

several quality bucks. He has also created several (five and counting) ponds on the property for wildlife watering, wetland/waterfowl habitat management, fisheries management and recreation, and irrigation (for wildlife food plots). A major challenge now, and going forward, is a serious feral hog problem. Haskins, his hunters, and his ranch manager are tackling this through sustained

trapping and shooting efforts.

Along with his passion for wildlife and habitat management, Walt is equally passionate about sharing with others. For years he has worked closely with Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1, and every year scouts have opportunity to earn merit badges in Fishing, Camping, Environmental Science, or Fish and Wildlife Management.

Likewise, numerous family and friends are the beneficiaries of Walt's sharing nature, enjoying all that the ranch has to offer.

In summary, Walt's effort, dedication, and passion exemplify successful wildlife conservation on private land, and he is very deserving of recognition as the 2017 ODWC Landowner Conservationist of the Year.



OLAP Seeks Leases for 2nd Year

By Jeff Tibbits, OLAP Wildlife Biologist



The Oklahoma Land Access Program (OLAP) provides financial incentives to landowners who allow public access for hunting, fishing,

stream access and wildlife viewing opportunities on private lands.

The Wildlife Department received a \$2.26 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of the 2014 Farm Bill, through the Voluntary Public Access - Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP). OLAP aims to increase walk-

in access opportunities for sportspersons while including and rewarding conservation-minded landowners. Landowners have the flexibility to maintain their current farming or ranching practices while providing sporting opportunities. Enrolled landowners are compensated based on enrolled acres, location, access type and contract length. Added compensation is available for properties enrolled in conservation programs, such as CRP, to further reward landowners making efforts to conserve and sustain wildlife. A bonus is available to multiple landowners who form local OLAP cooperatives.

Almost anyone who owns or leases at least 40 acres can

qualify. Property boundaries are posted with signs, and parking areas will have informational signs indicating access dates and allowed activities. Enrolled landowners are accorded limited liability by existing state laws, and Game Wardens periodically patrol OLAP properties.

Landowners may temporarily deny access while ranching or agricultural activities are occurring. Access is limited to foot traffic only, and vehicles are prohibited.

For more information or to sign up, go to www.wildlifedepartment.com/OLAP.