

# COMING EVENTS



## Field Day

Beef Production & Bobwhites  
February 10, 2001  
Asher, OK  
Program begins at 10 a.m.

### Topics:

Pasture Management, Bobwhite Quail Habitat, Habitat Improvement Demos and Cost Share Incentives.

Lunch and seed provided by Quail Unlimited.

For more information, Contact Mike Sams: 405/521-4920.

## Wetland Plant Field Days



March 19th through March 24th

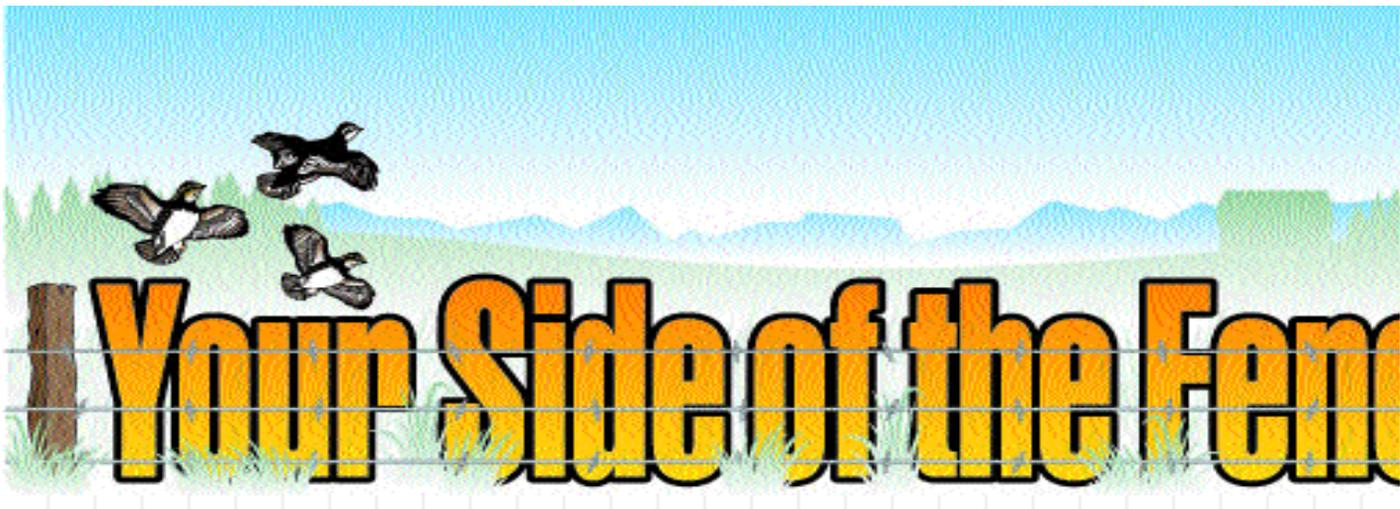
The ODWC, NRCS, Payne County Conservation District, OSU students, and local scouts will be planting wetland plants into the newly created Teal Ridge Urban Wetland Project in Stillwater. This 23-acre wetland was created to serve as a demonstration site for the public, will provide recreational and educational opportunities, quality wildlife habitat and floodplain management. The field day will provide a true hands-on experience in how to provide a diversity of wildlife valuable wetland plants for a wetland. Be prepared to get muddy. For more information please contact Melynda Hickman at 405/522-3087 or [mhickman@odwc.state.ok.us](mailto:mhickman@odwc.state.ok.us).



Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation  
1801 N. Lincoln  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105



Postage & Fees Paid  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Norman, OK  
Permit No. 35



Vol. 1, #1 • Jan.

A publication of the  Oklahoma Department of Wildlife

## Something to Gnaw On Information and Planning Key to Furthering Success

*By Mike Sams, upland game biologist*

Life is hectic, and seems to become more so every day. There is always something to do.

Just being as busy as a beaver does not guarantee success!

Working toward a goal still requires giving every thought to all the angles and periodically judging your progress. Without examination, back breaking work could just end up breaking your back. We're hopeful that this newsletter might just be the angle to help things fall into place for you.

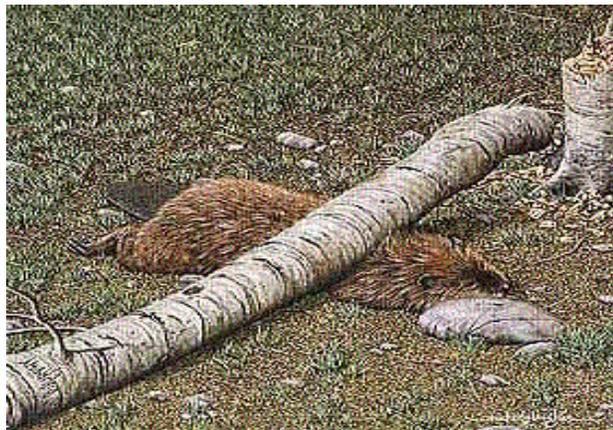
With more than 95 percent of Oklahoma's land base in private ownership, we believe that providing assistance to you on *Your Side of the Fence* is essential to managing the state's wildlife resources. Landowners and managers play a vital role in creating a landscape conducive to wildlife and nowhere is this more evident than in Oklahoma.

Whether for financial incen-

Wildlife, resulting in assistance to some 414 landowners with 287,000 acres.

We plan to continue this working relationship by exploring options for wildlife management in *Your Side of the Fence*. We will produce three issues a year (January, May, September).

In this publication we will provide dependable contacts and keep you informed on management strategies, cost-share initiatives, and upcoming events that will help you manage wildlife on your property.



*Without planning and checking progress, back breaking work could just end up breaking your back.*



**Oklahoma Department of  
Wildlife Conservation Mission**

**Statement:** Managing Oklahoma's wildlife resources and habitat to provide scientific, educational, aesthetic, economic and recreational benefits for present and future generations of hunters, anglers and others who appreciate wildlife.

**ODWC Landowner  
Assistance Programs:**

**Wildlife Habitat Improvement  
Program(WHIP); Technical Assistance  
Program**

Russ Horton: 405/202-5901

John Hendrix: 405/742-1278

Mike Sams: 405/521-4920

Dick Hoar: 918/744-1039

**Deer Management Assistance  
Program (DMAP)**

Wildlife Division: 405/521-2739

**Oklahoma Wildscapes Certification  
Program:**

Melynda Hickman: 405/522-3087

**Farm Pond Technical Assistance;  
Farm Pond Fish Stocking Program**

NW Region-John Stahl: 580/474-2668

SW Region-Larry Cofer: 580/529-2795

NE Region-Hutchie Weeks: 918/683-

1031

SE Region-Jack Harper: 580/924-4087

Northcentral-Don Hicks: 580/762-2248

Central-Garland Wright: 405/379-5408

Southcentral-Paul Mauck: 580/924-4087

**ODWC Contacts:**

Wildlife Division: 405/521-2739

Natural Resources: 405/521-4616

Fisheries Division: 405/521-3721

Law Enforcement: 405/521-3719

Operation Game Thief: 1-800-522-8039

Information & Education: 405/521-3855

License Section: 405/521-3852

Instant Licenses: 1-800-223-3333

*Your Side of the Fence* is published three times a year for those enrolled in the ODWC's landowner assistance programs. Articles may be reprinted with permission from the editors:

Brian Barger  
1801 N. Lincoln  
Oklahoma City, OK  
*bbarger@odwc.state.ok.us*  
405/522-4872

or

John Hendrix  
100 USDA, Suite 203  
Stillwater, OK 74074  
*jhendrix@onenet.net*  
405/742-1278.

**Public Hearings/Meetings**  
**The Public Input Phase of Fish and Wildlife  
Management**

*By Bill Dinkines, assistant chief of Wildlife*

Ever wonder how a regulation or rule gets put into law?

A proposal goes through a very lengthy screening process before it is ever recommended to the Wildlife Commission for adoption. Regulation changes can originate from a number of sources, including Department staff, citizens and conservation groups.

After being reviewed for biological merit and consequences, the proposals that don't have a negative impact on the resource go to a regulatory review committee made up of staff from the different divisions within the Wildlife Department. This committee allows the various divisions a chance to review and comment on the proposals.

The proposals that make it through this last screening process then are put on an agenda for public hearings. These public hearings are the last, and one of the most critical steps, in finalizing recommendations to the Wildlife Commission. The public hearings constitute the public input phase of the process.

As wildlife issues become more sociological in nature instead of biological, we MUST have input from the public. That is why it is critical you attend these hearings to help the Department finalize hunting and fishing regulation change recommendations that are both biologically and sociologically acceptable.



***Your Side of the Fence***

**is a FREE publication produced three times a year by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Questions, comments and suggestions about this, or future issues are welcome and should be addressed to the editors.**

**Would you like to start receiving Your Side of the Fence?**

**Know a neighbor or friend who would enjoy our publication? Do you wish to discontinue receiving this free publication? Please mail the following information to:**

**Attn: Editor  
Your Side of the Fence  
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife**

**Conservation  
1801 N. Lincoln  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

# Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP)

The WHIP program was established in 1994, and an estimated 280 landowners have used this program to improve wildlife habitat on their properties. Anyone with an interest in improving their property for wildlife should be interested in the program.

The WHIP program is designed to help private landowners develop, preserve, restore, and manage wildlife habitat on their properties. For those who qualify, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation will share up to 50 percent of the cost (not to exceed \$2,500 per landowner).

The landowner's labor, equipment use and materials may count as their cost-share for specific projects. In exchange, the landowner agrees to maintain the project for a period of 10 years. Deer, turkey, pheasant, dove, quail, lesser and greater prairie chickens and waterfowl are the targeted species for this program.

Acceptable objectives along with general descriptions may include:

- Habitat Protection: This primarily excludes or controls those things which damage and destroys existing wildlife habitat, such as domestic animals and vehicles. This would involve fencing to restrict grazing, unwanted traffic and other habitat damaging activities.

- Habitat Development Improve-ment: This involves planting trees, shrubs, native grasses, legumes and forbs.

- Water Facilities Improvement: This would include water development



*Landowners may receive cost-share assistance for establishing fireguards for their annual prescribed burn program.*

such as ponds, windmills, solar pumps, ground level pit ponds and wildlife guzzlers. Livestock may be allowed to use the watering site if they do not deter wildlife use.

- Timber Management: This may be used to create small openings in timber stands for timber stand thinning, timber stand improvements and to maintain current openings.

- Wetland Enhancement: This would include protecting, enhancing, restoring and developing wetland habitat to benefit waterfowl. Approved projects might include constructing dikes, levees or berms to impound and control seasonal availability of water. Installing water control structures for manipulating wetland water levels to enhance wetland plant communities for waterfowl food resources may also be covered by this program.

The procedure to participate in this program is simple. Contact the ODWC Wildlife Division at 405/521-

2739 for an application and brochure covering the program. Fill out the application and return it to the Wildlife Division. The application will be assigned to a wildlife biologist and they will contact you for an on-site project evaluation.

The biologist will prepare a plan for your property and submit it to the WHIP review board committee for approval. If approved, you will be able to complete the project as described in the contract.

Upon finishing the project, the biologist will complete a project inspection and paper work for reimbursement. The landowner will be reimbursed within 60 days and is responsible for maintaining the project for the 10-year period.

Applications will be accepted from Jan. 1, through June 1, annually. In the event funds are exhausted prior to June 1, applicants will be advised to apply after Jan. 1, of the following year.

Currently, 95 percent of Oklahoma is in private ownership. This means landowners have the most potential for improving wildlife habitat and increasing wildlife populations across our state. We hope this program will provide landowners the incentive to do just that.

# MANAGEMENT MEASURES

## January

### **Wildlife Habitat**

- Install wood duck nest boxes.
- Strip disk to encourage native food resources.
- Prepare ground for tree/shrub establishment.
- Evaluate and record food resources for wildlife.

### **Ponds**

- Cut cedar trees and stockpile for fish habitat.
- Trap muskrat and beaver as needed.
- Catch and remove crappie.

## February

### **Wildlife Habitat**

- Plant trees and shrubs as needed for cover.
- Strip disk to encourage native food resources.
- Prepare ground for tree/shrub establishment.
- Monitor turkey flocks.
- Clean out nesting structures/boxes.
- Set out bluebird boxes.
- Apply fertilizer to mast producing trees.

### **Ponds**

- Cut cedar trees and stockpile for fish habitat.
- Catch and remove crappie.

## March

### **Wildlife Habitat**

- Prepare ground for summer food plots if needed.
- Plant native grasses, forbs and legumes.
- Monitor/fluctuate water levels in wetland areas.
- Conduct prescribed burns as needed.
- Plan a grazing management system.

### **Ponds**

- Trap and remove muskrat and beaver.

## April

### **Wildlife Habitat**

- Plant native grasses, forbs and legumes.
- Clean and store prescribed burn equipment.
- Disk wetland areas to encourage moist soil plants.
- Implement a planned grazing system.

### **Ponds**

- Install cedar brush piles.

## Landowner Hunting and Fishing License Exemptions

### Here's the Scoop!

*By Dennis Maxwell, assistant chief of Law Enforcement*

Under the Oklahoma wildlife laws there are several provisions dealing with landowner rights and exemptions to certain licenses.

One example is the exemption for landowners to be able to fish in their own ponds. The law states that legal resident owners or tenants, their spouses, parents, grandparents, children and their spouses, grandchildren and their spouses may fish in private ponds on land owned or leased by them without having to purchase a fishing license.

Oklahoma law also states that legal resident owners or tenants who hunt on land owned or leased by them are exempt from the purchase of a hunting license. This exemption is just for resident landowners, not for non-residents who own land in Oklahoma. This exemption is also just for hunting licenses and does not cover other types of licenses such as deer, elk or turkey permits.

Another landowner exemption is the ability of resident owners, or tenants, or such individuals' children to trap for furbearers during furbearer season on land they own or lease. A resident may also hunt waterfowl exclusively on their own property without an Oklahoma waterfowl hunting stamp.

When our wildlife laws talk about a lease, or lessee, a "Lease" is a contractual relationship by which one party obtains a right to the possession and usage of a certain space, property, or subsurface rights for a definite period of time. In the event a person is permitted to come upon the land to perform some specific act, such as hunting, that individual has no "Lease", but only a "license" to do that act. A hunting lease does not give the person possession of

# Wildlife Commission Names Landowner of the Year

*By Todd Craighead and Brian Barger, information specialists*

For his outstanding efforts to enhance wildlife habitat on his property, Paul B. Odom, III was named 2000 Landowner of the Year by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Russ Horton, central region senior biologist for the Wildlife Department, said Odom deserves the award in recognition of the extensive work he has done on his 640 acres in southwest Canadian County.

"As a conscientious steward of his land and its resources, Mr. Odom is a prime example of how a landowner can successfully manage his property for the benefit of wildlife without compromising other interests for the land," Horton said. "What Mr. Odom has done with his place is a model for

other landowners with the same goals. We're proud to be able to honor him in this way."

In the early 1990's, Odom started with a dream to find a piece of land near Oklahoma City to manage strictly for wildlife recreation.

"I spent two or three years searching for the perfect property to one day develop into my own personal wildlife management area," said Odom. "I also hoped to turn it into a first-class hunting destination for sportsmen. And now, after years of hard work, that dream is a reality."

In 1992 Odom began pur-

chasing about 500 pounds of corn a week," said Odom.

As a result, the property is now home to an estimated 200-300 Rio Grande turkeys.

"There wasn't a single turkey anywhere near the place when

OSU Forestry and Wildlife Extension.

"I couldn't have done any of this without a lot of help from Russ and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife and many of the other agencies I worked with. I really want to thank everyone for all their effort."

To be considered for the prestigious ODWC Landowner of the Year Award, landowners must demonstrate a commitment to managing their property to provide benefits for wildlife.

For more information on the Department's Landowner of the Year program, contact private lands biologist John Hendrix at 405/742-1278.



*Alan Peoples (2nd to right), chief of wildlife, and Russ Horton (far right), central region biologist for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, present Paul B. Odom, III (2nd from left), with the 2000 Landowner of the Year Award. Joining Mr. Odom is his ranch foreman, Ray Roberts (far left).*

we bought it, and we didn't transplant any, either. I guess the old saying is true, 'If you build it, they will come'," smiles Odom.

Odom also practices a very strict self-imposed deer harvest plan.

"Biologists tell me that if I want big bucks, I should reduce the sex ratio as much as possible," says Odom. "We've only taken one buck out here since I purchased it, and we're seeing fantastic results."

Odom encourages other landowners to consider the untapped potential their land holds. Several agencies can provide technical and financial

## Technical Assistance Program

Want to attract deer or turkey to your property? How about more quail? These are just a few of the concerns that biologists help landowners with on a daily basis.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation offers a technical assistance program to landowners who have questions about managing their property for deer, turkey, quail, fish and other game species. This program is free to all landowners and is a simple, valuable tool in conserving wildlife populations and habitat.

Technical assistance ranges from phone conversations, to on-site evaluations and even written recommendations. To receive technical assistance or for more information about the program, contact the ODWC's Wildlife Division at 405/521-2739.

Have trouble remembering dates?

Well, certain wildlife management practices only come around once a year.

But, don't worry about remembering them because we've taken the liberty of jotting them down for you on the attractive *Oklahoma Wildlife Habitat Management Calendar*.

A limited supply of the 2001 edition is still available,

# Outdoor Calendar

## JANUARY 2001

"IN SEARCH OF EAGLES" interpretive programs at Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge will be held each weekend in Jan. 2001. Reservations will be taken beginning December 18, 2000, between 8 a.m. and 4:30p.m. For more information: 580/429-3222.

**1:** ODWC WHIP Program sign-up begins. Through June 1.

**1:** Panhandle pheasant season closes.

**13:** Hobart Quail Unlimited Banquet. Contact John Gish: 580/726-2951.

**13&27:** Eagle watch tours. Crow's Secret Nature Center, Lake Thunderbird State Park. For info: 405/321-4633.

**15:** Oklahoma Project WILD workshop. Bixby High School, Bixby. 8:30 a.m. - 2:30p.m. Contact Cheryl Paine: 918/366-2298.

**16:** Enid Quail Unlimited Banquet. Contact Ron Black: 580/446-5633.

**26:** Ponca City Quail Unlimited Banquet. Contact Bob Schuster: 580/762-1217.

**26-28 and Feb. 2-4:** Oklahoma City Boat Show.

**31:** Quail season closes. Pheasant season closes. Squirrel season closes.

## FEBRUARY 2001

**3:** Edmond Chapter Ducks Unlimited banquet. Oak Tree Golf & Country Club indoor tennis courts, 6p.m. Contact Dan Eppler: 405/749-1855.

**4:** 2nd part Crow season closes.

**10&24:** Eagle watch tours. Crow's Secret Nature Center, Lake Thunderbird State Park. For info: 405/321-4633.

**12:** Conservation Order Light Goose Season opens. Through April 1.

**15:** Cottontail, Swamp Rabbit and Jackrabbit season closes.

**15-18:** Oklahoma Fishing & Tackle Show. OKC Fairgrounds.

**24:** Oklahoma Project WILD workshop. OU, Norman (for credit w/WET Mar 3 & PLT Mar 10). 9a.m. - 4p.m. all three days. Contact Darlene Long: 405/325-1964.

## Common Questions Concerning Farm Pond Management

Winter is here and for most of us it's time to kick back in the recliner in front of a crackling fire, with a warm cup of coffee and a loyal dog at our feet.

This is a time for contemplation and relaxation. One of the things we might contemplate while escaping the harsh winter winds, is what we are going to do about that neglected pond. Wouldn't it be great if there was one magic silver bullet to fix all our farm pond ailments. Unfortunately, it isn't that easy.

I have been an Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation farm pond doctor for 21 years, and I've heard and seen it all. What follows are some frequently asked questions and some solutions.

Why do I have small/thin bass?

I never or rarely catch a big bass (4 pounds or larger). All my bass seem to weigh between one-half pound and a-pound-and-a-half? Some appear thin. Where are my big bass?

Answer:

Get a can of worms and a bobber and go fishing. If you start catching small bass and don't catch any bluegill on the worms, you may have a crowded bass population with little bass forage (usually bluegill). The ODWC can help you determine how many pounds of bass/acre you have and how many you should remove. Once you have removed the required amount of bass, try stocking adult bluegill. The Department can advise you on your stocking needs.

Why can't I get rid of the moss in my pond?

I have stocked five grass carp and/or treated it with the chemical my neighbor used on his pond.

bass long enough to reproduce, and for every six to 10 pounds you stocked, you gained a pound of bass. Channel catfish fingerlings must be eight inches long to survive largemouth predation and one-to two-inch hybrid bluegills are nothing but great appetizers.

What about crappie in my pond?

Answer:

Everyone loves to catch and eat crappie. Our two state record crappie were harvested from farm ponds. However, stocking crappie into a balanced bass, bluegill and catfish pond usually spells trouble with a capital T. Here's why.

Crappie have a tendency to produce sporadic, abundant year classes. If the pond lacks sufficient bass to reduce the numbers of young crappie, they quickly overpopulate consuming all available food.

The stunted or slow growing crappie soon disrupt the predator/prey balance in your pond and fishing for all species will decline. Before stocking crappie into your pond, review a copy of *Managing Pond Fisheries in Oklahoma* available through the ODWC.

These are just a few of the questions we often receive about farm pond management. I hope that this information might help answer questions or concerns about managing your pond, and we will address more pond management

