

**AGENDA**  
**Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**

**Public Meeting:**     **Monday, March 7, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.**  
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation  
1801 N. Lincoln Blvd.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

In compliance with the Open Meeting Act, this meeting is scheduled to be streamed live and recorded at [www.youtube.com/user/outdooroklahoma](http://www.youtube.com/user/outdooroklahoma)

The Commission may vote to approve, disapprove or take other action on any of the following items. The Commission may vote to authorize public comment on any agenda item requesting a rule change.

1. Call to Order – Chairwoman Leigh Gaddis
2. Roll Call – Rhonda Hurst
3. Invocation – Ken Cunningham
4. Pledge of Allegiance – Ken Cunningham
5. Introduction of Guests
  
6. Recognition of Rod Smith as the 2022 recipient of the National Wildlife Turkey Federation’s prestigious Henry S. Mosby Award – J.D. Strong, Director and Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division.
  
7. Presentation and consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject or take other action on a donation totaling \$6,000 from Pheasants Forever / Quail Forever chapters to support upland game conservation - Bill Dinkines and Laura McIver, Oklahoma Regional Representative of Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever.
  
8. Recognition of Mikel Donahue for winning the 2022-23 Oklahoma Waterfowl Stamp Contest and also recognizing Honorable Mention winners, London Peterson, Shae Meyer and Gregory Fritz – Nels Rodefeld, Chief of Communication and Education Division and Michael Bergin, Senior Communication and Education Specialist.
  
9. Recognition of Carolyn Mock and Nora Hall of their artwork selected for the 2022 license hard card artwork, and presentation on how this effort helps fund the Department’s marketing efforts – Nels Rodefeld and Michael Bergin.
  
10. Presentation of the FY2021 Actuarial Valuation Report for the Wildlife Defined Benefit Plan – Amanda Storck, CFO and Chief of Administration and David Sawyer, Definiti.
  
11. Presentation of the FY 2021 Annual Financial Audit – Amanda Storck and Dan Bledsoe, Finley & Cook PLLC.
  
12. Presentation of the January 31, 2022 Financial Statement and consideration and vote to approve, amend or reject miscellaneous donations – Amanda Storck.
  
13. Consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject or take other action on minutes of the February 7, 2022 Commission meeting.

14. Director's Report – J.D. Strong
  - a. Federal and Congressional Update
    - Oklahoma Legislative Update – Corey Jager, Legislative Liaison
  - b. Calendar Items – discussion of upcoming department calendar items.
  - c. Agency Update – an update on current activity within each division of the agency.
15. Presentation and consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject or take other action on the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's branding effort – Micah Holmes, Assistant Chief of Communication and Education Division, Rick Grundman, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation and Matt Whitman and James Lawson from Idea Ranch.
16. Announce the date for the next regular Commission Meeting on Monday, April 4, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in Miami, Oklahoma.
17. New Business – Discussion of any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
18. Adjourn

**People with disabilities may request accommodations by calling 405-522-6279 at least three days before the meeting.**

## MINUTES

Of the Regular Meeting on February 7, 2022 of the

### OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Held at the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, February 7, 2022. Commission meeting dates are filed with the Secretary of State, Office of Administrative Rules before December 15, annually. The Agenda is listed on the Department's website and was posted at the entrance of the Wildlife Department Building on January 31, 2022 at 2:45 p.m.

In compliance with the Open Meeting Act, this meeting was streamed live and recorded at [www.youtube.com/user/outdooroklahoma](http://www.youtube.com/user/outdooroklahoma)

Chairwoman Leigh Gaddis called the Commission in session at 9:00 a.m.

Rhonda Hurst, Executive Assistant, called the roll.

MEMBERS PRESENT:      LEIGH A. GADDIS, Chairwoman  
                                  JAMES V. BARWICK, Vice-Chairman  
                                  C. RICK HOLDER, Secretary  
                                  BRUCE MABREY, Member  
                                  JOHN P. ZELBST, Member  
                                  D. CHAD DILLINGHAM, Member  
                                  JESS M. KANE, Member

MEMBER ABSENT:        BILL K. BREWSTER, Member

J.D. Strong, Director, introduced the following guests: Dwayne Elmore, OSU; Madison Washburn, OSU; Kiera Kauffman, OSU; Laura McIver, Quail Forever; Jordan Menge, Pheasants Forever; David Lindsey, Pocasset, OK; Raymond Rice, Velma, OK; Bill Long, Midwest City, OK; Rick Grundman, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation.

Director Strong recognized Andrea Crews, Federal Aid Coordinator for 25 years of service.

Director Strong presented the first annual Spirit of ODWC Award to Andrea Crews, Federal Aid Coordinator. This award arose from the strategic plan for ODWC employees who are not already qualified for an existing agency award.

Motion was made by Mr. Dillingham, seconded by Mr. Mabrey to approve the minutes from the January 3, 2022 Commission meeting. Motion carried with Commissioners Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham, Kane and Gaddis voting "Yes".

Director Strong gave a brief update and highlighted the Congressional report submitted by Brittnee Preston, the Department's part-time Federal and Congressional Liaison. This report was sent to all Commissioners and will be kept with the minutes of this meeting. He gave a Director's Report on calendar items and agency updates. This report was given to the Commission and will be kept with the minutes of this meeting. He mentioned that the J.A. Manning State Fish Hatchery pump station project is nearing completion. Commissioner Zelbst asked to be notified when the project is complete and the pump will be turned on. Mr. Zelbst also

mentioned that the Foundation raffle hunt for the cow elk on his property was successful. Director Strong announced that 234 elk were harvested on the Wichita Mountains controlled hunt, and Chairwoman Gaddis asked to be provided with the ratio of bulls vs cows: 74 bulls and 160 cows.

Director Strong introduced Rick Grundman, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation, who provided the Commission with a full-color handout on the Foundation. This informational brochure is part of the grant writing project. These handouts can be given out to potential sponsors to introduce the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation and the projects important to the Wildlife Department. He announced that the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Hall of Fame Gala has been set for Thursday, October 6, 2022 at the OMNI hotel, and the honoree will be Larry Nichols. Mr. Dillingham stated that he had worked with Mr. Nichols on The Nature Conservancy Board and witnessed his passion for conservation. He is a phenomenal candidate for the Hall of Fame. Mr. Grundman asked the Commission to please submit the names of any additional people they would like to invite to the Gala.

Amanda Storck, CFO and Chief of Administration, presented the Financial Statement for December 31, 2021. Motion was made by Mr. Dillingham, seconded by Mr. Zelbst to accept the financial statements as presented and approve miscellaneous contributions. Motion carried with Commissioners Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham, Kane and Gaddis voting “Yes”.

Ms. Stork gave a brief report on current license sales.

All Recreational Licenses – Down 12% for January 2022 compared to 2021 sales.

Resident Fishing – Down 28%

Resident Hunting – Up 1%

Resident Combo – Down 30%

Nonresident Hunting – Up 3%

Nonresident Fishing – Down 24%

Lifetime Licenses – Down 13%

Lifetime Combo – Down 21%

Lifetime Fishing – Down 44%

Seniors – Down 6%

Chairman Gaddis polled the Commission asking if each member had received the packet of rule information from the Department and if they had the opportunity to review and consider the public comments submitted in connection with the proposed rules listed on the agenda. All members present said “Yes” by roll call.

Ken Cunningham, Assistant Chief of Fisheries Division, requested Commission approval of the follow proposed Title 800 Chapter 10 permanent rules.

## **Title 800. Department of Wildlife Conservation**

### **Chapter 10. Sport Fishing Rules**

#### **Subchapter 1. Harvest and Possession Limits**

800:10-1-4. Size and bag limits on fish [AMENDED]

800:10-1-7. Possession limit [AMENDED]

#### **Subchapter 5. Area Restrictions and Special Fees**

800:10-5-3. Designated trout areas [AMENDED]

The proposed rule changes include a modification of the statewide size limit for largemouth and smallmouth basses by removing the fourteen (14) inch length limit and replacing it with a one over maximum length limit (16 inches). This rule also includes a black bass tournament exemption until weigh-in, after which the fish must be released. The statewide bag limit for largemouth and smallmouth basses will be restored for Lake Murray and waters in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. The lower Mountain Fork River trout area trout bag limit

will be modified to include only one brown trout which must be thirty (30) inches or greater and the downstream section of the trout area will be re-established as a trophy area. The daily bag limit of forked-tail catfish will be modified to six (6) below Carlton Lake in the Fourche Maline River to the Robbers Cave State Park boundary. Modifications to possession limits for fish include housekeeping measures, corrections, deletion of a redundant definition, and other changes including how the Department will convey aquatic nuisance species restricted waters. Other modifications include changes allowing for fish parts or remains to be used as bait and a customer ID labeling requirement for containers used to store live fish in the field.

Mr. Dillingham expressed his concern with tournament anglers releasing the fish back into waters other than where they were caught. Josh Johnston, Northwest Regional Fisheries Supervisor, explained that the public comment concerns were from R.S. Kerr, which is a long reservoir within the Arkansas river system. The perception was that fish were being caught in one reservoir but released in another reservoir, when in fact both locations were in the same reservoir. Tournaments should always release fish back into the original waters. If there is more concern, this requirement can be put on the tournament exemption information. Director Strong stated that with the new tournament exemption reporting requirements, we will have access to a lot more data for research.

Mr. Barwick stated that the Legislative/Rules/Litigation Committee had met, reviewed all rules and recommended approval as presented. Motion was made by Mr. Barwick, seconded by Mr. Mabrey to approve the rules as presented. Motion carried with Commissioners Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham, Kane and Gaddis voting “Yes”.

Ken Cunningham, Assistant Chief of Fisheries Division, requested Commission approval of the follow proposed Title 800 Chapter 20 permanent rules.

**Title 800. Department of Wildlife Conservation**

**Chapter 20. Restriction on Aquatic Species Introduction**

**Subchapter 1. Restricted Exotic Fish**

800:20-1-2. List of restricted exotic species [AMENDED]

The proposed modification provide for the inclusion of the marbled crayfish on the Department's list of restricted aquatic species which is used to limit the spread of invasive and potentially harmful aquatic species.

Mr. Barwick stated that the Legislative/Rules/Litigation Committee had met, reviewed all rules and recommended approval as presented. Motion was made by Mr. Barwick, seconded by Mr. Holder to approve the rules as presented. Motion carried with Commissioners Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham, Kane and Gaddis voting “Yes”.

Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division, requested Commission approval of the following proposed Title 800 Chapter 25 permanent rules.

**Title 800. Department of Wildlife Conservation**

**Chapter 25. Wildlife Rules**

**Subchapter 3. Hunting on Corps of Engineers Lands**

800:25-3-2. Areas open to archery equipment and shotguns with pellets only [AMENDED]

800:25-3-3. Areas open to archery equipment only [AMENDED]

**Subchapter 7. Geneal Hunting Seasons**

**Part 5. Upland Game**

800:25-7-15. Wild Turkey – Fall; dates, limits and open areas [AMENDED]

800:25-7-16. Wild turkey – Fall; legal means of taking [AMENDED]

800:25-7-20. Squirrel (fox and gray) [AMENDED]

**Part 7. Falconry**

800:25-7-28. Dates, open areas, bag limit, hunting hours and legal means of taking [AMENDED]

**Part 15. Furbearers**

800:25-7-60. Dates and legal furbearers [AMENDED]

800:25-7-61. Bag limits [AMENDED]

800:25-7-62. Open areas [AMENDED]

800:25-7-63. License requirements and fees [REVOKED]

800:25-7-64. General provisions for furbearers [REVOKED]

800:25-7-65. Fur dealers [REVOKED]

**Part 19. Season on areas owned or managed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

800:25-7-81. Altus-Lugert WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-81.2. Arbuckle Springs WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-82.1. Atoka PHA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-82.3. Barren Fork WMA [NEW]

800:25-7-83. Beaver River WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-83.1. Beaver River WMA – McFarland Unit [AMENDED]

800:25-7-84. Black Kettle WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-85. Blue River Hunt Area [AMENDED]

800:25-7-86. Broken Bow WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-87.1. Candy Creek WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-88. Canton WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-90. Cherokee PHA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-92. Chickasaw NRA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-92.1. Cimarron Bluff Wildlife Management Area [AMENDED]

800:25-7-92.2. Cimarron Hills Wildlife Management Area [AMENDED]

800:25-7-94. Copan WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-94.1. Cooper WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-94.1.1. Cross Timbers WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-94.5. Deep Fork WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-94.6. Dewey County WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-94.7. Drummond Flats WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-95. Ellis County WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-97. Fobb Bottom WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-98. Fort Cobb WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-99. Fort Gibson PHA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-101. Ft. Supply WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-102. Gary Sherrer WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-102.1.1. Grady County WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-102.2. Grassy Slough WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-102.3. Grassy Slough WRP [NEW]

800:25-7-105.5. Hackberry Flat WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-105.6. Hackberry Flat WRP [AMENDED]

800:25-7-106. Heyburn WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-108. Hickory Creek WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-108.1. Honobia Creek WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-111. Hulah WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-115. Kaw WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-116. Keystone WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-117. Lexington WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-120. Love Valley WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-120.1. Lower Illinois River Public Fishing and Hunting Area – Simp and Helen Watts Management Unit [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-121. Major County WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-123. McClellan-Kerr WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-126. Mountain Park WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-127. Okmulgee GMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-128. Okmulgee PHA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-129. Oologah WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-130. Optima WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-131. Optima NWR [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-131.1. Osage WMA – Rock Creek Unit [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-132. Ouachita WMA – LeFlore Unit [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-132.1. Ouachita WMA – Cucumber Creek Unit [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-133.1. Ouachita WMA – McCurtain Unit [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-133.2. Ozark Plateau NWR [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-134. Packsaddle WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-136.1. Red Slough WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-136.2. Red Slough WRP [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-137. Rita Blanca WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-138. Robbers Cave WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-139.1. Sandhills WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-140. Sandy Sanders WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-141. Schultz WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-142.1. Shorb WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-143. Skiatook WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-144. Sparrowhawk WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-145. Spavinaw GMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-146. Spavinaw PHA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-147. Stringtown WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-148. Tenkiller WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-149. Texoma/Washita Arm WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-149.1. Three Rivers WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-149.2. Thomas A. Bamberger Sr WMA [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-151. Tishomingo WMU/Cooperative Unit [AMENDED]  
800:25-7-152. Washita County WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-153. Washita NWR [AMENDED]

800:25-7-154. Waurika WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-154.2. Whitegrass Flats WMA [AMENDED]

800:25-7-155. Wister WMA [AMENDED]

### **Part 25. Oklahoma Land Access Program**

800:25-7-181. OLAP walk-in hunting areas, seasons, and equipment restrictions [AMENDED]

#### **Subchapter 9. Controlled Hunts**

800:25-9-14. Qualifications and procedures (private land youth hunts) [AMENDED]

Subchapter 3 – These rules will clarify the time periods for the Hugo Lake and Pine Creek Lake controlled hunts, change the restriction to archery and shotgun with pellets for a 475 acre unit at Hugo Lake, and add additional hunting areas at Pine Creek Lake.

Subchapter 7 – Remove “either sex” from the fall archery turkey hunting bag limit, and remove bag limit for fall turkey gun hunting and legal means of take language and place these into the Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting Regulations; allow the Commission by resolution to set squirrel season dates, and open squirrel season year-round for Falconry; define trap placement, trap checking requirements and posting of signs; revise legal means of taking for trapping to allow 8.5” circumference traps, colony traps, fully submerged body-grip sets on private land only, and increase river otter season limit to 6; Allow nonresident fur dealers to transact business at specific locations, and clarify language on vehicle decal placement for fur dealers, revoke duplicative furbearer language; revise language for WMAs to be consistent with recent changes (no harvest of hen turkeys and shotgun-only gun hunting) for wild turkeys, which will now be published in the Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting regulations; change quail season closing date to January 31st and open trapping to statewide trapping regulations from February 1 to the end of February on western Oklahoma WMAs; establish permanent rules on the Barren Fork WMA in Adair county; establish rules for a new waterfowl refuge portion on Grassy Slough WMA; close quail season on January 31st on Hackberry Flat WMA; close quail season on Hackberry Flat WRP; open trapping opportunities on Lexington WMA; change spring turkey season to controlled hunts only, remove restriction on rabbit season, change fall turkey season to closed season, open deer archery season to same as statewide season dates, and close quail season on January 31st on Optima NWR; close quail season on January 31st on Washita NWR; and update language for OLAP properties to match new turkey season regulations and closing dates.

Subchapter 9 – Clarify the qualifications for private lands youth hunts by reducing the minimum acreage requirement to 320 acres and allowing ODWC to disapprove applications if a property doesn’t provide a safe or reasonable opportunity.

Tell Judkins, Wildlife Biologist, gave a presentation on the decline of the quail population and the justification for the quail season changes on western wildlife management areas. Specifically, he pointed out that several surrounding states close their season on January 31.

Dr. Dwayne Elmore, Oklahoma State University, gave a brief overview of the research OSU has done on the quail population and determining survival rates. He also stated that all states with bobwhite quail have issues, but weather and habitat are the primary driving factors.

Mr. Dillingham stated that he is behind good decisions based on science but that not everyone has access to private land to hunt and our constituents depend on public land. He is concerned about taking the last two weeks of quail season away from our hunters. He also believes, if this rule is approved, it should be statewide. He stated that he does support change



based on research and appreciates the amount of work and resources that have been spent on the study of quail.

Mr. Barwick stated that the Legislative/Rules/Litigation Committee had met, reviewed all rules and recommended approval of the rules as submitted, with the exception of the quail season. He indicated their concern with surrounding states ending their quail season on January 31, which allows more non-residents to come to Oklahoma to hunt public land from February 1 – 15. Motion was made by Mr. Barwick, seconded by Mr. Dillingham, to approve all other rules as presented, but modify the quail season rule to remain open through February 15, but closed to nonresidents on public land from February 1 through the end of season. Motion carried with Commissioners Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham, Kane and Gaddis voting “Yes”.

Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division, requested Commission approval of the following proposed Title 800 Chapter 30 permanent rules.

**Title 800. Department of Wildlife Conservation**

**Chapter 30. Department of Wildlife Lands Management**

**Subchapter 1. Use of Department managed Lands**

800:30-1-2. Use restrictions [AMENDED]

800:30-1-4. Camping [AMENDED]

Subchapter 1 – Opens Vann’s Lake Refuge to fishing access from February 1 – October 14; removes obsolete language for Robbers Cave WMA; closes Selman Bat Cave property to open access; clarifies language restricting number of days camping is allowed on WMA’s, leaving camping equipment on WMA’s and labeling camping equipment used on WMA’s; removes the word “Hills” from Cookson WMA; and establishes camping regulations on Barren Fork WMA.

Mr. Dinkines said in regards to the camping equipment rule, he recommends based on public input and discussions with law enforcement to change the phrase "will be removed" to "may be removed" to allow officer discretion.

Mr. Barwick stated that the Legislative/Rules/Litigation Committee had met, reviewed all rules and recommended approval with modifications. Motion was made by Mr. Barwick, seconded by Mr. Zelbst to approve the rules as presented with the modifications to the camping equipment section explained by Mr. Dinkines and to add the word "total" next to 21 days. Motion carried with Commissioners Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham, Kane and Gaddis voting “Yes”.

Chairman Gaddis announced that Commissioner Brewster was doing well and hope to be back in attendance very soon.

Chairman Gaddis announced the next Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 7, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Leigh A. Gaddis, CHAIRWOMAN

ATTEST:

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C. Rick Holder, SECRETARY

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**J.D. Strong, Director**

**Personnel Actions**  
**February 2022**

**New Hires**

Douglas Zentner – Fish Biologist at Norman Fish Lab (OFRL), 2/1/22

Shelby Davis – Grants Assistant, Central Office, 2/14/22

**Promotions**

Drew Stegall – Information Systems Network Management Specialist, 2/1/22

**Transfers**

Karlin Bailey – Game Warden, Creek County to Okmulgee County, 2/1/22

Lauren Johnson – WL Biologist, Private Lands, SW Region to WL Biologist,  
Private Lands, NE Region, 2/1/22

**Resignations/Terminations**

**Retirements**

Barry Bolton – Chief, Fisheries Division, 2/1/22

***Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation  
Financial Statement***

***For the period July 1, 2021 Through January 31, 2022***

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**Combined Balance Sheet - All Fund Types and Accounts Groups**  
**January 31, 2022**

	Governmental Fund Types		Fiduciary	Account Groups			
	General	Capital Projects	Fund Types	General Fixed Assets	General Long-Term Debt	01/31/2022	01/31/2021
			Trust			Totals	Totals
<b>Assets and Other Debits:</b>							
Cash	15,616,749		3,967,775			19,584,524	19,322,890
Investments	0		279,861,557			279,861,557	260,427,450
Accounts Receivable	2,268,479					2,268,479	2,421,496
Monthly Lifetime License			252,275			252,275	349,650
Legacy Permit / Operation game Thief	3,512,830		7,000			3,519,830.00	4,394,811.00
Fixed Assets				76,671,187		76,671,187	70,003,149
Land				103,565,869		103,565,869	95,408,697
<b>Other Debits:</b>							
Amount To Be Provided For Payment of Compensated Absences					3,421,304	3,421,304	3,351,600
Amount To Be Provided For Payment of Net Pension Obligation					(3,924,890)	(3,924,890)	16,555,543
	21,398,058	0	284,088,607	180,237,056	(503,586)	485,220,135	467,847,475
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balance:</b>							
<b>Liabilities:</b>							
Accounts Payable (accrual)	535,821					535,821	42,430
Due to Other Funds (current month Lifetimes)	252,275					252,275	349,650
Compensated Absences Payable (leave accrual)					3,421,304	3,421,304	3,351,600
Net Pension Obligation					(3,924,890)	(3,924,890)	16,555,543
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>788,096</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(503,586)</b>	<b>284,510</b>	<b>20,299,223</b>
<b>Fund Balance:</b>							
Reserved for Employee Pension Benefits			138,304,514			138,304,514	133,153,936
Reserved for Defined Contribution Benefits (DC)			6,213,284			6,213,284	4,858,503
Investment in General Fixed Assets				180,237,056		180,237,056	165,411,846
<b>Fund Balance</b>	<b>20,609,962</b>		<b>139,570,809</b>			<b>160,180,771</b>	<b>144,123,967</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>20,609,962</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>284,088,607</b>	<b>180,237,056</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>484,935,625</b>	<b>447,548,252</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>21,398,058</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>284,088,607</b>	<b>180,237,056</b>	<b>(503,586)</b>	<b>485,220,135</b>	<b>467,847,475</b>

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**Trust Funds**

**Combining Balance Sheets**  
**January 31, 2022**

	Expendable Trust	Nonexpendable Trust	Pension Trust	DC Trust	01/31/2022 Totals	01/31/2021 Totals
<b>Assets:</b>						
Cash (Wildlife Heritage)	404,627	3,563,148			3,967,775	3,715,778
Investments	40,458,594	94,885,165	138,304,514	6,213,284	279,861,557	265,285,953
Due From Other Funds		252,275			252,275	349,650
Restricted Assets (OP. Game Thief)		7,000			7,000	7,000
	<b>40,863,221</b>	<b>98,707,588</b>	<b>138,304,514</b>	<b>6,213,284</b>	<b>284,088,607</b>	<b>269,358,381</b>
<b>Fund Balance:</b>						
Fund Balance Reserved for Employee Pension Benefits			138,304,514	6,213,284	144,517,798	138,012,439
Fund Balance	40,863,221	98,707,588			139,570,809	131,345,942
Total Fund Balance	<b>40,863,221</b>	<b>98,707,588</b>	<b>138,304,514</b>	<b>6,213,284</b>	<b>284,088,607</b>	<b>269,358,381</b>

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances**  
**All Governmental Fund Types and Expendable Trust Fund**  
**For the Period July 1, 2021 Through January 31, 2022**

	Governmental Fund Types		Fiduciary Fund Type	01/31/2022	01/31/2021	Percent of Inc. or Dec.
	General	Capital Projects	Expendable Trust	Totals	Totals	
<b>Revenues:</b>						
Licenses (without Lifetimes)	13,100,252			13,100,252	13,461,587	-2.68%
Other Wildlife Sales	1,823,366			1,823,366	1,861,937	-2.07%
Agriculture and Oil Lease	435,813			435,813	433,835	0.46%
Grant Revenue	18,267,823			18,267,823	14,080,694	29.74%
Investment Income	109,034		24,311	133,345	211,937	-37.08%
Miscellaneous	942,387			942,387	2,282,889	-58.72%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>34,678,675</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24,311</b>	<b>34,702,986</b>	<b>32,332,879</b>	<b>7.33%</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>						
Administration	4,385,159			4,385,159	4,001,423	9.59%
Wildlife	8,163,170			8,163,170	8,052,607	1.37%
Fish	6,293,107			6,293,107	5,837,770	7.80%
Law Enforcement	7,136,384			7,136,384	6,750,384	5.72%
Information and Education	1,815,868			1,815,868	1,693,031	7.26%
Capital Improvements	4,215,379			4,215,379	5,256,408	-19.80%
Land Acquisitions		6,955,255		6,955,255	0	0.00%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>32,009,067</b>	<b>6,955,255</b>		<b>38,964,322</b>	<b>31,591,623</b>	<b>23.34%</b>
Excess(deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	2,669,608	(6,955,255)	24,311	(4,261,336)	741,256	674.88%
<b>Other Financing Sources(uses):</b>						
Sale of General Fixed Assets	0			0	2,178,565	-100.00%
Operating Transfers In	1,666,398	6,955,255	234,703	8,856,356	15,162,912	-41.59%
Operating Transfers Out	(6,955,255)		(1,666,398)	(8,621,653)	(146,920)	5,768.26%
Operating Transfers Out (215)			0	0	0	0.00
<b>Total Other Financing Sources(uses)</b>	<b>(5,288,857)</b>	<b>6,955,255</b>	<b>(1,431,695)</b>	<b>234,703</b>	<b>17,194,557</b>	<b>-98.64%</b>
Excess of revenues & other financing sources over expenditures & other financing uses	(2,619,249)	0	(1,407,384)	(4,026,633)	17,935,813	-122.45%
Fund Balances, Beginning of Year:	23,229,211	0	42,270,605	65,499,816	35,306,282	85.52%
<b>Fund Balances January 31, 2022:</b>	<b>20,609,962</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40,863,221</b>	<b>61,473,183</b>	<b>53,242,095</b>	<b>15.46%</b>

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances**  
**Trust Funds**  
**For the Period July 1, 2021 Through January 31, 2022**

	Fiduciary Fund Types			01/31/2022 Totals	01/31/2021 Totals
	Nonexpendable Trust	Pension Trust	DC Trust		
Operating Revenues:					
Licenses (Lifetime)	2,065,150			2,065,150	2,207,700
Other Sales (Senior Citizen Licenses)	100,755			100,755	111,210
Interest and Investment Income	0	130,324	(94,411)	35,913	16,837,541
Employer Contributions		1,250,000	333,191	1,583,191	3,599,787
Employee Contributions		330,336	242,255	572,591	524,063
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>2,165,905</b>	<b>1,710,660</b>	<b>481,035</b>	<b>4,357,600</b>	<b>23,280,301</b>
Operating Expenses:					
Administration		215,176	3,900	219,076	203,436
Benefits and Participant Refunds	0	4,931,449	57,123	4,988,572	4,920,307
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,146,625</b>	<b>61,023</b>	<b>5,207,648</b>	<b>5,123,743</b>
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>2,165,905</b>	<b>(3,435,965)</b>	<b>420,012</b>	<b>(850,048)</b>	<b>18,156,558</b>
Nonoperating Expenses:					
Transfers Out	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Nonoperating Expenses</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>2,165,905</b>	<b>(3,435,965)</b>	<b>420,012</b>	<b>(850,048)</b>	<b>18,156,558</b>
<b>Fund Balances, Beginning</b>	<b>96,541,683</b>	<b>141,740,479</b>	<b>5,793,272</b>	<b>244,075,434</b>	<b>215,125,564</b>
<b>Fund Balances, January 31, 2022</b>	<b>98,707,588</b>	<b>138,304,514</b>	<b>6,213,284</b>	<b>243,225,386</b>	<b>233,282,122</b>



# Wildlife Contributions Report

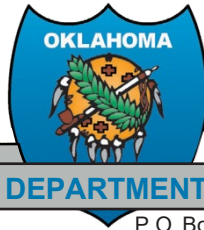
January 2022

<b>Order ID</b>	<b>Total Payment Amount</b>	<b>Name Of Individual Or Business</b>	<b>Description Of Contribution</b>
20992845	\$25,000.00	NRA	Packsaddle WMA gun range
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>		



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Leigh Gaddis CHAIRMAN	D. Chad Dillingham MEMBER
James V. Barwick VICE CHAIRMAN	Jess Kane MEMBER
Rick Holder SECRETARY	Bruce Mabrey MEMBER
Bill Brewster MEMBER	John P. Zelbst MEMBER



J. KEVIN STITT, GOVERNOR  
J.D. STRONG, DIRECTOR

P.O. Box 53465 Oklahoma City, OK 73152 PH. (405) 521-3851

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 23, 2022

**TO:** OK Department of Wildlife Commission and Staff

**FROM:** Brittnee Preston

**RE:** Report on February Federal and Congressional Issues for March Commission Meeting

**State of Play:**

- > Build Back Better reconciliation package seems to be dead for now.
- > The President is set to deliver his State of the Union (SOTU) speech on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- > The President's budget is expected within days of him giving the SOTU.
- > FY 22 government was extended in February and the new funding deadline is set to March 11<sup>th</sup>.

**President –**

- > With the tension between Russia and Ukraine rising, the President's focus has largely been on international affairs.

**Recovering America's Wildlife –**

- > The House version of the bill has 160 co-sponsors and the Senate version of the bill has 32 co-sponsors.
- > The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has held a hearing on the bill and is intending to markup the bill potentially this spring.
- > The House Natural Resources Committee passed the bill out of committee on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Several concerns on the pay for, or lack thereof, were expressed in the committee markup and members agreed to work on this ahead of putting the bill on the floor. The House version is ready for the floor but there hasn't been any indication on timing of floor consideration.

**Congress:**

**General Congressional actions:**

- > GOVERNMENT FUNDING:
  - o The House and Senate voted on a stopgap measure to keep the government running past the February 18th deadline. The extension funds the government through March 11th.
  - o Shortly after the extension agreement passed the House, a budgetary framework agreement was announced to fund the 12 bill, omnibus appropriation bill for FY 22 government funding. The House and Senate subcommittees reportedly have their top line numbers to work out the details of funding within their areas of jurisdiction ahead of the new March 11th deadline.
  - o With this action, it seems that the FY 22 funding should be in place by March 11<sup>th</sup> and Congress will proceed with the FY 23 appropriations cycle beginning in mid-March.

**House –**

- > After voting on the government funding extension, the House left D.C. for a two-week recess.

**Senate –**

- > The Senate confirmed by voice vote Martha Williams to be director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- > The Senate passed the extension and recessed until the first week of March.

## Agencies:

- > U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS)
  - The USFWS issued a [notice of initiation](#) of 5-year status reviews on 35 plant and animal species. This includes the Leopard Darter for Oklahoma. Comments are due by March 4, 2022.
  - The USFWS [proposed](#) their annual rule to establish the 2022-23 hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds.
  - The USFWS [announced](#) the reopening of the comment period on the October 8, 2020, proposed rule to reclassify the red-cockaded woodpecker as a threatened species with a 4(d) rule. Comments are due by March 7, 2022. However, the announcement stated, “Comments previously submitted on the proposed reclassification of the red-cockaded woodpecker and previously proposed section 4(d) rule need not be resubmitted, as they will be fully considered in preparation of the final determination.”
  - The USFWS gave [notice](#) that LPC Conservation LLC has applied for an incidental take permit (ITP) supported by the *Oil and Gas Habitat Conservation Plan for the Lesser Prairie-chicken; Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas* (HCP).
  - The USFWS [announced](#) the 2022 White-nose Syndrome Grants to States and Tribes. The deadline to apply for a grant is May 2, 2022.
  - The USFWS announced their [Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund: Recovery Land Acquisition Grant Program](#) and their [Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund: Habitat Conservation Plan \(HCP\) Land Acquisition Grants Program](#). Applications for the grants are due by April 26th.

## Courts:

- > Ahead of the EPA revisions of the WOTUS rule, the Supreme Court announced they will take up a WOTUS case potentially limiting the scope of the law. All 50 Republican Senators signed a [letter](#) to the EPA asking them not to move forward with the rulemaking until after the Supreme Court case is settled.

## Coming up...

- > FY 22 government funding set to expire March 11<sup>th</sup>.
- > FY 23 appropriations will be delayed until later this spring or summer.
- > 2022 WRDA discussions have begun.
- > The Farm Bill expires in 2023 and preliminary discussions on the next bill have begun.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is the state agency responsible for managing fish and wildlife. The Wildlife Department receives no general tax appropriations and is supported by hunting and fishing license fees and federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment.



## March 2022 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### **CALENDAR ITEMS:**

Mar 1 Rack Madness, ODWC Headquarters  
Mar 9-10 SEAFWA Spring Directors' Meeting, Athens, TX  
Mar 12 G&H Decoy Birthday Bash & Yard Sale, Henryetta  
Mar 14-18 The North American Wildlife Conference, Spokane, WA  
Mar 23-24 OKSSSP Shoot, Duncan  
Mar 25-27 Major League Fishing, Grand Lake  
Mar 29-30 OKSSSP Shoot, Coweta  
Apr 1-3 Total Archery Challenge, Beaver's Bend State Park  
Apr 3-4 Commission meeting/tour Paddlefish Research Center, Miami  
Apr 5 OKSSSP Shoot, Enid  
Apr 8-10 Ducks Unlimited Expo, Texas Motor Speedway  
Apr 13 OKSSSP Shoot, El Reno/Banner

### **AGENCY UPDATE**

#### ***LEGISLATURE:***

- The first legislative deadline has passed. Bills that did not receive a committee hearing in their chamber of origin are now dead. An updated tracking list is attached.
- JD and Corey presented to the Senate Rural Caucus on March 1<sup>st</sup>. They shared information about the license bills and answered questions about wildlife management in rural Oklahoma.
- The next legislative deadline was extended to March 24<sup>th</sup>. Bills must receive a floor hearing in their chamber of origin to remain active after this date.

#### ***HUMAN DIMENSIONS***

- Data is being collected for the 2021 Game Harvest Survey. 6,000 hunters were randomly selected to take part in the effort including 1,000 nonresidents- the first-time nonresidents have been included. Halfway through data collection we have over 1,500 completed surveys.
- Analysis is being done on the women and hunting survey and focus groups. A report is being drafted and will be circulated soon.
- Assisted with drafting a peer reviewed journal article covering the results of the Bowfishing Survey completed this past fall.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

- Accounting
  - Number of Claims Audited and Paid - 303
  - Total Dollar Amount of Claims Paid - \$1,846,289.17
  - Total # Agency Cardholders - 191 (20 approving officials)
  - Total Agency Spending Limit - \$361,500
  - Number of P/Card Transactions Processed -598
  - Number of In-depth Audited Transactions - 109
  - Total Dollar Amount of P/Card Purchases - \$160,549.66
  - Number of PCard Spending Limit Increase Requests Approved - 27
  - OMES documentation requests for PCard transactions - 0
  - New and Refresher PCard-holder and Approver Training Completed 4 Sent
  - Number of Purchase Orders/CO issued - 34
  - IT Acquisitions Processed - 11
  - OMES Surveys Completed - 255
  - Vehicle incidents reported - 5
  - Pending Incidents - 5
  
- Human Resources
  - Open Full-time Positions, January - 16
  - Positions Interviewed, 3 Candidates interviewed, 12
  - Positions Announced, 5
  - See included personnel report that shows personnel actions for the month.
  - Temporary Employees Processed (Interns & Aids), 10
  - End of employment, 1
  - 1 – ODWC Biweekly Computer Trainings
  - 1 – MINRC Meeting
  - 4 - weekly meetings with OMES payroll dept.
  - Preparing for Workday Parallel Payroll Testing/Meetings
  
- IT
  - IT took 140 inbound tickets and closed 158.
  - Major Current projects:
    - We have completely finished deploying all 124 law enforcement Toughbook's this month as well as finished off the last of the previous batch of 50.
    - We have prepared a fresh batch of laptops for the March Rack Madness project coming up in early March.
    - We helped support Betsey York in getting her yearly survey program off the ground.
    - Rodney has been working closely with H.R. to get us prepared for the move to the new Work Day system.
  
- License
  - Processed over 700 orders, including 593 licenses and 370 hard card orders (mail and walk-in orders) - \$59,534 in revenue
  - Shipped over 480 merchandise items (hats, books, etc), totaling almost \$5,000 in revenue.

- Processed almost \$56,000 in miscellaneous revenue, such lease payments, fines restitution, etc.

Property

- Reprogramed and installed 10 new low band radios in Law Enforcement trucks
- Bought and installed 4 batteries in our auction trucks.
- Bob Howard Dodge delivered 6 new trucks, 2 Fish trucks and 4 Wildlife Division trucks
- Prepared insurance packets for new trucks
- Ordered Comdata fuel cards and Pike Pass for the 6 new trucks.
- 3 new vehicle exchange for Wildlife Division.
- Registered and titled 1 new boat, 1 boat motor and 6 new dodge trucks
- Sent over to OTC, 320 wildlife plate registration renewals for 2022.
- Sold 37 trucks 2 four wheelers and 10 misc. lots on Purple Wave online auction. Sale closed on 2-22-22. Total sale of auction was \$874,655.
- 2022 trucks are ordered with build dates of 3/14 thru 3/21 on half ton trucks and 5/20 thru 5/27 on super duty ¾ ton and 1-ton trucks.

**FISHERIES DIVISION**

**January**

Statewide Fish Stockings

<b>Species</b>	<b>Number Fish</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Number Locations</b>
Rainbow trout	30,017	9-11"	10
Rainbow trout	1,082	14-24"	10

Meeting attended

- Attended the Southern Division American Fisheries Society annual conference, January 19-22 in Charleston, SC.
- Participated in monthly AFWA fisheries chief’s video conference calls.

Activities

- Staff collaborated with US Army of Engineers, State Parks, and LMFR Foundation staff to develop a trout habitat plan for the Lower Mountain Fork River. Initial phases of the plan were implemented by constructing and installing six rock weirs.
- Grounds maintenance at American Horse reservoir included spreading 182 tons of rock and gravel on the access roads.
- Road maintenance at Vanderwork Lake included installation of new tinhorns.
- Grounds maintenance, including access improvements, mowing and picking up trash, continues at all Department lakes and fishing areas.
- Staff continues to meet with BA/Shooting Sports Coordinator to review ongoing projects and view several existing and potential future projects.
- Assisted ODOT with surveys at the Eldon Bridge right-of-way.
- Staff continues to coordinate with GRDA staff to resolve issues on the upper Illinois regarding commercial use of ODWC properties.

- Creel surveys are ongoing at Robbers Cave SP, Holdenville and Hugo reservoirs, and the Route 66 and Edward Park CTHF.
- Analysis of data collected during standardized surveys continues to be analyzed. Data summaries were used to update regional management plans and Federal Aid reports.
- Mark-recapture sampling of Blue Catfish at Wiley Post Reservoir has begun with a population estimate of 296 Blue Catfish >30”.
- Alligator Gar mark-recapture sampling is ongoing when weather permits.
- Winter paddlefish sampling and tagging surveys were conducted on Oologah and Eufaula reservoirs in collaboration with USFWS staff.
- Routine maintenance at the Paddlefish Research Center continues in preparation for the upcoming paddlefish season.
- Information was provided to Communication and Education Division staff regarding white bass fishing for the Department website and upcoming news releases.
- Staff was interviewed by Kelly Bostian concerning pending bass rules changes.
- Staff reviewed and approved scientific collector permit applications and drafted letters of authorization.
- Attended pay meeting for the Manning SFH pump station project, provided oversight on the project, and worked with construction and properties and engineering staff to resolve construction issues.
- Grounds maintenance at all hatcheries continues, and all fish houses, ponds, buildings, and equipment have been prepared for the upcoming fish production season.

## **C&E DIVISION**

- Brandt provided a 2021 revenue report for efforts including email, push notifications and digital ads. Total revenue generated from marketing efforts was \$3.53M. Email tactics made up more than 75 percent of total revenue.
- Oklahoma was listed as a Top Ten state in the number of hunters (ranked #6) in a recent MSN article: [This state has the most registered hunters in America, according to data \(msn.com\)](#)
- Sarah Southerland, with help from the social media team, is busy maintaining ODWC’s social media platforms. Several of our social media platforms have seen tremendous, and at times, overwhelming growth. Staying current on trends, remaining engaged with constituents, answering comments and messages while generating content is an arduous task. The social media team itself has grown tremendously and continues to exceed standards. The social media team includes Sarah Southerland, Todd Craighead, Daniel Griffith, Whitney Heskett and Smokey Solis.
- Kelly Boyer, Shawn Gee, Damon Springer, Jason Smith, Lance Meek, Jennifer Benge, Kassie Harriet, Colin Berg and staff from other divisions set up and ran the OKNASP state shoots at the OKC and Tulsa Fairgrounds.
- Daniel Griffith has maintained two websites for several months (the current site and the new site under development). Pending approval ODWC’s proposed brand, Daniel will apply ODWC’s new brand assets to the new website. Daniel is working

with Rodney in IT section to migrate the new website to ODWC's server. This could be a long process. Daniel continues to work with the Website Council and others to determine appropriate content, layout, design and formatting. The estimated release of the new website is mid-April.

- Sarah Southerland and Micah Holmes attended the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation conference in Dallas, Tx.
- Jason Smith conducted fire guard and road maintenance at the Arcadia Conservation Education Area.
- Blake, Darrin and Todd continue to seek story leads and produce episodes for Outdoor Oklahoma. Their first premier season finishes March 27. The second premier season begins May 22. Each premier consists of a new show open, with Todd highlighting a Department activity, a new segment 5-8 minutes, an old segment from previous shows, and a "post card" which are landscape views and natural sounds from a WMA. Here is one of the latest episodes: [Outdoor Oklahoma 4633](#).
- Skyler St Yves conducted three in-person basic trout fishing courses. These courses were very popular and registration was at maximum capacity.
- Jena Donnell continues to raise awareness of Oklahoma wildlife diversity. Her recent efforts include promotion of the Wildlife Diversity Tax Check-Off. Oklahomans can donate a portion of their tax return to 8 organizations, including the Wildlife Diversity Fund. These funds are used to support operations related to species not hunted or fished.
- Damon Springer finalized the OKSSSP Regional and State Shoot information and sent out registration info to coaches.
- Don Brown completed the March/April issue of Outdoor Oklahoma magazine. Annual subscriptions hold steady at around 10,000, a total not reached since 2012. The March/April issue features the annual Anglers' Guide, written by Skylar St. Yves. This year's Anglers' Guide highlights nongame fish.
- Lance Meek worked on a reporting system for range projects and conducted sight visits.
- Smokey Solis produced a video for Outdoor Oklahoma. The video followed a similar style to "America's Test Kitchen." The video featured Smokey as he walks through how to make Italian elk sandwiches.
- Kasie Harriet and Colin Berg met with NWTF volunteers regarding the second annual deer conference.
- The Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting regulations committee met and developed a plan to condense the regulations book. New this year, the regulations book will not have any ads. This has resulted in fewer available pages for content.

## **WILDLIFE DIVISION**

- Wildlife Management Areas
  - Prescribed burns conducted on 6,513 acres on various Central and Northeast region WMA's. Burn bans have precluded burning on western WMA's during this year's dormant season burning so far. Very dry conditions have prevailed in the SE and also precluded burning there, but recent precipitation has resulted in more favorable conditions, and burning is expected during the next 4-6 weeks.

- 17 miles of WMA roads were maintained.
- 76 miles of fireguards were maintained.
- Mowed/strip disk/herbicide/masticated/cedar cutting/hack & squirt 90 acres of habitat
- Removed and replaced 6.75 miles of boundary fence
- Construction has started on the new access road into the interior of Sans Bois WMA. This road traverses very steep terrain, and required significant engineering / planning, but work is progressing nicely.
- Monitored and Inspected Agricultural, Hay, and Grazing leases
- ODWC will be hosting two town hall meetings to better update the local public about planned work at Drummond Flats WMA, as well as solicit feedback and suggestions. NRCS and DU personnel will also be present to assist in presenting their partnership roles as well as address pertinent issues/questions. Meeting is being planned either for March or early April in Drummond, Oklahoma.
- Staff met with DMAP Cooperators and picked up deer jaw bones / harvest records.
- Conducted Mid-Winter Waterfowl Surveys across the state.
- Conducted the inaugural Trapping Workshop at Cherokee WMA. There were 5 participants and it was a great success.
- The deer herd health evaluation projects targeted South-central and Southeast Oklahoma. Numerous staff assisted with the weekly collections/processing.
- Oklahoma State University researchers were successful in capturing 100 pronghorns in Texas and Cimarron Counties for population evaluation. After helicopter crews safely netted the pronghorns, each animal was fitted with a GPS transmitter collar for tracking. Data will be continuously collected in the coming months/years to determine pronghorn survival, reproduction, and movements. Later this year, transmitter collars will be used to locate fawning does for further reproductive data collection. This grant is funded via the Wildlife Restoration Program (W-215-R-1).





Helicopter crew capturing antelope to be fitted with GPS collars for research project (note “shooter” on far side strut of helicopter)

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

- Game Warden Larry Green (Osage County) D1 and Corps of Engineer Ranger Aaron Brown rescued three duck hunters from Kaw Lake on January 19<sup>th</sup>. The hunters had swamped their boat in 3–4-foot waves after trying to return to the boat ramp. If it wasn't for the boat driving expertise of Warden Green the 3 hunters would more than likely die from hypothermia before anyone else could have reached them.
- Wardens Austin Jackson (Craig) and Riley Willman (Delaware) D1 assisted the Ottawa County Sheriff's office in an accidental shooting investigation. Without the help of these wardens and the knowledge they gained from attending the Hunter Incident Investigation School, this case would not have been solved. The wardens used their knowledge to trace the bullet track through the house and outside, which ultimately led to the spot a few hundred yards away that an individual was shooting at stray dogs from.
- Warden Kenny Lawson (McCurtain) D3 conducted a lengthy investigation into a hunting lease with several non-resident hunters from Texas and Arkansas. Warden Lawson suspected them of using the Department's non-resident archery license to harvest numerous deer with rifles and crossbows along with a bear that was checked in Arkansas. The couple plead guilty in McCurtain county court and paid over 7K dollars in fines and license suspended for 2 years. They also plead guilty in Arkansas to the illegal bear and were fined \$2840.00 plus had their license

suspended for 5 years. With both states being members of the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact the couple will not be hunting in either state for the next 5 years.

- The process of getting new Dell Toughbooks out to the field has been almost completed. These new Toughbooks are replacing old laptops and Chromebooks that have been needing replacement for years now. Kuddos to Amanda Storck for the help in getting the computers and Drew Stegall and I.T. for the help in getting everything installed and issued to the field. They have worked hard to get this done for Law Enforcement.
- Wardens have been working numerous outdoor shows over the last couple of weeks, some in NE Oklahoma, the Backwoods show is coming up, as well as Rack Madness at the Department.
- In Grove, Wardens and Biologists worked the Mid-South Tackle, Hunting & Boat Show. There were record numbers of attendance with over 10,000 people coming through the doors.
- We are still in talks with the Tribes to work on a solution that is mutually beneficial to all of us after the McGirt ruling.
- Wardens have also been assisting C & E with the Archery in the Schools shoots over the last couple of weeks.

#### **UPDATE FROM RICK ON FOUNDATION**