



SHOW-ME GOBBLER

A Tri-Annual Publication of the George C. Clark Missouri Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation

Volume 43 Number 1 • Winter 2022

Tyler Rodes NWTF NFI Area Forester – Kingston, MO

The NWTF continues to establish itself as a leader in the conservation of upland wildlife habitat with an emphasis on forest management. As part of this development process, we have grown our project level staff in the field through cooperative agreements with partner state and federal agencies. Missouri has three such positions. Will Rechkemmer has been working in cooperation with the USFS and NRCS for the last 2 years focusing his efforts primarily in the shortleaf pine region of south central Missouri. Justin Ferguson has been with us for almost 5 years providing additional assistance with private land forest management in southeast Missouri based out of Farmington. Tyler Rodes recently filled the position that Tyler Cooper left when he took a permanent position as an NRCS Forester. Tyler Rodes is the newest Forester on the Missouri NWTF team.

Tyler's position as an NWTF Area Forester based out of Kingston, MO is a partnership between the NWTF and the USDA NRCS as part of the National Forestry Initiative. Tyler holds a B.S. in both Forestry and Fisheries & Wildlife from The University of Missouri-Columbia. After graduation, Tyler spent 7 years as an assistant consulting forester. During this time as an assistant consulting forester Tyler gathered a wealth of practical forest management experience and knowledge. Tyler was fortunate to work with hundreds of private landowners across the state to properly implement forest management techniques based on their personal goals for their property. Tyler also worked for Quail Forever and Pheasants Forever (QF/PF) for 5 months where he learned valuable prairie and

grassland management. Most of his time with QF/PF was spent working with landowners to improve their CRP fields for wildlife. As the new NWTF forester for Area 1, he is looking forward to bringing his experience and knowledge gathered over the years to help MO landowners make better decisions on timber management and helping increase wildlife populations in the process.



Tyler is an avid outdoorsman, and is proud to be filling this role.

This position will primarily be focused on managing privately owned forestlands by providing technical assistance as well as cost share assistance. Tyler's project area for the NWTF's National Forestry Initiative lies mainly within Northwest Missouri, but also covers North central and West central Missouri. The 27 counties Tyler covers range as far South as Benton county and North to Atchison, these counties are mainly influenced by agriculture and are typically tied together with tracts of timber along ditches, creeks, and rivers. He will be working with mixed bottomland hardwood forests along the Missouri River and its riverine tributaries, as well as oak-hickory forests, historic oak prairie woodlands, and restoration of native prairie habitat and warm season grasses.

An active management approach is needed to restore and maintain oak-hickory forest and prairie grassland natural communities that are critical to healthy wild turkey populations and that other native wildlife also depend on. On private lands, most of these natural communities have had a history of poor management, no management, or more commonly in this area have been exploited for

Continued next page

Tyler Rodes, continued from page 1

other land uses leaving them highly degraded or non-existent. A lot of forested and native grassland acres in the agricultural areas have been cut down, cleared, or plowed under to make for more farming opportunities, but the benefits of forest and grasslands are now being seen by many not only for wildlife, but environmental impacts as well. Many forests that were not cleared have been high graded by harvesting the best timber and leaving poor quality trees to grow. Other forestlands have not been harvested and are currently overstocked and sometimes stagnated with undesirable tree species for managing wild turkey.

NWTF and its partners have an excellent opportunity to achieve great success in mitigating natural resource challenges. Through outreach and collaboration with private landowners and stakeholders, we are seeing our restoration potential hit the ground and objectives being met in the forest. There are Cost-Share Opportunities through the USDA NRCS Field Offices (EQIP is a great option) and The Missouri Department of Conservation to conduct such practices as Forest Stand Improvement Thinning's (FSI), selective herbicide applications for invasive species control, riparian buffer establishment (tree plantings), burn unit preparation, prescribed fire implementation, seeding with native grasses and forbs, erosion control, skid trail stabilization/restoration, and wildlife watering ponds to name a few practices available.

As an NWTF Forester in Northwest Missouri, Tyler is available to meet with landowners and listen to their desired objectives and questions they may have regarding their forestlands, open woodlands, and grassland. Tyler will assess the resource at present and provide a management plan that best meets the landowner's objectives with resource potential for forest health and wild turkey habitat. Tyler will present the best available cost-share opportunities for the landowner to explore and decide upon in order to achieve the desired objectives outlined in the management plan. Lastly, Tyler is available to provide technical expertise to the landowner or forest contractor implementing the management practices. Most importantly, Tyler will follow-up with the landowner to make sure that the process is successful and that all stakeholders involved are satisfied.

If you have land within the area that Tyler serves and are interested in receiving professional assistance in managing it, please contact him at 816-284-0256 or e-mail him at trodes@nwtf.net.



SHOW-ME GOBBLER

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The Show-Me Gobbler is published three times per year by the George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation and is circulated statewide to its membership as well as other interested parties. As the official publication of the George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Show-Me Gobbler serves to inform, educate and entertain wild turkey enthusiasts throughout Missouri and is committed to supporting conservation through sound wildlife management, and sport hunting through safety and ethics education.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION NOTE:

Please feel free to submit future articles with photos to the contact information listed above. Submission requirements: Digital copy submitted in Microsoft Word. Digital photographs only. Please use at least 225 resolution (dpi), or medium to high settings from your phone. Photos submitted outside of these guidelines may not be suitable for printing. Please include photo captions and credits for each photo submitted. Thank you for your contributions and we look forward to your participation in the future.

**Advertising & Article Deadlines
for the Show Me Gobbler Publication**

**Spring Deadline
May 25, 2022**

From The President

By Dan Zerr

THE SEEDS THAT WE SOW . . .

The sun was creeping up from the horizon and was at our backs, as was the wind. It was presumably a perfect set-up, except that the temperature was way to warm for December. That was part of the reason we traveled across the state to hunt public ground instead of the river blind we have been used to hunting for the last year. Warm weather means no duck movement. The action had been slow for the first part of the season, and really slow the last several days and this prompted us to try something different, hence the drive across the state in the middle of the night.

My hunting companions for this safari were the three Zerr boys. One of the rare occasions where everyone could get off work, and all of the family obligations had been met. Even if the action remained slow, it was going to be a good day regardless. I have come to have complete faith in the judgement of “The Guide” (son number 2) His passion is waterfowling, and the time and effort he expends on those endeavors are not normal. But he usually gets results. His chosen “honey hole” is in a part of the Conservation Area most other people shun, because of the number of parties that are allowed into that area. “The Guide” however knows how to get away from other people. So, it was no surprise that a pair of mallards dumped into the decoy spread about 10 minutes before shooting time. It was a harbinger of good things to come. We were not disappointed. “The Guide” sets up on the one end, because he has Ned the Super Dog to control, the other end is usually manned by son #1, more experienced (lately) and a better shot. That leaves the middle for me and son #3, (the greedy Snickers candy bar hoarder), (he also is a better shot). As

the ducks started to work, they came in, not in big bunches but in singles and pairs.

With the sun at our backs it was easy to pick out the drakes, and they were close so our marksmanship skills were not tested severely. On the birds that sailed, Ned the Super Dog, made some outstanding retrieves. I usually like to brag on him, but his mathematical skills leave a little to be desired. As we collected our limit of mallards we were waiting to see if some bonus ducks would show up, more mallards continued to work the decoy spread and we had ducks in our face. Ned could plainly see them from his stand and was ready to make a retrieve. When nobody would shoot, he watched the duck fly away and then turned and looked at “The Guide” as if to ask what is wrong with you guys? At the end of shooting time, sons #1, #2 and #3 picked up the decoys and did the heavy lifting. I felt like I had achieved my goal of being a burden to my kids. I thought back to years gone by, when my brother and I would pack son #1 and son #2 on our backs to the duck blind. Why everybody never got soaked was a minor miracle. We always made sure there was enough junk food to go around and were always amazed that they never got bored. Now they are taking care of me, making sure I don’t have to work too hard, and they still respect my observations on the situation at hand. They want to make sure I have an opportunity to hunt and extend the good times It was a good day.

As we bid farewell to 2021, let us look forward to 2022. 2021 was supposed to be a much better year but it came with challenges. Your state chapter has worked hard to keep things on an even keel, adapt and make changes as necessary. The local chapters across the

state made their best efforts to raise funds so that NWTF could continue to work for our mission. Those efforts cannot be thanked enough. As 2022 dawns let us renew our commitment to the conservation of the wild turkey, and NWTF programs. We can have many good days ahead.

Thanks for all you do, we appreciate each and everyone of you,

Dan



Greg Buckner (adult in both pictures) of Gods Pro Staff, provided mentored turkey and deer hunts for local youth otherwise lacking the opportunity. Carter, (pictured on top photo) Xander, and Rowdy all harvested gobblers with Greg during the 2021 season on the Mark Twain National Forest. The Missouri NWTF has supported this event in the past, and hope to be doing so again in the future. Prior to COVID, this event usually involved close to 20 kids.

The George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter Member Harvest Page



Terry Schenk of Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter Missouri buck.



Katelynn is pictured with her first buck taken during youth season. She is the granddaughter of state chapter board member Dan Minor.



Lisa Beumer of the Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter, and her Oklahoma Whitetail.



Gage Gray of the Kirksville Ridgerunners with his 2021 Whitetail Buck.



NWTF life member, Steve Mowry, with some ribeye of the sky.



Natty Underwood, grandson of state board member Jackie Rowe, showing off his 2021 buck.



Logan Burk, son of district biologist John Burk, had an impressive hunting season. Two nice bucks.



Logans 2021 Wisconsin buck #2. Way to go Logan!



Lauren Scott, daughter of former RD Travis Scott.



Chase Hanes, grandson of Dan Zerr with his deer taken during the regular firearm deer season. Chase was hunting in Monroe County.



Saige Hanes, granddaughter of Dan Zerr, with her deer taken during the regular firearm deer season. She was also hunting in Monroe County.



Check out this 24" Arkansas White River Brown Trout that Lisa Beumer of Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter caught this year.



Wyatt Balcer, son-in-law of Regional Director, Larry Neal, (left) and son of RD Larry Neal, Lance.



Central Regional Director of Conservation Operations, Jared McJunkin, with his Kansas bow kill.



Bootheel Boss Gobblers member Randy Keuhn.



Tyler Brown, son-in-law of Jay Jerring.



Cole Erwin mentored by Regional Director Mike Allen.



Brandon Bennett, son of State Chapter Chariman RL Bennett.



Cole Chatman, President of the Current River Callers.



Brandon Butler of Fayette with his 2021 buck.



Justin Montgomery (right) and his dad David with Justin's deer. Both committee men for the Heartland Gobblers.



State board member Tim Schwent with his 2021 US Royal Slam.



Nolan, son of Missouri Prairie Foundation Prairie Manager Jerod Huebner with Jerod's bow kill.



Lisa Beumer Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter Missouri Whitetail.



Former Missouri Regional Director, Tim Besancenez, and son, Rylee, with their 2021 rifle bucks.



Tara Pullum, daughter of Natasha Fornkohl of Crowleys Ridge Limbhangers.



USFWS Biologist and MO IA Oaks Project Partner, Chris Woodson.



Tyler Herring, son of Jay Herring, with his 2021 archery buck.



State Board Member, Jay Herring with his bow deer.



Congratulations to Project Forester, Will Rechkemmer, with his rifle buck, and his wife, Danita, with her first bow buck, both on public land.

Share your outdoor experiences with your NWTf peers, PLEASE submit them to John Burk at jb Burk@nwtf.net with a brief photo description and they will be considered for the harvest page section of your Show Me Gobbler newsletter.

Missouri NWTB Banquets & Events

Please contact the event coordinator to ensure your local event is active.

Missouri State Banquet

01/08/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Mike Allen

(660) 341-1557

Location: Margaritaville - Lake of the Ozarks
494 Tan Tara Drive, Osage Beach, MO 65065

Perry County Beards and Spurs

01/15/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Dominic & Erin Blythe

(573) 768-0878

Location: Knights of Columbus Hall
31 South Church Street, Perryville, MO 63775

Current River Callers

01/22/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Troy McAfee

(573) 325-4930

Location: Winona School
Hwy 19 North, Winona, MO 65588

Union Covered Bridge Gobblers

01/22/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Bruce Mills

(573) 721-2268

Location: Madison Community Building
115 South Main St, Madison, MO 65263

Honey Creek Strutters

01/22/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Chad Utt

(816) 284-0017

Location: Cameron Community Center
915 N. Ashland Dr., Cameron, MO 64429

Shaky Ground Gobblers

01/28/2022 - 6:00 PM

Contact: Walter Campbell

(573) 380-7928

Location: K of C Hall
Hwy U, New Madrid, MO 63869

Salt River Sharp Spurs

01/28/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Pat Heathman

(660) 651-2703

Location: American Legion Hall
520 E. Maple, Shelbina, MO 63468

Ray County Shortspurs

01/29/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Mark Mccorkendale Family

(816) 217-7496

Location: Ray County Veterans Memorial Bldg.
312 Clark St, Richmond, MO 64085

Summit Ridge Longbeards

02/03/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Glenn Farris

(573) 690-6425

Location: Capital Bluffs Event Center
1616 Oilwell Rd, Jefferson City, MO 65101

Tick Ridge

02/03/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Dan Coons

(660) 415-6842

Location: Macon CO Expo Center
Hwy 63 S, Macon, MO 63552

Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter

02/04/2022 - 6:00 PM

Contact: Brian Duckett

(314) 574-9213

Location: The Boeing Machinist Building
212 Utz Lane, Hazelwood, MO 63042

Upper Meramec Longspurs

02/04/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Shane Staples

(573) 259-7405

Location: Recklein Auditorium
304 North Smith Street, Cuba, MO 65453

Hickory County Jakes and Jennies

02/05/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Tim Pratt

(417) 298-5690

Location: Lucas Lodge House
25232 Co Rd 50, Cross Timbers, MO 65634

Chariton River Full Strutters,

02/05/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Jordan Harmon

(660) 247-5306

Location: Knight and Rucker Building
Broadway, Brunswick, MO 65236

Gateway Long Spurs

02/11/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Tim Smith

(314) 581-7639

Location: Ofallon KC Hall
202 West Third Street, Ofallon, MO 63366

Putnam County Chapter

02/11/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Justin Trimble

(660) 988-0741

Location: 4-H Building
Fairgrounds, Unionville,
MO 63565

Bootheel Boss Gobblers

02/12/2022 - 4:00 PM

Contact: Bronson Senn

(573) 225-3087

Location: Osage Center,
1625 North Kingshighway,
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Grand River Gobblers

02/12/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Chad Foster

(660) 868-0714

Location: American Legion Post 216
32932 W State Hwy 13, Bethany, MO 64424

Kingdom of Callaway Limbhangers

02/25/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: John Burk

(573) 808-1159

Location: 54 Country
400 Gaylord Drive, Fulton, MO 65251

Fabius River Fantails

02/26/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Jeremy Holman

(660) 216-2508

Location: Community Center
207 N. 4th St., Edina, MO 63537

Lincoln Hills

02/26/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: R.jay Herring

(314) 486-8581

Location: Sacred Heart Parrish
714 Lincoln Street
Elsberry, MO 63343

Sand Burr Strutters

02/26/2022 - 4 PM

Contact: Shane Washburn

(573) 380-2923

Location: Sikeston VFW
709 Smith Ave, Sikeston, MO 63801

Lead Belt Longbeards

02/26/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Kathryn Wolff

(573) 701-2050

Location: Knights of Columbus Bonne Terre
7897 Berry Rd, Bonne Terre, MO 63628

NWTF Banquets & Events

continued

Muddy Creek Gobblers

03/03/2022 - 6:00 PM

Contact: Jared Chestnut

(417) 262-0531

Location: Thiebaut Auditorium

11th and Poplar, Lamar, MO 64759

Osage Prairie Thunderin Toms

03/04/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Adam Dean

(417) 448-7380

Location: Eagles Lodge

East Austin Blvd, Nevada, MO 64772

Stealth Gobblers

03/04/2022 - 6:00 PM

Contact: Jeremy And Shelia Reardon

(660) 238-9320

Location: Elks Lodge

822 E. Young St., Warrensburg, MO 64093

Parkville Gobblers

03/04/2022 - 6:00 PM

Contact: John Shene

(816) 365-2856

Location: Old Mill Emporium

168 S Main St, Parkville, MO 64152

Sho-Me

03/05/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: R.I. Bennett

(417) 840-3949

Location: White River Conference Center

600 West Sunshine, Springfield, MO 65806

Mark Twain Forest Longspurs

03/05/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Tony Hollinsworth

(573) 854-0497

Location: TWIN EAGLES

10254 Wateredge Road, Potosi, MO 63664

Heartland Gobblers

03/05/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Chuck Stewart

(573) 421-1257

Location: Poplar Bluff Grotto

Poplar Bluff, MO 63901

The Overlooked Fact That Forest Habitats Are Ever Changing

By Justin Ferguson,
NWTF Project Forester

The restoration of turkeys in Missouri is a shining example of a conservation success story. However, after decades of significant decline, concern is mounting over Missouri's statewide turkey population. Few other outdoor pursuits inspire the level of passion that is shared amongst turkey hunters. Because of this passion, many turkey hunters have been extremely vocal about their concerns regarding the declining resource. In my personal experience, when conversing with fellow turkey hunters regarding the decline several topics seem to naturally arise. These subjects of discussion include the expansion of predator populations, concerns over diseases, and feral hogs among numerous other things. I often hear statements like, "Twenty years ago turkey hunting on my farm was much better." In friendly conversation, I make it a point to ask, "How has your habitat changed?" A common response to this question is often something to the effect of "My woods haven't changed in twenty years." However, we need to ask ourselves, have they?

Our habitats, whether they are forest, grassland, or wetland communities, are not static environments. Common sense dictates that a natural community will change with time. However, this gets lost on folks when it comes to forests due to the long-lived nature of trees. This is especially evident from the earlier mentioned conversations that I have had with turkey hunters, whether they be private landowners or public. Change in habitats, even in forest communities, can occur much quicker than one would realize. A few decades can add up to substantial shifts in habitat quality.

Natural communities experience change over time on a continuum known as ecological succession. On one end of the successional spectrum are vegetative species that initially "pioneer" or colonize a new habitat. On the other end is the "climax community" of vegetation as succession reaches its endpoint. Succession is not a one-way street, as disturbance events can set back a community to an earlier successional state. Common disturbance events that affect succession in turkey habitats include the removal of trees from natural factors like disease, windstorms, and drought, as well as human manipulation by timber harvest and thinning treatments. Fire, whether wild or prescribed, is also a major disturbance event. The time line that succession is observed is relative, and can range from weeks to millions of years. However, being that we are discussing turkey habitat succession can be observed in years to decades.

As a forester, I am tasked with influencing succession in forest communities with carefully planned disturbance events in order to meet desired objectives. In my part of the state, the St. Francois Knobs region, most forest management is aimed at promoting oak/hickory or oak/pine forest and woodland communities. Active management is needed to maintain the health of these communities. Oak/hickory and oak/pine forests could be considered mid-successional communities, as they are heavily dependent on disturbance. Prior to European settlement in Missouri, widespread fire was the chief disturbance that influenced our forest and woodland composition. Oak species in Missouri are, for the most part, fire adapted and shade intolerant. Oaks utilize fire and other significant

disturbances like well-planned timber harvesting in order to out compete shade tolerant and/or faster growing species. Without disturbance, oak forests progress on the successional continuum to a climax community of shade tolerant species like sugar maple. When this occurs, quality turkey habitat is lost, especially when it comes to suitable brood rearing habitat that drives overall turkey numbers. This shift occurs over many decades.



In relatively short time, this bush honeysuckle infestation has eliminated turkey use from this habitat.

So what changes to our forests could have occurred during the few decades since the turkey population peak in the late '90s and early 2000s? What could have possibly occurred during this narrower time frame? In the absence of significant disturbance and as a forest stand ages, individual trees continue to expand their crowns until they have occupied all available growing space. At this point all trees in the stand are in direct competition with each other, limiting their overall productivity in terms of diameter growth as well as mast production. However, the most significant impact on turkey habitat that occurs from the canopy closing is the reduction or elimination of sunlight reaching the forest floor. This significantly reduces the abundance of understory plant species, particularly communities of forbs and grasses. Turkey poult survival is directly tied to access to quality

habitat that provides access to protein rich insects as well as the proper cover structure to protect them from predators. Herbaceous communities on the forest floor provide both of these habitat components, but are sadly absent from much of the landscape due to management inaction. A closed canopy forest is certainly a pretty place to call up and harvest a gobbler, but it provides no value for producing them. When much of the landscape turns to this habitat type after decades of forest maturation and stagnation, the overall turkey population suffers.

Another practical example of rapid change in our forest communities is the proliferation of invasive species. These non-native species feature adaptations to their native ranges that allow them to outcompete our native species. Among the worst invasive species that affect forestland in Missouri are bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, and multiflora rose. These species are not utilized by our wildlife in the same way native species are. They do not provide a host plant for the majority of our insects, particularly insects that turkey poults rely on for protein. They also do not provide adequate nutrition for adult turkeys or deer. As invasive species occupy increasing space and take up resources in our habitats, a similar suppression of vegetation communities in closed canopy forests occurs. However, species like bush honeysuckle and autumn olive form dense thickets in the understory. This is a huge threat to the long-term health of our forest communities, as tree species will not successfully regenerate in a thicket of invasive species. If we allow this to take place, much of our forestland will be lost to a sea of bushes that are valueless for wildlife and commercial timber production. In the short term, dense thickets of invasive species make forestland unusable to turkeys. Dense cover defeats a turkey's eyesight. If a turkey cannot see around 30-50 feet, they do not feel comfortable and will not spend much time in this

type of habitat. Bush honeysuckle abundance in particular is especially evident during the early spring at its leaf out period. Honeysuckle leaves out several weeks before most native species. Over the past five years in my early spring travels, I have been shocked and saddened at how bad honeysuckle infestations has become over much of the state and how much forestland has been totally eliminated from use by turkeys. This is particularly true in the northern part of the state.

A hands-off approach to forestland often leads to unintended consequences. This is especially true as it applies to turkey habitat. As time marches on, our habitats change. Without significant disturbance, this change is most often negative for the forest communities that we have in Missouri. It is important that landowners and land managers are thoughtful of the long-term and short-term health of all habitats, especially our forestland. We cannot take our forestland resources and the habitat they provide for granted. We owe it to future generations of turkey hunters.

If you are interested in learning more about managing the forest resources on your property, technical assistance is available. Below is the contact info for NWTf Project Foresters as well as a link to look up the contact information for Missouri Department of Conservation private lands staff for your county:

Justin Ferguson

309-453-1283 / jferguson@nwtf.net

Will Rechkemmer

319-572-3387 / wrechkemmer@nwtf.net

<https://mdc.mo.gov/contact-engage/local-mdc-contacts>

Factors Influencing Wild Turkey Nest Success and Poul Survival in North Missouri: Research Update

By Reina M. Tyl
Wild Turkey and Ruffed Grouse Biologist
Missouri Department of Conservation

In the last issue of Show-Me Gobbler, I introduced a new cooperative research project between the Missouri Department of Conservation and the University of Missouri which is partially funded by the National Wild Turkey Federation. This project aims to answer the question: why is turkey production lower now than it was a few decades ago? More specifically, we aim to determine which factors—habitat, weather, predators, and food availability—have the greatest effects on nest success and poul survival. We also plan to evaluate brood-rearing habitat selection and determine how brood-rearing habitat selection impacts the chance a poul survives its first month post-hatch, as well as identify the major causes of poul mortality.

In January, we began the first field season of data collection in Putnam County by scouting for, and baiting flocks of wild turkey hens into capture sites. We were able to successfully deploy 51 GPS-transmitters onto 30 adult and 21 subadult wild turkey hens before the end of February. The hens were tracked from the time they were captured through mid-August. During that time, there were only 5 hen mortality events—three deaths resulting from predation and two instances where a cause of death could not be confidently assigned.

Thirty-nine hens attempted to nest at least once, which amounted to an initial nesting rate of about 80%. This nesting rate is similar to the 78%, on average, nesting rate that was observed during another wild turkey research project from 2014-2018 in MDC's Northeast Region. The median date of incubation initiation—meaning the average date that hens began incubating their first clutch of



Caught on camera! One trail camera deployed as part of the study captured a hen turkey, coyote, and bobcat travelling the same path within a 24-hour period.

eggs—was May 12th. Unfortunately, the re-nesting rate appeared to be low this year, with only about 15% of hens attempting to nest again after a failed first attempt.

Nest success was also on the low end, with only about 21% of nests successfully hatching at least 1 poult. Overall, 18% of hens in our sample successfully hatched a nest this year. Due to the low nesting success, opportunities to tag and monitor poults and collect brood-rearing habitat selection information were limited. Luckily there are three more field seasons of opportunity to collect this important and insightful data.

In addition to monitoring hen reproductive attempts, we collected extensive data related to nest predator density, poult predator occupancy, nest site vegetation characteristics, available brood-rearing habitat vegetation characteristics, and available brood-rearing habitat arthropod abundance and diversity. To evaluate nest predator densities, we conducted a mark-and-recapture effort at 3 sites across the county. About 40 box traps were set at each site, and the sites were trapped for 10 nights each. Overall, 53 raccoons were captured (15 of which were recaptured) and 30 opossums were captured (20 of which were recaptures).

We set out 62 trail cameras and scent stations to monitor occupancy of larger poult predators—such as coyotes, foxes, and bobcats—in different land cover types throughout the county during the late spring and summer. A highlight from this effort was one camera capturing a hen turkey, coyote, and bobcat traveling along the same field edge within a 24-hour period!

We established 25 sites in forest, grassland, and agriculturally dominated land cover types at which vegetation and arthropod biomass and diversity were sampled throughout the brood-rearing season. This data will help to quantify the vegetative structures and arthropod abundance and diversity within available brood-rearing habitat. This is an important first step to determining which types of habitats hens with poults are selecting for, and how that impacts survival of the brood.

In addition to all the data collection efforts mentioned above, prior to the nesting season we deployed 10 weather stations throughout the county. These weather stations collected detailed temperature and precipitation data during the spring and summer months. This data will be used to determine the relative effects of weather on nest success and poult survival.

Even though field data collection ended in August, there is still lots of work to do. We are busy combing through the arthropod samples and trail camera photos collected during the summer. Additionally, we are preparing for the second field season that will kick off in January with another round of hen captures and GPS transmitter deployment.

This project is a large collaborative effort that would not be possible without cooperation from landowners within our study area. During this field season, 86 landowners allowed us to access a total of 40,448 acres across Putnam County. On behalf of the entire research team, I want to sincerely thank all the landowners who graciously allowed us to access their properties—we look forward to continuing to work with you for the duration of this project.

NWTF Banquets & Events

continued

Bayou Strutters

03/08/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Diane & Larry Neal
(314) 334-4942

Location: Cedars Banquet and Gatherings
401 East Washington, East Prairie, MO 63845

Platte County Longspurs

03/11/2022 - 4:30 PM

Contact: Doug Yeager
(816) 807-4277

Location: Platte County Fairgrounds
414 M92 Spur Hwy, Tracy, MO 64079

St. Louis Longbeards

03/12/2022 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Russ Ode
(314) 704-4398

Location: Elks lodge
6330 Heege Road, Affton, MO 63123

Gentry County Gobblers

03/12/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Mitch Holtman
(816) 273-6774

Location: Tri Meadows
34499 St Hwy VV, Conception Jct., MO 64434

Black Mountain Longbeards

03/12/2022 - 4:30 PM

Contact: Jason Wengler
(573) 783-9988

Location: St Michaels Catholic School
Fredericktown, MO 63645

Nemo

03/18/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Melissa Sharkey
(217) 257-9894

Location: Quality Inn
120 Lindsey Drive, Hannibal, MO 63401

Saline County Strutters

03/19/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Rhonda Browning
(660) 886-3295

Location: Martin Community Center
1985 S. Odell Ave, Marshall, MO 65340

Eddie Murray Remembered...

In January 2021, the Gateway Long Spurs lost long time member Eddie Murray to complications stemming from Covid-19. His loss was a great shock to his family and all who knew him.

Eddie was a very active member of the Gateway Long Spurs chapter, serving in many capacities ranging from banquet duties to his real passion as Hunter Education Coordinator for the chapter.

Getting kids involved with the shooting sports was a high priority, on what he viewed as the Chapter's Mission. He also served on the State Board as Treasurer in the early days of the Gateway Long Spurs' history. He was never afraid to lend his time and expertise to the many chapter functions.

One of his other past times that demonstrated his commitment to the community was his involvement with the St. Charles County Fair. His brother-in-law Edward (Snap) Siesensop, the Fair Chairman corralled his energy to help do the set. For several week prior to the Fair, Eddie would work weekends and nights at the Fairgrounds making sure everything was squared away as would be required. One of the problems that the Fair Board faced was getting a reliable work force to tend the bar on the nights of the Fair. This is where Eddie thought that this would be a perfect fit for the Gateway Long Spurs in their efforts to give back something to the community.

The Chapter readily agreed to the partnership, the Fair Board got a reliable source of bar tenders, and the Gateway Long Spurs got some long, painful mornings the next day. Win/Win.

After Eddie's passing, the Chapter was wondering how we could honor



Mary Kaiser (St Charles County 4-H Shooting Program Coordinator) Bryan Eisenbath (Gateway Long Spurs Chapter President) and Mary Murray (wife of Eddie Murray)

the memory of our chapter member. It was decided the Chapter would continue it's association to the Fair Beer Garden and continue our service. We also wondered what we could do to make a difference and keep Eddie's commitment to youth hunting alive. The Fair Board was approached about putting out Tip Jars, we explained that any proceeds would be turned over to a youth oriented project that encouraged hunting and safe firearm handling. The Fair Board, knowing Eddie readily agreed.

The Friday night at the fair, the beer booth manned by the Gateway Long Spurs brought in over \$500 dollars. The next night the fair board put the tip jars out again and brought in over \$600 dollars. Everyone was impressed by the generosity of the people attending the fair. The final decision was that the St. Charles County

4-H Shooting program would be an appropriate program to invest the proceeds in.

At the Gateway Long Spurs Christmas Party a check for \$1,230.00 was presented to the St. Charles County 4-H Shooting Program in Eddie Murray's name and memory.. Mary Kaiser the County Coordinator for the 4-H program since its inception, gratefully accepted the donation and explained to the Chapter that the Shooting Programs gives out two \$1,000.00 scholarships per year, as well as buying shells for the participants. With today's uncertainties with the availability of acquiring shells and what the cost may be, we are hoping this makes a difference. We are sure Eddie is smiling down on our efforts.

Things to know about our Conservation Seed Program in 2022:

The year-old or older seed that makes our program possible has a germination rate of greater than 60% (most is greater than 80%) or we wouldn't offer it.

- This is a national program so how much seed we get is dependent upon national supply and demand. Therefore, placing an order only guarantees that you will get the seed IF it becomes available.

- We do not control when the seed gets here but it has always been well within the planting window.

- The delivery locations will be Kirksville, St. Joseph, Nixa and Elsberry.

- Seed location coordinators will contact everyone on the list associated with their site once the seed arrives.

- **All distribution sites will have seed days.** The dates and times available for seed pickup will be determined by the coordinators of those sites once the seed arrives. You will be notified of these dates by the coordinators of those sites.

The seed we can most likely count on will be Roundup Ready corn, Roundup Ready soybeans, and milo. Clearfield sunflowers may or may not be available but we have ordered some for Missouri if they do become available.



We will also have three cover crop blends that will include a turnip/radish mix, a rye/crimson clover/radish mix, and an oats/radish mix. Same rules apply, you MUST be a member to purchase the seed, it CANNOT be harvested, and the limit on corn is 5 bags per member.

Although the program will be available in 2022,

at this time we still do not have any details on price points so we will not be taking any orders until those details are finalized. I don't anticipate much change in price but fuel costs, supply chain, and shipping issues may factor in. If you are interested in ordering some seed, like last year, there will be a "seed program" tab at the

top of the home page on the Missouri State website and you can place your order online there. That tab should be available shortly after the first of the year and we will send out an e-blast reminding folks of program availability once the site is activated.

Getting Back To Normal

By Mike Allen, Regional Director, Missouri

Someone told me the other day that they would be glad when things get back to normal. I am not sure what normal is anymore. I would like to be able to say “Since Covid” but it seems to still be hanging around. One thing I do know, the NWTf is going to keep on doing what we do, conservation and preservation of the wild turkey, and our hunting heritage.

The past 18-20 months have caused us to change the way we operate to achieve our mission. We have learned to have Zoom and Teams virtual

meetings, we have learned to do online fundraising, we are learning new ways to do old things.

We will be, once again, hosting our annual Missouri State Chapter kickoff event at Margaritaville Resort at Lake of the Ozarks on January 8, 2022. This is a great way to start the year, and we hope to see you there!

The NWTf will be back at Opryland in Nashville for our national convention in February 16th-20th. Check our website, nwtf.org, for information. It looks to be bigger and better than 2020, and we would love to see you there as

well. With one of the biggest sports shows in the country, calling contests, taxidermy contest, seminars, there is something of interest for everyone.

The field staff is working with committees across the state planning our 2022 fundraising banquets. There are new procedures for ordering product, and a few other things are new, but the bottom line is our mission is the same. Your attendance at banquets, and the efforts you put into making those events successful, are the means that drive the mission. Thanks for all you do!

2021 Lake Wappapello Handicapped Deer Hunt

On October 14th-16th the Bootheel Boss Gobblers Chapter helped host a deer hunt for disabled hunters at the Army National Guard Lake Wappapello Training facility. The 25 hunters invited to attend arrived Friday afternoon to site their rifles in and get comfortable for the weekend. Hunters harvested 8 deer that weekend and all had a good time afield.

In addition to the Bootheel Boss Gobblers Chapter, the hunt was made possible by the Corps of Engineers, the Wake Foundation, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri National Guard, and many volunteers.



David Brawley



Rex Sutherland



Jesse Vandeven second morning.



Justin Montgomery

HB369 Becomes Law of the Land

By John Burk

A big THANK YOU to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), the Missouri Prescribed Fire Council (MPFC) moprescribedfire.org, The Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), Senator Mike Bernskoetter, Representative Tim Taylor, and Governor Mike Parson. MDC started the ball rolling in pursuing this legislation and was very helpful in providing guidance throughout the process. The MPFC and its affiliates (including NWTF) were very helpful in finding bill sponsors, providing testimony, and rallying the troops. CFM worked directly with the legislature throughout the process, as well as its affiliates, to promote the importance and garner the necessary support. Senator Bernskoetter and Representative Taylor “carried the torch” by sponsoring the bill and effectively introducing it to their peers and Governor Parson put the cherry on top by signing it into law.

It was a long and winding road and I have personally experienced the old saying, “two things that you don’t want to see made is sausage and legislation.” After a 3 year process of fits and starts the sausage is finally curing and hopefully this will eventually equate to more wild turkeys available for Missouri Thanksgiving dinners to go with the sausage dressing. Governor Parson signed HB369 into law back in July and it became effective on the 28th of August. This bill was an omnibus bill that contained several provisions relating to land management. However, the Missouri Prescribed Burning Act was of particular importance. Prior to HB369, Missouri was one of only five states that did not have a law on the books pertaining to the use of prescribed fire on private land. Historically,



Governor Parson signing the bill into law... Pictured with the Governor is Tyler Schwartz, Executive Director of the Conservation Federation of Missouri.

liability associated with the use of this invaluable management tool on public land was covered by the agency and there was a general understanding that managers using this tool were highly trained and follow specific protocol that significantly reduced the risk of anything bad happening. However, this general understanding did not exist for anyone doing private land burns even if the practitioner had the same level

of training and possibly even more experience. Therefore, those that used this tool on private land were either willing to roll the dice or had clauses in their existing insurance coverage that specified a certain prescribed fire cap of their overall workload that would be covered under their existing policies (usually 15% or less). Without HB369, insurance coverage was either not

Continued next page



The "Pure Air" photo is of the Pure Air Prescribed Burn Association in NEMO.

available or not affordable if a large part of your business, as a conservation contractor, involved burning. Insurance companies base their premiums off of risk assessments and since there was previously no legal definition of negligence associated with prescribed fire, all prescribed burners were assessed at the same level (i.e. if, in the rare event something bad happened, you had no out). An analogy would be that no one expects to get in a car accident but you cannot afford to not have insurance. If you are 55 and have a spotless driving record, you pay "x." However, if you're 25, have 6 speeding tickets and a DWI, you pay "y." Prior to HB369 we either rolled the dice, all paid "y," or we did not burn.

One of the biggest challenges in getting HB369 through the mill was addressing the liability issue with both the legislature and concerned stakeholders like the Cattlemen's Association and the utility companies. There was a lot of confusion on the purpose of the bill. The misunderstanding by most was that they had visions of western wildfires dancing across their minds and that we were asking to be absolved of all liability. We, MPFC and its affiliates, were not asking to be absolved of liability; we just wanted liability legally defined. We do not have the fuel types or relative humidity levels to ever see the level of fire intensity we deal

with out west. In fact, most folks that use fire in this region are not really all that concerned about the flames they're more concerned with smoke management and the risks associated with that (smoking in a road or smoking out a residential area).

Boiled down, the law basically states that if you are a private landowner, certified prescribed burn manager, or agent of the landowner you will not be held liable for damage caused by smoke or flames unless you are found to be negligent. Negligence is legally defined as a person who is legally responsible for harm if reasonable care was not taken. Reasonable care would be further defined as executing your fire based off of a burn plan. Burn plans define, in great detail, under which conditions it is safe to conduct the burn (relative humidity, wind speed, temperature, wind direction, fuel types, adjacent fuel types, fuel moistures, slope and aspect, location and width of firebreaks, ignition pattern, mixing heights, contingency plans for fire escapes, onsite available resources needed, and more). The flip side concern expressed by some legislators was that this law would require landowners that are currently doing burns without plans (burning off agricultural duff as an example) would have to pay for a plan or be held liable. The response

was that this law does nothing to change the requirements for anyone wanting to conduct a burn. Those landowners that were burning off agricultural duff in the past were always rolling the dice and they will continue to do so at the exact same level of risk now if they decide to execute a burn without a plan. The point of the plan is that, if you follow the specifications of the plan there is almost no chance of anything bad happening. In most cases, when something bad does happen with a planned burn, the person who dropped the match rolled the dice on one or more of the conditions outlined in the plan. This would be called, “burning out of prescription” and in that case, that individual would be defined as negligent and would still be responsible for any damages that occurred as a result.

The highest hurdle to clear in making prescribed burning easier for landowners to implement was getting a law on the books to address the liability concerns. Other pieces that will be falling into place in the coming months include the completion of a Missouri fire needs assessment, the hiring of a Prescribed Fire Coordinator, and the creation of a prescribed fire certification training platform. MDC is in the final stages of launching the training platform. Private landowners and prescribed burn practitioners will be able to access a self-paced online training course. Upon completion of the training module, participants will take an online test and if a passing score is achieved the platform will issue a certificate inviting the participant to attend a day long field portion of the training. These field sessions will be offered throughout the year by MDC Private Land Services staff and qualified partners much like the burn workshops offered in the past. Once the field portion is completed, the participants’ certificate will be signed and they will be considered a certified prescribed burn manager under the provisions of HB369. Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever secured funding to hire a Missouri Prescribed Fire Coordinator and this position should be filled by the end of the year. The coordinator will work closely with the MPFC managing their website and social media platforms that will serve as a clearing house for prescribed fire related information including trainings, equipment, fire data entry, available contractors, etc. The position will also assist in the development and coordination of prescribed burn associations (PBA’s). PBA’s are essentially landowner associations that help each other conduct burns on member properties. There are currently 6 in Missouri including the Upper Osage, East Central, Mark Twain, Pure Air, Ozark, and Foothills. The needs assessment will probably be the last piece to fall into place. It is a detailed collection of fire related information that establishes a baseline, determines where fire is needed, how fire is needed, what the current capacity is to address implementation, etc. These take a

lot of time and effort to compile but those states that have them are usually pretty successful in securing grant dollars enabling them to increase their capacity to achieve the objectives in their assessments. The MPFC is currently trying to get a university to take this task on.

The data is still being crunched for the 2021 brood survey. However, the preliminary information from the June portion of the survey is usually a pretty good indicator of what production will be for the year and it is predicting a hen:poult ratio of 1.0. We know that poult survival is the underlying problem to our turkey decline. There are a myriad of reasons for this and we are currently taking a detailed look at many of them to tease out what the primary causes are and what practical measures can be put in place to address them. One thing is for certain; regardless of what the research shows, restoring and maintaining the maximum amount of quality early brood range will always result in better production. Many question the habitat link claiming that their habitat is fine and the decline has to be the result of something else. Early brood range is a pretty specific vegetative structure that isn’t as common as many would prefer to believe. Prescribed fire is the cheapest and most effective way to restore and maintain early brood range. Depending upon when and how fire is applied to the landscape will eliminate some vegetation and encourage others creating habitat that provides ideal composition and structure that poult need to survive. Without the frequent use of fire it is difficult to create and maintain these ideal vegetative conditions.

Prior to the passage of HB369, the reluctance to use fire to manage private land was understandable. I have been hearing for the last several years from concerned turkey hunters their desperate desire to do SOMETHING to reverse this disturbing trend in turkey numbers. Our turkey decline is a production problem so if you really want to do something meaningful to reverse the trend provide more quality early brood range. Turkey harvest is not the problem. Predator numbers are an issue but significantly reducing their numbers without the benefit of a healthy fur market is not practical. The weather has also been an issue. The last 12 years have been the wettest in the last 126 but you obviously cannot control the weather. It is a proven fact that when you have more high quality brood rearing habitat more poult survive and there isn’t a better way to create and maintain it than with prescribed fire. The signing of HB369 into law is a conservation success and a step in the right direction in a state that is over 90% privately owned.

NWTF Banquets & Events

continued

River Hills Thunderin Longbeards

03/19/2022 - 5:00 PM
Contact: Butch Stephens
(573) 543-2165
Location: Bloomsdale KofC Hall
175 Jersey Lane, Bloomsdale, MO 63627

Rogersville Strutters

03/25/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Cody Wilson
(417) 838-2457
Location: Samuel Cedars
5000 Samuel Cedars Lane
Rogersville, MO 65742

Osage Gobblers

03/25/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Patrick Kliethermes
(573) 897-2169
Location: Osage Community Center
1769 US 50, Linn, MO 65061

Lake Area Longbeards

03/26/2022 - 5:00 PM
Contact: Charles Mcelyea
(573) 346-5482
Location: The Exchange Venue
57 Court Circle S.W.
Camdenton, MO 65020

North Central Local

03/26/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Bill Wehrle
(660) 646-4362
Location: Chillicothe Elks Lodge
401 Harvester Road
Chillicothe, MO 64601

Kirksville Ridge Runners

04/01/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Ron Darr
(660) 341-6936
Location: NEMO Fairgrounds
Hwy 11 East, Kirksville, MO 63501

Four Rivers

04/02/2022 - 5:00 PM
Contact: Mark Burns
(636) 584-4046
Location: Washington K of C Hall
1121 Columbus lane
Washington, MO 63090

Cooper County Limbhangers

04/02/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Vaughn Sell
(660) 882-7833
Location: Knights of Columbus Hall
1515 Radio Hill Road
Boonville, MO 65233

Heartland Longbeards

04/08/2022 - 4.00 PM
Contact: Kevin Clark
(816) 678-5019
Location: Big Iron Town
29608 E 179th St
Pleasant Hill, MO 64080

Hocomo Big Beards

04/09/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: David Glaskey
(573) 631-5533
Location: St Josephs Church Hall
300 N. Cleveland,
Fayette, MO 65248

Mid-State

04/14/2022 - 5:00 PM
Contact: Zach Wagner
(573) 673-4078
Location: Stoney Creek Inn
2601 S. Providence Road
Columbia, MO 65203

Lake Show-Me Longbeards

04/15/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Spencer Starrett
(660) 341-3780
Location: VFW Post 4958
123 W. Monroe, Memphis, MO 63555

Randolph County Longbeards

04/23/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Larry Terry
(660) 651-8636
Location: St Pius Catholic School
210 S. Williams St, Moberly, MO 65270

State Fair Strutters

04/30/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Chuck Mattingly
(660) 827-0758
Location: MEC Building
Missouri State Fair Grounds
Sedalia, MO 65301

Branson Tri-Lakes

06/11/2022 - 5:00 PM
Contact: Charles J Livingston
(417) 699-3481
Location: STONEBRIDGE
50 Stone Bridge Parkway
Branson West, MO 65737

Bollinger County Double Beards

06/18/2022 - 4:30 PM
Contact: Jackie And Mary Rowe
(573) 238-4535
Location: Leopold K C HALL
HWY N, Leopold, MO 63764

Locust Creek Longbeards

07/29/2022 - 5:30 PM
Contact: Ashley Santee
(660) 734-1524
Location: Milan Community Center
203 N. Market Street, Milan, MO 63556

Ozark Mountain Gobblers

07/30/2022 - 5:00 PM
Contact: Kenneth Sherrill
(573) 546-3392
Location: Arcadia Valley Elks
204 S. McCune Street, Pilot Knob, MO 63663

Crowleys Ridge Limbhangers

08/05/2022 - 5:00 PM
Contact: Dale Kemp
(573) 624-1283
Location: Gathering at Varsity
Crossing, 1430 N. Outer Rd
Dexter, MO 63841

Perry County Gun Blast

08/11/2022 - 6:00 PM
Contact: Dominic & Erin Blythe
(573) 768-0878
Location: Perryville Eagles Club
2746 West St Joseph Street
Perryville, MO 63775

River Bottom Gobblers

08/13/2022 - 5:00 PM
(803) 637-3106
Location: Caruthersville Armory
801 West Third Street
Caruthersville, MO 63830

David Blanton Memorial

08/20/2022 - 5:00 PM
Contact: Darren Jones
(417) 746-4854
Location: Mt. Grove YMCA
1 YMCA Drive, Mt. Grove, MO 65711

NWTF/QF/MDC/MPF/Friends of NRA Cooperative New Hunter Recruitment Dove Field Initiative 2021



As part of the National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative, we have offered an annual new hunter recruitment program that has been in place since the beginning of the initiative. This effort has been a partnership with Quail Forever (QF), the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), the Missouri Prairie Foundation (MPF), Friends of the NRA, and Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). Due to the financial impacts of COVID-19 to the NWTF, we were not able to count on super fund dollars to offset program costs in 2020 or 2021. The seven years

prior to 2020, the dove field program was a 10k line item in our annual budget and served as an insurance policy if other sources of funding were limited or unavailable. The Private Land Services Division of MDC contributed 10k and Friends of the NRA contributed 2.5k to cover the input and contracting costs of 6 fields totaling 59 acres. The MDC also designated one of their 10 acre sunflower fields at 10 Mile Pond as reserved for this program on opening day.

This project, from start to finish, was an excellent example of the true value of a cooperative effort in that all

partner agencies and organizations gave equally of their resources to make it a success. MDC and Friends of the NRA paid for the seed, herbicide, fertilizer and contracted installation costs of establishing the fields. All partners helped promote the opportunity. QF was helpful in locating landowners that provided 2 of the fields and also planted the fields and provided mentors. The MPF provided one of their fields as they had the past 3 years. Table 1 reveals numbers associated with the program including: 59 acres planted enabling 11 hunts to be conducted creating 45 new hunters. The total cost of the program was \$12,500. Program costs include: chemical (\$1,106.73), contracting (\$5,037), fertilizer (\$3,723.98) and seed (\$2,632.24). Therefore, providing this opportunity cost \$117.92/hunter and \$277.78/hunter created.

Table 2 reveals numbers associated with the 9 year program. The total cost of the program was \$112,797 with \$47,443 spent on seed and herbicide, \$31,524 for contracting some of the fields, \$30,752 for fertilizer, \$2,478 for fencing, and \$600 for road repair. Therefore, providing this opportunity cost \$68.32/hunter and \$168.35/hunter created.

Although we still believe that this program is successful, participation has declined over the last few years. The reduced number of fields is one reason. Folks, particularly new to the sport, are not as likely to travel very far to participate. Unfavorable weather conditions the last 3 years has impacted our ability to produce sunflowers and

Field	Total Acres	Total Hunts	Total Experienced Hunters	Total New Hunters	Total Hunters
Monroe	10	0	0	0	0
Callaway	8	2	9	9	18
Franklin	12	4	18	14	32
Newton	15	1	4	4	8
Cass	10	2	4	4	8
Randolph	4	1	10	10	20
Mississippi	10	1	16	4	20
Totals	69	11	61	45	106

Table 1. Counties where dove fields were planted, acres planted, number of hunts, number of mentors/experienced hunters, number of new hunters, and total number of hunters during the 2021 mentored dove hunting program.

Counties	Fields	Total Acres	Total Hunts	Total Experienced Hunters	Total New Hunters	Total Hunters
21	71	691	130	981	670	1,651

Table 2. Counties where dove fields were planted, acres planted, number of hunts, number of mentors/experienced hunters, number of new hunters, and total number of hunters for the 9 year effort.

has also impacted hunting conditions. This has reduced the number of fields and hunts that we could offer and has also impacted scheduling. We have found that when you have to reschedule hunts, new hunters do not appear to be as flexible with their schedules. Fields that got planted a little later than preferred or delayed in development from extreme draught or wet weather may not have been ready on opening day or the first weekend. The Monroe field did not hold any hunts this year because,

despite being replanted twice, it still failed due to extremely wet conditions. The Newton field held a hunt because there were still some birds using the weed seed in the field but a neighboring landowners cows got into the field just prior to preparing it for the hunt and completely eliminated the flowers in that field. Dove activity seemed much lower than previous years on every field in the program and this impacted the number of hunts offered. Normally we offer 3 hunts per field with the exception

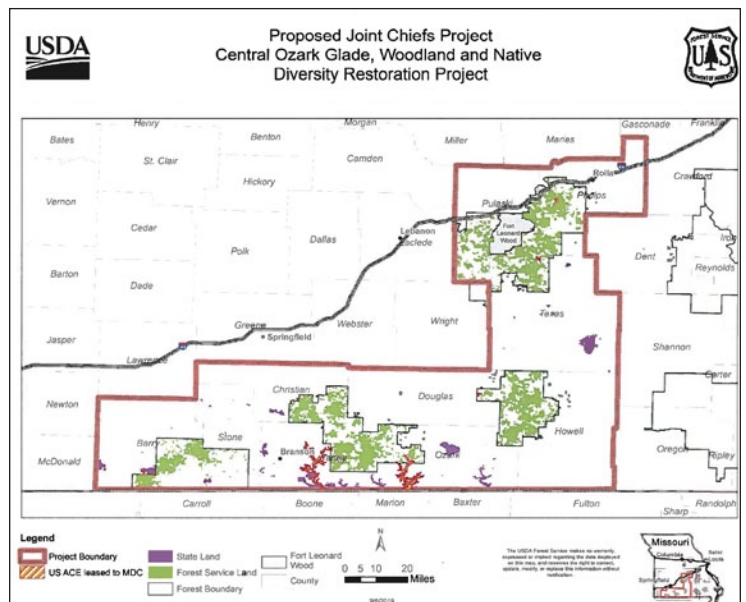
of any public fields we may have access to (Mississippi County this year) where we only have access on opening day (September first). The Franklin County field was the only field where more than 2 hunts were held. We want to offer a high quality experience for participants so if bird activity is really low we don't offer a hunt.

We intend to offer this program in 2022 as well.

An Opportunity To Improve Habitat On Private Land In Southern Missouri: Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Program (JCLRP)

In 2020, the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Program was approved to the tune of approximately \$250,000 to be used in private land restoration. This program is centered on private land restoration in 10 counties of the Missouri Ozarks: Pulaski, Phelps, Texas, Howell, Douglas, Ozark, Taney, Christian, Stone and Barry. These funds will be administered via cost-share through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on a variety of habitat improvement practices including forest stand improvement (FSI), glade and woodland restoration, prescribed burning, native grass establishment, tree planting and many others. The main priorities of this program are to restore at-risk ecosystems, reduce wildfire risk, improve water quality and quantity and benefit the communities in the area. At a larger scale, the JCLRP is a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and NRCS to meet common restoration goals at a landscape level.

Many of the goals and objectives within JCLRP align with improving habitat for wild turkeys, deer and quail. The forested areas, woodlands, and glades in this region are in dire need of restoration to improve brood range and nesting habitat for turkeys, in an area which showed the poorest Poults to Hen ratio in the state in 2020. With the addition of this \$250,000, it opens up a larger funding pool for this type of restoration to occur on private lands across the ten counties, and potential to make greater impacts on habitat in an area we need it most. If you own property in these counties, or know someone who does, I encourage



you to consider some habitat work on your property! Additionally, if you do own property in these counties and are considering applying for funding through NRCS, please feel free to contact me or your local NRCS office to discuss how we can best help you.

NRCS Office Locator: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/local/>

Will Rechkemmer, NWTF Forester, Southern Missouri: Email – wrechkemmer@nwtf.net , Cell: (319) 572-3887.