

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT *News*

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Dr. Deer's Field Day Nacogdoches, Texas, 2014

Dr. Kröll's mission statement is pretty evident when you enter the front security gate. These are the signs that greet you. It doesn't matter how much you manage, but how you manage it. Providing the wildlife on your property with the best conditions and resources is a commitment and ever-changing process. Fresh water sources, adequate cover, bedding areas, and nutrition are all areas of great importance in developing wildlife habitat.



Making the long trip to Nacogdoches, TX, with me this year are (l-r) Dave Sienko, Scott Sienko, and Mark Peretore. A lot of the information and management practices will be shared with everyone up north.

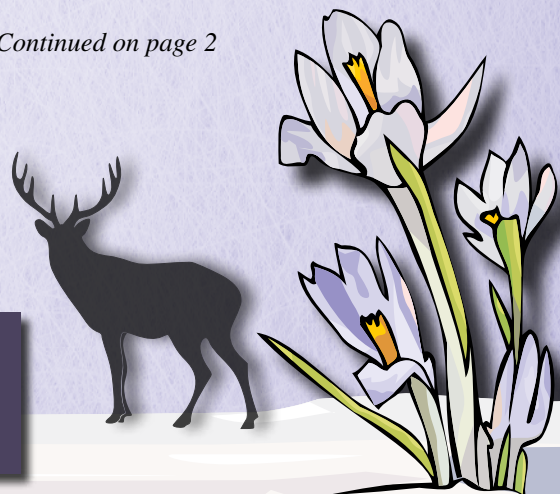


John Butler and Dr. Steve Harrison share an area of the field day where they explain the uniqueness of Buck Forage Oats. No oat variety exists that has all of the qualities of Buck Forage: Winter hardiness, disease and insect resistance, root hardiness, grazing survival, drought toleration, and most importantly, deer preference.



I want to thank Bob Wallace for writing the article on pg. 5 on such short notice. When we were at Dr. Kröll's facility preparing sites for tree planting, I said to him, "Why don't you write an article about your family's dedication to the reintroduction of the American hybrid chestnut?" Bob thought it was a great idea and spent many hours in the hotel writing his "Dunstan Legacy" story while we played! Thanks, Bob, for everything. If your Grandpa ever knew!

Continued on page 2



WMNews can be viewed at these sites:

www.buckforage.com
www.drdeer.com
www.realtreenursery.com

www.buckforagetv.com
www.chestnuthilloutdoors.com
www.shadowhunterblinds.com

Dr. Deer's Field Day – Nacogdoches, Texas, 2014 continued from page 1

Tens of thousands of varieties of oats are planted and tested at Dr. Harrison's facility at Louisiana State University. Around 1,500 varieties are genetically channeled into the white tail program. Only a handful of the varieties are chosen to be tested here at Dr. Kroll's. At this stage of the program, the deer do the testing by eating.



Dr. Harrison is pointing out a high sugar-containing oat; an advance line variety. It has passed all of the testing to be sold as a Buck Forage product. This successful oat variety

(LA 117) takes 10-12 years of genetic testing and breeding. Money spent on research and continued development ensures the best products available.



Bob Wallace has plenty to smile about at the field days. Dr. Kroll has listed Dunstan Chestnut Trees and Chestnut Magic as "Dr. Deer" approved products. This prestigious symbol is awarded only to products that are rigorously tested and approved by Dr. Kroll.

Timber! by Scott Sienko



Being the son of a logger, as well as former chainsaw safety instructor, means I've sat through my share of safety demonstrations. This, however, was my first time watching one in Texas while we were in Nacogdoches at Dr. Deer's annual field day, and as I stood among a murmuring crowd, my father – David Sienko – made a bold claim. To keep the crowd engaged, he wagered that he could hit a soda can with the trunk of the tree that he would be using for his demonstration. This certainly garnered some attention; however, the focus here was safety.

With 40 years of experience in the logging industry, he is certainly an expert in his field. He may be fairly well known here in Pennsylvania, but in Texas he still had to win over his audience. Hence the whole soda can wager. He began with the standard procedure of observing the chainsaw before you use it, making sure that all parts are in working order. After only being given the saw several minutes before he started the demonstration, he noted that the chain was quite dull. After that he began to go over the five step process that helps the logger to fell a tree the safest way possible: ① Observe all hazards above and below you, ② Take into consideration which way the tree is leaning, ③ Plan an escape route away from the tree, ④ Measure the diameter at breast height, and the final step ⑤ Put all the data together and formulate a plan.

At this point, several in the crowd spoke up saying they never thought to go over the act of felling a tree in such an analytical matter. While we all watched at a safe distance, he began to make his notch in the tree. After several minutes of sawing, all the fine details were taken care of. All he needed to do was cut the thin trigger holding the tree in place. A hush fell over the crowd. Could he actually hit such a small mark, after all a soda can is only several inches in diameter? I chuckled to myself. I knew for a fact that his accuracy averaged around three feet of a target depending on the direction the tree leaned, among a few other factors. I honestly couldn't predict the outcome this time. The hinge popped, and the tall pine began to groan as it

started to fall. As it came to meet the ground, our view of the can was obscured.

After several witnesses clambered around the log, it was confirmed the tree had indeed crushed the can. Not only that, but it had hit the mark so successfully that the can could not be dislodged from underneath it. The audience gave a nod of approval, and several folks came to me to ask questions about technique and safety, which I quickly cleared up by having the professional point them out.

Educating anyone who deals with any form of timber cutting on the proper use and technique can save life and limb. After all, chainsaws are the most dangerous of all the power tools, so using them safely and successfully is paramount. It was certainly a pleasure to work with the staff and sponsors at Dr. Deer's research facility, and it is always gratifying to give the community skills they can take back and use to their own advantage.



DAVE SIENKO DEMONSTRATES CHAINSAW SAFETY TECHNIQUES AT DR. DEER'S FACILITY. BETS WERE TAKEN AS TO WHETHER HE WAS GOING TO HIT THE CAN WITH THE TREE HE FELL. SORRY, DAVE, I SHOULD HAVE BET ON YOU!

RELEVANT AND TRUTHFUL CONTENT has always been my main concern in the publication of my magazine, Wildlife Management News. Many of you have been more than helpful and complimentary to my efforts over the years and I am forever thankful.

On my past trip to Dr. Krroll's research center, Dr. Krroll made a point of telling me that he wanted to meet before I went home. I've had the honor of knowing Dr. Krroll for several years; I look at him as the world's most renowned authority on the whitetail deer, but also as a mentor and friend.

You can't imagine how absolutely honored I was when Dr. Krroll suggested that he would write his new column in my publication. I have always encouraged folks to write for my magazine, perhaps to have their first work published. It is truly humbling to see the connections that God has made for me in the past and I'm looking forward to everything He has for me in the future.

Thanks to all my sponsors and contributing friends I realize that this publication is worthwhile.

—Jim Holbert

You can now access Wildlife Management News on Dr. Krroll's website: www.drdeer.com.



DR. DEER'S Management Calendar



each of which can be critical to their success. A management plan should be a prescription of activities representing the what, how and when of each.

My experience is that the “when” to conduct a management practice is the most confusing to the average landowner. That is what this new segment is all about – a calendar for you to follow. As I write this column, Spring finally is approaching! It has been a tough year, even in the traditionally warmer South. Our deer herds have managed to survive some of the toughest conditions, even our favorite animals are adapted to survive. The 2013 season was one of the strangest I have seen in decades. Not only did whitetails throughout the range have to cope with poor climatic conditions during the growing season, many had to deal with the specter of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD/Blue Tongue), which over the last two years has reduced herds in many areas by 25-90%. To make things worse, we had an unusual series of full moons last fall that created early ruts in some areas and “trickle” ruts in others. What will the coming year bring us? Time will only tell, but all this makes management and doing things right and on time ever more important.

So, as we move into Spring, what should we be doing? Working in both the North and South, I long ago realized the timing of some activities may be quite different for each general region. For example, as we enter Spring, southern landowners already are thinking about warm season plantings, while northern landowners are just trying to dig out of

winter. Wherever you live, let's talk about what you should be doing now.

There are three aspects to all management plans. I have likened deer management to a three-legged stool: one leg representing deer herd management; a second, habitat management; and the last, people management. The reason for selecting three legs is obvious. Without any one leg, you fall on your behind! For each month or period of the management year there are activities related to each. Long ago I learned NEVER to give a landowner or manager a specific deadline date for a prescribed activity. Rather, we designate windows of time for the completion of any activity. So, what are some of these for the coming Spring?

People Management

The perceptions of hunters and landowners about last season and management year are extremely important. Ill feelings or misconceptions about progress in the management program have to be identified and dealt with as quickly after the season as possible. I like to hold a meeting with each person involved to solicit information. In fact, I strongly recommend you develop deer observation cards for each person visiting the property to fill out. Each visit or hunt, observations of bucks, does and fawns are invaluable in assessing both progress and herd health. I insist my hunters become involved in the data collection process, since it serves two purposes. First, it gets people involved in the program, creating proprietary interest. Second, it is difficult to criticize data YOU were involved in collecting. So our first calendar item is to collect all information you requested from everyone involved. This information needs to be in your hands no later than March 1.

Continued on page 4

Dr. Kroll's Management Calendar continued from page 3

Herd (Population Management)

I often have said, "Whitetails are more than happy to tell you how they are doing, IF you ask the right questions!" So, I like to assemble all harvest data (ages, sex, antler measurements, lactation data and weights) by March 1, as well. Relating back to people management you should develop and disseminate a summary document to all involved by the end of March. Untimely reporting is a bad habit of many biologists and managers, and affects confidence in your management abilities.

Over time, you will develop a profile and status report for each deer herd. You do not manage a herd, you "fine-tune" it! You implement a strategy, then measure the herd response. If it is improvement, you might increase harvest or nutrition strategies, until there is no more improvement. If the response is negative, back off until it becomes positive. In future columns, we will discuss data collection in detail throughout the year.

One of the most important activities is to conduct a recruitment census. I have no faith in any type of census to estimate deer numbers, but I do have great confidence in a camera inventory. We position at least one trail camera either over bait (where legal) or on trails and food plots where not, and run them continuously for two weeks. In the North, we conduct such counts in April; in the South in late February to early March. The camera density should be one per 50-80 acres.

Once you have your photos, go through them, counting (even repeat animals) the numbers of does and fawns (now called "coming yearlings"), as well as the relative ages of bucks surviving the winter. Look closely, since buck have cast antlers by this time and may be mistaken for does. The categories I use are: 1. Coming yearlings, 2. Immature bucks, and 3. Mature bucks. If you also divide the number of coming yearling deer (does and bucks) by the total number of does, you will develop a good indicator of the number or percentage of last fall's fawns likely to survive to one year of age (=recruitment).

These activities, whether North or South, should be completed by May 1.



Habitat and Nutrition Management

This facet of our calendar evaluates the current status of your native habitat, the success of your food plot program, and provides you with important information about the coming year's plantings (food plots and trees). How and when are these done?

I monitor and keep a written record of the success of each planting from Fall through Spring. Using exclusion cages, you get an idea of how potential forage was produced and how much the deer used. This also tells you how much your deer like a specific food plot and variety.

As you prepare for the coming planting season, you must collect soil samples in time for the lab to provide the analyses so fertilizer can be purchased and/or lime for improving production. If you fail to do this, it is a guessing game how successful your crops will be. Warm season crops should be your focus this time of year. Depending on variety, you will want to time planting with proper soil temperatures and soil moisture. If you do not have your seed in hand and equipment in order, your planting program will suffer. You should have all this preparation done by the first of April in the South and the first of May-June in the North.

In the North, you should have already ordered any trees you want to plant. Early spring planting gives time for roots to develop before high summer temperatures and dryness. I seldom plant trees in the Spring in the South, preferring to do so in the Fall; but if you failed to plant your trees last Fall, try to Spring plant as early as possible.

Lastly, you should learn to identify the preferred browse plants of deer in your area. By Spring, deer will have removed a portion of last year's growth. Browsing sign is easy to recognize, giving a pulled off appearance since deer do not have upper front teeth. Walking the same transecting lines across the property in late winter, stop periodically and record the estimated percentage of twigs browsed, calculating an average for preferred browse plants – the habitat will also "show" you how it is doing. More than 50% use of deer browse is a clear indicator of over-population. The reverse also is true.

So, as Spring develops, you have a lot to do. Give yourself windows of time to complete activities. You will reduce frustration and assure you get scheduled activities completed. See you next time!

DR. KROLL AND BOB WALLACE DEMONSTRATE PROPER PLANTING AND PROTECTION TECHNIQUES FOR DUNSTAN CHESTNUT TREES. TREES THAT WILL BE RELEASED SOON ARE THE NEW AMERICAN PERSIMMON CALLED "DEER MAGNET," WHICH IS VERY WINTER HARDY, THE DR. DEER PEAR AND THE DR. DEER PLUM. AS PART OF DR. KROLL'S WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, FOOD PLOT TREES AND PLANTS WILL PROVIDE FRUIT THROUGHOUT THE SPRING, SUMMER AND FALL.

www.drdeer.com



THE DUNSTAN LEGACY *by Bob Wallace*

The Dunstan Chestnut™, the most widely planted chestnut in America, was bred by Dr. Robert T. Dunstan in the early 1950s. These trees have been propagated and planted due to the work of Dunstan's grandson, Robert D. Wallace, over the last 30 years. The Dunstan-Wallace family has been breeding plants for over 70 years, and have produced a number of other innovations besides just Dunstan Chestnuts.

Dr. Robert T. (Bob) Dunstan was born in Windsor, NC, in 1901, the "runt pig of the last litter" of Dr. Henry Vaughn Dunstan, a surgeon and survivor of the Civil War. The Dunstans were farmers and business owners in southern Virginia and eastern North Carolina since the 1620s. Their ancestor Saint Dunstan was the Arch Bishop of Canterbury in 950 AD. St. Dunstan's Chapel is located in Westminster Abbey, and Dunstanburg Castle is located on the Northumberland coast.



CHESTNUT FOREST BEFORE THE BLIGHT

in Greensboro, NC. While he was in college, he was house-sitting for a professor who was away on sabbatical in France. The professor collected roses and sent home some grape vines along with rose plants. This was how Bob Dunstan became interested in the plants and soon began experimenting with growing grapes. He said that on the weekends he would play grapes instead of golf.

The French wine grapes sent by his professor died, killed by a virus called Pierce's disease, while the native American muscadines and scuppernongs thrived. Bob Dunstan set about trying to cross the two species to see if he could create a hybrid that would bear the beautiful bunch grape fruit that made the wonderful wines of France and California. Because the two species have different numbers of chromosomes, all of his efforts in breeding failed; the hybrids were sterile. However, by chance, Dunstan tried doubling the number of chromosomes using the mutagenic chemical Colchicine. The use of the tetraploid vines enabled the hybrids to become fertile and produce seed! He sent plants to geneticist Dr. Haig Dermen at the USDA Station at Beltsville. Dermen confirmed the hybridity and Dunstan published a ground-breaking article in the *Journal of Heredity* describing his work.

The hybrid grapes produced by Dunstan's crosses proved to have excellent resistance to Phylloxera, an aphid-like insect that was decimating the vineyards of France. By grafting the French wine grapes onto the hybrid rootstock, the vines became resistant to the infestation. This discovery saved so many vineyards in France that the Societe du Vin gave Dunstan a national award of honor, and he traveled to Paris and gave his acceptance speech in French.

<http://mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/grapes/History/florida-grape-history-peopleline.pdf>

Dunstan's family farm survived the Civil War because when General William T. Sherman burned his way across the South at the end of the war, he spared the house because Dr. HV Dunstan and Sherman were both Masons. His father passed away when Bob Dunstan was only 6-years-old, and young Bob was raised by his mother and two older half-brothers.

Bob Dunstan went to college at Trinity College (now Duke University), paid for with skins he hunted and trapped in the Albemarle swamps near Windsor. He majored in languages, received his PhD, and became a professor of Romance Languages at the Women's College

This technique became very important in the effort to establish a wine grape industry in the eastern United States. Dunstan became widely known in plant circles for his work and retired to Alachua, FL, in 1962 to continue his breeding efforts full time. He produced a number of new varieties and his genetic material was used in further crosses by many other breeders. Grandpa jokingly referred to himself as "a pimp to pollen"!



DR. DUNSTAN

Dunstan was also a member of Northern Nut Growers Association (NNGA) since the 1930s (which had its 100th anniversary in 2009) and we have letters to him written by noted plant geographer and world explorer J. Russell Smith. It was Dunstan's affiliation with NNGA that provided him with the cuttings of the surviving American chestnut that he crossed with Chinese chestnuts to produce the Dunstan Hybrid Chestnut. Dunstan was also a founding member of the North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX), a group of amateurs devoted to the collection and development of unique and rare fruit. He collected all kinds of fruit and nut trees – the orchards he planted around his house on our farm in Alachua still produce chestnuts, pecans, hicans, native and kaki persimmons, jujubes, citrus, bananas, figs, mulberries, pears, and grapes. Dunstan passed away in 1987 at the age of 86.

Dunstan's eldest daughter Aurelia met and married A.T. Wallace from Millen, GA, after WWII while going to college at the University of Georgia in Athens. Wallace grew up on a farm and became interested in plant breeding through meeting Dr. Dunstan. Wallace received his PhD in Plant Genetics from NC State University, and became a professor at the University of Florida in Gainesville. There he pioneered grain breeding by using mutagenic chemicals and cobalt radiation to change the genetics of oats, wheat and barley. His goal was to breed "steak on a stalk," wheat with all the essential amino acids to feed the poor around the world. He became Dean for Research for the College of Agricultural Sciences at UF. Wallace had a Japanese graduate student that sent him the 30 best Oriental Persimmon varieties from the Okitsu Research Station when he received his PhD under Dr. Wallace. Wallace gave these to the UF Fruit Crops Department and Dr. Dunstan. This was the introduction of such widely planted varieties as Saijo, Gionbo, Matsumoto and Ichi-ki-kei-jiro.

Unfortunately Dr. Wallace's life was cut short by cancer, from an overdose of radiation from an accident in the lab. He died at 49 in 1971.

A.T. Wallace's son, Robert Dunstan Wallace, moved to the Dunstan farm in Alachua at 22 years old after getting his BS in Biology from the University



JAMES CARPENTER WITH THE "ORIGINAL SURVIVING" AMERICAN CHESTNUT THAT HE FOUND IN S.E. OHIO AMONG A GROVE OF DEAD TREES. HE WAS A GOOD FRIEND OF DR. DUNSTAN AND REPORTED THIS "SURVIVOR" TO HIM.

Continued on page 10

It's Been A Hard Winter by Tony Rainville

Many will say that the winter of 2013-14 has been a “hard winter” here in the Northeast, and the fact of the matter is that every winter is hard for wildlife, especially whitetails. Food sources are exhausted, the forest is dormant, temperatures drop and snow inhibits forage and travel. In many areas supplemental feeding is banned, and we now know that “supplemental feeding” may not be in the best interest of the deer.

While I can't imagine a time when I will not plant wildlife food plots, they are of little value buried under literally feet of snow and/or ice. In the whitetails' world, “winter” does not end until new growth emerges and until that time, they rely upon “browse” to meet their nutritional needs, on average between 6–8 pounds per day. The once common belief that deer can survive on acorns, cornfields, or apples is fading as more hunters and managers spend more hours afield during the “off season” and increase their knowledge of habitat and biology.

Generally speaking, especially in many areas of the Northeast, we have become so acclimated to a population of whitetails that is above Biological Carrying Capacity (BCC) that the over-browsed woodlands are barely noticed. Whitetails will consume anything under 6' in the forest understory, and a population above BCC quickly consumes all available browse.

Increased education and instant access to information and research is changing the way hunters think about whitetails and the woodlands. This is good news for the deer, deer hunters, and deer managers. While websites, internet forums, and social media do offer some great information on QDM practices and habitat improvement, misinformation from self-proclaimed experts and other well-intentioned people abound, and can be confusing if not downright detrimental to the wildlife we are seeking to help.

Hinge and Browse Cutting to the Rescue! Fire up the Chainsaw!

Intensive deer managers and hunters have been “hinge cutting” trees and dropping browse to provide additional deer food for quite some time. We now see this practice discussed and demonstrated on the Internet with regularity, and we can easily learn how to safely drop trees for browse, but which ones are best for the deer?

I have personally observed regional variations in what whitetails actually “prefer” or readily consume during the winter months; this may differ in your woodlot depending upon population, forest composition, or simply the local whitetails' preferences and nutritional requirements at that particular time. Some of what I have found on the Internet, however, can confirm or contradict credible whitetail researchers, my own practical experience, and common sense.



To the Internet!

Without getting into specific sources, let's just say that not every website has an accurate ranking of what deer prefer – in regards to what has the most nutritional value or is the most palatable for deer. What is commonly at the top of the preferred list is Northern White Cedar (*Arborvitae*) – This preferred browse is so preferred as to be virtually extinct in most areas of New York. I'm not saying that the only place that you will find this is around a suburban foundation protected by a deer fence or burlap, but you have a better chance of finding the Hope Diamond in my deer woods! By and large, highly preferred browse species will not appear in your deer woods, because they are just that, highly preferred. Another site lists American Chestnut, and they disappeared long ago. Yet another internet list places Hawthorne and Elm as “high preference” and Sumac is listed as low. This is the exact opposite of what I have observed in my woods, where elm trees are mostly dead and once served a useful purpose for Oriole nests and wagon wheel hubs, but not deer browse. If we are talking about cutting browse for winter deer food, the value of these lists is questionable.

So, for the Do-It-Yourself deer manager, be aware that these lists are far from the gospel in the woods where you live and hunt. That being said, using these lists as guidelines will give you some general ideas about what deer actually do prefer. The “most preferred” list for your hunting grounds is limited to the most preferred that is available in your woods.

Here is where the guidance of a professional is well worth seeking – whether it be a state or regional wildlife biologist, a local forester, a local habitat professional or an experienced and trained QDMA member. In my experience, I am looking at what is present in MY woods that are most preferred first. Secondly, I am looking for trees with minimal future forestry value, and lastly minimal wildlife value in the present or future. This is a balancing act, and a professional can help you sort out the values and the pros & cons of each option. Once you get your priorities in order and some experience under your belt, the choices get easier. The choice between a white oak and a stump-sprouted maple is an easy one; the choice between a white oak and an apple tree can be much more complicated.

In farm country, prime candidates for browse cutting can be found on the edges of woodlots, hedgerows, and old field habitat. In areas of big woods, look for stands of hardwoods, old homesteads, power line or gas right-of-ways, or roadway edges. You may find striped maple growing in a big woods setting, and this is a good browse that you won't see on the top of very many published lists. Don't discount the “garbage trees”; these are often overlooked and don't often appear on these browse lists, like sumac and box elder. Sumac responds very well to patch cutting and will be highly utilized even in the summer months. Box elder is in the maple family, is often found on field edges or disturbed soils, has low forestry value, and I have found to be highly preferred.

So yes, fire up the chainsaw! Do some homework, seek some guidance, and enter the woods with as much information as possible. Be safe, and by all means – Get some browse on the ground!

About the Author: Tony Rainville has been developing wildlife habitat in the Northeast for over 20 years, manages a QDM Cooperative in NY, is a QDMA Certified Land Inspector and active volunteer. He owns Foothills Habitat Consultants providing full-service QDM wildlife management programs. You can find him on Facebook and follow him on Twitter @NYRutReport



THIS IS A CLEAR BROWSE LINE IN THE HEMLOCKS. THE WOODS HAVE BEEN LOGGED IN THE PAST TEN YEARS BUT LOGGING WAS NOT ENOUGH TO KEEP THE DEER FROM IMPACTING THE WOODS. TIME TO FIRE UP THE SAW!



WHEN DROPPING TREES FOR BROWSE, BE SURE TO "BREAK THEM DOWN," CUTTING THE LIMBS SO THE DEER CAN REACH THEM. THIS IS A LARGE BOX ELDER ON A FIELD EDGE.

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"I took some pictures of my Buck Forage Clover plot last night. I am a little worried that I will need to replant in spring. The deer have torn up the whole food plot with the BF Clover and if you notice they have hardly gone into the radishes in the background. This food plot is just shy of two acres with three defined areas planted with different products. The deer continually choose the BF Clover over the other two plantings. I guess I should reconsider what I plant in the future."

~ Tom Wheeler
Wildlife Category Manager
CFD Cooperative Feed Dealers






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Cutting of the Shirt Tail



Chuck and Barb Stone, owners of Sheldon Hill Tree Farm, are in the planning stages of developing their 275-acre property to a premier site for our wounded warrior servicemen to hunt on. Through their generosity, veterans will be able to hunt deer and turkeys from sites that are easily accessible and strategically placed. Ground blinds and elevated stands will be made for the hunters' convenience, safety, and hopefully, success.

The stone property will soon be scouted prior to spring turkey season by Chuck, Hunts for Healing head mentor Ken Bach, and master turkey caller and owner of Top Calls, Russ Wagner. They will also be placing ground blinds in preparation for the opening day.

Plans are also underway to have the hunt televised and I will be covering the progress on Chuck and Barb's generous project for our Wounded Warriors on their property.

Pictured here is Juan. He is going through the age-old ritual that many hunters have endured, the cutting of the shirt tail. This embarrassing tradition symbolizes the hunter's shooting at, but missing, a white tail deer. Hunts for Healing mentor Russ Wagner has always explained to the young hunters that, in this hunting camp environment, it's not the place for "tender feelings." If you do something that warrants being picked on, you better believe it's going to happen.

To my knowledge, Juan was the only deer hunter who did not harvest a deer this year at the "Hunts for Healing" lodge, although he had several shots.

When I had the chance to talk to Juan, he told me that being from Brooklyn, NY, he never had a chance to hunt before. It was an exciting experience that was like nothing he had ever dreamed. Juan said he never met more caring and loving people than the gang at the lodge. I think given the chance, Juan would go deer hunting again even if it ended up with more cut shirt tails.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Be part of the 2nd annual

Old Glory Sporting Clays Shoot-out Celebration

Friday, June 13, 2014

at Rock Mountain Sporting Clays in Springville, PA

Call Hunts for Healing at 570-869-1233 for information.

Pray for Our Veterans and Country Every Day!

We thank Ayres-Stone VFW Post 5642 Montrose, PA, along with Buck Forage Products and Pump'n'Pantry, for making our veterans' voices a little louder by making copies of this magazine available to our veterans at home and abroad!



Thank You

The Dunstan Legacy continued from page 5



DUNSTAN WITH CHESTNUT



DR. DUNSTAN WITH HIS TREES

of Florida, and began learning how to propagate the chestnuts and fruit trees grown by Dr. Dunstan, who was then in his early 80s. He started Chestnut Hill Nursery in 1981, and began selling trees to orchardists with the goal to establish a U.S. chestnut industry. Wallace founded the Chestnut Growers of America in 1985, and wrote and received the only US Plant Patents ever given to chestnuts. Over the next 30 years, Chestnut Hill Nursery has grown to over 100 acres of nursery and orchard production, and sells a diversity of fruit and flowering trees to box stores, garden centers and landscapers along with chestnut trees. Chestnut Hill has sold enough trees in this time to plant 500,000 acres with forest! Wallace is still a Board member for the Chestnut Growers Association and actively involved in chestnut orcharding and nut marketing. In addition to the Dunstan Chestnuts and Persimmons, Wallace has introduced a number of varieties of other trees, including the St. Lukes Purple Leaf Plum, Freedom Flowering Pear, and Noel Lake Chinese Fringetree.

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Knowledge through Experience

I don't want to call **Willie Kasten** an "old" friend and "old" trapper because we share some of the same dilemmas. Young at heart, trapped in old bodies and besides, we are the same age.

Willie and I go back just a few years... maybe like 58 of them when we were in kindergarten together. With a few challenges, we both graduated from Montrose High School in the class of '69. I went on to Mansfield University while Willie took a job right out of high school with the PA Game Commission where he stayed until he retired in 2004.

Willie spent these years working his way through the ranks and became a land manager for state game lands and a deputy PA Game Law Enforcement Officer through his hands-on experiences in the outdoors. I consider Will to be an authority and I learn something from him every time we are together.

Today, Willie runs his trapping supply business, which is a lot more than a little retail niche. If you have a chance to visit the store just outside of Montrose, PA, you will see that it is a tribute to trapping history and tradition.

Trapping holds a thick slice of America's history in that our early economy was based on the fur trade. Today's trappers may not have a great role in the economy, but just sharing a few minutes with Willie opened my eyes to the important role they play in balancing many of our wildlife populations when we see preferred species decline such as grouse, pheasants, turkey, and deer, we realize the need to enhance habitat but we also need to control the predators that are feeding on them.

Most of us understand the role coyotes and bobcats have played as predators, but Willie pointed out to me how trappers also harvest many animals that are major "egg eaters." Among these are skunks, opossums, and raccoons. Anyone affiliated with organizations such as the NWTf or Pheasants Forever should be thanking their trapping brothers for keeping these "egg eating" predator populations in check.

If you would like to learn more about the history and tradition of trapping, contact the PA Federation of Trappers or give Willie a call at 570-278-2553. Make sure to visit his shop.



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Muzzle-loader Buck *by Leah Tyler*

When I was a little girl I used to go out into the woods to hunt with my dad. As soon as I could I started hunting alongside him.

For the past few years, because of college, I haven't been able to hunt and I have really missed it. Each year I would come home for Thanksgiving and would have to leave to go back to school the Sunday before opening day. When I came home for Christmas break I was telling my dad how much I wish I could hunt and he mentioned that the muzzle-loading season would open soon. So the next day we headed to the sporting goods store and picked up a license and a muzzle-loading tag. We borrowed my uncle's muzzle-loading flintlock rifle and headed out the day after Christmas.

The first morning began excitedly when we saw four deer pass by right off the bat; unfortunately, it was either too dark still or they were too far away. That night we saw four more deer come by with the same result. I was loving being able to be out with my dad and being able to see some deer. With each one my heart would start beating fast and I would pray that it would come just a little closer or hang around until it got lighter.

The next day my dad came home a little early from work so that we could go out. As we sat quietly waiting we weren't seeing anything like the day before and I started to get worried that we wouldn't see anything and I remember thinking that meant I was going to have to get up early the next morning to go out. Just as I was thinking this my dad motioned to me that there was a deer! I looked over and saw him in the brush. My dad was using his binoculars to see if he was legal or not and he whispered he thought it was a small buck, probably not legal. We had been seeing a few 4-pointers around lately. Then he stepped into the open and my dad whispered, "He's legal." My heart started beating so fast I could feel it in my chest. I was facing the wrong way so I slowly started to turn. I was halfway turned when my dad said, "He sees you," so I froze. Then I watched as his tail flicked and he spooked taking a couple leaps away from us. My heart fell as I watched him move away. I asked my dad, "Do you think he'll come back around?" and he told me he doubted it. Still I kept watching with a sliver of hope left that he would loop above us and come down the other side. The spark quickly became a flame when I saw movement above us, and sure enough it was him! This time I was ready on that side with my gun right where it needed to be. We watched as he moved painfully slowly towards us. It was beginning to get dark at this point and I was praying that he would hurry up! It seemed like a lifetime before he began walking towards us. He stopped and I got ready, but my dad warned that there was a small tree and couldn't tell if it was in front of him or behind him, so I held off, waiting. As he moved I realized he was headed right to the open path. Because of the snow and the extra light this would be the perfect place to take the shot. Slowly he moved onto the path and I steadied the site on him, my dad whistled and he stopped and looked up. BANG!

Because of the smoke I couldn't see him; I looked at my dad and asked with nervous excitement, "Did I get him!?" and he said, "I think you got him!" I kept asking if he was sure because I was so nervous. I asked if I should reload but he said no because he really thought I got him. We headed down the ladder – at this point I could barely hold it together. We started following his tracks, which was easy with the snow. We started to see specks of blood and then my dad said, "I think that's him!" And sure enough there he was laying in the snow. I let out a yell and ran up to him with a huge grin on my face and my dad said, "You did it!"



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Holzman Apple Clinic

Norm Holzman and his mom of Kingsley, PA, hosted an apple tree pruning field day on Sat., March 15 on their 120-acre property. Apple trees that were well over 100 years old were trimmed and pruned, and some trees were actually removed to make “elbow room” for other healthier trees.

It took less than five minutes of my conversation with Norm to begin learning from him. He pointed out several varieties of crab apple trees. Some of the trees still held a supply of crab apples, which are a great benefit for both birds and deer. Depending on the variety of tree, the fruit varied in size from the size of your little fingernail to that of a golf ball.

An energetic group of guys from the Susquehanna Branch of QDMA arrived on the scene with pruners, pole saws, and chain saws to assist Norm in his pruning. Fourteen-year-old Jey Rusek climbed trees to get to the hard-to-reach areas where all of us old guys couldn't.

Matt Sellers manned the chain saw where he cut the top out of an apple tree that is well over 100 years old. This tree is still very productive and Norm told us that the ground was literally covered with 6-8" of apples that had fallen from it this fall. Unfortunately, when apples fall from the top of this tree, they are bruised, broken, break down and quickly decay. Norm said that all of the apples that fell from this tree did very little for the wildlife since they deteriorated so quickly. He is hoping that trimming and taking some of the old cracked top will strengthen the tree and keep its productive limbs closer to the ground.



Art Lucarelli snips the unwanted suckers off close and square to the apple tree's trunk.



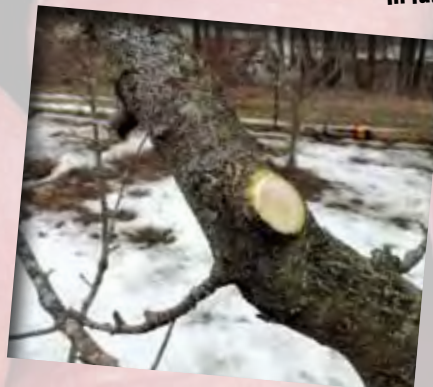
QDMA member Craig Roe trims branches out of an apple tree with his power pruner, which is basically a small chain saw on a pole. Craig emphasized that he would not take out more than 1/3 of the existing live branches so that the tree would not be stressed. In future years, more trimming should take place.



This is a close up of old growth “suckers” that need to be trimmed. They have no value to the tree and are wasting its good growth and production.



Jey Rusek



Norm Holzman explained that this cut was a good example of trimming the apple tree. There was no damage to the main trunk by a careless saw or pruner and the cut is squared off well. This will allow the cut to be completely “barked over” and healed. If the cut is not squared off close to the main body, the pointed part of the old branch will rot.

Commercial Timber Sale on State Gamelands 35 in Susquehanna County

by Chuck Wiseman

This is in a location referred to as the Handicap Area and was abundant with various sizes of oak trees. The sale was broken into seven blocks for a total of 217 acres harvested by private contractor crews. The purpose of the harvest was to thin out the oak and other species of trees to open up the area and allow for regeneration of new oak, leaving only a few of the healthy reproducing trees. The deer in that area have been having a field day with new browsing opportunities; crews were observing deer during the cutting operations on a daily basis. Now the hope is for some good acorn-producing years to help get that area on course for a healthy regeneration.



CLOSE UP OF DEER ACTIVITY ON WINTER BROWSE. YOU CAN SEE HOW THEY ACTUALLY GRIND AND CHEW THE TIPS OF THE BRANCHES.



PA's HSH Venison Donation Program Posts 2013 Season Preliminary Results

As of mid-March 2014, still-incomplete statewide totals for whole deer donated to this unique hunter's program and pounds of venisonburger turned over to statewide food banks indicate donations were down from previous years. To date, a total of 73,195 pounds – derived from 1,750 reported deer – as delivered to food banks, soup kitchens and needy families has been logged in. However, more than a dozen HSH (Hunters Sharing the Harvest) deer processors still have yet to report in with their results, so these totals will increase and improve to some extent.

The decrease in donated meat could be attributed to more hunters needing the meat for their own families, less hunting pressure, lack of opportunity for time afield, and harvest success in many areas. Weather, access to hunting areas and other factors tied to the economy and local circumstances will also affect the overall donation cycle. The HSH program sets an annual goal of 100,000 pounds of donated meat to help Pennsylvanians, which was last exceeded for the 2008 hunting season with 102,000 pounds.

On a Northeast PA regional basis, the HSH program's NE board member Bill Sordoni and staff wish to thank and recognize the active support and interest of the QDMA's Susquehanna County Branch and Cabot Oil & Gas, who partnered together to expand donation operations and public awareness throughout a 4-county area matched to major news media exposure. Both the Susquehanna Branch and Cabot provided significant financial grants for covering upgraded donations and processing costs, which resulted in more than 3,180 pounds of donated meat delivered to the poor. Regional food banks receiving the meat included the Weinberg NEPA Food Bank, Wyoming Co. Food Pantry and St. Vincent dePaul Soup Kitchen. The program and its partners hope to continue this challenge in future years, while more information is available by visiting www.sharedeer.org.

Why do we hunt? *by C.J. Winand, Wildlife Biologist*

Why we hunt is a tough question to answer. It is even more difficult to convey the answer to our non-hunting friends. But this simple yet complicated question might determine hunting's future. Bowhunting icon Fred Bear once said, "I hunt because I love the entire process: the preparation, the excitement, and the sustained suspense of trying to match my wood lore against the finely honed creatures. On most days spent in the woods, I come home with an honestly earned feeling that something good has taken place. It makes no difference whether I got anything; it has to do with how the day was spent."

Although most of us can understand Bear's thoughts, do you think a non/anti-hunter would understand? Probably not. To try answering this question, I went onto the Internet and asked hunters and wildlife biologists their opinions. The question generated an enormous amount of responses and proved the importance to both groups. Their answers spurred another question: Should we use the term "kill" or "harvest"? The purpose of this article will be to try to explain the answers both hunters and biologists gave and their role in the future of hunting.

Why is hunting so cherished?

Before we delve into such questions, we need to consider how much we cherish hunting. The late Robert Jackson, a professor at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, studied hunter satisfactions and expectations. He believed hunters go through five stages: shooter, limiting-out, trophy, method and sportsman. Jackson also listed specific reasons why people hunt, including seeing deer, utilizing hunting skills, nature appreciation, exercise, escape from routine, solitude and companionship with family and friends.

Jackson's research found 81 percent of all bowhunters interviewed said they would miss bowhunting more than all other hunting activities. In contrast, 61 percent of gun hunters said they would miss gun hunting more than most or all other interests. In addition, only eight percent of bowhunters classified their hunting experience in relation to taking game or competing against other hunters in bagging deer.

Many hunters never advance past Jackson's harvest stage. Is that wrong? Not necessarily. But, if greed and the numbers game enter the picture, maybe there's room for concern. Thus, many friendships are destroyed by self-serving hunters who only think about themselves and not the resource or their fellow hunters.

Although Jackson's paper is considered a classic, I never fully agreed with five stages of hunter development. For whatever reason, throughout the season and my hunting career, I always considered myself somewhere in between. I remember when I was in graduate school at West Virginia University, Dr. Dave Samuel, *Bowhunter* magazine's Conservation Editor, had us read Jackson's research paper. During one of his classes, "Dr. Dave" asked, "Why do you hunt?" My answer was quick and simple, "Because I like to kill animals." With that answer, Dr. Dave was all over me. "If you hunted the best ranch in the world and shot a Boone and Crockett buck every single time you went out, would you still hunt?" he asked me. My answer was yes, no doubt about it!

I then asked Dr. Dave, if killing wasn't a major motivation in hunting, why don't you hunt with a camera or binoculars? He was pretty hot with my comments and explained that killing is simply a by-product of why he hunts and it's NOT a priority! Our conversation basically deteriorated from that point, but Dr. Dave had caused me to do some thinking and I'm sure other hunters also ponder why we hunt.

Being a young college student, my reflective answer was sincere, and I just couldn't understand why Dr. Dave didn't agree with me. Since then, I have taken many critters with my bow, and now realize I was being a little shallow. Nowadays, I appreciate what Dr. Dave was talking about and have come up with what I call the hunting triangle.



Why We Hunt

I often describe hunting in terms of a triangle. The points on my triangle consist of three independent variables: (1) harvest, (2) challenge and (3) experience. When many of us first hunt, bagging an animal is crucial. To proudly say that we finally harvested a game animal is a goal that's very important to a young hunter. But, after taking several animals, many hunters decide they need more challenges. Thus, many take up archery, muzzleloading or other ways to increase the hunter's satisfaction in harvesting a game animal. Through time, the challenge becomes more important and often overrides the harvest.

Later in life, the overall hunting experience often becomes the most critical factor. As the saying goes, "Been there, done that." They hunt to see the gleam in a young hunter or friend's eyes. They readily give up a good stand so a greenhorn or buddy can perhaps enjoy what the veteran hunter has experienced so many times before. Or, as in the case of those who practice QDM, they hunt to witness the positive changes they have brought about in the deer populations, such as witnessing intensified rut behaviors, watching deer feed beneath a tree they planted, or seeing deer use a bedding area they created.

Many other variables such as spending time with family and friends, experience nature, exercise, feeding the family, etc., all weave through my hunting example, but most fit somewhere within the three corners of the hunting triangle. For instance, we might become complacent about the beginning of the bow season. Some hunters may hunt mainly for the experience or the challenge, or some may just have to shoot a deer to get one under our belts. Thus, there's always a struggle between the corners of the hunting triangle throughout the season and our hunting career.

Wherever your point falls with the hunting triangle, some may stay in the middle while others switch almost daily. No matter where you are within the hunting triangle, I believe it's important to note that no one point is better than another. Although each of the three main variables within the hunting triangle may change in value throughout our lives, all are part of why we hunt. The dynamic shifting of our point within the hunting triangle is most likely why we continue to hunt throughout our lives. This is especially true whenever you hunt a critter you've never pursued. For example, the first time you ever hunted elk, chances are the size of antlers really didn't matter. You simply

wanted to take a bull... any bull. Although you may be in the experience side of the hunting triangle for whitetails, whenever you hunt elk, harvest is much more important.

I also believe that in addition to the three corners of the hunting triangle there's a circle around the hunting triangle that has to do with God. Call it what you may, but whenever I'm hunting, this is when I'm closer to Jesus Christ. The meditation that many of us experience in the woods while hunting is almost better than going to church itself. As it says in Genesis (1:26), God gave man dominion over all wild creatures. This dominion is the wise stewardship we hunters demonstrate whenever we legally harvest an animal. To watch the sun rise and set or a big buck slip through our shooting zone is something most Americans never experience, yet many hunters take it for granted. Yes, God surrounds us with his grace and we must give him credit for giving us dominion over all his critters.

Reinforcing the Motivations

When I asked my Internet buddies on www.bowsite.com, "Why do hunters hunt?," their answers varied between the hunting triangle's three points: harvest, challenge and experience.

"Jersey Bob" (his Web forum name) wrote, "I live my life as a manager in a very large corporation in a very large city, surrounded by people who can't deal with an out-of-service elevator. When I kill a deer, I have accomplished something that I consider challenging, by myself. I have the gratification of 100 percent self-sufficiency."

"Seapig" wrote, "The kill is not important to me. It's like any sport: Watching is okay for a while, but the real rewards come when you participate. We can go into the woods and be a spectator, or we can go to hunt and be part of the circle of life."

Many respondents said hunting is almost a religious experience. I agree. There isn't a hunt that goes by where I don't say a prayer, and I say another prayer whenever I harvest an animal giving thanks to God.

Harvest vs. Kill

If you haven't already noticed, I purposely haven't said the "kill" word. Why? Well, because of my wildlife biology background, I often use the term "harvest" instead of "kill." Sure, many biologists use the "kill" when we're in the presence of hunters or other professionals. But, many are very careful not to say it in the presence of a non-hunter. Some might say biologists are pretentious for saying "harvest" or think they have something to hide, or that they're playing semantic games. Still others say "harvest" is a euphemism and possibly a deceptive term for the word kill.

Personally, I think "harvest" implies something larger to most biologists. Professor Ben Payton from Michigan State University wrote, "Harvest reflects hunting's role in wildlife management and suggests a larger context than one person killing one animal. Biologists are not hiding or being defensive when we avoid terms such as "kill" that elicit undesirable images, perceptions and reactions among some of the audience. We are being sensitive."

Stan Gehrt from the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation writes, "If an animal is harvested, you can assume it was killed by a certain method (bow or firearm) that the time of the killing was appropriate, that the killer/hunter followed certain constraints to provide fair chase, and that the hunter was following certain ethical guidelines not necessarily mandated."

The common theme in those comments is that wildlife biologists deal with wildlife populations, not individuals. Therefore, "harvest" deals with a population, not an individual one. In other words, hunters kill individual wildlife to obtain a population harvest. As a result, "harvest" more precisely describes the

process under which we kill animals. It elicits a broader, more honest and positive connotation. In my opinion, the word *kill* should be used whenever an incidental or accidental removal of an animal occurs such as a nuisance or highway statistic. When we use the word *kill*, it implies there was no management objective; whereas, *harvest* has a goal or management premise behind it.

Other Harvest Considerations

Most biologists who responded to my question agreed that the preferred word is *harvest*. Of course, speakers or writers should first know their audience and choose appropriate terminology.

Dr. Robert Schmidt from Utah State University wrote, "Society is concerned about how animals are killed. This is true for pet animals, food animals, research animals, performing animals and yes, wildlife." Thus, by introducing the nonhunting public to the values of the word "harvest," maybe we can have less trouble with these words.

Biologist Roger Barr voiced similar thoughts, "If we have opinions we believe are correct because of our training and expertise, it is up to us to inform the media so they don't pass off distortions of the truth in the name of fact."

Of course, few things in our life are black and white, and, therefore, few things are easy to explain. Some biologists mentioned that when we harvest corn or wheat, the plants are already dead. Thus, we do not kill the plant. To further confuse things, exceptions occur even there. Consider silage or hay, where the alfalfa or grass is in full bloom. Technically, we kill these plants.

What Hunters Say

Not surprising, hunters on the Internet had some interesting comments regarding kills and harvests.

"Ironbow" says, "I do not want to offend the non-hunter, so I might say 'harvest' on occasion. Even so, there is no need to be offensive, either."

"Labdad" wrote, "We spend too much time trying to avoid offending non-hunters and anti-hunters. In my opinion, you harvest crops; you kill game. Is it dirty to use the word? I don't think so. It's the reality of life. In killing an animal legally, I am exercising my right to take game for my family's consumption. It is necessary to kill in order to do this."

"Bowyer" wrote, "I have drifted to using 'harvest' and 'taking.' Our speech has softened over the years, and I see no problem using softer speech to avoid offending people."

"Dan C. in PA" writes, "I am a self-proclaimed hunter who stands proud of that select membership and title. I would, however, take exception to those who would call me a killer. I am a hunter. There is a difference. The death of an animal is the ultimate consequence rather than intention of my hunt."

"Don Schultz" wrote, "I've used both terms depending on my opinion of the people near me. I was talking to my wife, a non-hunter who supports my hunting, and she objects to me using 'harvest.' She thinks it is sugar-coated and dishonest."

"Deerdreamer" wrote, "Non-hunting friends ask, 'Did you catch a deer?' No one asks if I 'kill' a deer. Since they avoid the word 'kill,' I do the same when I'm around them. I'll use terms such as 'got,' 'caught,' 'took,' and very rarely 'harvest,' but never kill."

"Bowbender" wrote, "While we must make every effort not to offend non-hunters, I don't think we should become politically correct in our speech or writing." Bill Wonderling took it one step further and said, "Do we as hunters harvest or kill our game? It doesn't matter how we describe it. It only matters that we have the opportunity to enjoy it."

Maybe, "Doc in PA" probably said it best, "We need to demon-

Continued on page 20



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“Why do we hunt?” continued from page 19

strate that we are responsible, dedicated, honest and sincere people who love animals at least as much as the non-hunters. Neither term should be off limits. There is a time for the soft euphemism and the time for directness.”

Is this whole issue mere semantics? Maybe it’s not what we say, but how we say it that reflects what hunting is all about. Although we hunt for various reasons, a hunter’s primary intent is to kill a deer for food. Thus, hunters might seldom even think about or say “harvest.”

If such discussions help hunters better communicate to non-hunters why we hunt, as well as the distinctions between “kill” and “harvest,” perhaps hunting would be the better for it. And if all hunters understood their role in wildlife management, we would be viewed in a more positive light. This is one of the many positive aspects of QDM – hunters experience the transition from being a deer hunter to being a deer manager, gaining in the process an understanding of the importance of hunters in sound management of deer and all wildlife.

Sharing the Harvest

Another way to gain broader acceptance among our non-hunting friends is by playing host to wild-game dinners. Recently, Rick Wilson, Executive Director of Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry (FHFH), www.fhfh.org, took this one step further. Wilson started a nonprofit, national feeding ministry through his church in Hagerstown, Maryland. Now FHFH is implementing their innovative feeding plan nationwide.

Most states have a venison-feeding program. But they generally are hampered by cash shortages for butchering. Wilson and others convinced the MD DNR, Wildlife and Heritage Division, to include \$1.00 on all hunting licenses sold. These dollars are then used for the butchering of donated deer. FHFH is also encouraging other states to include a donation box on a hunting

license. This seems to be the icing on the cake for this long-term marriage between the state wildlife agencies and FHFH.

Once again, hunters are taking the lead in conservation and the need to feed the unfortunate. Many believe the future of our beloved tradition may well depend on organizations like FHFH and dedicated people like Wilson. Industry leaders also see the benefits in organizations like FHFH. (Numerous companies and organizations in the hunting industry, including QDMA, have signed on as Sponsors.) API treestands, Easton arrows, IBO, Mathews, Knight Rifles, Mossy Oak, the North American Hunting Club, Scent-Lok and QDMA, have been some of FHFH’s best sponsors. Ameristep, Buck Knives, Hawg’s Limited Synthetic Scents, LEM Products, Loggy Bayou, Bowsite.com, Muzzy broadheads, Nature’s Essence, Pope and Young Club, Suzuki, Whitetails Unlimited and Vulcan Outdoors have also joined the FHFH team of sponsors. Companies like these are surely a blessing to all of us in the hunting community.

How effective are venison-feeding programs? Wilson shared a letter from non-hunter, Ms. Kathy Marks. She said, “I have always been avidly opposed to hunting. But the story about FHFH really got my attention and gave me some hope for all concerned. My husband was really surprised when I told him I wanted to make a donation.” Obviously, organizations like FHFH can only help our beloved sport!

Is there a happy medium between using words like kill and harvest? I think so. Admittedly I’m biased, but if this subject educates one hunter to better communicate to a non-hunter on why we hunt and the proper usage of words like kill and harvest, then my purpose has been met and our sport will thrive. Although we all hunt for various reasons, if hunters truly understand their role in wildlife management as responsible stewards of all wild creatures, we would all be viewed in a more positive light!



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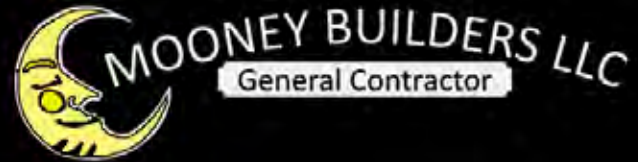


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Food Plotting – 10 Steps to Avoid “Beginner” Mistakes

by Jim Stickles, Associate Wildlife Biologist®

It seems that every year more people are jumping on the deer management bandwagon by starting their own food plot program. Food plots provide numerous nutritional benefits for deer and other species, as well as recreational wildlife observation and hunting opportunities. However, in conversations with hundreds of “beginner” food plotters, it is evident that the fundamental basics of food plotting are often ignored, leading to many headaches down the road. The purpose of this article is to steer this year’s “beginners” to a successful food plot program for many years to come.

Step 1: Do Your Homework

You will save yourself a lot of time, money, and headaches by doing a little bit of research on food plotting. The book *Quality Food Plots: Your Guide to Better Deer and Better Deer Hunting* by the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) is a phenomenal resource for anyone who wants to plant food plots for deer and wildlife. You can find it for \$34.95 on the QDMA’s website. It’ll be the best \$34.95 you spend because if you follow the advice in this book, it will likely save you thousands of dollars in the long run.



Step 2: Food Plot Location

If possible, do not make a food plot location choice on your own, but rather consult with somebody who has a lot of food plotting experience. Aerial maps, topo maps, and soil maps are very helpful in this process as they can reveal important travel corridors, important terrain features, seasonal wetlands, and soil types that are most conducive for planting. A good food plotting plan can make your experience much more enjoyable, successful, and cost efficient, and it all starts with selecting a good location.

Step 3: Weed Control

BEFORE any plow hits the ground, take some time to address weed issues. You can save yourself a lot of time and money by managing weeds appropriately.

Step 4: Get a Soil Test

ALWAYS get a soil test! Soil should be tested well in advance of planting. This will help ensure that soil amendments at appropriate times in relation to planting.

Step 5: Soil Amendments

Follow the recommendations of your soil test. Lime amendments should be made well in advance of planting so it has time to work into the soil. Both lime and fertilizer are important, but if for some reason budgetary constraints force you to pick one or the other, it is almost always a wiser choice to pick lime.

Step 6: What to Plant

There are numerous food plot species profiles in the *Quality Food Plots* book. Choosing the appropriate cultivar often depends on many variables, but there are some general rules.

- Avoid “Throw & Grow” mixes and any mix with perennial rye grass.

- Clover will feed deer a majority of the year, but 6-10 inches of snow makes clover unavailable, so try to plant at least a portion of the property in either standing corn or soybeans to help feed deer during the winter.
- Although seed mixes are popular, planting 2 or 3 seed types in alternate strips or blocks can sometimes be easier to manage and maintain.
- When planting soybeans, cowpeas, or other large legumes, either plant >3 acres, or invest in some sort of fencing to protect them because deer will mow them before they have a chance to get established.
- Corn is NOT deer specific. Be prepared to feed turkeys, raccoons, bears, crows, and every other species that likes corn.

Step 7: When to Plant

Different cultivars require different planting times and appropriate soil temperatures. Refer to the *Quality Food Plots* book for details on when to plant. When in doubt, plant when other farmers in the area are planting. As a general rule, a very high chance of rain should be in the forecast immediately prior to planting.

Step 8: How to Plant

If you have rain, sun, and good seed-to-soil contact, something will usually grow. Planting methods are not as important as ensuring that there is rain in the immediate forecast followed by some sunshine.

Step 9: Utilization Cage

If a food plot appears to be failing, sometimes it’s not failing at all, but rather it is so heavily utilized by deer that the plants cannot grow to their full potential. If the outside of the cage looks mowed, and the inside is a tangled mess of yummy food plot deliciousness, then it may be time to either increase the property’s doe harvest or plant more food to support the property’s obviously abundant deer herd.

Step 10: Record Keeping

To get the most out of your food plot program, it is necessary to learn from your mistakes... and believe me, you will make mistakes. The key is to not make the same mistakes twice, so start a food plotting journal and keep track of plantings, soil amendments, and weed management efforts.



THE UTILIZATION CAGE IN THIS PHOTO ILLUSTRATES THE IMPACT DEER CAN HAVE ON A FOOD PLOT. MONITORING THESE CAGES CAN HELP YOU MAKE BETTER MANAGEMENT DECISIONS WITH REGARD TO DOE HARVEST.

CVYAA Shoot for a Cure

Mr. Chris McComb, principal of the Choconut Valley School, informed me that 172 young archers from grades 4–12 representing Choconut Valley, Lathrop Street, Tunkhannock, and Summit Christian Schools participated in the CVYAA “Shoot for a Cure” Archery Tournament. The numbers were huge this year and I’m always amazed at the organization and discipline displayed at these shoots.



I can’t think of a sport where so many kids can participate for such a low cost. Anyone can participate and the girls involved almost equal the boys in number and ability.

Mr. McComb knows he has a great crew of instructors and helpers and without their dedication this wonderful program wouldn’t fly. He would like to thank Ken Foster, Roger Steward, Sue Giles, Diane Wurth, Fred Hayes, Mike Guinane, John Waldron, Scott Beeman, Kate Ford, Tom Olineacz, Tom Perkins, Brian Baker, Mike Lyden, and Ted Cady.

All of the results are on the Choconut Valley webpage:
<http://www.masd.info/schools/choconut/>.



Bald and Golden Eagles have been frequent visitors at the Baker Camp near Forest Lake, Pa. this year. Bait for coyotes is now apparently bird food!

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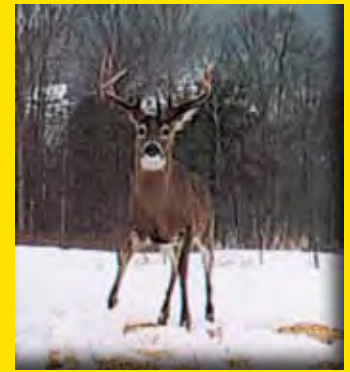


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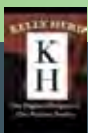
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Is There Life and Happiness Beyond Apples and Oaks?

by Robert Fearnley

Apples and oaks... apple and oaks... apples and oaks! They are the dynamic duo of wildlife trees. Magazine articles by the dozen extoll the virtue of these two wild food producing trees. Both produce fruit or nuts eaten by a wide variety of wildlife from deer mice to black bears. However there are many other trees and shrubs that wildlife find appealing.

Diversity is a big buzz word in today's culture, but perhaps nowhere does it make more sense than in wildlife management. The more diverse the population of trees and shrubs the better the chance there will be a full plate of food available for wildlife throughout the year. Two years ago in the northeast apples were very scarce even in well managed commercial orchards; acorn production is often a hit or miss deal. White oaks produce a good crop only every 4 or 5 years; red oaks bear every other year but at least on our farm, located in Forest Lake Township, Susquehanna County, never with a bountiful crop.

Wildlife management is not just meant for hunting season so some of these trees and shrubs will not lure deer or other wildlife to the bow or gun but will attract them at other times of year. Trees and shrubs produce mast either hard or soft. Hard mast includes acorns, nuts and hard seeds that last past the fruiting season. Soft mast includes fruit and berries that deteriorate rapidly after they are produced. Some trees produce fruits that are both such as black cherries have soft flesh but also a hard pit that turkeys and squirrels enjoy until they are gone.

Let's start with some shrubs that are of value as wildlife food sources. American hazelnuts are a personal favorite of mine. They produce clusters of pea-sized nuts most years that are favorites of turkeys, squirrels and blue jays. The flavor is very good, tasting like filberts in the Christmas nut mix. This shrub sends up a number of shoots to form a thick clump of brush up to ten feet tall. This dense clump provides cover for rabbits and nesting habitat for songbirds. They make a great addition to any hedgerow.

Elderberries provide abundant fruit for birds and deer but also pies for the land manager! These shrubs grow in damp soil but also in uplands, in light shade and full sun. Both hazelnuts and elderberries are susceptible to browsing by deer. In fact elderberries are one species whose abundance is quite noticeable in deer exclosures. I have never tried growing shrubs in tubes but I don't think they would do well in five foot tubes and anything less than 5' is a deer lollipop. A hoop of woven wire will get these shrubs started until they can compete with deer, but the cost will be several dollars per shrub although the fence can be used again and again. If you have a deer exclosure, that would be an excellent place to start shrubs. Once these shrubs get a start they can compete with the browsing pressure.

Trees can be started in tree tubes; while not as good as fencing for growing a tree, they are more economical for a small number of trees. An alternative to oaks that has gotten a good push lately from the media and QDMA is the chestnut. Until the 1930s the American chestnut was not only the most numerous tree in eastern North America, but also the most important to wildlife. Producing a large crop every year due to avoiding spring frosts by blossoming in late June and early July; it was a staple for both man and beast. Unfortunately blight killed the great chestnut forest, leaving stumps and snags for us to remember them by. In recent years there has been an effort to bring back the chestnut... at least in some form of it past greatness. Research in both gene splicing and back crosses with blight resistant Chinese chestnuts have been done by private, academic insti-

tutions and the government. One such cross bred tree is the Dunstan chestnut. It is said to bear nuts in just a few years after planting and is blight resistant. I have several planted on my farm and am pleased so far with the quality of the seedlings and with the growth after two years in the ground. I look forward to getting chestnuts from these trees in a few years. One chestnut that I have been getting nuts

from already is the Chinese chestnut. Chinese chestnuts are a fast growing tree shaped somewhat like an apple tree with wide branches and a height of 25 feet. I have to fight the squirrels and deer for these sweet, buttery nuts in late September. Chinese chestnuts are an alternative to American chestnuts for mast production; however, they will never replace the American chestnut in volume of production or in quality of timber.

Soft mast alternatives to apples include pears, peaches and persimmons. Deer love pears perhaps more than apples. Wild pears are mostly small and many will pucker your mouth, however deer don't seem to mind. Planting tame varieties give the land manager more control on when the pears ripen. If you can find winter pear varieties, they will last long into November or December if severe cold stays away. Some Asian pear varieties will hang onto the tree until snow flies.

Although I have never seen it mentioned in any of the wildlife literature, peaches are a deer favorite. A buck will step over an apple to eat a peach and then he will spit out the pit when he is done. One drawback to peaches is the relative short life span and high cost of trees, but they do come up readily for planted pits so after canning a bushel of peaches plant the pits along the edges of food plots in the hedge rows and you may get some trees to grow.

The last tree I want to mention is the American persimmon. The persimmon is native in the southern mid-west and east; however, it has been grown successfully in home orchards far to the north of its home range. Persimmons are famous in the hunting lore of the south for everything from possums to foxes to deer. Fully ripened and exposed to some frost, they are very sweet and irresistible to many species of wildlife including deer. I planted 35 persimmon seedlings last spring on my farm. They were not bothered by the May frost which burnt the leaves on my oaks and showed remarkable growth rates with many growing out of five foot tree tubes in one growing season. How they survive this winter's subzero temperatures will tell the story on whether they deserve a spot on a northeast PA land manager's planting list.

These are just a few of the many alternatives to apples and oaks for the wildlife manager to try planting. After a long, cold winter, I know I am looking forward to putting in the ground a change of menu for the wildlife. Now, what should I try this year? ... Mountain ash? ... How about paw paws? It is fun to dream. Try something new this year!



MATURE DUNSTAN CHESTNUT TREES

Trappers and Data Collection

Pennsylvania Trappers Association District 9

Pictured to the right is the USDA team taking samples from coyotes that were taken during the District 9 PA Trappers Association's annual hunt. Kyle Van Why, who heads the team of biologists, is very thankful for the opportunity the hunt provides to collect data from a large source of fresh specimen. Blood samples and stomach contents provide information that determines everything from the coyote diet to the types of many parasites that the animal hosts. DNA testing is also an important tool that helps map the coyotes' ancestry and migration background.



The PA Trappers Association District 9 also hosted a fur sale February 8 at the Triton Hose Co. in Tunkhannock, PA. I always enjoy time spent with the trappers who spend many hours outdoors observing all kinds of animal activity.

It is hard to imagine the repercussions of predator control if we lost the important tradition of trapping. For more information on trapping techniques and history, visit the National Trappers Association's website www.nationaltrappers.com.



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The Perfect Union *by John T. Buck*

With the intention of planting fruit and nut trees in an orchard-type landscape to help attract whitetails to our intended hunting set-up, we can help facilitate our trees to dramatically increase the overall fruit and nut production and foster greater health as well.

In today's land management community, we as hunters and stewards of the land, can improve the growth habits in the trees we plant on our lands by studying the structure and framework of various trees, properly train them and have them outlast our existence for generations ahead.

As a landowner, hunter and land-manager, I have planted several varieties of quality mast-producing trees on my property that will afford whitetails and other wildlife to benefit from their mast and as they grew, I came to the conclusion that even though they seemed to be healthy during several growing seasons, one problem still existed, The Union.

SNOW LYING ATOP OF A BRANCH, CAUSING IT TO BEND DRAMATICALLY AND ADDING STRESS TO THE "UNION" OF A POORLY TRAINED TREE.



With each year, the maintenance of all my trees caused me to study the framework and help train the angles of the branch to grow away from the stem, causing the tree to grow in width and allow more sun to reach the center of the tree. By doing so, the stem of the tree grows dramatically and the grain of the wood fibers would flow freely up and down the stem, into the branch, through the union.

As our trees grow, the sun causes the branches to grow in an upward position, consequently competing with the stem and promoting narrow crotch angles. Narrow crotch angles prohibit



NOTICE THE SIZE OF THE BRANCH THAT HAS BROKEN AWAY FROM THE STEM DUE TO A POORLY TRAINED "UNION"

quality fruit and nut production and cause the union to become vulnerable, as the wood fibers are prevented to grow evenly from the stem to the branch, known as an "inclusion."

The inclusion is the weak point of the branch and any weight placed upon it from either fruit and nut production, ice and snow or from animals reaching to get the food, will cause the branch to tear away and leave an indelible scar on the tree. Although the tree may have been producing some mast in its first few years of life, the wound initiates several negative aftereffects for the future of the tree.

As with the vast majority of growers, the intention for our trees to be forever healthy is paramount. When first planting our trees, our hopes of them becoming good specimens, providing we adhere to proper planting techniques, is what motivates us to care for them in subsequent years. When I first planed my trees, I realized, through trial and error, what could be done to keep them healthy and productive in a natural setting.

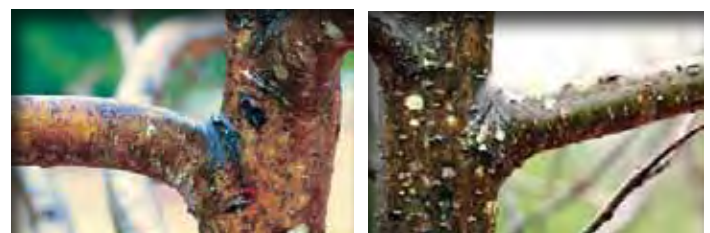
In large commercial orchards, with thousands of trees dotting the landscape, the use of trellises promote the wide crotch angles we desire; however, from a hunter's perspective, such superior goals are left to our own imagination. The question remains, how could a hunter obtain such results during the tree's first years of life, in selective locations in the wild?

The answer is simple. When our trees are first planted, they are in a new setting and ready to grow. Providing they obtain good soil contact, are protected from browsing deer, receive a considerable amount of sun and moisture, they will grow rapidly. The existing branches are flexible and will soon bud. At this point, it is absolutely vital to train them to grow outward, in a 60-90° angle from the stem. Just as they would be trained on a trellis, we need to maintain this desired angle for 4-6 weeks, as the grain of the wood will converge and maintain this shape for the life of the tree.

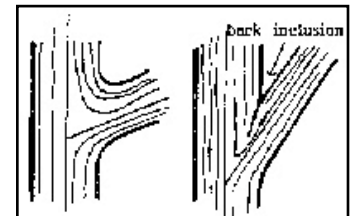
There are only a few effective methods or products that have been tried to resemble that of a trellis that are more cost effective, less time consuming and utilizes the proper amount of space.

The use of a clothespin, clipped on the stem, lying atop of a branch, would force the branch downward, having limited results. As the branch begins to take shape and the constant pull from the sun's rays exists, the branch is caused to push upwards. The clothespin is then forced in the same direction and could possibly dislodge itself.

The use of spreaders has been widely used, only in the case from which the branch has already been set and the diameter of the branch is willing to accept the spreader lodged in-between the branch and the stem, forcing the branch to grow outwards. It is important to know that the wood grain of the branch will take on a new shape. This is where the grower would have to



A BRANCH THAT GREW AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY TRAINED AFTER THE GRAIN OF THE WOOD HAD ALREADY SET. THE CREASE IS THE WEAK POINT WHERE THE BRANCH WOULD TEAR AWAY FROM THE TREE.



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PROPERLY TRAINED AND A POORLY TRAINED BRANCH. NOTICE THE INCLUSION, THE WEAK POINT WHERE THE BRANCH WOULD BREAK FROM THE TREE.

be watchful due to the placement and the amount of pressure needed to spread the branch from the stem, to prevent tearing the branch from the stem.

Spreaders come in varying sizes and to obtain the desired angle would cause us to use longer spreaders further away from the union, thus causing less stress at that point. Once the preferred amount of pressure has been reached, the spreader could stay in position for several weeks and then be removed as soon as the branch has taken shape.

One of the most effective ways to train the angle of the branch from the stem is to use a device called a Grow N' Guide. This was designed specifically to obtain the perfect union and angle when strapped to the tree, forcing the branch to grow outward, creating a scaffold branch that withhold added weight when fruit or nut production exists. The branch, following the length of the guide, will continue to grow outward at a different angle, keeping it away from the stem, causing more direct sunlight to reach the center of the tree.

The Grow N' Guide actually grows with the tree in succeeding years, as they can be removed and reapplied to newly formed branches on the stem.


The training of the branch is the piece of the puzzle that has allowed me to help develop my fruit and nut trees for added fruit and nut production and has improved the overall health, preventing them to fall victim to disease and insect infestations. A properly trained scaffold branch can be 5x stronger throughout the life of the tree and comprise of a sturdier framework, taking the shape of a perfect central leader tree.



A SEQUENCE OF PHOTOS OF HOW THE GROW N' GUIDE IS ATTACHED TO THE SCAFFOLD BRANCH AND PROPERLY TRAINS THE BRANCH FROM WHEN THE TREE WAS FIRST PLANTED, PROMOTING A WIDE ANGLE AWAY FROM THE STEM.

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GROW n' GUIDE™

The Grow n' Guide encourages the branch to grow to a desired 60-90 degree angle from the stem, promoting wide, strong crotch angles, by training the grain of the wood for added flexibility to withstand more weight from fruit production and ice/snow in subsequent years. Additionally, when the scaffold branches of the tree are able to grow outwards, the width of the tree will increase, thus increasing the amount of light interspersed to help promote the formation of fruit buds to fill in the tree.

NOTE: Branches with narrow crotch angles of 45 degrees or less are weak and tend to break away from the trunk of the tree under minimal pressure, whereas they are also a pathway for pathogens and disease to enter the cambium of the tree, ultimately causing the tree to perish in a short period of time.

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Feral Swine – A Growing Problem in Pennsylvania

by Kyle Van Why – Wildlife Disease Biologist, USDA-Wildlife Services

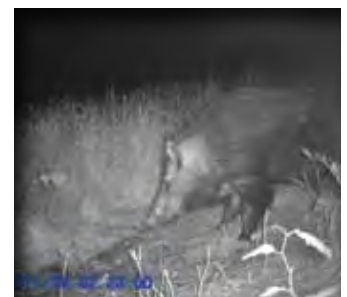
They come by many names – wild pigs, feral hogs, Russian boars, Eurasian boars, Razorbacks – but whatever you call them they have invaded Pennsylvania. Many people associate feral swine with southern states, but populations have been found in 38 states at last count. Free-ranging wild pigs can be found in states such as Michigan, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Vermont, New York, and Oregon, all of which would not be considered southern unless you are looking down from Canada, and they can be found in Canada too. Many historical feral swine populations, those found in southern and western states, originated from domestic stock traveling with early North American explorers. Many populations follow early Spanish exploration routes such as those by Cortez, Desoto, Hernando, where explorers brought hogs because they provided stock that was highly mobile, hearty, can eat anything, have high reproductive potential, and provide a variety of food staples. In other areas, swine were free-ranged by early pioneers, allowing them forage on the bountiful landscape that settlers found across the United States. Over the years, populations in many of these areas became established and part of both the environmental and cultural landscape.

So where did feral swine originate from in Pennsylvania? That is a good question, because at some time in the history of Pennsylvania someone free-ranged domestic pigs on the Keystone State's landscape and we are now overrun with hogs. A combination of factors lie at the heart of the issue. Many of the free-ranging hogs we now have in Pennsylvania originated from various sources. One source is from shooting preserves, where hogs were released and quickly found holes in fences. Many facilities quickly found that pigs are intelligent, strong, agile, and those descended from European stock, or mixed heritage animals captured in the wild, are escape artists. Another source is hunters who experienced hunting hogs somewhere and felt that releasing them into the Pennsylvania wilds would be a good idea. Documented releases have been found as far back as the 1960s where sportsmen's clubs might release a few hogs, and luckily were able to harvest them within a few weeks to months. Unfortunately, the pigs did not see harvest as a viable option and continued to evade their pursuers. Other potential sources may have been occasional escapes from small farming operations where hogs were raised outdoors and were more prepared to survive on the landscape. However feral swine came to call Pennsylvania home, hogs have been found in over 26 counties since 2000. These sightings range from 1 or 2 animals to unknown numbers in self-reproducing populations. Animals have shown up in random areas, and ranged from European boars (with their shaggy coats and big tusks), classic domestic hogs (pink and black), mixed breeds (tusks with grey, black, or red colorization), and even potbelly pigs have been documented as causing havoc. The Pennsyl-

vania Game Commission classifies any animal of the Family Suidae that is found roaming freely on public or private lands in the Commonwealth is classified as a feral swine.

Many see swine as another resource for sportsmen, but wild hogs are a serious threat to natural resources, agriculture, property, and human health. It is well documented that feral swine will consume almost anything they can eat. This includes hard and soft mast, crops, and a variety of other vegetative matter, but swine will also consume animal matter, including insects, amphibians, eggs, carrion, nestlings, lambs, fawns or anything else they can catch. This diversity of diet causes direct and indirect impacts on the native game and non-game species in Pennsylvania. The impacts that feral swine directly have on the environment can be equally as devastating due to their feeding methods, rubbing, and wallowing behavior. Rooting behavior can increase erosion and invasive plant growth. A small group of hogs can devastate an agricultural field. Wallowing destroys and contaminates water sources in Pennsylvania turning clean running mountain seeps into mud pits, and hogs regularly rub on trees impacting growth in forest stands. Besides impacts to agriculture through damage to crops, feral swine can pose significant threats due to disease concerns. Feral swine have been documented as carrying over 40 transmittable diseases and another 40 parasites. They can pose threats to a wide range of livestock including other hogs, cattle, and poultry. Direct interactions can be a serious concern, but contamination of water and food are often unforeseen threats. Many diseases can cause direct mortality of livestock, but also causing sickness or reproductive issues. Similarly, feral swine are a concern to human health, from contamination of water, agricultural crops, or disease picked up by sportsmen who don't take precaution while processing the animals.

So what can be done in Pennsylvania to prevent this plague from growing? Reporting feral swine sightings, sign, and harvest are very important. The PGC allows for opportunistic take of feral swine when they are encountered. It is important to report this take, and assist with sample collection. It is important to identify where feral swine are located, to help reduce threats to natural resources, agriculture, and human health. Sample collection from harvested animals helps determine if there are disease concerns within the population. It is also important to document feral swine occurrence to determine where the animals may have originated from and control the source. Information can be provided to the PGC or to USDA Wildlife Services, along with a variety of other agencies, which work cooperatively as part of Pennsylvania's Feral Swine Taskforce. For further information on feral swine or to report feral swine, contact USDA Wildlife Services, 1-866-4USDAWS (1-866-487-3297).



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