



Mentor program  
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## Salato Center and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation team up for busy March



When the Salato Wildlife Education Center opens for the season, it will be greeting visitors to a brand-new indoor display.

The “Be Bear Aware” exhibit shines light on the status of black bears in Kentucky and highlights the dos and don’ts for coexisting with our state’s bears.

“As black bears make a natural comeback in Kentucky, it becomes very

important that people know how to live alongside these animals,” said Salato Center Director **Brent McCarty**. “We hope this exhibit will illustrate easy ways that people can achieve this, whether they’re residents of East Kentucky or people who may experience a chance encounter with a bear elsewhere in the state.”

The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation funded the exhibit. The Salato

Center has scheduled the exhibit’s official unveiling for Friday, March 17 at 10am.

Engineering Division’s **John Akers** headed construction of the new exhibit and received assistance from **Rachel Crume** and **Sharon Sparrow** of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Rounding out the month, the Salato Center and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation team up again to host the eighth annual Running Wild 4-mile Trail Run on Saturday, March 25. This unique trail race leads runners through the hiking trails within Davison Woods and serves as one of three fundraising events that benefit the center.

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## WE GET MAIL

### *Letters to the Commissioner's Office*

**T**homas W wrote, "I liked the Green Wing Adventure because it was the first time I had gone hunting in my whole life. Also, I got to kill two ducks.

One of the ducks I have at my house to be stuffed and the other one I put in a pile with a lot of other ducks so they could be cleaned so everyone could take home some duck to eat.

So, I would like to thank **D.J. Garland** and **Courtney Baldwin** for getting me to the blind safely. Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who was involved in the Green Wing Adventure for letting me have this adventure."

We received the following letter from Mr. Larry McIntosh in Mayfield. He wrote, "Thanks to the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and all who support them.

I recently enjoyed a challenging but very rewarding elk hunt in the beautiful mountains of eastern Kentucky. It was great to be able to hunt the magnificent elk in my home state.

In December of 1997, Kentucky state wildlife managers released seven elk in eastern Kentucky. As members of R.M.E.F., I and many others in western Kentucky helped as we could to support the reintroduction of elk to Kentucky.

We are very thankful to KDFWR and RMEF and all they did and still do, not only for elk, but for all wildlife and the opportunities we enjoy. From the beginning, we hoped to someday have huntable numbers of elk in Kentucky and in 2001 a very limited number of permits were issued.

By 2002, more than 1500 elk had been released at eight different sites in the eastern coal fields region and did so well that the number of permits to hunt was increasing.

I applied each year, hoping to someday draw a permit. Elk continued to grow in

numbers with over 10,500 now roaming the hills of eastern Kentucky. This not only created opportunities for hunters to be able to hunt Kentucky elk, but also brought some help to the economy of the distressed areas of Appalachia through money spent by hunters in the area. The efforts made by all involved have truly benefited a lot of people in a lot of different ways.

In May 2016, I received a letter from deer & elk program coordinator **Gabe Jenkins** of KDFWR. It started with: Dear elk hunter: Congratulations! You have been drawn for the 2016 Kentucky elk hunt and have drawn an antlered archery/crossbow elk tag.

I was very happy to have been drawn out of 74,953 applications, and hoped I would be able to find and get within range and take a big bull during the crossbow season. Then I met and hunted with two of

Kentucky's finest, state troopers Brandon Thomas and Wes Sandlin of Hazard.

I had waited until cool weather, and by then a lot of leaves were gone, and it was difficult to close the distance with not a lot of cover. The second rut had kicked in, and the big bulls were surrounded by lots of cows with lots of eyes watching every move.

I passed on some small bulls, as this was my one chance for a Kentucky bull, and I wanted to take a good one. It was a tough hunt, but we kept at it. Thanks to Brandon, Wes, the landowner and the wonderful folks of Hazard, on the evening of December 4, 2016, my 19-year dream came full circle with a beautiful 6x6 Kentucky bull elk.

Thanks to everyone who made this possible and above all, Thanks to our Heavenly Father, from whom all good things are possible."



## HUNTER EDUCATION CERTIFICATION

Wyatt Friend of Hardinsburg was one of more than 30 Hunter Education candidates who completed requirements for their Orange Card earlier this month at the KDFWR air rifle booth at the Owensboro Hunting and Fishing Expo. Conservation Officer Sgt. Scott McIntosh helped Friend complete his certification.

## FILO program receives Engineering Excellence Award

The Hatchery Creek Stream Restoration project, undertaken by the FILO program, has earned a National Recognition award in the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) 2017 Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA) competition – the *“Academy Awards of the engineering industry.”*

The EEA National Recognition Award is a prestigious distinction honoring engineering projects in each of several categories across the nation.

ACEC will recognize KDFWR and Stantec, the engineering firm that designed the project, at a black-tie EEA Gala Dinner and Awards Program hosted



by comedian Kevin Nealon in Washington D.C. in April.

Hatchery Creek is the second FILO project to receive an ACEC National

Recognition Award. East Fork of Indian Creek in the Daniel Boone National Forest also received the award in the 2016 EEA competition.



## MULLINS NAMED NWTF OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Second District Conservation Officer Sgt. Dustin Mullins was selected as Kentucky’s NWTF Officer of the year and accepted his award along with Major Shane Carrier. Mullins will represent Kentucky and be recognized nationally on February 18 at the national NWTF Convention.

## New hires and promotions

**Randall Alcorn** was recently appointed to a position as the NRCS Area 3 Liaison.

Randall has been employed by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife for the last seven years, first as a seasonal technician at Clay WMA, and most recently as a Farm Bill Biologist in London Kentucky.

He received a Bachelor's degree from Berea College in Agriculture and Natural Resources in 2005 as well as a Wildlife Management degree from Eastern Kentucky University in 2008.

Away from work he enjoys spending time in the outdoors with his wife and two-year-old son, sharing his wildlife knowledge with him. However, he recently admitted that he was able to share all of his wildlife knowledge in about one day, so now they primarily find things to look

under or rocks to throw. The next time you see Randall, please congratulate him on his promotion.

**Matthew Young** joined the Department February 1 as a GFTL Wildlife Technician III position focusing on the Livingston County WMA along with the Livingston County Northern Bobwhite Conservation Quail Focus Area on Private Lands.

The GFTL position is supported with funding from The Livingston County Fiscal Court and The Kentucky Chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

Matt has two degrees from South-eastern Illinois College in Applied Science for Shooting Complex and Game Preserve Management.

Matt has a wealth of equipment and hunting experience from working on the

family farm as well as three consecutive years from 2011 to 2013 working with KDFWR on Higginson-Henry and Big Rivers WMAs.

Matt has also gained valuable experience working on the King Ranch and Laboritas Creek Ranch in South Texas from 2009-2010. Major hobbies include hunting/fishing and shooting sports.

Effective February 16th, **Michael Scott** has been promoted to Program Manager in the Engineering, Infrastructure and Technology Division (EIT).

Michael's primary responsibilities will be the engineering/maintenance portion of the division.

Please join us in congratulating Michael as he assumes his new duties in the EIT Division.

## Boatwright WMA gets 147 acres of tree plantings

**K**entucky Fish and Wildlife contracted the planting of 147 acres of trees on the Olmsted Unit of the Boatwright Wildlife Management Area in Ballard County as part of its effort to continue a mission of bottomland hardwood forest management.

Contractors completed the planting of 8,000 trees in late October.

Plantings consisted of swamp white oak, swamp chestnut oak, overcup oak, bur oak, willow oak, cherrybark oak, nuttall oak, pin oak, pecan, and shellbark hickory.

The trees consisted of three-gallon containerized stock and were planted on a 20' x 40' spacing resulting in density of 54 trees/acre.

Trees had a minimum root collar of ½" in diameter and ranged in height from 2' to 7' depending on species.

Site preparation included spraying of the site with crossbow and roundup,



followed by a controlled burn conducted by KDFWR Purchase Region staff, with assistance from USFWS and Kentucky

Division of Forestry personnel.

Plans include planting an additional 150 acres in the fall of 2017-spring 2018.



## Bell County bull elk rescued

Conservation Officer **Sgt. Ray Lawson** received a phone call early Sunday morning on January 29 about a Bell County bull elk caught up in a large mass of wire.

Elk Biologist **Dan Crank**, along with Elk Technicians **Adam Dunn**, **Alex Grenier** and **Kate Williams** deployed to the scene to attempt to free the bull. They found the bull tangled so badly that he was unable to move.

Crank immobilized the animal and the elk technicians cut through the entanglement and freed the stricken animal

of his mess.

Elk program staff, being the opportunists that they are, then affixed a GPS collar and ear tags to the animal.

The bull will now enter our research project looking at seasonal habitat use.

Thus far, elk program staff have deployed three GPS collars this winter, bringing the number of collared animals in the project to 18. GPS collared elk are located all across the elk zone.

It is never a dull moment in the elk program!



## CAMP EARL WALLACE'S NEW DISPLAY WILL CATCH YOUR EYE

Geraldine Kinnett, camp cook for Camp Wallace since 2006 has a new creation. She made her most recent quilt from various versions of shirts through the years from the Department's three conservation camps. The new quilt is displayed at Camp Wallace.

## JWM study: From mining to management for bobwhite

*This article originally posted February 1, 2017 on The Wildlife Society website.*

**By Julia John**

**R**eclaimed landscapes scarred by surface mining could become more valuable habitat for the northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), according to a recent study, especially if subjected to certain methods conventionally used to manage quail.

“Because of their size and open landscapes, reclaimed mines can provide an excellent opportunity to conserve and manage bobwhite populations,” said Jarred Brooke, extension wildlife specialist at Purdue University and lead author on the paper, which was published last October in *The Journal of Wildlife Management*. “Through management, we can enhance these sites.”

Brooke and his team suggested that bobwhite habitat could be improved on reclaimed coal mines by reducing invasive plants and making way for plants beneficial to the birds.

Wildlife managers knew bobwhite inhabited reclaimed strip mines, but while studies had examined the ecology of songbirds and raptors associated with these novel grassland-like environments, quail remained largely a mystery.

In an effort led by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and the University of Tennessee and funded by the Wildlife Restoration Grant Program and the nonprofit Quail Forever, Brooke and collaborating researchers investigated how typical quail management techniques could make these places even more favorable to the birds. Between 2010 and 2013, they put radio collars on bobwhite at the Peabody Wildlife Management Area, a reclaimed 20th-century surface mine in west-central Kentucky.

The ecologists assessed how various habitat management decisions – applying herbicide, disking and prescribed burn-



A male northern bobwhite perches atop a brush pile built by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to increase woody cover on Peabody Wildlife Management Area.

*Eric Williams photo*

ing – affected the quail’s population and habitat selection. They looked at how well the bobwhites’ nests survived, how they picked where to build them and how their young chose resources. The researchers also measured vegetation.

They discovered that while the vegetation offered adequate habitat for nesting and brood-rearing bobwhite, habitat management practices could improve it. The study revealed that bobwhite nested and raised broods more in places where herbicide had been applied to control the perennial sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*), an invasive plant commonly used to counter soil erosion on reclaimed mines across the eastern U.S.

Decreasing sericea and other plants through herbicides and disking every couple of years promoted better cover for bobwhite to nest and rear chicks by establishing plants that were more desirable for the quail, the study found.

Although bobwhite usually benefit from controlled burns, researchers noticed the birds at this location avoided burned regions because sericea recolonized them immediately after the fires. Annually disked firebreaks, on the other hand, boosted cover for young birds by providing the appropriate structure and composition for movement and foraging, they said.

The bobwhite’s reproduction and nests’ survival rates during the breeding season seemed lower than at other study sites, possibly because of dietary deficiencies caused by sericea, as the quail can’t digest its hard seeds.

“That’s why we think the management we can do to limit sericea coverage is the most beneficial,” Brooke said.

*Julia John is a science writer at The Wildlife Society. Contact her at [jjohn@wildlife.org](mailto:jjohn@wildlife.org) with any questions or comments about her article.*

## Upland game hunters complete New Hunter Mentor program

Through a partnership between The Kentucky River Ruffed Grouse Society chapter and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, five new upland game hunters were able to complete the “Be Safe, Be Smart, Be Yourself” New Hunter Mentor Program.

“The Kentucky River Ruffed Grouse Society chapter is new to Kentucky, but has been active and proactive since its inception.

The group has held a woodcock learning session, conducted a Bird Dog Training Seminar with Hall of Fame trainer, Dave Hughes, conducted a summer education event and fun shoot, and is raising funds for successional forest habitat in conjunction with the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Department by raffling a Commissioners Bull Elk tag for 2017.

They also worked with the Department to take young hunters from Eastern Kentucky University on a Department sponsored quail hunt on the Blue Grass Army Depot.

They recently conducted the New Hunter Mentor Program sponsored by the Ruffed Grouse Society. The program titled “Be Safe, Be Smart, Be Yourself” is designed to educate future generations of hunters about the legacy of an endangered sport.

The country is experiencing a decline in young people engaged in outdoor upland game activities. Partnering with the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Department, this program began with several students from the EKU Wildlife Management Program.

Student reviews have been great and, even though students of wildlife, many had never seen a dog on point or fired a shotgun



before. The program also opened their eyes about possible career paths in the wildlife field.

Indications suggest that the mentor program will be continued with EKU next year and possibly expand to students from Morehead State University.

Through partnerships like these, the Hunter’s Legacy Program hopes to facilitate hunter development by creating positive social hunting environments and

building support groups for developing hunters.

“Growing up my family never really ventured outside much,” said an EKU senior about Hunter’s Legacy programs. “We were not hunters, fishers, gun owners, or even campers honestly. But luckily, those opportunities have all been opened to me since I started going to Eastern Kentucky University.

“I have had many new experiences in the outdoors thanks to groups like The Wildlife Society, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and National Wild Turkey Federation. Everything I know about hunting has been through the Mentor Hunt Programs they have offered in partnerships with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, and all my friendships in college have grown through these trips,” she said.

Most recently, the Ruffed Grouse Society’s New Hunter Program has brought me to my first successful harvest. It was great to watch their dogs work and be a part of a hobby that the members of Ruffed Grouse Society are so passionate about.

“I feel accomplished having my first harvest and even more so after getting to cook and eat my birds for dinner tonight!” said Kirstine Brown, a senior wildlife management major at EKU.