



# SHOW-ME GOBBLER

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

Volume 40 Number 2 • Summer 2019

## What Is Happening to Missouri's Wild Turkey Population and What Can NWTF do to Address the Alarming Trends That We Are Seeing?



Most are intimately aware of growing concerns about the turkey population trends in Missouri and many, particularly within our ranks, believe that we have come to a crossroads where something must be done to address it.

Turkey harvest is a good indicator of turkey population trends and most are aware of these numbers. John Lewis thought that spring harvest in his day (based upon mark & recapture data) represented about 10% of the overall population. Although hunter harvest is additive (takes more than would naturally be taken by predators and disease) it is not suppressing population growth at the levels occurring in Missouri. Things have obviously changed over time (season structure, technological advancements in hunting equipment, methods of hunting, etc.). However, whatever the proportion of the population the harvest actually represents (10% or more) there is no denying that the 36% decline between the high water mark of 60,744 in 2004 and the 38,788 we harvested this past season represents a popula-

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## New MDC Wild Turkey Biologist

As I begin my professional career as the Wild Turkey Biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation, I feel proud to work in a state whose residents hold strong turkey hunting traditions and for a department that is known for science-based management of our natural resources. I have been working toward obtaining a position like this one for many years now, and I am eager to get to know members of the Missouri Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation at banquets and meetings in the years to come.

Like many of you, my admiration of the natural world began when I was young. I remember spending countless hours outdoors with my two brothers, exploring the nature preserves and catching critters we found in the creek near our house in southeast Michigan. Our family made frequent trips to my grandparents' farm in northwest Ohio, where my grandpa taught my brothers and I how to fish at the pond they stocked with largemouth bass and bluegill. In high school, my cohort of friends and I would head out to one of the local lakes as soon as the final bell rang to get a few hours of fishing in before dark. On the weekends, my friends and I would travel "up north" to the northern part of Michigan's lower peninsula to spend time camping, fishing, kayaking, and hiking around the public lands. These experiences shaped my desire to pursue a career where I would have the opportunity to spend time outdoors and work to conserve our natural resources.

My professional experience with upland game birds and other wildlife began while I was completing my bachelor's degree at the Ohio State University. I had the opportunity to intern with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife, where I assisted their biologists with waterfowl and upland game bird banding. I also had the opportunity to conduct whistle-call surveys for Bobwhite quail and assist the turkey biologist with a population demographic study of wild turkeys in Ohio. This is where my passion for upland game bird research began.

Because of my experiences studying game bird population dynamics at Ohio State, I decided to pursue the opportunity to continue conducting similar research in graduate school. Fortunately, I had the chance to do just that, when I was chosen to work on a project where I would study a population of eastern wild turkeys in northeastern South Dakota. While working on this project, I split my time between completing coursework at West Virginia University in the fall and conducting field work out in South Dakota during the winter, spring, and summer. In January, I would head out to South Dakota and begin scouting for flocks of wild turkeys, setting up bait piles, and capturing birds for our study. Come April, I was chasing 80 hens wearing radio-transmitters around a 4-county area, monitoring their nests and broods through the spring and summer. Because nearly all the land within my study area was privately owned, I had to maintain positive working relationships with landowners, hunt-



Reina Tyl, the new Turkey Biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation, holding an adult eastern wild turkey hen that was captured, fitted with a radio-transmitter, and monitored for survival as part of her master's thesis research project. This hen was captured using a rocket net in February of 2017 on private land in Grant County, South Dakota and was still alive at the end of the project on April 2, 2019.

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# Forest Health News

By Tyler Cooper

This article is going to address the Little green/brown metallic beetles that have been annoying us the last few years during the summer months. Japanese Beetles, originally from Japan, first made it to the U.S in 1916 and have been spreading ever since. These insects have a one-year life cycle

starting with the eggs that are typically laid in July. Each female beetle can lay up to 60 eggs, these eggs hatch into grubs in August. The grubs will stay underground feeding on grass roots until early to mid-June of the following year when they emerge as adult beetles and start to feed. These beetles will feed on any plant leaf they find palatable. If they taste test a leaf and like their first bite they will put off a floral scent that attracts other beetles until the entire tree/plant is infested. The beetles eat the top layer of the leaf leaving behind a leaf skeleton defoliating the plant .

Japanese beetles are known to feed on over 300 different plant species. These infestations typically do not kill a tree, but the defoliation will stress the tree. If multiple years of defoliation occur in a row, death is possible. In drought years it is best to water trees 2-3 times per month if you are concerned with a specific tree. A good rule of thumb is 10 gallons of water per inch of the tree's diameter. Plants that are in full sun are more targeted than shaded plants, so to prevent major infestations in gardens or other small shrubs, plant in semi-shaded areas if possible.

So, how can you get rid of these pests? There are several different treatment methods, some more tedious than other. One of the most environmentally friendly methods is hand picking in mid to late June. This is exactly what it sounds like, if you spot a Japanese beetle remove it by



hand and this will not allow the beetle to release the pheromone that attracts more. Another treatment option would be insecticides, it is important to note that using insecticides is not beneficial to having a pollinator friendly yard and should never be used on flowering plant or trees that will attract bees and other pollinators. That being said there are organic insecticides that contain azadirachtin, Spinosad, or Bacillus thuringiensis galleriae that are effective deterrents for only a few days. Neem oil can be useful in deterring beetles from feeding if applied at the first sight of Japanese beetles. Broad-spectrum insecticides can be purchased at local lawn and garden stores and control Japanese beetles, it is important to check

the label and confirm that your tree species and Japanese beetles are listed. Re-application may be necessary depending on weather conditions. Also be aware that these insecticides can kill pollinators so never use on flowing plants or trees. Systemic insecticides are another option but have to be applied as a soil drench in mid-April, but I do not recommend them due to the serious threat to pollinators.

Lastly, DO NOT USE BEETLE TRAPS!! The advertised Japanese beetle traps do nothing but attract more than average amounts of beetles to your property and increase damage to surrounding trees and plants. Just because you see them caught in the trap does not mean that you are solving your problem.

For any questions or concerns regarding forest health please feel free to contact me via email or phone; Tyler Cooper NWTF Area Forester, (816) 586-2061 ext. 113 or tcooper@nwtf.net



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**Conserve. Hunt. Share.**

# 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:

The staff of the Show-Me Gobbler thank you for your contributions to the publication. Please feel free to submit future articles with photos to the contact information listed on the back page of this issue. Submission requirements: Digital copy submitted in Microsoft Word. (please contact us if you can only send hard copy) Digital photographs are preferred but will be accepted as snapshots if supplied to the editor. When scanning your own photos, please use at least 225 resolution (dpi) but no more than 400 dpi, saved as a .jpg, .tiff or .eps. Photos submitted outside of these guidelines may not be suitable for printing. Please include photo captions and credits for each photo submitted. Photos will not be returned. Thanks again for your contributions and we look forward to your participation in the future.



**Spring River Toms Jakes Event**  
09/28/2019 - 09:00 (CST)  
Contact: Jerry Hartman  
Phone: 417 388-2923  
Location: Baugh Flight Park  
6079 Incline Road, Reeds, MO 64859

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tion in significant decline. Although this decline is real it is also important to note that hunter numbers have also decreased by 21% since the mid-2000's so some of the decline in harvest can probably be attributed to fewer hunters. Regardless, the declining numbers have become more unacceptable to many of our members in recent years and it is their passion that drives them to ask "what can we do?" on behalf of the resource.

### Why is the Turkey Population Declining?

Wild Turkey population dynamics is a complicated system, especially considering that the wild turkey is a landscape level species that may occupy more than 4-square miles annually as part of their normal home range and it is not uncommon to document movements on transmitted birds of more than 10 miles. As with most matters related to wildlife there are a multitude of factors that collectively have an impact on populations. People, habitat, weather, predators, competition, and diseases can all contribute to changes.

### Land Conversion

Overall landowner property acreage continues to get smaller each year. Additionally, overall conversion of land into developed, non-wildlife friendly space is creeping upward. This combination of factors will yield more challenges for managing human impacts over a larger area.

### CRP Acreage Declines

Nationally, when we were setting turkey harvest records annually in the early 2000s we had almost 40 million acres of CRP and 1.6 million of it was in Missouri. Starting in 2007, CRP acreage in Missouri declined from 1.6 million to 1.0 million by 2014. When you lose 600,000 acres of nesting and brood rearing habitat, ground nesting bird populations will decline. The smaller strips or ribbons of habitat versus the larger contiguous blocks increase predation rates and lowers overall turkey production.

### Changes in Available Waste Grain

Harvesting equipment is much more efficient, waste grain does not exceed a bushel to the acre, and operator instructions are provided on how to manage for this or less. A waterfowl study measuring changes in average available waste grain between 1978 and 1998 indicated a 50% decline. More recent information from TN indicated the decline is greater than 90%. Waste grain used to be visible on fields throughout the winter and this important high energy supplemental winter food was undoubtedly important to fueling the productivity of both deer and turkey populations throughout the Midwest. Juvenile and adult hen nesting and re-nesting rates can be influenced by declines in body condition as a result of dietary deficiencies; therefore, reproductive potential decreases. If juvenile hen and re-nesting rates are significantly lower as a result of dietary shortfalls, this would have a significant effect on the reproductive potential of north Missouri

turkey populations much like mast failures influence this in the Ozarks.

### Predator Population Increases

Between 1977 and 2017, which includes the period prior to the fur market crash in the 1980's, scent station visitation rates (a furbearer population monitoring index), by raccoon and opossum, have each increased over 200%. Between 1994 and 2017, furbearer observation rates made by archery hunters (another index to monitor furbearer populations) raccoon and opossum observation rates increased by over 60%. Predator populations influence turkey production and we have more predators on the landscape today than in the past.

### Spring Rainfall

Wet springs negatively impact production regardless of habitat quality, especially when combined with high predator populations and habitat configuration (i.e. linear and easily searched vs larger blocks). Historical spring (March-May) rainfall records from 1895-2015 indicate an average of 12 inches. When comparing the spikes and troughs between our brood survey records and these rainfall records, in nearly every case where we had a spike in production we had a corresponding trough in spring rainfall. Weather patterns tend to be cyclical as do turkey population fluctuations. Although wet springs are bad for ground nesting birds, habitat quality, quantity, and configuration can mitigate some of the effects of weather and definitely sets the table for boom years when conditions are favorable.

### Diseases

There are several turkey diseases such as avian pox and blackhead disease that are well known; however, there are other disease vectors that are being looked at more closely, such as West Nile Virus and Lymphoproliferative Disease, to understand potential impacts to populations. Localized populations could have marked declines due to some diseases especially when turkeys are congregated at locations with supplemental feed and/or bait. In these cases, disease incidence and transfer increases dramatically.

### There is No Easy Fix:

Everyone is concerned about declining turkey populations and many are insistent that NWTf lead the charge to do something about it. Many think that the problem can be solved with simple regulatory modifications. "All we have to do is 'x' and everything will go back to the way it was." The problem is that the decline is the result of a combination of factors and there is nothing simple that can be done to change the trajectory. The following 7 suggestions are the more common being offered as necessary changes as well as the logic behind why these are not workable solutions.

### Predator control in the form of contests or outright bounties.

"Predator control" does not work and paying for, or even supporting, contests that make this claim is not

in our best interest. They will NOT have any measurable impact on predator populations at a landscape scale. They WILL make us an easy target for groups that are totally opposed to any form of hunting for any reason; the cost benefit cannot be justified. Sport hunting or trapping predators as an additional and enjoyable outdoor recreational activity that responsibly and respectfully uses these native wildlife populations is something we can support.

In order for a bounty to be effective it has to be high enough to achieve the desired effect. Historical trapping harvest data going back to 1991 (well after the fur market crash) shows that two peaks existed as a response to increased fur demand, one in 1997 when we harvested around 220,000 animals and one in 2013 when we harvested 160,000 (note: last year we harvested around 35,000). Both of those increases happened when we had a \$15/pelt or higher average. Therefore, to even approach meaningful harvest through a bounty, the bounty would have to be \$15 or greater and stay there. At 1997 harvest levels the bill for that bounty would be 3.3 million unbudgeted dollars. The only way to meaningfully influence fur harvest is to restore the fur market. This is obviously not something that could be immediately accomplished and would require a wide reaching, aggressive, and committed marketing campaign.

### Eliminate the fall season(s)

At first glance this seems to make sense. Why allow the harvest of even one hen when our turkey population is declining like it is? Although hen wild turkeys live a little longer than other ground nesting birds, they are still relatively short lived animals with fairly high mortality rates and the majority of this mortality is not human induced (annual mortality of hens is about 40%). The study that we just concluded put hen fall harvest rates at less than 1%. These results are similar to the last study conducted in the Ozarks where hunters shot less than 1% of the radio-tagged hens. Therefore, elimination of the fall season would not have any measurable effect in reversing population trends because the problem is not harvest related. All ground nesting birds rely on high reproductive potential that allows the population to respond quickly and significantly to favorable weather patterns and habitat conditions. We still have plenty of hens we just need better conditions for them to respond. Successfully recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters is a critical part of our mission and needless regulations that minimize opportunity or access are an obstacle to our success. The science says this change would not fix our problem of low turkey numbers. This is Missouri; we should always support what the science says.

### Restrict the spring harvest to males only

Bearded hens harvested in the spring only compromise 1% of the harvest, and is considered statistically insignificant. Harvest restrictions are established to maintain spring turkey hunting quality, which is defined by the Missouri turkey hunter as the reasonable opportunity to hear and hunt a gobbling adult male turkey. The science tells us that our current



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season structure does not affect population growth or the quality of spring turkey hunting. Therefore, like fall harvest restrictions, we should not be in favor of regulations changes that needlessly deny opportunity.

### Go back to one bird in the spring

Missouri already has one of the most restrictive spring seasons in the country and these regulations (ex., Monday opener, one bird the first week, and only 3 weeks long) does help maintain some gobblers in the population that may have otherwise been harvested under a different structure. However, there is a limit to how many you can realistically carry through a season or over to the next season. Although the majority of mortality on gobblers is harvest

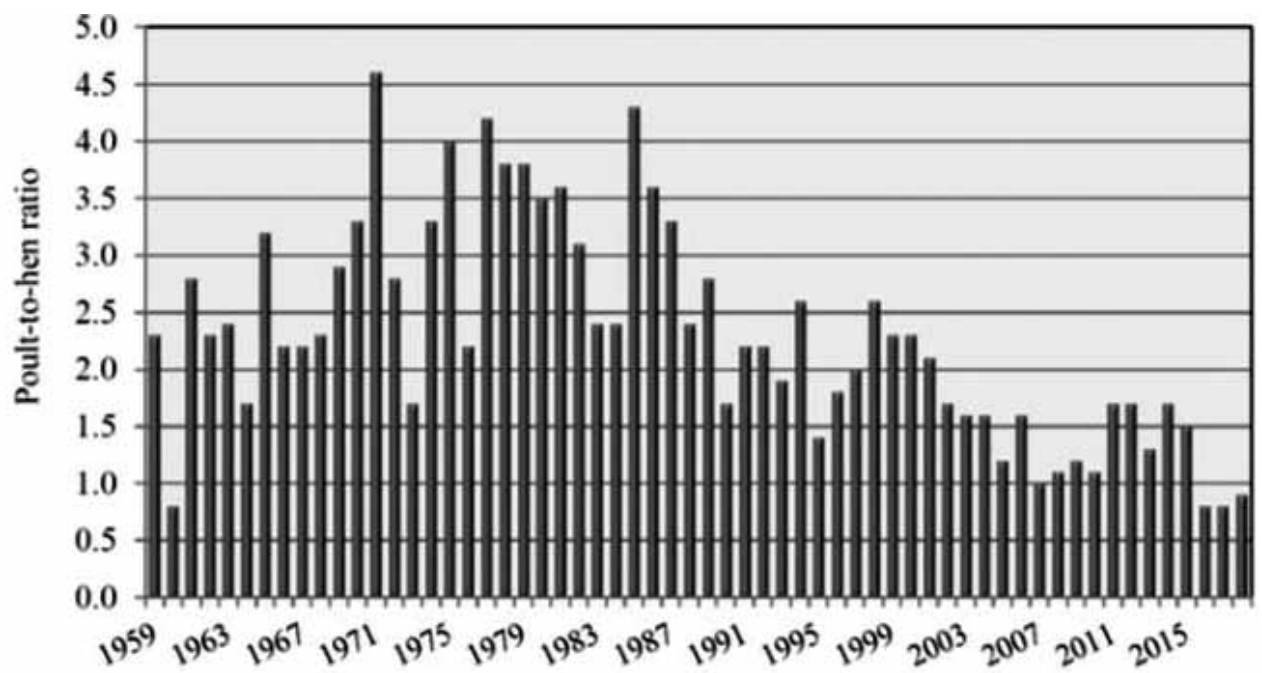
related, hunted or not, gobblers don't typically live very long. Also, only about 5% of hunters harvest both of their birds. Although dropping to one bird may bank a few, what is more likely to happen is that a one bird limit would have the same effect as the one bird the first week rule. The "second bird" not shot by the 5% will be someone else's "first bird." Therefore, the overall harvest probably would not change much. The upside may be that it would potentially create more mentors but this too could actually increase the overall harvest because someone being mentored by the 5% is probably more likely to harvest a bird. Although there may be some benefits (increased hunter success, increased hunter satisfaction, more mentors) the change would not affect the overall population so this too would be a decision of; if the science says no population effect, why should we lobby for it?

### Shorten the season

The majority of the harvest (about 85%) happens the first 2 weeks of the season so to significantly reduce gobbler harvest would require limiting the season to a week. Restricting gobbler harvest may bank a few gobblers but the same arguments apply here that applied to restricting the harvest to one bird: 1) you can only bank so many gobblers, 2) restricting gobbler harvest does not impact the overall turkey population.

### Have county or region specific regulations

Our current framework of regulations was designed by a string of the most reputable and respected wild turkey biologists in the country based upon the best available science. The regulatory framework they built has made Missouri one of the best destinations for eastern turkey hunting in the country by providing high quality turkey hunting without being needlessly complicated and restrictive. Despite the fact that we are looking at nearly a 40% decline since the early 2000s our harvest is still higher than most other eastern turkey states. Complicated regulations are an obstacle to recruitment, retention, and reactivation. Here again, our problem is not related to harvest and we cannot solve the problem by manipulating regulations. Therefore, we should not pursue this.



**Figure 2. Statewide wild turkey productivity index (poult-to-hen ratio) in Missouri based on observations during the Conservation Department's Wild Turkey Brood Survey, 1959–2018.**

### Close season even in the spring until they bounce back.

Current spring harvest levels do not impact turkey population growth so this restriction would have no effect on the overall population. This needless restriction of hunting opportunity should not be considered for the same reasons previously outlined.

### What is NWTF doing to Address The Issue?

As a Biologist, avid turkey hunter, and NWTF sponsor member, one thing that really bothers me is when I hear folks expressing that NWTF is not doing enough or, in some cases, not doing anything to solve the problem. The following is a list of things that we are doing and that are making a difference.

### National and State Policy

Our Chief Executive Officer, Becky Humphries, is a nationally respected career resource professional as are other members of our management team that work with Cornerstone Government Affairs in Washington DC. on big ticket items like the Farm Bill. The 2018 Farm Bill cap is 25 million acres; not the 40 million we had in the hay days but twice what was originally proposed by congress. The NWTF and partners had significant influence to maintain wildlife friendly practices within the Farm Bill. Additionally, NWTF majorly influenced forestry related activity through increased funding for forestry related practices. We also influenced congress to stop the practice of "fire borrowing" within the USFS where program budgets throughout the national forest system were robbed to pay for fire suppression efforts out west. This funding will now come from disaster relief funding and enable our national forest staff to more effectively manage our national forests. USFS Stewardship agreements are a product of our national staff, past and present, that help us enable the USFS to more effectively manage our public lands. Chad Doolen is responsible for

delivering these projects on the Mark Twain, and his work has influenced thousands of acres of private forest land and hundreds of acres of Mark Twain nesting and brood rearing habitat. Lastly, the NWTF secured a \$5.3 million dollar Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) agreement to support 24 forester positions in 23 states to help deliver forest management and conserve / enhance a minimum of 350,000 acres. Justin Ferguson and Tyler Cooper are positively impacting private lands through our NRCS agreements in northwest and southeast Missouri to improve forest management. Other non-governmental biologists and I serve on the state technical committee for NRCS. The Farm Bill and the cost share assistance programs associated with it provides the single largest source of funding and technical support available to private landowners that control and manage the majority of the habitat throughout the Midwest and are influenced by the technical committee. Significant improvements have been made to maximize the wildlife benefits when these practices hit the ground in every successive iteration of the Farm Bill as a result.

### Super Fund Dollars at Work

Your super fund dollars have been used to support 5 separate cost share programs that have helped improve thousands of acres of private land in southwest, central, southeast, northeast, and northcentral Missouri. The work that we are helping make happen on those properties are creating source populations and demonstration sites that are expanding demand for similar work elsewhere. Many of these private landowners have positively commented about the increase of turkeys on their tracts. Your super fund has enabled the purchase of 77 individual pieces of habitat equipment including: fully equipped prescribed burning trailers, no-till drills, oscillating seeders, tillers, tractors, UTVs, sprayers, chainsaws, etc. The majority of this equipment is housed at local Soil &



# NEMO Chapter Assists Mark Twain Lake with Annual Mentored Turkey Hunts

Missouri ranks 4<sup>th</sup> nationally in hunters created through chapter related mentored hunts, one on one member hunts, and hunters created through hunter education. The efforts of the NEMO Chapter stand out as to why we have this impressive national standing. The chapter has been working with The Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) at Mark Twain Lake and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to host a variety of mentored deer and turkey hunts for years and they are making a difference. This spring, 3 different hunts were offered: a youth hunt where nearly 100 youth participated, a handicapped hunt where 20 folks were taken afield, and an adult mentored hunt where 8 new hunters were disciplined in the art and science of spring turkey hunting.

The 8 adult apprentice hunters were introduced to turkey hunting on the public lands of Mark Twain Lake. Members of the NEMO Chapter and MDC staff contributed their time to serve as mentors for the apprentice hunters. They graciously and patiently provided instruction on safe hunting tactics and strategies.

To some, successful turkey hunting is gauged by the harvest. To the Mark Twain Lake apprentice hunters though, success was measured by time spent in the Northeast Missouri forests experiencing the beauty of spring time, new friendship created, and skills gained that they will utilize during their future turkey hunts.

The NEMO Chapter and the Hannibal Crossing Church also offered their 10th annual youth spring turkey hunt during the 2019 season. Youth from several Missouri counties and some from out of state participated in an informational safety/turkey hunting seminar on Friday, April 5th with special guest speaker, and multiple National Champion Turkey Caller, Billy Yargus. On Saturday, April 6th



Cael Wilt (left) and Gideon Bogue, showing off their success.

nearly 100 youth turkey hunters were taken afield with a guide in hopes of bagging a turkey. For some, this was their first time in the turkey woods. Eight youth hunters were successful on Saturday morning.

After a morning in the field, hunters gathered in Maywood Missouri, with host, Ralph Bedenbender for a BBQ, refreshments, and prize give-aways. Youth hunters were able to be included in a drawing to win guns and other prizes. A total of 8 guns were given away to the youth participants. Turkeys were also weighed, and beard and spur measurements were taken. Some of the kids who were not successful on Saturday were able to go out again Sunday, where several others enjoyed success in harvesting a NE Missouri tom.



NWTF NEMO Chapter came together to pull off a great mentored hunt in 2019.

Special thanks go out to the NWTF NEMO Chapter, Grand National Calling Champion, Billy Yargus, Ralph Bedenbender and everyone who helped guide and provide land for the kids to hunt on. We would also like to thank everyone who gave donations and to Stanley's Diner for the BBQ.

New MDC Turkey Biologist continued from page 1.

ers, and the public to ensure I would be able to conduct my research. Therefore, I spent a lot of time attending community outreach events, including NWTF Chapter Banquets, to spread the word about the project and update interested stakeholders about the status of their turkey population. I really enjoyed communicating with turkey hunters and NWTF members during my time in South Dakota, and I look forward to continuing to "talk turkey" with all of you here in Missouri.

Even though the past few years have been challenging for many of Missouri's turkey hunters, this state still offers some of the best turkey hunting around. The Department's statewide brood survey, conducted in June, July, and August indicated very low poult-to-hen ratios during 2016 and 2017. Fortunately, 2018 appeared to be a better year for reproduction, as the statewide poult-to-hen ratio was 13% higher than in 2017. Compared to the 5-year average, poult-to-hen ratios in 2018 were higher in the Lindley Breaks region; similar in the Mississippi Lowlands, Northeast, and Northwest regions; and lower in the Ozark Border, Ozarks East, Ozarks West, Union Breaks, and West Prairie regions. During the 2018 survey, 36% of hens were observed with a brood, which was up from 27% in 2017 and the same as the 5-year average. The average brood size in 2018 was 3.8 poults, which was an increase from the average brood size observed in 2017 (3.5 poults).

I know that many of you are concerned about the future of turkeys and turkey hunting in the state. We are in an interesting time in wild turkey history, where population growth has slowed, or abundance appears to be declining, across much of the wild turkey's range in North America. I certainly have my work cut out for me but will work tirelessly to ensure there is a sufficient population of turkeys in this state, so Missourians' strong turkey hunting traditions can continue for years to come.

-- Reina Tyl

***Turkey Hunting  
Headquarters  
of Northeast Missouri***



***"Second best cheeseburger in town"***

**Kirksville, MO**

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# The George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter Special Recognition

Share your outdoor experiences with your NWTF peers, PLEASE submit them to John Burk at [jb Burk@nwtf.net](mailto: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.



Chapter president Mike Wolff of Leadbelt Longbeards with state scholarship runner up Alyssa Jenkins.



Osage Gobblers chapter President, Jacob Wolfe, pictured with scholarship winner Dalton Jaegers.



Reynolds County Strutting Gobblers chapter Gary Black.



Alex (left) and George Head of Locust Creek Longbeards, and their 2019 harvest.

**Please consider sharing your story in the Show Me Gobbler Publication**  
Updated submission deadline is — April 15, July 15 & November 30

## Our 2019 Super Fund Dollars at Work in Missouri

At the January 2019 Missouri State Board of Directors budget meeting board members approved a budget of \$305,365 for 2019. The projects approved were selected from all submitted applications totaling more than \$150,000. These projects stand to improve habitat on both public and private ground and support outdoor recreation safety, awareness, and education in the Show Me State. An overview of allocated dollars follows:

**Equipment, Habitat & Research - 23 projects - total \$150,195 (49%)**

Conservation seed for our members that will impact over 5,500 acres, needed equipment for Missouri Prairie Foundation to manage over 2,700 acres of prairie throughout the state, prescribed burning equipment, create a subsidy program to provide generic glyphosate to members, cost share assistance programs in the Missouri River Hills and NEMO, assist the Mark Twain with augmenting their aerial prescribed burning program that will conserve over 10,000 acres, habitat restoration at Capps, Bethlehem, Grand River Bottoms, and Upper Tebo Creek CA, Mark Twain Lake, and Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge, commitment of support for poult survival study in NEMO, support project forester in SEMO, provide match for USFWS Partners Program. \$10,000 of chemical to manage NWSG at grassland focused CAs throughout the state.

**Support of Educational & Community Programs – 15 projects total \$24,725 (8%)**

Provided NASP program at the local level in 5 communities; provided additional support for larger jakes events; provided funding for leadership events for volunteer outreach and education, provided funding for 6 landowner workshops, supported Discover Nature Girls Camps.

**Support Shooting Sports & Mentored Hunts – 10 projects total \$19,050 (6%)**

Purchase equipment to initiate or enhance local 4H shooting programs throughout the State, provide mentored dove hunts, support youth turkey hunts, support dove clinic, provide equipment for BSA at Camp Lewellan.

**total \$193,970 (63%)**

### OTHER ANNUAL COMMITMENTS

|   |       |           |       |
|---|-------|-----------|-------|
| Scholarships                                    | total | \$28,000  | (9%)  |
| JAKES   | total | \$13,000  | (4%)  |
| Support for National District Biologist Program | total | \$20,000  | (7%)  |
| WITO Local and state events and training        | total | \$1,000   | (.3%) |
| Support of MO 4H Shooting Sports                | total | \$2,500   | (.8%) |
| United States Sportsmen's Alliance              | total | \$5,000   | (2%)  |
| Archery in the Schools Program                  | total | \$2,500   | (.9%) |
| Share the Harvest                               | total | \$1,000   | (.3%) |
| Support Development of State Sportsmen's Caucus | total | \$2,500   | (.9%) |
| National Convention Travel                      | total | \$4,000   | (1%)  |
| FFA   | total | \$2,300   | (.8%) |
| Wheelin' Sportsmen events with local chapters - | total | \$5,000   | (2%)  |
| Conservation Federation Affiliation Dues        | total | \$3,000   | (1%)  |
| Hunting Heritage Commitment                     | total | \$1,000   | (.3%) |
| Recruitment                                     | total | \$5,000   | (2%)  |
| Chapter Rebate                                  | total | \$10,000  | (3%)  |
|   | total | \$105,800 | (35%) |

**2019 Total recommended Super Fund Budget**  
**\$193,970 + 105,800 = \$299,770**

# NWTF/QF/MDC/MPF/ CFM & Friends of the NRA Cooperative New Hunter Recruitment Dove Field Initiative

As part of the National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative, Missouri initiated a new hunter recruitment program in partnership with Quail Forever (QF), the Conservation Federation of Missouri, the Missouri Prairie Foundation, Friends of the NRA, and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). In an effort to attract new hunters into the sport, 5 dove fields were established in different regions throughout the state on private land.

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 paid for the seed, herbicide, fertilizer and contracted installation costs of establishing the fields (we used The



Conservation Seed Program to get our seed; \$35/bag vs. \$250). All partners helped promote the opportunity and MDC and QF conducted some workshops to educate the new hunters. QF was

very instrumental in locating landowners that provided 3 of the fields and also planted the fields.

Table 2 (below) reveals numbers associated with the 5 year program to date. The total cost of the program was \$69,644 with \$30,531 spent on seed and herbicide, \$17,657 for contracting some of the fields, and \$21,195 for fertilizer. Therefore, providing this opportunity cost \$54.45/hunter and \$162.34/hunter created.

We are providing this opportunity to anyone, regardless of age, that has never hunted previously but would like to give it a try. If you, or someone you know, may be interested in participating this September please fill out the application and give it shot. You won't be disappointed!

| Counties | Fields | Total Acres | Total Hunts | Total Experienced Hunters | Total New Hunters | Total Hunters |
|----------|--------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 19       | 41     | 502         | 88          | 754                       | 525               | 1,279         |

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 5 year effort.

## Missouri Dove Hunt Registration Form

**Date of Event: Hunt dates may vary but will be 9/1 and 1 or 2 other days during September 2019.**

Although not required, it is highly recommended that you attend either a hunter education class or a dove workshop if you have never previously hunted. Information on available classes can be found at the following links:

**Dove Workshops:** <http://mdc.mo.gov/events>

**Hunter Education Registration:** <http://www.register-ed.com/programs/missouri>

Please complete the following information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Check the space that applies to you:**

First time hunter     Lapsed hunter (didn't hunt anything the previous year)     First time migratory bird hunter

**Preferred hunt (check all that you would attend but put a "1" by your preferred location)**

Mokane Area     Mark Twain Lake Area     Diamond Area     Washington Area     Chillicothe Area

Check here if you would like to attend more than one hunt if spots are available     If you do not have a shotgun check here

This opportunity is being provided in an effort to recruit new hunters. Therefore, priority will be given to people, regardless of age, that have never previously hunted. Second priority will be given to lapsed hunters (did not hunt anything the previous season), and those hunters that have not previously hunted migratory birds followed by youths 11-15 (even if they have previously hunted).

**Send completed application to: John Burk, 7152 Tomahawk Lane, Steedman, MO 65077 or e-mail to [jburk@nwtf.net](mailto:jburk@nwtf.net).**

Note: Hunting licenses and shells will be the responsibility of the participant.

All information is due by August 23, 2019.



## Tyler Cooper 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. Chad Doolen has been working in cooperation with the USFS and NRCS for the last 3 years focusing his efforts primarily in the shortleaf pine region of southcentral Missouri. Justin Ferguson brought on in November provides additional needed assistance with private land forest management in southeast Missouri. Tyler Cooper 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 new National Forestry Initiative. Tyler holds a B.S. in both Forestry and Fisheries & Wildlife from The University of Missouri-Columbia. With several years of experience with the Missouri Department of Conservation as a Forester, as well as years as a professional outfitter, he has developed a passion for conservation and improvement of wildlife habitat.

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 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



Tyler Cooper, NWTF NFI Area Forester.

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 816-209-2814 or e-mail him at [tcooper@nwtf.net](mailto:tcooper@nwtf.net).

## Regional Review

Nate Carl — Regional Director  
Eastern Kansas – Western Missouri

Hi All,

I was fortunate enough to start my spring turkey season early this year, with a public land archery hunt in Kansas, who's archery season opens a week before Missouri's. Prior to this season, I had never hunted turkey in Kansas, and I had hunted them very little on public land. On a whim, I decided to give it a shot, and I was able to harvest my first Kansas turkey. Looking back on that hunt, I realize it was made possible entirely by my access to quality public land. Considering I have lived in Missouri my entire life, I don't know any landowners in Kansas, nor was it an option to lease a farm or pay an outfitter. That being

said, I still had the opportunity to go hunting. This is the case for thousands of hunters in Missouri and across the nation, regardless of residency. They may not know the landowners, or have the means to lease a farm, but they still have the opportunity to hunt because of their access to public land. It is the recognition of the importance of hunting access to the general public that I believe set's the NWTF apart from other conservation non-profits. To put it bluntly, hunters cannot be created if they have nowhere to hunt, and this is something the NWTF recognizes in their Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative. Over the course of the first 6 years of the initiative, the NWTF has opened 559,833 acres of hunting access, exceeding our 10 year goal by 59,833 acres, with 4 years to spare. I personally see this as 559,833 new opportunities for people to go hunting, thus resulting in higher hunter retention and recruitment rates. So I encourage all of you to pat yourselves on the back knowing that the hard work you put into your banquets helps lay the foundation for the preservation of the sport we all love.



# The Prettiest Turkey Hunter in the State

By Ben Doerge

Here it is the last day on the quest for the coveted prize. If it doesn't happen now it's another whole year of preparation, anxiety and stress of waiting. The self-talk drives you crazy, 'what should I have done differently to improve my chances?' This is such an up and down emotional rollercoaster. So, you pack up for a short period and decide I'm going for it again next year. So, you take a short period to regroup and think about what lies ahead, then the process starts over. You practice whenever you get a chance. Sometimes it drives the family crazy that you are doing this AGAIN and ALREADY, but, you are committed. The practice never ends, eventually you have to start getting your gear ready, do I wear the same gear again, or is it time to buy new? Do I need new footwear too? Do I change my routine or stick with the one that got me so close? I'm committed, this is what I want to do! I practice, I try on my

attire, I want to make sure I have the correct ammo this time!

WAIT! Did you think I was talking about turkey hunting season? Well not just that. Let me introduce you to Shae Smith, one of our many JAKES. Shae is the daughter of Mark and Angie Smith, owners of Smiths Restaurant in Bolivar and Springfield, MO. Not only a turkey hunter, but an avid softball player and athlete.

The first time Alice and I went to the Miss Missouri pageant, it was an experience. We went to see our granddaughter who was one of the little sisters to one of the Miss Missouri contestants. The girls shadow their big sister for the weekend for the experience and mentoring that takes place, and much needed to ensure the continuation of their passions. We need to be constant in that mentoring of our hunting passion also. As we watched these young ladies, 13 to 25 years old, in their

quest for their passions to harvest the prize, you see how athletic they are and how much they had to practice to perfect their routine, so they could draw the judges in close to them for the ultimate interaction. With communication skills they need to be able to lure the judges to be more curious into what they are saying. It's not a beauty contest.

I watched as the moment neared, Marks heart was about to beat out of his chest. Damn, she missed, the judges missed, but she was first runner-up. I saw and listened to Mr. Smith trying to be the ultimate mentor, encourager, DAD to Shae. Using logic to explain what had just happened, but it doesn't matter. If you've never taken a youth or new hunter along on the mentoring journey, you don't know what you are missing. Take your butt out there and enjoy the passion, if your heartbeat doesn't thump your chest, Quit! Do something else! Just remember if you've never missed, you haven't enjoyed it enough.

So, her practices amped up, longer, more intense. Her gear may have changed the appearance, but the



Shae Smith with her 2018 buck.

passion that's inside will always be there. This season the quest resulted in a successful hunt.

Shae Smith 2019 Miss Missouri Outstanding Teen Winner! Prettiest turkey hunter in the state? I told you it's not a beauty contest. Congratulations Shae, and to all those hunting or on the quest for your passions.

## Feral Swine Hunting Closure Order For the Mark Twain National Forest

As you read this a decision has probably already been made as to whether or not it will continue to be legal to hunt feral hogs on the Mark Twain National Forest. This not only seems counter intuitive to the control and ultimate elimination of feral hogs but also counter to our mission of hunter creation. However, this is a necessary step to enable the most affective war against this pervasive and destructive pest. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) has been a significant partner to the USFS on numerous habitat enhancement projects on USFS lands throughout the nation. In many states (including Missouri) federal lands provide the largest contiguous tracts of suitable turkey habitat and public access to hunt them available. It is the mission of the NWTf to conserve the wild turkey and preserve the hunting heritage. Therefore, we support any proposed action intended to manage and protect healthy natural systems that turkeys and other native species are a part of and that feral swine are not. The NWTf, at both the state and national level provided a letter of support for this closure and the logic contained within it follows:

Recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters is a primary objective of our 10 year Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative and critical to mission delivery. Furthermore, the NWTf has a national reputation of being a hunter advocacy group as much as we are a conservation organization. Therefore, being in favor of restricting hunting opportunity seems counter to our mission. We understand and appreciate the recreational value that feral hog hunting provides to those currently participating in it and that are defending it. However, there are reams of undeniable

evidence that feral hogs place additional stress on natural systems that these unique and valuable resources; a part of our natural Missouri heritage, are not designed to absorb.

We are currently experiencing a significant decline in eastern turkey populations. While the reason for this state-wide decline is multifaceted, feral hogs are no doubt an additional limiting factor that should not have to be overcome in large portions of the Ozarks where feral hog numbers have grown out of control. Evidence from a previous study indicates that feral hogs do negatively impact turkey production (Petty et al. 2011)

Feral hogs also serve as an unacceptable additional risk to both human and livestock health with the diseases that many commonly carry. Eliminating feral hogs is the best way to manage this threat.

With all that is common knowledge about feral hogs, even those that enjoy hunting them recognize that feral hogs do tremendous unacceptable damage, they are not a positive addition to our landscape, and that they must be eliminated. Those opposing the closure order believe that feral hogs can be controlled through unrestricted hunting. However, here again, mounting evidence points to the fact that the biology and behavior of the animal does not render hunting as an effective control method. In fact, everywhere that has allowed unrestricted hunting access



# If Nothing Else, Please Read This — Why Managing Your Local Banquet Is Important

By Larry L Neal  
Missouri Senior Regional Director

Telling our story locally is something I don't do a great job of. My guess is many of us fall into that same category as well. It's a busy life and after the banquet we are all usually pulled in several directions. Some of us either don't realize or don't understand why we had a banquet and how to tell folks what we do. It was FUN and many people won guns or bought prints and enjoyed a great evening, auction and meal. It's over and maybe not thought about again until next year. This short read is for you all to have a better understanding of why managing your local banquet is so important. So, this is my story to you about what you, as a committee person, can do to make our raised dollars go farther. It's also an invitation to everyone reading to get involved with your local chapter. It's also a request for you to tell people what the NWTF does locally. Most of you reading this are connected to the NWTF as a general banquet attendee and we Thank You Very Much. People in the Seats as Members are the most important part of raising the dollars and we certainly couldn't do what we do without you. Please consider joining the local committee as well. Becoming a Member of the NWTF is Important and Joining the Local Chapter Committee is a Great way to Support what we do and Our Hunting Heritage for Future Generations to Enjoy.

The remaining article is to help our committees understand why managing their Local Chapters Banquet is so important. Missouri has about 100 Chapters and every

chapter has an annual banquet. Missouri raises more dollars than any other state. Yes, you read that correctly. Missouri is the leader of fundraising for the NWTF and therefore has more Super Fund Dollars than any other state. These dollars are what we use for JAKES Events, Wheel'n Sportsmen Events, Habitat Work, Timber Management, National Archery in the Schools Funding for Missouri Schools, Scholarships, MDC and US Forest Service Projects, 4-H, Equipment purchases, Share the Harvest and many other great proposals that are submitted every year.

Missouri has a Board of Directors that are ALL VOLUNTEERS from Missouri Chapters and they sit in 4-6 meetings every year to approve proposals that are submitted in November for the following year and this budget is usually approved the first Saturday in January. There are 18 Volunteers on the Missouri Board of Directors that are very engaged in what we do and how we spend your hard earned dollars that you entrust us with from your local banquet. They come from across Missouri and All are a part of a Local Chapter as well. Our NWTF Missouri Biologist, John Burk, works to partner our dollars raised to stretch it even farther with matching money many times matched 3-5 times. Thanks go to John Burk who has proved himself to be the best of the best at what he does across the nation.

AFTER the budget is set, the Regional Directors begin the process of raising these dollars with the local committees at their banquets. "NWTF is in your town one night a year" for business and making

that banquet as good as it can be is always on our mind. We must not fail because those proposals are ALREADY GRANTED and the dollars MUST be there when they are requested. Now you may better see why the Regional Director might seem so panicky at times. We are the ONLY person held accountable if Your Banquet Fails, the ONLY person who's job could be in jeopardy if we don't succeed. Please trust us to help make wise decisions for your banquets. We all have the same goal and that is to raise dollars and have the best banquets we can.

The Regional Director orders all guns and merchandise for banquets usually beginning in April and finishing the end of June for the coming year. Yes, a full half year prior to any banquets and more than a year and a half before many banquets that haven't even occurred the current year. We base our orders from past years performance and sometimes a wild guess as to how your banquets will be. It's not an easy task and we rely on our committees to sell tickets and get folks to the banquets.

LOCAL spending for banquets plays a huge part in raising dollars. Managing YOUR banquet has more impact than most of you even realize. If we have 100 Local Chapter Banquets and EVERY committee manages their banquet to save a mere \$100 then we have generated \$10,000 more dollars. The math is that easy. And if they save \$200 then we raised \$20,000 more. Local committees can make a big difference by managing MEALS the most but also managing hall cost, decorations, entertainment, guest speakers, JAKES table spending, door prizes

and other items unnecessary for their banquets. We must have enough food of course but in my 17 years of doing banquets and conducting well over 500 banquets, probably approaching 600 banquets, my chapters have run short on food a small handful of times. I can probably count these on 1 hand but for sure not more than 10 times. More times than not we over order by 30-50 meals even 100 meals too many at times and that food does nothing for Conservation or our Hunting Heritage. Its wasted money. We want our people fed and the hall to be nice and we try to build those costs into the ticket prices but additional spending that has no return is something some local committees could be more aware of.

Missouri Committees are great and our volunteers are the best of the best and most everyone on the local committee does an outstanding job of making conscious decisions that pertain to spending locally and raising dollars for our banquets. This is obvious because Missouri does have the wealthiest super fund and YOU are the ones that made it that way.

Let's continue to propel Missouri to the top and that's best done by selling sponsors, everyone becoming a MEMBER, gathering donations, underwriting and controlling local spending. The Regional Directors are already looking forward to 2020 and excited about the future of the NWTF and working with our local committees for the greater good and the future of hunting and conservation. THANK YOU ALL!



## **Sho-Me Gun Bash - 08/30/2019**

Contact: Kevin Hess - (417) 521-7447

Location: Shrine Mosque, 601 East St Louis St., Springfield, MO 65802

## **River Hills Thunderin Gun Bash - 10/07/2019 - 6:00 PM**

Contact: Rob Sulkowski Jr - (573) 883-9982

Location: Ste Gen KofC Hall, 600 Market Street, Ste Genevieve, MO 63627

## **Bootheel Boss Gobblers Gun Blast - 10/08/2019 - 6:00 PM**

Contact: Timothy Schwent - (573) 225-3740

Location: Jackson KofC Hall, Hwy 61 North, Jackson, MO 63755



# Gasconade County Gets New No-till Drill

Nationally, a lot of the habitat work that NWTf helps pay for with the dollars that you raise primarily targets work on public land. Here in Missouri we do spend a portion of our dollars improving state conservation areas, state parks, and federal lands. However, Missouri is 93% privately owned so to be relevant we had to figure out a way to equitably go to work on private land. We have done this primarily in two ways: 1) augmenting existing cost share efforts in focal landscapes, and 2) assisting with the purchase of needed equipment primarily housed at Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Offices throughout the state. This equipment is made available on a first come first served basis to private landowners.

During the 2019 granting cycle, Diana Mayfield, District Specialist IV Manager with the Gasconade County SWCD applied for and was awarded a super fund grant to assist with the purchase of a John Deere 10' no-till drill. The purchase was made in May and the drill was conserving acres the afternoon of the same day it was delivered.

The quality and quantity of nesting and brood rearing habitat is the single biggest limiting factor suppressing turkey population growth so the creation of it has always been our primary focus when it comes to Saving The Habitat. The over 70 pieces of habitat equipment that we currently have in the field averages annually conserving almost 30,000 acres. Missouri is currently third in the nation in acres conserved and we are on track to achieve the national initiative goal of 4 million acres. We are also on track here in Missouri to achieve 10% of the national total and our equipment acres make up the majority.

The great thing about habitat equipment projects is that they are the gift that keeps on giving. The more common way to put NWTf habitat dollars on the ground is to pay for contracted work on public land. These projects are important as well. However, contracted habitat projects only impact the acres contracted. Habitat equipment are conserving acres annually for as long as they are operational. As an



example; our contribution to the purchase of a drill is usually \$5,000. The average cost of a drill is \$30,000; a 6:1 match rate or six partner dollars for every dollar you contributed at your local banquet. The average drill probably conservatively does around 250 acres each year and lasts for about 10 years. Paying a contractor to install native warm season grass averages around \$400/acre so to contract what our average drill accomplishes would cost a million dollars. Your help raising dollars at the local level is making a difference at the state level by enabling this equipment to be made available where it is needed most.

## Wild Turkey Leg Roast

By Larry L. Neal

Many Hunters don't have a good way to utilize the legs and thighs from their Gobbler but those days are done with this easy recipe. Start this before heading out for an afternoons hunt and enjoy it when you return to camp.

### Ingredients:

- 2 wild turkey thighs and 2 legs
- 4 Beef Bullion Cubes
- Whole Carrots
- Potatoes
- Onions
- Stalk Celery
- Whole Mushrooms

Place legs and thighs in a roasting pan or pan you can cover with foil. Smash 4 bullion cubes into powder and sprinkle over legs and thighs (a baggie and hammer or flat rock will do). You could substitute 4 tablespoons of Beef Stock from a jar. Half the carrots, quarter or cube potatoes and onions, chunk the celery and add all on top of legs and thighs. Salt and pepper optional to taste. Do not add Mushrooms or any liquid. Cover tightly with lid or foil. Place in oven at 250 degrees for 4 hours. Open and add mushrooms and spoon the generated juice from the bottom of the pan over the top of the meat and vegetables. Re-cover and allow another hour cooking or until it appears everything is done. Cooking time may vary.

The Meat will fall from the bones and those pesky tendons will slide right out. Adjust meat



and vegetable amounts to fit crowd size. Enjoy and never give those legs away again.

What is Happening... continued from page 3.

Water Conservation District offices across the state and available for use by any private landowner that requests it on a first come first served basis. This equipment enables us to conserve an average of over 27,000 acres of private land annually. Since the start of the Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative we have annually helped the Mark Twain augment their prescribed burn program by paying for additional helicopter time. The Mark Twain is able to burn an average of 10,000 additional acres annually

because of our help. The restoration of open woodlands through thinning and burning and the restoration of glades are critical to increasing the quality of nesting and brood rearing habitat that is making a difference.

### Overall Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. Goal for MO

We are on track to exceed our goal of conserving 400,000 acres of habitat between 2013 and 2023. The majority of this goal is concentrated on nesting

and brood rearing habitat improvement work. This does not quite make up for the 600,000 acres of CRP we lost but we are making a difference. Our goals were aggressive but realistic. If we really want to do something to help improve the turkey population, then we each need to be better ambassadors.

Support the programs and policies we have in place that are helping improve things (state and federal cost share programs, push back on anti-agency project proposal resistance).

Respond to damaging legislation proposals when made aware of the problem.

Resist the temptation to "group think," take the easy way out, and lobby for changes that will not make a difference just to appear to "do something"

Get more folks to support our cause; more members mean a louder voice on the big issues and more money to impact more acres that will actually make the difference we seek.



Feral Swine... continued from page 9.

to feral hogs has seen their populations explode. The reason for this is obvious, the hogs are being moved around and released in areas with large blocks of public land by those that enjoy and benefit from this recreational activity and the reproductive potential of feral hogs rapidly allow them to fill it and expand.

Admittedly, feral hogs are fun to hunt and can be great table fare but they are not a natural part of any ecosystem, cause unacceptable damage to natural areas, crops and pastures, compete with our native wildlife for limited food resources (Sweeney et al. 2003), are effective predators of native wildlife, and pose as an unacceptable disease risk to humans and livestock. The goal of the feral hog task force is to extirpate feral hogs from Missouri and this can only be successfully accomplished or even approached through extensive trapping efforts. Hunting not only directly interferes with effective trapping efforts but as

long as hunting is allowed on these large public tracts, the incentive to move them around still exists and the goal of extirpation or even control cannot be accomplished.

We do not wish to negatively impact the lives of those people that have developed a tradition of feral hog hunting. However, their tradition comes at an unacceptable cost and, therefore, can no longer be supported on public land.

Literature Cited: Petty, B.D., R. Lopez, J. Cathy, S. Locke, M. Peterson, and N.J. Silvy. 2011. *Effects of feral hog control on nest fate of eastern wild turkey in the post oak savanna of Texas. Proceedings of the National Wild Turkey Symposium.* 9:169-172. Sweeney, J.R., J.M Sweeney, and S.W. Sweeney. 2003. *Feral hog. Pages 1164-1179 in G.A. Feldhamer, B.C. Thompson, and J.A. Chapman, editors. Wild mammals of North America. Johns Hopkins University Press. Baltimore Maryland, USA.*

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Show-Me Gobbler  
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Columbia, MO 65201-7224

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