalize on as a flexible, and open group of conservationists.

NWTF is working collaboratively with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on

several strong habitat enhancement activities on Gus Engeling WMA and Cooper WMA. Over the years on these properties, natural events, such as fire, have been suppressed and led to the increase in tree and other non-herbaceous plant density on the landscape. As such, open areas, which are beneficial to turkeys and other wildlife, have slowly disappeared as trees and other vegetation has outcompeted the grass and herbaceous species, filling in the gaps. NWTF projects on these WMAs are addressing these issues and timber thinning and mulching activities are opening up the habitat and helping to promote prescribed burning. The continued management capitalizing on these needed initial activities is planned by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and will show continued benefit for years to come.

The work done in these landscape areas is in substantial need and is being addressed by many state and federal agencies, non-government organizations, and private foresters and industrialists. We are working with the Northeast Texas Conservation Delivery Network to look at some of these issues and others across eastern Texas.

Recently there has been the development of cost share funding, the NETX Habitat Initiative Program, which is looking to help private landowners pay for conservation based activities, such as timber thinning and mulching as previously mentioned. Please contact me or your land manager to get additional information. It's a great way to help our turkeys and their habitat!

The NWTF is working on other programs in eastern Texas on the Sam Houston, Angelina, and Sabine National Forests, the Caddo and Old Sabine Bottom Wildlife Management Areas, the I.D. Fairchild State Forest and is in project development on the Davy Crockett National Forest, Pat Mayse and Dam B Wildlife Management Areas, and new projects on existing properties. Cumulatively, the NWTF has impacted over 8,000 acres and is looking to influence 700 more in the 2017 fiscal year. With the help of you, our new team members, project partners, and any new members you can get, we look to continue on our path of meaningful conservation.

Thank you all again for your involvement. Please feel free to call or email any time.

Annie Farrell named new Project Biologist



By Annie Farrell
Project Biologist/Forester
(770) 789-2615 • afarrell@nwtf.net

Hello everyone! I am the new Project Biologist/Forester for NWTF in Texas. I am originally from Roswell, Georgia. I graduated from University of Georgia with my Bachelor of Science in Forest Resources. From there I went on to attend graduate school at Mississippi State University, where I graduated with my Master of Science in Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture. Last year, I joined my husband in East Texas, where he has worked as a biologist for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for 5 years. I studied eastern wild turkeys for my master's thesis and developed an unending passion for conservation of the wild turkey during my time in Mississippi. I am excited to add capacity to our amazing Texas team, so we can go out and accomplish even more in honor of our favorite bird!

As an NWTF project biologist, I am working in coordination with Dan and Gene on the implementation of numerous projects in East and North-Central Texas. So far

I've been involved in the Lake Ray Roberts Hunter Access Improvement Project with TPWD and USACE. Our work on the 7 public access sites is coming along nicely, with new rock, new pipe fence, new gates, and new signs. Be sure to check it out if you're in the area! We finished up a logging job at Gus Engeling WMA in March and will begin some service work in June. We also have a timber salvage on Old Sabine Bottom WMA in Lindale, Texas from the tornadoes that came through town in April 2016. This one is close to home, as I live in Lindale and OSBWMA is my husband's WMA. The river has been too flooded to access the timber, but we're hoping to get in there soon. In the mean time, I have been burning up the roads in East Texas, trying to shake as many hands as possible and get familiar with the area and our other projects. I'm very passionate about making sure we benefit wild turkeys, wildlife, or hunter access in some way, so I can confidently say that I am very dedicated



Wildlife Biologist, Annie Farrell releasing a wild turkey.

to the conservation of the wild turkey and preserving our hunting heritage.

Feel free to contact me at afarrell@nwtf.net and 770-789-2615. I'll see y'all around!



Public Hunting Program report

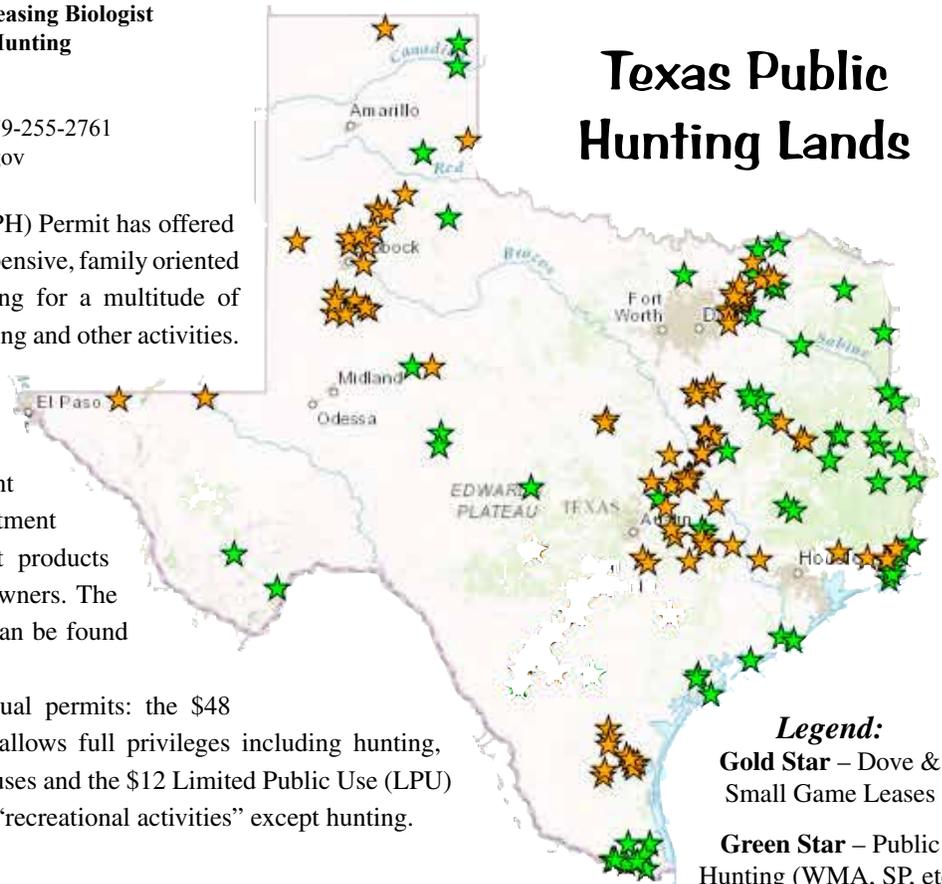
Kyle Thigpen – TPWD Leasing Biologist
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Since 1987, the Annual Public Hunting (APH) Permit has offered the opportunity to participate in a variety of inexpensive, family oriented outdoor recreational activities including hunting for a multitude of wildlife species, fishing, nature watching, camping and other activities.

The Public Hunting Program includes over 1 million acres located throughout Texas. Here, you can find information on property owned by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) as well as acreage leased by the department from other state and federal agencies, forest products industries, and other cooperating private landowners. The Public Dove and Small Game Hunting Areas can be found here.

Access is provided by two types of annual permits: the \$48 Annual Public Hunting (APH) Permit which allows full privileges including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking and other recreational uses and the \$12 Limited Public Use (LPU) Permit which also provides access for all other "recreational activities" except hunting.

Texas Public Hunting Lands



Youth recruitment is our challenge...



Eleven year old turkey hunter Asa Cook harvested this great Rio Grande bird this Spring. The excited NWTF Rusk County Jakes member nailed his first gobbler in Hemphill County on his first hunt . Asa was using a Remington 870 pump and Avian X decoys . The Tom has a 9in beard with 1in spurs on both right and left side. Asa's dad, Texas State NWTF Board member and Rusk County NWTF Chapter President A.J. Cook purchased the hunt at 2016 NWTF Texas Rendezvous. Thanks to Jason McAnally for the donated hunt. Asa is all into this turkey hunting now after this experience. Hats off to Asa's dad A.J. for being a mentor for Asa and passing on our hunting tradition...

“Save the Habitat”

Two hunts that were sold at 2016 Texas NWTF Hunting Heritage Banquets. Both hunts were donated 100% to help generate dollars for the NWTF's mission... “Save the Habitat – Save the Hunt.” Look for opportunities like this at your local NWTF Hunting Heritage event!



JAKES member Asa Cook and his dad A.J. Cooke with his first Rio from Hemphill County Texas.



Extreme JAKES member Hunter Linton with his triple bearded east Texas gobbler harvested in Polk County, Texas.



Volunteers helped with our NWTF mission “Save the Habitat and Save the Hunt” in east Texas.

A great example is this auctioned hunt purchased by Melvin Linton for his 17 year old son Hunter Linton at the 2016 at the Pineywoods NWTF Hunting Heritage event.

A group of Pineywoods committee members Larry Jordan, Terry Wheeler, James Morgan, Louis Short and Gary Brock accompied Hunter Linton on a private hunting club in Polk County for the two day hunt. The weather was awful...rain, wind and cool temertures. Hunter Linton and guide Terry Wheeler got out of bed and went hunting despite of the weather. They heard 5 birds gobble on the roost at first morning.

Things got real quite after that, at mid-morning the spotted several birds on a pipeline right of way about 400 yards away. They glassed the turkeys and could see a nice male in the flock. Terry and Hunter made a big loop and set up where the turkeys would be able to hear Terrys calling. It all worked perfect and Hunter was able to harvest a great east Texas Tom with 3 beards on the first morning. Thanks to everyone who helped Hunter harvest this trophy turkey in Polk County Texas...

“Save the Hunt”

Wheelin' Sportsmen Outreach Program

By Kyle Verner
Wheelin' Sportsmen Coordinator

Hello, I trust y'all had a great turkey season, and I hope everyone made some great memories along the way. I wanted to tell everyone about a need that I hope to get filled this year. The Wheelin' Sportsmen Outreach Program of the NWTF provides people with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. Whether it's a turkey, deer, or hog hunt, we want to give people with disabilities the opportunity to experience something they may have thought impossible. Many of these individuals have become disabled fighting for us in our military or became disabled due to an accident or illness and have given up hope of ever getting to enjoy the special experience of the hunt. We want to make hunting more accessible, but we need a Wheelin' Sportsmen Trailer in Texas. Arkansas and Louisiana have one and are making a difference for folks all across their states. We need to be doing the same. I'm looking for a sponsor or sponsors willing to help bring this project to life. The trailer needed is a box trailer that is wheel chair accessible and has special equipment that makes it possible to harvest an animal regardless of the extent of the person's disabilities. The cost of the trailer with all the equipment is between twelve and thirteen thousand dollars. By having this trailer,



we can have more opportunities to make a difference in the lives of the disabled. We will provide advertising on the trailer for the sponsor or sponsors. These sponsors will get advertising from the trailer as it is used in these hunts across our state, while making a difference in a lot of good people's lives. I believe this project is an important one and could be the difference in offering hope to a lot of folks. If you agree and are interested in helping us help others, contact: Kyle Verner, 903-243-0306 or kyle.verner2013@gmail.com



Portable Hunting Blind designed for disabled hunters



Texas Wheelin' Sportsman Coordinator Kyle Verner volunteering at a NWTF booth.



Interior view of portable WS hunting blind, note the high tech equipment like Video, monitor and joy stick to sight in the gun for shot.

Spring Turkey Report

(Continued from page 9)

TPWD WILD TURKEY BANDING EFFORTS

TPWD initiated a statewide banding study in 2016. Since then TPWD staff and other conservation partners have banded close to 1,700 wild turkeys. Each leg band is stamped with "TPWD" and a phone number for reporting your harvested bird. A big thanks goes out to all you hunters who reported your banded bird. This data is helping TPWD better assess harvest rates at the regional and statewide level, which in turn helps to predict population fluctuations and juvenile male recruitment.

EASTERN TURKEY RESTORATION CONTINUES

TPWD released 120 wild turkeys into a restoration sites in Anderson, Angelina, and Cherokee Counties this past winter. This completed a stocking on Angelina National Forest, another on the Neches River in Cherokee County and a full stocking in northern Anderson County. Two broods have already been reported from the latest stocking in Anderson County. Habitat evaluations are ongoing this spring and summer to identify additional restoration sites in East Texas. For information on the eastern wild turkey restoration program contact Jason Hardin with TPWD, 903-322-2770 or jason.hardin@tpwd.texas.gov

South Texas Report

(Continued from page 6)

and Glenda Furry, Cory Harris and Cody Goodson banded together early this year to start our new Lee County Chapter. Their first banquet was a raging success in Giddings on May 11th: the open bar, fried chicken, tons of guns, games and a presentation by their local biologist, Laura Sherrod, made for a night to remember for about 150 who attended their inaugural event.

And a couple of folks who are familiar faces at many of our banquets decided it was time to get a chapter going in Montgomery County: Lee and Cathy Zimmerman pulled the trigger, and joined by Tim Gage, Richard Pratt, Wally Stinson and Jay Todd are in the process of planning their first gig to held on August 24th at the Magnolias Fairgrounds in Conroe. It is going to be a barnburner!!

Finally, hunters have been reporting lots of birds this year, but generally they have been operating with their beaks shut. Gobbling was at an all-time low according to most of the folks I talked with. Lots of big birds harvested, but it was tough hunting!! I took 3 sets of new hunters out this spring, but we were only able to seal the deal one one bird (10.3" beard and 1/25 spurs). The novices saw birds, but we kept getting surprised us by creeping in quiet, ignoring the decoy and sneaking up behind us. Got to remember to watch the back door!



To-Do Lists

Dorothy McCarver
WITO Coordinator

The other day I was forced to clean out my purse because all of my lists and notes were having “puppies” in there and it was time to either toss them or compile them. I don’t know about you, but I keep lists for everything I need to do or purchase. One of these lists is like the “bucket list” we have heard about only this one contains things I want to enjoy doing this year. For instance, in October is my pheasant hunt and another item is to go see my ‘grands’ or have them visit me. After I do those amazing activities I’ll have the satisfaction of checking them off.

Let me tell you about two more awesome ‘escapes’ for you and your mom, sister, and friends. Think of it as a “Gals Day Out”. It is called a Woman in the Outdoors Event. WITO is one of the outreach programs of NWTF. One these events is near Temple, Texas on June 10th and will be hosted by the Tri-County Longbeards NWTF Chapter at the beautiful and private Hilliard Ranch. Monica Sobodka at 245-760-2784 will be happy to tell you what kind of a great WITO ‘gal’s day out’ she has planned for you.

The Northeast Texas NWTF Chapter will host their 19th



Women in the Outdoors group getting ready for a Pheasant hunt.



WITO Event September 23rd at the Northeast Texas Community College’s Agricultural Complex near Mt. Pleasant, Texas. Dorothy McCarver is on board to share with you their super plans for your escape! Call her at 903-577-2674 or email her at Dorothy.mccarver@yahoo.com .

There will be classes that involve shooting some kind of firearm or bow and there will be others

that are more passive like a crafts or outdoor cooking classes. The event planners try to balance the active class offerings with passive classes when designing their events. All classes are taught by expert instructors. For more added fun there will raffles, games, a silent auction and a delicious catered lunch plus refreshments.

In other words, you will play, eat, and shop and fellowship together in a comfortable and fun outdoor setting. Wow! What a day!

So add either or both of these events to your fun “bucket to-do” list and start making plans to attend. That’s what I’m going to do.



Kim Potts
Outdoor Education
Coordinator

The National Wild Turkey Federation has spent the last four years partnering with the Dallas Ecological Foundation, now known as the Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation, and Texas Parks and Wildlife to encourage school districts across the state of Texas to enrich their curriculum with the Outdoor Adventures Program.

All three organizations share a passion for increasing the knowledge and awareness of the conservation efforts that are needed and currently occurring across our great state to support habitat restoration. The

Texas State NWTF Board of Directors created an Outdoor Education budget that provides financial support to districts that lack the funding to get the program up and running. However, some districts have been chosen as recipients based on their geographical location in order to give exposure to the NWTF and their initiatives. The board awarded 26 grants to districts, \$500 each, during the 2015-2016 school year and checks are currently being issued for the present school year.

The OA Program provides students the opportunity to experience outdoor traditions that were an everyday part of my childhood and that my children still enjoy today. My family will definitely pass their love of the outdoors on to my grandchildren

and great-grandchildren, but the use of technology has become the norm in today’s society and Outdoor Adventures provides the opportunity for outdoor traditions and life-long skills to live on in the generations to come and not be forgotten.

Please join us in our efforts to ‘Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt’. If you are interested in learning more about the OA Program, I encourage you to call me at 903-348-1845. I would love to visit with you about the program, how it can benefit your district, students and their families, and the funding possibilities available through the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation, and Texas Parks and Wildlife.

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