



TEXAS CHAPTER NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

www.nwtf.org/texas/

NEWSLETTER NO. 35 - JUNE 2015

EDITOR - DALE BOUNDS

WILD TURKEY CENTER
POST OFFICE BOX 530
EDGEFIELD, SC 29824-0530
770 AUGUSTA ROAD
EDGEFIELD, SC 29824-1510
803-637-3106
FAX 803-637-9180

Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt . . .



Photo Credit: David Bradford

Our Mission:

**Dedicated to conservation of the wild turkey
and the preservation of our hunting heritage**

Our Texas NWTf Wildlife Conservation Hero...

Dr. Sam McManus

By Dale Bounds and excerpts from NWTf Turkey Country Magazine, May/June 2015



Dr. Sam McManus is a charter member of the NWTf (1973). Joined by family members, Dr. Sam is presented the prestigious Wild Turkey Bourbon Award at the 39th NWTf National Convention in Nashville, Tenn.

Dr. Sam McManus received the Texas State Chapters Living Legacy Award at Fredericksburg Texas Awards event and the prestigious Wild Turkey Bourbon Award (WTBA) at the 39th NWTf National Convention in Nashville, Tn.

The WTBA award is presented to a volunteer who exemplifies grassroots dedication to the NWTf's programs and wild turkey conservation.

Dr. Sam said, "I was stunned to receive this award. I joined the NWTf in 1973 and have volunteered ever since. I do whatever I can for the NWTf, so everybody can have opportunities to spend time in the woods and enjoy seeing the wild turkey in the wild."

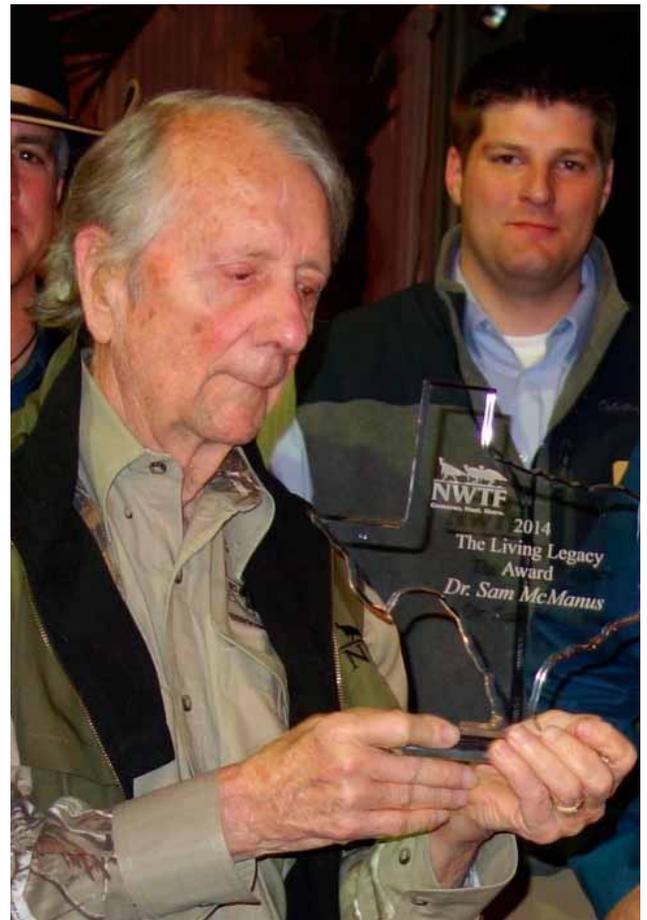
Dr. Sam of Houston Texas, is a life member of the NWTf. He has served on the Texas State NWTf Board since 1998. In 2015 the state board named it's Texas Volunteer of the Year award after him.

He has been an advocate for youth involvement in hunting and fishing and a has been a major contributor to the NWTf scholarship program. In 2000 he personally funded four of the \$500 NWTf scholarships awarded by the Houston Chapters five participants because they were to close to call.

He has regularly donated his time and talents to turkey hunting calling seminars, and JAKES Field Days events in the Houston area. McManus has been a supporter and countless NWTf Hunting Heritage Banquets and events. He has also been a long time judge at Texas turkey calling state champion contest.

Dale Bounds said, "Dr. Sam has been a mentor for our State Board since 1998 when I was elected to serve as the president. You can always count on him for solid direction when thing seem bogged down".

The Living Legacy Award has been presented only two times to Texas NWTf chapters or individuals who have dedicated their time and treasures to the NWTf's "Save the Habitat-Save the Hunt" efforts. Dr. Sam received this honor at the January 17, Texas State NWTf Awards event in Fredericksburg, Texas.

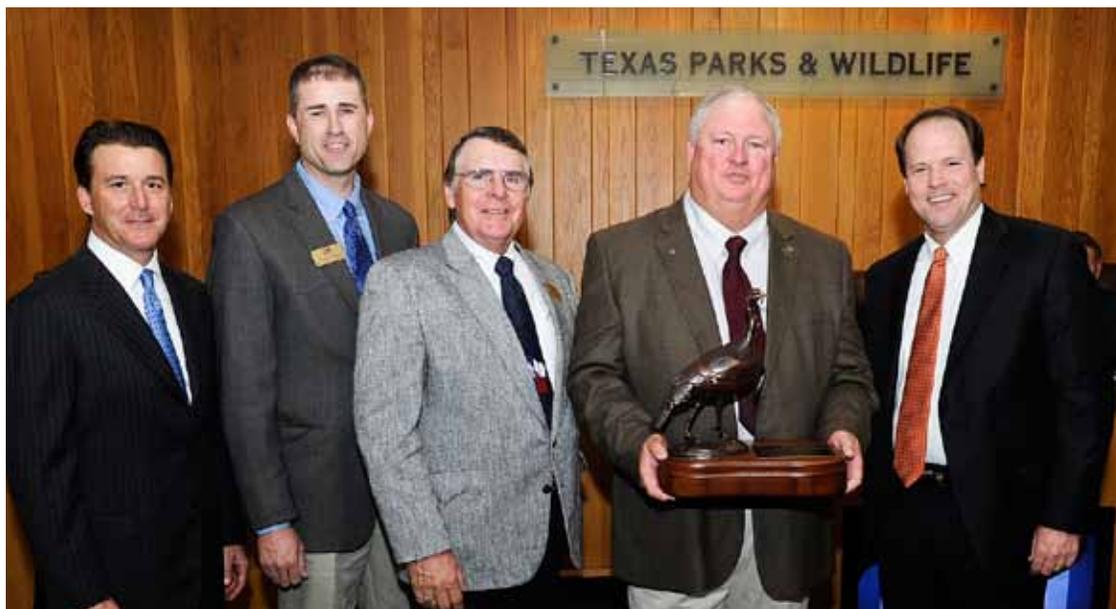


Dr. Sam McManus receives the Texas NWTf 2014 Living Legacy Award in Fredericksburg.

IN MEMORIAM

Randy Fugate – TPWD Wildlife Technician
Falfurrias, Texas

Excerpts of a March 26th email from Mr. Carter Smith - TPWD Executive Director



L-R: Former TPW Commission Chairman Dan Friedkin, Shawn Roberts, Dick McCarver, the late Randy Fugate, and TPWD Executive Director Carter Smith.

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of our friend and colleague, James “Randy” Fugate at the age of 64. Randy faithfully served TPWD as a Fish and Wildlife Technician for nearly 42 years, most all of which was spent in his beloved brush country. Quite simply, they broke the mold after Randy. He was the consummate gentle giant, a man who never met a stranger, never missed the chance to play a practical joke, and possessed a heart as big as the state he so dearly loved.

Randy began his career with TPWD in May of 1973 in Edinburg, Texas, and became a permanent employee in September of that same year. Most of Randy’s time in the Rio Grande Valley was spent working on the white-winged dove project and the Las Palomas Wildlife Management Area. In 1976, Randy transferred to the South Texas Regulatory District and assumed his present location in Falfurrias in 1979. If you have ever lived, worked, hunted, ranched, or otherwise enjoyed wildlife in South Texas, you have benefited from Randy Fugate’s proud service to the land he called home and the habitats that he so thoughtfully stewarded.

Randy provided technical guidance to landowners covering over 2 million acres in Brooks, Kenedy, and Kleberg Counties.

He served as a valuable member of the long-term White-tailed Deer Selective Harvest Research Project on the King Ranch that was completed a few years ago. He was the TPWD District 8 Water Board representative on water issues in south Texas. Randy also was the former District 8 coordinator for turkey production surveys, as well as, the coordinator for the Public Dove Hunting Lease Program in that area. He led turkey trapping efforts during the 1980’s and 1990’s and as a tribute to his work on Rio Grande turkeys, Randy was honored with the prestigious 2012 National Wild Turkey Federation’s Joe Kurz Excellence in Wildlife Management Award.

Randy Fugate was TPWD’s “ambassador” to south Texas. Few will ever match Randy’s innate ability to cultivate such strong and lasting relationships with landowners, researchers, and the community as a whole. There was not a gate in south Texas for which he did not have a key, nor a ranch home or a deer camp in which he was not welcomed. He was a friend to all, and all, in turn, were a friend to him.

Randy’s big heart, love of life and people, and contagious sense of humor will be deeply missed within the TPWD family.

From Your Texas State President... G.R. (Dick) McCarver

ANOTHER GOOD YEAR

Reports from our Regional Directors indicate that so far, banquets have been strong with attendance and revenue up. It would appear that another successful year for Texas NWTF is in the making. I have said this before, but consider it worth repeating, we give credit where credit is due. Every member of every chapter can be proud of their accomplishments with regard to banquets, JAKES events, WITO events, and Wheelin events. A special thank you goes out to all of you. The Texas State Board will be able to put Super Fund Dollars to work on worthwhile projects as a result of the hard work carried on by local chapters.

Dale Bounds, State Board Newsletter Coordinator deserves to be congratulated again. Every time we think a newsletter cannot possibly get any better, Dale proves us wrong. Each newsletter seems to be bigger and better than the last. Since this is still our primary way of communicating with members statewide, the Board wants our Texas membership to stay informed on activities across the state.

NEW NWTF STAFF MEMBERS

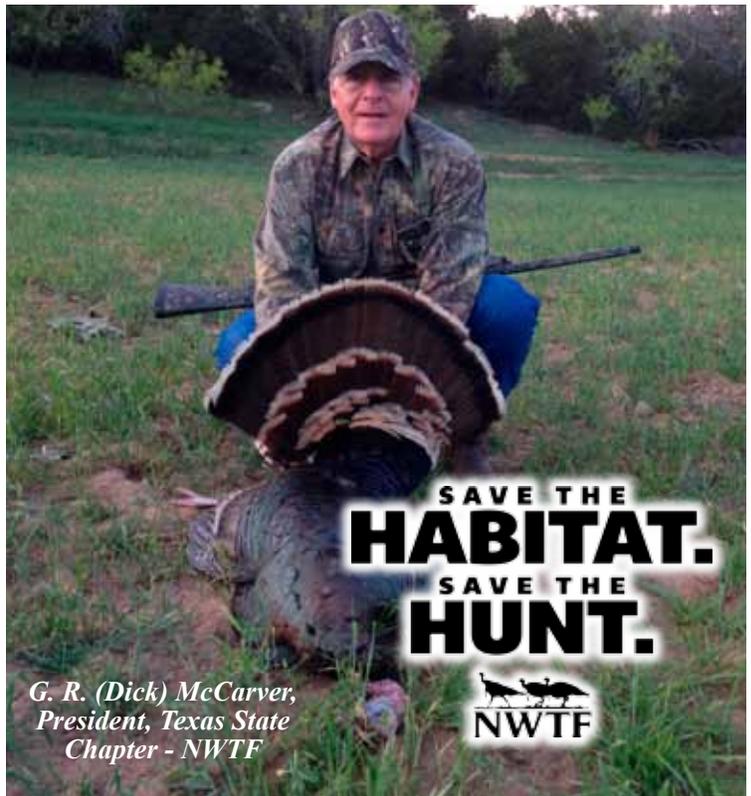
Mr. Shaine Nixon of Diana is our newest NWTF staff member in Texas. His position is that of Regional Director for Eastern Texas. Shaine has many years of experience as a NWTF volunteer and has served as a local chapter president and has assisted numerous chapters with banquets, JAKES events, and WITO events. Shaine and his daughters have also participated in state and national NWTF turkey calling contest. That being said, Shaine hit the ground running and will, no doubt, prove to be of great assistance to his chapters in East Texas.

A few years back, former TPWD Biologist, Terry Turney was hired by NWTF as our Private Lands Leasing Biologist for Texas. His responsibility was to lease privately owned lands for public hunting. The actual leases were paid with funds provided by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in support of public hunting. Terry was very diligent in his efforts and acquired numerous leases for public hunting across the state. The program proved so successful that NWTF has recently added two more Public Lands Leasing Biologist. David Carter of Temple and Shawn Coleman of Lubbock will be working to acquire even more public hunting leases and ultimately allow more hunting access to privately owned lands in their respective areas. TPWD Biologist, Kyle Thigpen is headquartered in College Station and is also responsible for leasing private lands and public hunting. As a TPWD employee, he will be working to make even more public land available for hunting.

TEXAS NWTF AWARDS & RECOGNITION EVENT

The 2015 State Awards and Recognition Event this past January in Fredericksburg was hugely successful and a fun event for everyone. While our goal was to make it enjoyable, the event provides the opportunity to recognize NWTF volunteers and chapters for their accomplishment. The actual list of winners will appear separately in this newsletter, but there are several awards that are worthy of additional comments.

Several years ago the state board created an award to recognize a volunteer or chapter for outstanding lifetime contributions to



NWTF. This is the “Living Legacy Award” and is not necessarily given on an annual basis. The first recipient of the award was the Pineywoods Chapter. The state board selected Dr. Sam McManus to receive this award for 2014. You can read more about Dr. Sam in the report on the NWTF National Convention, but to further recognize Dr. Sam, the board chose to rename our overall Texas Volunteer of the Year Award to “The Dr. Sam McManus Award. Tim Webster was selected to receive the Dr. Sam Award for 2014. A “Volunteer of the Year” is selected from each of the three RD regions. This year’s honorees were: Colby Brown - North Texas & Panhandle Region; Steve Peters – South Texas Region; and A. J. Cook – East Texas Region. All of these individuals are outstanding volunteers. The Texas State Board was able to provide a cash subsidy of \$1,000 to each “Volunteer of the Year” for travel to the National Convention.

The Board has again selected Fredericksburg as the site for the January Awards and Recognition Event, so make plans to attend on January 16, 2016. If you do attend, I promise you won’t be disappointed. VP Tony Hawley has done a great job in securing the facilities and in making arrangements, so to Tony, we say thanks.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT AND GROWTH

As of March 2015, there were 6,229 NWTF members in Texas – 5,256 adults and 973 JAKES. This is only a fraction of the number of turkey hunters in our state. We need to increase NWTF memberships, and it can be done. NWTF members work hard to make this a great state for the NWTF initiative, “Save the Habitat, Same the Hunt”. Let’s work together and build our great state into a top state for members.

I would like to issue a challenge to every current Texas NWTF member to recruit at least one new NWTF member. Five or ten new members would be even better. We can do this. We can push our numbers over the 10,000 mark. We are all volunteers

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NWTF TEXAS

AWARDS DINNER AND CASINO NIGHT!

JANUARY 17TH IN FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

The Best of the Best ...

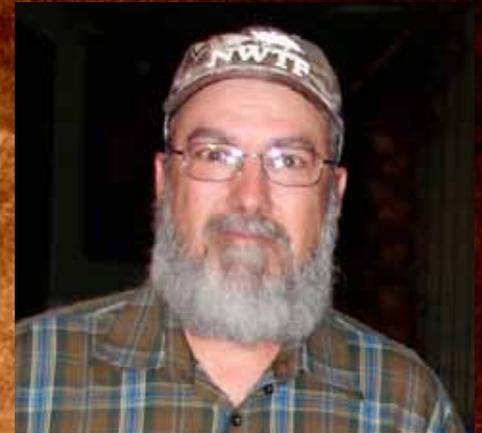
2014 Texas Award Winners



Texas Volunteer of the Year, Tim Webster receives the Dr. Sam McManus Award.



N. Texas & Panhandle Region Volunteer of the Year, Colby Brown.



2014 East Texas Volunteer of the Year, AJ Cook.



The Alamo chapter wins most memberships award.



Canadain River Chapter reaches Half Million Dollar mark and lead the state in Sponsors members for 2014.



Steve Peter wins Volunteer of the Year for South Texas.



Longtime hunting buddy and famous turkey call maker Allen Jenkins surprises Dr. Sam on his big night at the Fredericksburg Awards event.

2014 Texas State Awards Winners



April AWOL Chapter wins 2014 Best overall chapter, highest net, highest gross, and LA Dixon Awards.

HIGHEST GROSS INCOME

April AWOL
Pineywoods Chapter
Alamo Chapter

HIGHEST NET INCOME

April AWOL
Pineywoods chapter
Houston Chapter

HIGHEST NET TO GROSS

Houston Chapter
Big Thicket
* Perryton Strutters
*Northeast Texas chapter

HIGHEST MEMBERSHIP

Alamo Chapter
Canadian River
Pineywoods

HIGHEST SPONSORSHIP

Canadian River Chapter
Pineywoods
Alamo chapter

BEST JAKES EVENT

Pineywoods Chapter/ April AWOL/Gulf coast
Alamo
Kaufman

BEST WITO EVENT

Pioneer Chapter WITO
Tri-County Chapter WITO
Northeast Texas Chapter WITO

BEST OVERALL TEXAS CHAPTER FOR 2014 "L.A. DIXON AWARD"

April AWOL chapter
Pineywoods Chapter
Canadian River Chapter

BEST WHEELIN EVENT

Pineywoods/April AWOL/Gulf Coast Chapter
(***3 awards with all names on it)

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

North Texas & Panhandle Region - Colby Brown
South Texas Region Steve Peters
East Texas Region – A J Cook

THE DR. SAM MCMANUS AWARD

Tim Webster

LIVING LEGACY AWARD

Dr. Sam McManus

MOST IMPROVED CHAPTER 2014

Big Thicket Chapter

Continued from page 2

and have other demands on our time, but this is an attainable goal if everyone will make the effort. This will bring more people to our banquets and will ultimately generate more money to be spent on worthwhile wildlife projects here in Texas. You, as current members, are our best recruiting tool. Won't you do your part to help reach the 10,000 member mark?

SUPER FUND HIGHLIGHTS

Your Texas State NWTF Board had a very productive meeting in January at the Hangar Hotel in Fredericksburg. The board finalized a record budget for 2015 and addressed other issues facing our state. The State Board approved a working budget of \$220,800.00 and a special reserve of over \$75,000.00. In addition to the usual budgeted items, 26 schools were provided with \$500 in start up money for Outdoor Education classes during 2014. An additional 26 will receive assistance during 2015.

In other business, the Board reluctantly accepted the resignation of long time board member Billy Snow of Kerrville. Four applicants for Board membership were approved. New Board members are: Chris Womack of Terrell, Dean Castillo of Frisco, A.J. Cook of Henderson, and Stuart McManus of The Woodlands.

Each January, your four Vice Presidents and your Board President review grant requests on Friday night prior to the Saturday board meeting and develop a proposed budget. During the Saturday Board Meeting this budget is reviewed by the entire board before final approval. Your board members travel to board meetings and pay their own expenses, so when you have an opportunity, tell them that you appreciate what they are doing for NWTF here in Texas.

The project proposal submission deadline for next year's budget is November 1, 2015. Feel free to contact Gene Miller (gmiller@nwtf.net) (806) 655-9416 for a NWTF Hunting Heritage Super Fund Project Proposal form or with questions regarding grant request.



Craig and Stacy White of the April AWOL Chapter earn a 2nd place (Golden Gobbler Award, for highest net) in the nation and received the L.A. Dixon Award

BRAGGING RIGHTS – NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF TEXAS

The Texas State Board was well represented at the February NWTF Convention in Nashville by twelve board members: Dick and Dorothy McCarver, Tim Webster, Kim Potts, Dr. Sam McManus, Stuart McManus, Bob Linder, Lou Von Woglom, Larry Noble, Craig White, Dean Castillo and Chris Wommack. Board

members Bob Linder and Lou Von Woglom were again asked to serve as judges in the Grand National Turkey Calling competition. Texas TPWD Game Warden of the Year, Chris Swift and his wife also attended the convention.



The NWTF L. A. Dixon Awards for outstanding accomplishments are one of the highlights of the annual national awards program. Texas received several of these awards during the 2015 convention. The Texas State Chapter was recognized for second place in the "Highest Total Golden Gobbler Income Dollars Raised" category. This is the fourth year in a row that Texas has placed second in this category. Craig White of the April AWOL Chapter in Nacogdoches accepted a second place plaque for that chapter in the "Best Golden Gobbler Income" category. In 2014, the Pineywoods Chapter in Lufkin received third place recognition in this same category, and the Cottonwood Creek Chapter placed third in the "Local Best of the Best" category. Needless to say but we have outstanding chapters and volunteers here in Texas!

Another of our Texas volunteers was honored with a very special recognition at the National Convention this year. Dr. Sam McManus of Houston was presented the "Wild Turkey Bourbon Rare Breed Society Award". See inside front cover story and photos.

For the second time in three years, a Texas TPWD Biologist was selected to receive the prestigious NWTF "Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year" award. Dana Wright, TPWD Regulatory Biologist at Paducah was selected to receive this national award. Only one of these awards is presented yearly, so this is a huge national recognition for Dana and Texas. (See page 7.)

TPWD COMMISSION MEETING

On March 26, I (as President of the Texas State NWTF Chapter) was given the opportunity to meet with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in Austin. Several members of our Texas NWTF staff were also present. During my presentation to the commission, I was able to express appreciation for the long term partnership with TPWD and review the "Save the Habitat – Save the Hunt" initiative as it will help to meet shared strategic goals of the Department and NWTF.

We were also able to recognize Warden Chris Swift as Texas NWTF Warden of the Year and Dana Wright as Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year before the Commission, TPWD administrators and staff, and guest gathered for the meeting. NWTF is fortunate to have a close working relationship with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and we look forward to a continuation of this partnership. Ours is truly a partnership in wildlife conservation and management that will continue to grow in the future.

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LAND STEWARDSHIP PRACTICES FOR WILD TURKEY – GUS ENGELING WMA

A Wild Turkey Field Day was held May 1 at the Gus Engeling WMA for landowners interested in managing their properties for wildlife, particularly wild turkey. The event was a cooperative effort between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, TPWD, and NWTF. Topics included: Land Stewardship for Wildlife Management, Management for Wild Turkey, Re-stocking and Restoration Efforts in East Texas, Native Grass Restoration, GPS Technology for Management, Timber Thinning to Improve Turkey Habitat, Wildlife Property Tax Valuation, and Maintaining Grasslands with Prescribed Fire. A NWTF information display provided information, and RD Shaine Nixon also showed off one of our JAKES trailers.

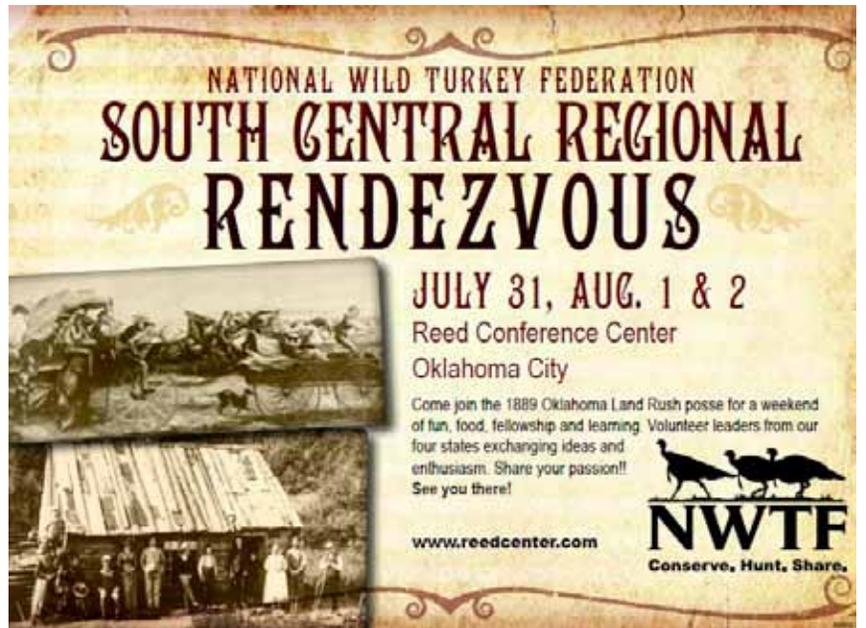
This was a well planned education program and provided valuable information to the 68 participants. Anyone, interested in having a similar event in your area should contact TPWD Upland Game Bird Specialist Jason Hardin or NWTF Biologist Gene Miller.



SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL RENDEZVOUS – JULY 31, AUG. 1 & 2, 2015

Four States Rendezvous: The 19th annual NWTF South Central Regional Rendezvous is scheduled for July 31, August 1 & 2 at the Reed Conference Center in Oklahoma City, OK. Texas NWTF volunteers are invited to come join the 1889 Oklahoma Land Rush posse for a weekend of food, fun, fellowship and learning. Volunteers from our four states (OK, TX, AR, and LA) will have the opportunity exchange ideas and enthusiasm.

When this event was organized 19 years ago, the plan was to have it rotate around the four states. Texas will host the event in 2016. Your RD will have additional details in the near future. This will be a great opportunity for volunteers in North Texas and the Panhandle to attend due to the shorter driving distance. Mark your calendar now and plan to be among the Texans invading Oklahoma, July 31- August 2.



IN CONCLUSION

As always, the Texas State Board and professional staff members continue to look for ways to help NWTF grow. New chapters are needed in areas where there are none, and volunteers are needed to serve in existing chapters. If you are not already involved in a chapter or would like to help start a new chapter, please contact a board members or Texas NWTF staff member using contact information is on the back page of this newsletter.

G. R. (Dick) McCarver
President, Texas State Chapter - NWTF

Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year Award Winner: Dana Wright – TPWD Wildlife Biologist

Annually, NWTF recognizes a single outstanding wildlife manager from across the USA. Ms. Dana Wright, TPWD Biologist, out of Paducah, Texas was recognized at the 39th annual National Convention with this award. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has been blessed with a number of excellent wildlife technicians and biologists over the decades.

Dana's history with the department began over 20 years ago when she was hired as a Wildlife Technician in her native Texas Panhandle. Dana has spent her entire career with TPWD working in some of the most productive turkey habitat in the state, Texas' Rolling Plains. Dana's career with TPWD and dedication to her craft has a strong and positive influence on the landowners responsible for managing wild turkey populations and their habitat. Dana's knowledge of riparian habitats and their critical role for wild turkeys and other species places her at the helm of turkey management in northwest Texas.

Dana's area of responsibility falls within one of the most populated areas of Texas for Rio Grande wild turkeys. This exposure to wild turkeys provides Dana with a unique opportunity to participate with a number of wild turkey management and research efforts. Through the years with the TPWD Dana has conducted numerous wildlife surveys, assisted in habitat management efforts on both public and private lands, provided technical assistance to private landowners, and served as a leader and mentor to other TPWD biologists.

With regards to trapping, Dana has trapped hundreds of turkeys for both in-state and out-of-state restoration efforts as well as for research. No current biologists or technicians working for TPWD have trapped or handled as many wild turkeys as Dana, including TPWD's Turkey Program Leader. Her expertise was demonstrated in 2007 when she coauthored TPWD's Rocket Net and Drop Net



This year's Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year Award (Dana Wright) at the March 2015 TPW Commission - TPW Commission Chairman Dan Allen Hughes, Dana Wright, Dick McCarver, and TPWD Executive Director Carter Smith

Trapping Procedures, a publication funded by TPWD, the Texas Chapter of NWTF, the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society, and Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute. Dana provides training to TPWD staff within and outside of her district, to graduate students, and to other resource agencies. Additionally, Dana has been on the front lines for identifying trapping locations for research and restoration efforts.

Dana has been one of only a few voices calling for the protection and restoration of degraded riparian and roosting habitat in the Rolling Plains of Texas. Her insight has helped direct research and management efforts examining roosting habitat in the Texas Panhandle and other areas of the state.

TPWD has lost many of our "old hands" here in Texas. Dana is one of the last of her generation of TPWD biologists remaining with the department. I can think of no other individual currently with TPWD more deserving of this award.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Report:

SPRING TURKEY REPORT

The 2015 spring turkey season has come to a close. Despite hunters finding a lot of henned-up gobblers early in the season, but with a little patience many hunters left the field successful. Turkey hunters were greeted with a ton of gobbling action this spring and harvest should be up.

Hens were in great shape entering the nesting season and most have at least attempted their first nest. Renesting rates should be good this year as well and young poults should begin to show up in the next few weeks. Nesting and brood-rearing cover is wide spread, which should lead to excellent recruitment. That means a lot of jakes and jennies running around this fall and next spring. This also sets the stage for great hunting during the 2017 hunting season with a ton of two year old birds.

A portion of the GPS-marked hens released in east Texas in 2014 and this past winter are incubating eggs and should be hatching poults very soon. Heavy rain events are a cause for some concerns with nesting hens and young poults. Fortunately, eastern turkeys typically nest in upland areas away from potential flooding. However, wet hens can lead to increases in nest predation.

WILDLIFE HARVEST SURVEY APP

The 2015 spring season provided turkey hunters with an opportunity to report their wild turkey harvest using TPWD's new My Texas Hunt Harvest App. Quite a few of you used the app to

report your harvest. Thank you for your data contribution. Eastern turkeys harvested in Texas require mandatory reporting within 24 hours of harvest. During the 2016 spring season Eastern Wild Turkey Check Stations will be closed and hunters will only be able to use the app or the TPWD website to report their harvested eastern turkey. The App is available for both Apple and Android devices. Download the app today.

EASTERN TURKEY RESTORATION CONTINUES

TPWD released 42 wild turkeys into a restoration site in Trinity County this year falling short of our 80 bird goal. TPWD will attempt to complete the stocking this next winter. Staff also plans to stock birds on public lands in Angelina County this coming winter. This restoration effort is part of a research project, but should help boost the local population. Habitat evaluations are ongoing this spring and summer. Additional sites may still be identified for additional stocking this winter. For information of eastern wild turkey restoration contact Jason Hardin with TPWD.



Jason Hardin
903-322-2770 o
Jason.hardin@tpwd.texas.gov

Lee Avery and Major's 1919 Trinity County Turkey Hunt

By Dale Bounds, *President, NWTf Texas Pineywoods Chapter*

In an ongoing effort to bring back the Eastern Wild Turkey to East Texas, we took a positive turn this February, according to Jason, Hardin, Texas Parks Wildlife Department Upland Game Bird Specialist. Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) has recently released 42 wild trapped Eastern Wild Turkeys (EWT) in Trinity County on properties that met the protocol established by the Department for this new restoration effort. TPWD's plan is to release 80 wild trapped turkeys at this location in Trinity County. East Texas counties had EWT's at the turn of the 20th century, as documented the following story about a 1919 turkey hunt by Lee Avery in Trinity County.

Long time Groveton resident Bill Avery recalls an interesting story about his turkey hunting grandfather. My grandfather, William Lee Avery loved to hunt the Eastern wild turkeys in the Longleaf pine Forest of Trinity County around Groveton, TX. in the early 1900's. Mr. Avery and his live turkey gobbler decoy were very successful in their partnership of hunting turkeys. He would put his tame, live Bronze gobbler "Major" in a special handmade leather carrier he attached to his saddle horn and ride to his hunting destination among the tall pines. Mr. Lee would tether Major to a short rope near his



William Lee Avery (1919)



Eastern wild turkey release in Trinity County, February 2015.

brush blind. Grand paw Lee would yelp on a handmade wing bone turkey call, and once Major got fired up, Major would gobble back at him and strut.

On a calm spring morning in Trinity County, the game was on... any gobbler within a half mile radius of them would answer the call and would come running, strutting and gobbling to the challenge that Major was making with his thunderous gobbling. When the wild turkey got into range of Mr. Lee's Parker Double barrel 10 gauge shotgun, with its 36 " barrel he would give him a blast. Then he would unleash ole' Major so he could have some action. In an attempt to establish his dominance, Major would run jump on the wounded or dead turkey, fight and spur him until Mr. Lee got him under control.

This practice is not legal today, but was practiced back then. Needless to say, they were a very successful duo and many EWT's fall to these two!

The EWT disappeared by the early 1930's across most of its historic range in the eastern part of the United States, due to poor conservation practices. Only two viable populations occurred in costal South Carolina and Pennsylvania in the early 1940's.

A historic efforts by state wildlife departments, federal wildlife agencies and non-governmental organizations like the National Wild Turkey Federation have successfully brought the wild turkey back to record numbers (estimated to be 6.2

million today) in North America. They have reintroduced the five subspecies (Eastern, Osceola, Rio Grande, Merriam's and Gould) wild turkeys to their historic ranges. This is one of the major wildlife accomplishments in the last 100 years of wildlife conservation in North America.

Since then, several attempts have been made by TPWD to bring back the EWT in east Texas and Trinity County.

"The earliest stocking attempts utilized pen raised turkeys and later Rio Grande subspecies from central and west Texas. Both methods failed to create a sustainable turkey population in east Texas. Beginning in the late 1970's, TPWD began releasing wild trapped EWT from neighboring states. By 2003 over 7,000 EWT were released in 58 east Texas Counties using the block stocking method (15-20 per site) with 5-10 sites per county. While this method was successful on some sites, most of the birds disappeared without creating a sustainable population.

In 2007, TPWD and the NWTf funded research through Stephen F. Austin University to test a new Super Stocking model (80 turkeys at a release site). After 3 years of research, this model showed considerable merit. Therefore, TPWD reopened the EWT Stocking Program in 2014.

TPWD released 247 birds in 2014 and we are feeling very positive about the new efforts, according to Jason Hardin, TPWD Upland Game Bird Specialist."

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TPWD-Habitat Suitability Index, Protocol and Evaluation requirements for Eastern Wild Turkey Stocking: TPWD is focusing restoration efforts in two Priority Areas.

- Sulphur River Priority Area: Sulphur River, White Oak Creek, and Cypress Creek watersheds
- Within Bowie, Camp, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Morris, Red River, Titus, and Upshur Counties.
- Neches River Priority Area: Neches River and White Rock Creek watersheds within Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Houston, Jasper, Polk, Trinity, and Tyler Counties. Other counties within TPWD Wildlife Division Region III may also qualify, but will not be given priority over the landscapes described above.

Restoration sites must consist of a minimum of 10,000 acres of contiguous usable habitat. Proposed restoration sites may consist of multiple landowners. Restoration sites consisting of multiple

landowners must demonstrate a level of cooperation among landowner members.

Request for restoration must be submitted by the landowner or their agent and must have management authority of the property. Individuals must make a request for restoration in writing to TPWD's Upland Game Bird Program. Request should be sent to Jason Hardin at Jason.hardin@tpwd.texas.gov or mail to P.O. Box 279, Buffalo, TX 75831.

Proposed restoration sites must hold a meeting with TPWD staff present before TPWD can move forward with the evaluation process.

Prior to a stocking, release sites must possess a TPWD approved Management Plan and demonstrate management activities beneficial to wild turkeys.

Contact your local TPWD wildlife biologist for more information. http://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/technical_guidance/biologists/

Research Update: Rio Grande Wild Turkey Research Update Cross Timbers Texas

By Dr. Bret Collier

As Texas NWTF readers know, the Aggie turkey crew is continuing our work on Rio Grande wild turkey in central Texas. Our study is focusing primarily on understanding how birds select and move through habitat, as well as what types of management actions can be used to create more habitat. In 2010 we started a new project in the Cross Timbers region of north central Texas, in conjunction with personnel from Texas Parks and Wildlife District 3. In 2014 we also expanded our research areas to include Wildlife District 4 (northern Edwards Plateau). Now in our 5th spring following Rio Grande wild turkey males during the hunting season and hens during the breeding season, let's just say we are very optimistic in the outcome for this breeding season.

As I write this update, the turkey hunting season is coming to a close and the hens are beginning to nest. With a fairly decent winter and exceptional spring precipitation, I expect the nesting season to be well above average this year. Most vegetation has exploded with growth this spring and the majority of our radio collared hens are beginning to nest.

Texas A&M University graduate student Luke Scroggs, along with lead Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist Jennifer Barrow are monitoring >70 Rio Grande wild turkeys on 3 study sites in north-central Texas. Jennifer Barrow is currently monitoring 27 birds on the LBJ National Grassland. Of the 27 birds, 17 hens have GPS radio collars, 8 hens with VHF collars and 2 Jakes with GPS collars. Jennifer has also banded multiple jakes and hens around the LBJ National Grasslands in north Texas. Surprisingly, the hens have scattered in all directions with many beginning to nest as early as 10 April. As of today two GPS collared hens are incubating their eggs and we look forward to seeing hens with broods soon.

In Stephens and Eastland counties, graduate student Luke Scroggs has been monitoring 39 hens with GPS collars, 3 hens with VHF collars and 4 males with VHF collars. As of today 8 hens are incubating their clutch of eggs with multiple other hens beginning to nest. As vegetation continues to grow and insects become more abundant, we expect nest numbers to increase throughout the season.

Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist Kory Perlichek and District Leader Rufus Stephens in District 4 (northern Edwards Plateau) are



Researcher releases a GPS Collared Rio Grande turkey on study site

monitoring 12 GPS collared hens. Along with the GPS collared hens, multiple hens and jakes were banded. We put aluminum bands on each bird's right leg and a colored band on the left leg so we can identify the birds when we see them on trail camera's during fall surveys. Since capture, District 4 staff have been radio-tracking and collecting location information regularly.

Luke is continuing his Master's research on habitat selection of Rio Grande wild turkeys, but as readers may or may not be aware of we have begun habitat work on the LBJ National Grasslands as well. The National Wild Turkey Federation, in conjunction with Texas Parks and Wildlife is conducting over 1000 acres of habitat work on LBJ. In expectation of the removal of eastern red cedar and other undesirable woody species, Texas Parks and Wildlife has extended our project at LBJ into 2017 to evaluate the response of Rio Grande wild turkeys to habitat management activities. During the summer months of 2014, we collected vegetation information on locations that were going to be treated (shredded, cut or burned) in the fall and we are very excited about the opportunity for this large field experiment on how turkeys respond to habitat management. We will examine the change this summer along with collecting data from Rio Grande wild turkey use.

Overall, it has been an exciting time for the research and habitat management activities that the NWTF supports here in Texas. We are thrilled to continue our research to better understand Rio Grande wild turkey and improve habitat for future generations.

Save the Habitat ... West Texas Regional Biologist Report



Mike and Gene T. with big Merriam's gobbler near Sundance, Wyoming this spring.

Opening up a new firebreak to set up large acreage for Rx burning to benefit northern bobwhites, wild turkeys, and deer on our National Grasslands in Wise County

As I write this, we may be experiencing too much of a good thing for wild turkeys in Texas this year with continued torrential rains and record flooding throughout the state! Our prayer is for the safety of all citizens, including each of you and your families.



*By Gene T. Miller
Regional Biologist
West Texas & Oklahoma*

I am including an update of East Texas work in this issue while we are recruiting to fill our NWTF East Texas Regional Biologist which is currently vacant.

NWTF'S SAVE THE HABITAT. SAVE THE HUNT - NWTF's national habitat and hunting heritage initiative continues to move forward in the Lone Star State with habitat acres accruing in some of your NWTF Focal Landscapes and beyond from west to east, and north to south. This is how we will go about conserving wild turkeys and preserving hunting heritage in the coming years. This is your plan! Ask your Regional Director how each of you can participate at the local chapter level throughout our state and for a copy of your State Strategic Plan if you have not seen it.

TPWD GAME BIRD STAMP FUNDS - Work continues on the ground to use \$1,430,500 in game bird stamp funds from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department for big habitat initiatives, all to be completed by this coming August 31st.

NEW \$1 MILLION DOLLAR HAZARDOUS FUELS GRANT ON CADDO - LBJ National Grasslands - USDA Forest Service has requested National Wild Turkey Federation in Texas to be their contractor of choice to put new money on the ground in Wise County (LBJ) and Fannin County (Caddo) over the next 5

year through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement. We are thankful for this opportunity to partner with them and proudly give credit to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as an outstanding cooperator in providing Upland Game Bird Stamp funds to do over 1,000 acres of type of this work (Eastern red cedar removal, followed by Rx burning to restore early succession habitat) on LBJ National Grasslands during 2014 and 2015.

EAST TEXAS CONSERVATION WORK - Active stewardship projects continue on the Angelina-Sabine National Forest and the Sam Houston National Forest with USDA Forest Service. Likewise, work continues on TPWD's Caddo Lake WMA restoration project (timber sale and service work) and a new 2,000-acre oak savannah restoration project on Gus Engeling WMA in Anderson County where Eastern wild turkeys have been restocked in 2014. We are involved with many state and federal agency partners in the Texas Longleaf Implementation Team effort in southeast Texas; and, are assisting TPWD field staff in habitat evaluations for future Eastern wild turkey restoration efforts. Luke Lewis, NWTF Regional Biologist in Louisiana, and myself have been spending much time in East Texas in recent months doing liaison work with state and federal partners, and our efforts are welcomed and partnerships are strong.

FINAL RAMBLINGS - I always offer my personal thanks to all our Texas NWTF staff, state board, and all of you volunteers for what you do each day to further our mission. Without you, we would not have an NWTF. If any of you members have questions for me, please contact me at gmler@nwtf.net and 806/655-9416 (office) and we'll visit. Until next time, be well, be safe, and good hunting!

SAVE THE HUNT ...

How You Can Win a Rio Grande Turkey Hunt

In 2013 your NWTF launched a program they named SAVE THE HABITAT-SAVE THE HUNT. Texas set a goal to recruit 30,000 new hunters by December 2016. We need all of the adult 5,250 Texas NWTF members to step up and help us capture the number of hunters that have been recruited.

OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU

Tony Hawley <fb710@yahoo.com>our volunteer Save the Hunt Coordinator (STH) has provided a simple 1 page reporting form that we hope you will respond to him with your information. Tony will email you this reporting form upon your request.

You can help us with this... all who reply to Tony with the information requested will have your name included for a turkey hunt in 2016, (Site and date to be determined).

Take a youth hunter or hunter who has dropped out of hunting and you will qualify once you report it to Tony. Remember,we are 5,250 members strong... if we all take this CHALLENGE,we can make a difference. Be a mentor,enjoy the rewards and satisfaction of mentoring a young turkey hunter. See Adam Huggin's story on page 12 about his experience mentoring a young turkey hunter.

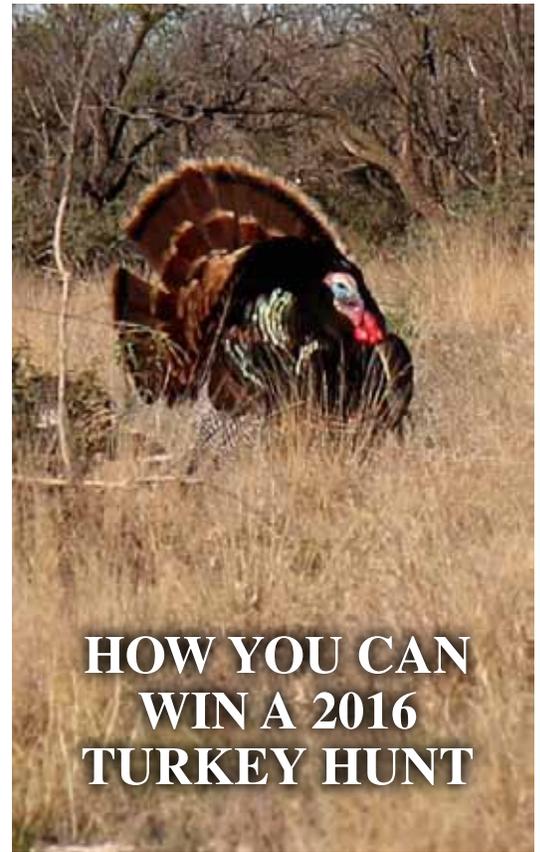


Photo by David Bradford

CLIP & MAIL

HUNTER RECRUITMENT FORM...SAVE THE HABITAT, SAVE THE HUNT

Submitted by: _____ Email: _____

State _____ Chapter: _____ Date: _____

MENTORED HUNTS (please select one) ___ State Agency learn to hunt program, ___ Mentored new hunter(s) or individual hunt, ___ Mentored new hunter on a guided hunt Date of Hunt: _____

Was the Hunt registered with the NWTF: ___ Yes ___ No Number of Hunters _____

Cost of Hunt: _____ Cost per Hunter: _____ Amount Contributed: _____

Equals = Hunters Counted: _____

HUNTER EDUCATION

NWTF Volunteer Hunter Ed Instructor: _____

Email: _____

Date of Hunter Education Class: _____ Number of Graduates: _____



Return Form to: **Tony Hawley**
3801 Meadow View, College Station, Texas 77845
email: fb710@yahoo.com

Braxton Olivers hunt, “SAVE THE HUNT”... Mentor a hunter

By Adam Huggins, *Pineywoods NWTF Chapter*

Clint Oliver was the high bidder on the donated youth hunt for an Eastern Wild Turkey at our 2014, Pineywoods NWTF Hunting Heritage Banquet. Clint had dreams of his son Braxton taking his first turkey in East Texas. They connected Sunday morning at 10:45 am on Braxton's first Eastern Gobbler at Cottingham Hunting Club, in Nacogdoches County.

This was his last chance to get a turkey on this hunt.

Braxton's determination and attitude lead us to one of the coolest turkey hunting experiences of my life. It sounds crazy but to me, the only thing better than everything working out perfectly for a quick easy hunt, is when you put in several long, tough, frustrating hours and then have it work out perfectly. Something about that adds a little extra sense of accomplishment to it. It's a feeling where you know you've done something truly special. That is exactly how this hunt played out and I feel lucky to have been part of it.

On April 20th, Guide Brett Todd, who guided this hunt for the last several years and knows the property and turkeys habitat. Brett and I spent a couple of afternoons before the hunt scouting. The hunt started with good weather and gobblers answering the calls. A hen came in and checked them out, but not long after the wind picked up steadily and eventually forced them to move. No chances on day one but at least there was some great turkey action.

Second day of his hunt was set for Saturday, April, 25th. Brett was leaving town that weekend and asked me to take them. He told me about Braxton and said there's no doubt he'll handle his end of the deal, we just had to get one close. He also said, "Braxton wants it bad and I want it to happen for him".

Saturday we were rained out and with strike to it was making it tough. I couldn't imagine with all the fresh sign in the area, that we wouldn't hear a single bird roost at least. This hunt was a disappointment, but I wasn't surprised at all when I asked if they wanted to try again in the morning and they said "YES, let's do it!"

Sunday morning and our final chance to get it done got off to a rocky start. I thought about it all night and decided since someone might have hunted our spot. It was foggy and the woods were quiet. We got set up and started the process all over again. We had a hen in the distance talking to us. She sounded excited and I thought for sure one of us would make a bird gobble, but no luck. It was sure nice to hear life in the woods though. A couple more hours passed and this day was starting to remind me a lot of the day before.

The fog slowly lifted and the sun started to show around 9:00 AM. Shortly after on a random call sequence; that we'd tried countless times in the last 10 hours, we heard a gobble! We all popped up and get a new burst of adrenaline that we didn't think existed anymore. We try him again and another one answers behind us, then him again, then they started gobbling at each other! How did this happen so fast? Where did they come from? Where are they now? Are they headed this way? Do we go to them? Which one? Every one of these questions crossed my mind at once. So, we did nothing. They went crazy for the next 15 to 20 minutes. They gobbled at each other, at crows, birds, us and anything else that made a noise. They were both a few hundred yards away but they were talking. During this time I saw a hen cross the road and go in the woods about 50 yards behind us



Braxton and Clint Oliver with Braxton's first Eastern Wild Turkey from Cottingham Hunting Club in Nacogdoches County.

headed in the direction of one of the toms. Five minutes later he was silent again. For the next hour or so we sat and called sparingly just enough to keep the other one interested. He stayed put and would gobble but not near as much as when he first started. We thought about getting aggressive and going to him. We were also thinking about the other bird behind us. He hadn't gobbled in an hour and could be miles away or right on top of us.

Something was keeping him there. That thought hadn't even cleared my head when he gobbled again and it was closer! He was on the lane headed to the road! I gave him a minute and called again to make sure he headed our direction once he got there. They cut me off and I realized there were two of them. They were at 150 yards and closing fast! They were coming up our right side and Clint and I were both between them and Braxton. We had to think quickly! We could wait till they passed us and get to the decoy for a perfect shot and video. Or we can turn around and shoot one at first sight. We chose option #2 not wanting to chance getting busted. I never called again afraid it would give away our location.

It was all Clint and Braxton from there. What happened next was purely awesome! In about 6 seconds they made their move and got into position. Braxton on point and ready and Clint behind him with video rolling. I instantly heard the unmistakable spitting and drumming sound that usually triggers my heart to beat loud enough to drown out all other sounds. They gobble! I watched Clint whispering to Braxton to help keep his composure. He tells him not to move until he's ready to shoot. They gobble again and he tells him to take a deep breath. I couldn't believe how calm and cool they were! They were both like soldiers, steady and ready. I was the opposite and just sat there shaking uncontrollably trying not to breathe too loud. I see

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

them!! 50 yards out in full strut and closing distance! They see the decoy and are showing her everything they've got. I'm watching from about 10 yards behind waiting to see one roll up at any second. Just about the time they disappeared from my view, I see Braxton shoulder his gun and fold the lead bird inside 15 yards! I jumped up and bounced around like Richard Simmons for a few seconds then it was hugs and high fives out to take a look at Braxton's first Eastern Gobbler! He was full grown and handsome sporting a 10» beard and 1 1/8» spurs.

Over 10 of the last 24 hours were spent waiting for this moment to happen. Before we heard that first gobble, it felt like we'd been hunting for a week. It's funny how quickly you forget about all that once you close the deal. I feel like I took as much from this experience as anyone. Watching Braxton handle himself the way he did under that kind of pressure was impressive. But seeing how he handled himself the day before during the tough turkey hunt waiting was even more impressive. It's hard to believe he is only 12 years old. Most grown men can't put in the effort and resolve as he did. Watching Clint throughout those last crazy intense minutes was

equally impressive. He kept his cool which modeled for Braxton to keep his too! There was no hope for me but I was just along for the ride at that point. Anyone who has ever sat on the ground trying to hold a shotgun still and steady while birds gobble and strut towards you, knows how hard that actually is to do. I don't like using words like «earn» or «deserve» when talking about hunting, but it seems fitting in this case. Both father and son earned this one and deserve the trophy they have to show for it.

As I said before, feeling lucky to be a part of this experience and help mentor Braxton is an understatement. We all have a lifetime memory and an awesome story to tell forever. It was a learning experience for me because it won't be long before I'm the one trying to keep my son steady for a shot. I can only hope to be as poised and patient as Clint was when my 4 year old son Bridger is ready to go on a real hunt. I also hope he'll have the drive and determination that Braxton showed the entire hunt. Either way, I have a memorable great example of how it's supposed to be done, by both a father and his son. That is priceless! Thank you, Clint for allowing me to help mentor Braxton and congrats on your Eastern Wild Turkey harvested in east Texas!



National Wild Turkey Federation

770 Augusta Road | Edgefield, SC 29824
803-637-7608 – Direct line | www.nwtf.org
803-637-0034 – Fax



Barry Woods, *Director of Field Operations, West Central Region*

I want to express how grateful I am to be working with the great state of Texas and its many NWTF volunteers. I have been with the NWTF as a volunteer since 1995 when I joined because of the urging of the late great Dick Kirby while I was attending college at the University of Tennessee! I have been an employee for 6-1/2 years now and currently serve as the West Central, Director of Field Operations. Before I went to work for this great organization I was an outside salesman for a machine shop located in Amarillo, TX. I lived in Amarillo for 9 years and enjoyed the Texas Panhandle especially the turkey hunting! I still have many friends and contacts all across the Texas Panhandle! Whether as a volunteer or an employee it is a great time to be a part of the NWTF and the Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. Initiative.



The Canadian River Chapter won the most Sponsor Members Award

Well Spring has sprung and turkey season is almost done. It's been great to see all of the pictures of birds and hear some of the wildest stories of the hunt. Not sure I can believe all of them completely, sounds more like a fishing story....but all great times had this spring in the turkey woods. I am very happy we are now running at full strength with RD's positions. We have seen good turnouts at the banquets and other events. We are all looking forward to more events that are coming up. From the sound of everyone these events coming up will be very good. NWTF Texas has done a great job of helping with the development of outdoor adventures programs for hunter education in schools across. As summer comes up, we will see more WITO events, and Jakes days. Make sure you get in on the fun. Look forward to seeing you all at many of the upcoming events. Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt!

HAPPY TRAILS!



Robbi Vincent

District Field Supervisor, Texas/New Mexico/
Colorado/Utah/Nevada/Arizona
National Wild Turkey Federation
401 N. Carroll ave. Suite 127
Southlake, Tx 76092
817-437-3014
rvincent@nwtf.net
www.nwtf.org/texas/

South Texas



Houston Chapter wins highest net to gross at Texas State NWTF Award event this January.



Mike Shouse
Regional Director Southern Texas
(512) 966-9539
mshouse@nwtf.net
www.nwtf.org/texas/

Our NWTF Southern Texas Region started off with a bang and continues to prove 2015 will be a banner year for us. Great feedback continues to roll in from both banquet attendees and turkey hunters from the Hill Country to the Coast to the Sabine.

Our Fueling Conservation Sporting Clays Tournament in January brought 40 teams / 160 shooters together to support Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt and raised a record amount for an event in our region. Anadarko provided the underwriting for the shoot, and many of the service companies in their network supported with sponsorships, underwriting, donations and teams. We will be using the money generated at this event to run a series of outreach programs for landowners to improve wildlife habitat across the region. Additionally, we are planning to use some of the funds to throw a big “Save the Hunt by Sharing the Hunt” dove shoot between Houston and Victoria. For this event, we would like to host 200 new hunters plus their mentors for a day of food, fellowship and hunting this September / October. Look for more updates coming soon on this as we will need the local chapters to participate.

Since the spring season started, it has been tough to track down our staunch hard core turkey hunters. They have been in the field, and have been reporting lots of birds, but mixed success in calling those wary birds in and staying dry with the blessed rain we have received in the last weeks. But even with the tough hunting and folks primarily having success on their private land or leases, I have had reports of several birds (both Rios and Easterns) taken on public land. And the 1 gobbler Central Texas area has been on fire, populations are up and lots of sightings and birds taking between I-35 and I-45. And even better news is that seems, that no matter where the hunts are taking place, almost all of our hard core hunters have been getting new hunters out, teaching them tactics and to call and sacrificing their opportunities to make sure the rookies get a bird. Getting these new folks addicted is critical to SAVE the HUNT, and our members are being true to the mantra.

We have a great line up of banquets, and outreach events coming up in our Region this summer! Check out the new NWTF.ORG and Powderhook websites for upcoming events.

Hello from East Texas ...



Top Women in the Outdoors Chapters: 1. Pioneer, 2. Tri-County, 3. Northeast Texas Chapter.

First, there are so many of you I need to thank for helping me get through this busy time of year. THANK YOU! With the banquet season well into full swing as I came on board, there really hasn't been any time for a learning curve. So much for all that I learned while teaching high school English.

My first banquet actually took place two days before I officially started. I'm not sure how that happened. Since February 2, East Texas chapters have been doing a great job getting the word out about Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt. Several chapters have new leadership and committee members stepping up to continue the success of Texas NWTF.



Christi and East Texas Regional Director Shaine Nixon.

As many of you know, I have been involved with NWTF since 1991. I am very proud to be serving in my position and hope that I can help all of the East Texas Chapters and Texas NWTF strive for success both at banquets and in the field.

If you were unable to attend the Gus Engeling WMA workshop on May 1, you missed a great day of learning about Eastern wild turkeys and their habitat. Several counties continue to be involved with Eastern Turkey habitat surveys and I am looking forward to seeing where birds may one day call home. This continues to be an exciting time for the reintroduction of turkeys to East Texas.

Several East Texas chapters still have banquets coming up, so be sure and check the calendar for upcoming dates. I have had some success with tickets being purchased through powderhook.com. If

you have a chance, take a minute and go to their site. All East Texas chapters are listed there.

As I am writing, I just realized there are only two days left in the Eastern turkey season. I was only able to slip off for two half days and I did take my son, Hunter, on his first hunt for a Rio Grande turkey. I was able to see turkeys on every trip. East Texas has some great, longbeards. Unfortunately, they were all on the wrong side of the fence. However, Hunter was able to connect in Olney, Texas, with a nice three year old. The bird had a 9 inch beard, weighed 18 pounds, and had 1 3/8 and 1 5/8 inch spurs. It was a short hunt but a great time. Spending time in the woods with a friend or your son is what turkey season is all about.

Thank you again to all of you who have been patient and helped me get up and running. Without you and your hard work, none of this would be possible. It's your dedication, time, and passion that makes NWTF a success in Texas and Nationally. If you or someone you know would like to host an event for JAKES, Women in the Outdoors, Wheeling Sportsman, or host a banquet, please don't hesitate to call or email.

Get in the woods every chance you have and don't miss an opportunity to encourage, mold, and create a new member or hunter. *Save the Habitat ... Save the Hunt.*



April AWOL, Pineywoods and Gulf Coast Chapters share best Wheelin' Event and best JAKES event awards.



Shaine Nixon
Regional Director
East Texas NWTF
(903) 399-8450
snixon@nwtf.net
www.nwtf.org/texas/

Juniors Acquiring Knowledge Ethics and Sportsmanship



As the NWTF presses forward with its mission to “Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt”. The Jakes program, in my opinion, is by far one of the most important aspects of the mission. Yet as I look at the Texas numbers, I see a big hole in the bucket.

There are currently 65 chapters statewide with only 28 chapters having some sort of JAKES event. Over half of the state is missing out on a very rewarding opportunity to impact young minds in a safe positive way.

These events can easily be put together as almost everyone is willing to give time or support for kid related outdoor activities. Your local archery and gun clubs are a great place to start. Time invested is minimal and rewards are plentiful.

For chapters interested in holding a Jakes event, funds are available as well as 3 state trailers with BB gun range and guns, skeet machine and coming soon, archery equipment. I will be glad to help get you started.

Tim Webster
timw_@live.com



Angelina County 4-H Club conduct the BB Gun and Archery Stations.



Shooting was the focus at the Texas State JAKES event held on the Winston Tree Farm.



The JAKES Take AIM Shooting Trailer was a big hit at Texas State JAKES Event.



Photo Credit:
David Bradford



Hunting 12 Months With Your Camera

By Dale Bounds

How would you like to hunt turkeys all year long? Photographing wildlife can be as challenging, exciting and rewarding as pursuing them with a bow or gun.

I made my living taking photographs and video for the US Forest Service. I often thought that the Forest Service didn't know it, but I would have paid them to do some of these wildlife photo shoots.

My friend Steve Moore brought me a thumb drive of great Rio Grande shots by photographer David Bradford on his family's Den-Moore Ranch in Concho County.

I was so impressed that I would like to share some of David Bradford's work with you.

Private Land Leasing Program



Terry Turney – CWB - NWTF
TX Private Lands Leasing Biologist
302 Oak Ridge • San Marcos, TX 78666
512-558-1971
tturney@nwtf.net

Hope everyone has enjoyed the cool spring and all the showers we have been getting, it's shaping up to be a great year across the State. Gene T. Miller and I have been busy on NWTF's behalf early in the year taking care of all the aspects of hiring three private lands leasing biologists. One position is a continuance of my previous position and two new employees to lease for TPWD across the state, one position in Lubbock and one in the Stephenville area. My position will remain in San Marcos working South and Southeast Texas and Kyle Thigpen leasing biologist with TPWD is in College Station. We had some great candidates for the position and hired Shawn Coleman in Lubbock and Dave Carter soon to be in the Meridian area. Hopefully we will all make it to the Summer Board meeting and or the Uvalde meeting.

Quick note on leasing activities, twenty-one leases to date between us with a few weeks to go before the leasing deadline of June 1st. We continue leasing after the deadline for next year's lease book but TPWD has to meet a print deadline each year. I encourage everyone to purchase the Annual Public Hunting Permit for \$48 to support the program and to take advantage of some of the great hunting the program offers.

Please welcome these new guys when you get to meet them and help us out with leads on properties to lease, even if you have no information on great looking wildlife habitat in your area that doesn't get hunted, we'll track down the owners and get in touch with them.

Shawn Coleman was hired in May as a Private Lands Leasing Biologist for the NWTF. He lives with his wife, Kim, and 7 month old daughter Abigail, in Lubbock, TX. The Coleman's recently moved back to his hometown of Lubbock, TX from the Phoenix, AZ area where he had been for the previous 2 years working for the Arizona State Forestry Service Fire Aviation program and serving as a college missionary on a community college in Chandler, AZ. Shawn has a B.S. in Range Management from Texas Tech University and a M.D. from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He is excited to back on his native soil and working for the NWTF in the High Plains and Rolling Plains of Texas. Previously Shawn had worked in the same area of Texas as a Regional Natural Resource Coordinator for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and then later running his own natural resource management company, Llano Fire Management Inc. Shawn enjoys the challenges of working with landowners in the Panhandle of Texas and hopes that he can make an impact in the availability of private lands hunting in Texas while serving the NWTF. He is optimistic and excited to work with NWTF and hopes to help establish a student chapter at Texas Tech University.



Shawn and Kim Coleman



Dave Carter



My name is Dave Carter and I am a Private Lands Leasing Biologist for NWTF. I attended Tarleton State University studying Animal Science and Wildlife Management, and upon leaving there in 2002, I began working in the deer breeding business and doing private wildlife and fisheries consulting work for the next 13 years. I enjoy all types of hunting, fishing, kayaking and have a real passion for wildlife photography.

Shawn Coleman – NWTF
TX Private Lands Leasing Biologist
2615 112th. St. • Lubbock, TX 79423
806-778-2214
scoleman@nwtf.net

David Carter - NWTF
TX Private Lands Leasing Biologist
5808 Fair Hill Dr.
Temple, TX 76502
254-434-1225
dcarter@nwtf.net

Kyle Thigpen – TPWD
Leasing Biologist, Private Lands & Public Hunting
12805 FM 2152, Suite 106
College Station, TX 77845
(O) 979-696-4148 • (M) 979-255-2761
kyle.thigpen@tpwd.texas.gov

Women and Handguns

By Dorothy McCarver, *State Volunteer WITO Coordinator*



Three of the Northeast Texas NWTF Chapter's members, Ginger Walker, Tammy Foster and Carie Overstreet recently had the opportunity to take a gun safety class that was offered by the Titus County Sheriff's Department and was available to all women eighteen years of age and older. It is evident that they learned a lot about handguns, improved their shooting skills and had a great time in this class. According to Titus County's Sheriff Tim Ingram, "These classes are to provide a relaxed atmosphere with trained firearm professionals to teach women how to safely use a firearm."

Ginger explained that the women attending this class were there for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons was for protection. Many of the women's husbands were gone a lot for work and they wanted to defend themselves if necessary. She says that other gals just wanted to learn the basics of handling a gun such as loading, shooting and cleaning while a few women had never had any experience with a gun and started off feeling nervous. However, by the end of the class all of the women participants left feeling more confident.

Ginger's reason for taking this class was to gain more knowledge with the attitude that knowledge was power. She felt that even the most experienced gun handler has room for improvement. Being a single mother and living alone with her youngest daughter, Ginger did not plan on being a victim. She said that she will do whatever it takes to protect her daughter, herself and her home. Another reason Ginger and chapter members attended was because

it was advertised as being very thorough. Ginger had never been shown how to clean my gun before and wanted to learn the correct way. Lastly and simply, Ginger exclaimed that she just loved to shoot!

Women's gun clubs are becoming more and more popular all over Texas. I can agree with Ginger that this is great because it is awesome to see women empowering themselves. Ginger, Tammy, Carie and I want to encourage all interested women to attend a gun safety class not only to gain invaluable knowledge but to realize that it is a great way to share your interest with others.

You can also learn the basics of shooting all types of firearms safely at a Women in the Outdoors Event and specialty events. Please contact Dorothy McCarver (Dorothy.mccarver@yahoo.com) for information about the upcoming Northeast Texas NWTF Chapter's Gun Safety Class that will be held at Clays N More Gun Club in Mt. Pleasant this summer. Also make plans to attend any of the Texas WITO events like the Pioneer Chapter's WITO event on May 16; the Tri-County Longbeards Chapter's WITO event on June 13, Paso Del Norte Chapter's WITO event (date to be set), Northeast Texas Chapter's WITO event on September 26. You will find contact information for each event at NWTF.org.



Women In The Outdoors event teaches shooting safety.

Texas State Scholarship Winner for 2015, Cheyenne Swor

The winner of the Texas \$2,000 State Scholarship is **Cheyenne Swor of Diboll** who was submitted by the April AWOL Chapter. She is first in her class with a 4.0 average and has helped for a number of years with the Jake's Day 22 shooting booth. She is active in 4H and FFA and plans to attend Stephen F. Austin State University and major in Animal Science/Agribusiness. Cheyenne was an outstanding representative for Texas in the national competition.

Each Texas NWTF Chapter can receive a \$500 Scholarship. The forms can be downloaded from the NWTF Web site www.nwtf.org.net. After completion they must be submitted to a local NWTF Chapter by February 1st each year. Contact your local chapter for details.

2015 NWTF Scholarship Recipients ... CONGRATULATIONS

Brandon Hoelscher - Tri County Longbeards
William Ben Hurbrough - Houston Chapter
Shelbi Roberts - North East Chapter
Cheyenne Swor - April AWOL Chapter
Jacob Wood - Pineywoods Chapter
Marvin Cody Wayne May - Blackland Prairie
Joelton Mayfield - Highland Lakes Chapter
McKenna Lynn Nixon - East Texas Chapter



Cheyenne Swor

"I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the National Wild Turkey Federation for being selected as the scholarship recipient. My participation and working at the Jakes Day really peaked my interest in the NWTF. It was a great opportunity to get close with nature and teaching kids about the proper handling of guns. I will be using the money to attend Stephen F. Austin State University in the fall. I will major in Animal Science Pre-Vet and minor in Agribusiness. I will receive my Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A & M Vet School. Eventually, I will open my own vet clinic in Angelina County. I plan on helping out with many more Jakes Days."

NWTF Summer Political Liaison Report - 2015

This has been a busy session at the Capitol. Texas Outdoor Partners (TOP) has been very active in our participation – representing the Hunters and Fishermen of Texas by looking out for our best interests – and also the interest of our wildlife and fisheries habitat.

Our biggest input came with our testimony "FOR" a bill addressing the RIGHT TO HUNT AND FISH IN TEXAS. This issue should now appear on the ballot in the November election.

The key is to get out the vote of every outdoor enthusiast that you know – plus all family and friends to vote FOR this issue. NEVER – I underline NEVER assume that there will be enough

votes easily enough to win – if you do not vote. That would be the biggest mistake you could make.

Show up at the polls and vote on this very important issue. TOP also wrote letters and testified on other bills that would have taken away some control of our fishing limits from TPWD. TOP – through the guidelines of the North American Wildlife Conservation Model – supports that the State and its game commission has the right to manage game only – though scientific methods and its biologists. Not other entities. WE also worked in tandem with others concerned over the monies generated for the establishment of artificial reefs in the Gulf to help fishing. WE were about to "accidentally" lose those funds and we worked to be sure that those funds were not erased from the TPWD Gulf reef program.

Also we worked on making sure an innocent predator eradication bill from 1-3 counties did not set a precedent of taking monies from the TPWD budget that had not been appropriated in the original bill.

In closing – Detecting the "fallout" – sometime accidentally – from innocent bills can cause problems for future legislative sessions and for our limited funds that are budgeted for TPWD if precedents are set. So each bill involving wildlife has to be read carefully and examined with a fine tooth comb. End results can be more than one can originally see in a bill at first look.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Linder, Past Texas NWTF State President
Texas NWTF Political Liaison



6th Annual Wheelin' Sportsmen event was another success in East Texas!

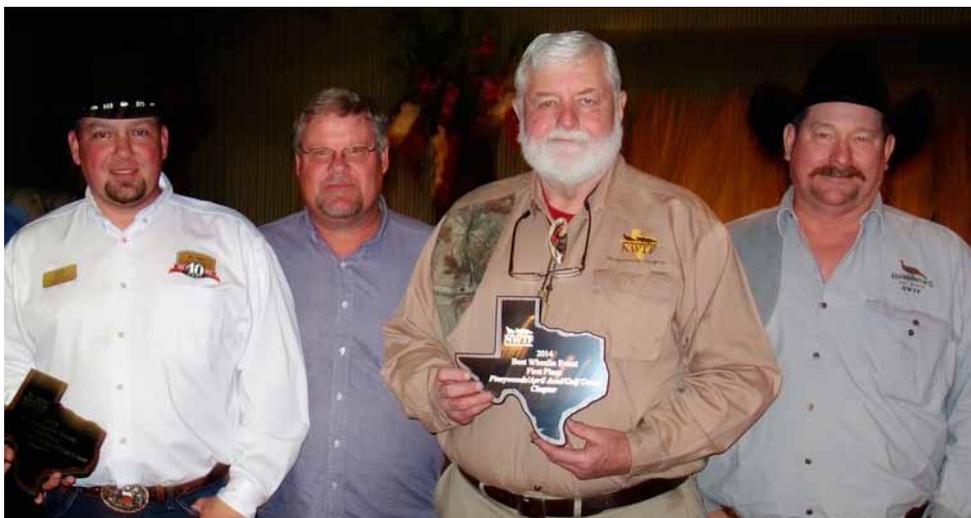
By: Craig White



2014 Wheelin' Sportsman group photo at Winston Tree Farm.

For 6 years, the April AWOL and Pineywoods Chapters have partnered with the US Forest Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the US Fish and Wildlife to host an NWTF Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt that everyone has grown to love. This year's event took place December 12-13, 2014 in Nacogdoches County on Alazan WMA, the USFS's SFA Experimental Forest, and approx. 3,000 acres of private land owned by the Winston Family. The deer and hog hunt took place on a Friday afternoon and all day Saturday. Hunters had the chance to hunt all three pieces of property and interact with a variety of wildlife. Several does were harvested by hunters, but a surplus of acorns kept deer from feeding on corn as they tend to do. Nonetheless, a fun time was had by all. Choice Cuts of Lufkin donated services to prepare the venison for cooking and they continue to support the NWTF without question. The Pineywoods Chapter impressed us again as they prepared a full course venison meal Friday night for everyone present. Accommodations for the hunters have never been less than par, and the hunters will be the first to tell you.

The partnerships represented in this event are beyond impressive. Each



Pineywoods, April AWOL and Gulf Coast Chapters share, 2014 Best Wheelin Sportsman Award at the Fredericksburg State NWTF Awards event.

entity involved has a part in planning and when the plan comes together, it is nothing but fluid. Volunteers outnumber hunters 3 to 1 and enjoy the weekend as much if not more than the hunters. Every volunteer goes above and beyond to sacrifice many hours of time in planning and helping to allow these hunters to have the opportunity to go hunting for one weekend. For many of the hunters, this is the only opportunity that they will have until next year's hunt.

A majority of the hunters that

participate in this hunt return year after year; however, this hunt is open to any physically impaired individual that would like to participate. This year's event is still in the planning stage, but will take place during the month of December. If you would like to apply for an opportunity to participate or would like more information on possibly starting a Wheelin' Sportsman event in your area, please contact Craig White: craigwhite@yahoo.com or call/text 936-552-1942.

Texas State Chapter
National Wild Turkey Federation
206 Rosedale
Lufkin, Texas 75901

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Lufkin, Texas
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2015 Texas State Chapter Board of Directors & Officers

Dick McCarver - President
425 Tennon Road,
Mt Pleasant, TX 75455
(h) 903-717-8670 (c) 903-563-4748
gr.mccarver@yahoo.com

Jennifer Barrow - Treasurer
121 CR 3131, Decatur, TX 76234
(w) 940-627-5475 (c) 940-393-8908
jbarrow1994@gmail.com

Lou VonWoglom - Secretary
14906 Oak Bluff Court
Houston, TX 77070
281-320-8388
lvonwog@gmail.com

Tony Hawley
VP – South Texas Region
Save the Hunt Coordinator
3801 Meadow View
College Station, Texas 77845
830-889-5819
Fbg710@yahoo.com

Jason McAnally
VP – Panhandle and West Texas Region
P.O. Box 274
Canadian, Texas 79014
806-255-5789
jason.mcanally@mrcglobal.com

Dale Moses
VP – North Texas Region
3827 FM 1853
Denison, Texas 75021
(c) 903-819-0126
texomawarden@gmail.com

Larry Noble
VP – East Texas Region
2705 Red Hill Dr.
College Station, Texas 77845
(h) 979-693-2024 • (c) 281-639-9185
noble.turkeyman@gmail.com

Robert Linder
Past President
Texas Political Liaison
3302 Vista Lane
Marble Falls, Texas 78654
(h) 830-693-9515 • (c) 713-825-0425
rlinderhaus@aol.com

Kim Potts
Outdoor Ed. Coordinator
7623 FM 514
Emory, Texas 75440
903-348-1845
kpotts@reg8.net

A. Dean Castillo
6136 Frisco Square Blvd., Suite 400
Frisco, Texas 75034
469-525-6551
adcibt@aol.com

Dr. Sam McManus
203 Cove Creek Lane
Houston, Texas 77042
713-785-0257
samPM@sbcglobal.net

Dale Bounds
Past President
Texas State NWTF Newsletter Editor
206 Rosedale Drive
Lufkin, Texas 75901
936-635-2116
dalebounds9@gmail.com

Tim Webster
JAKES Coordinator
171 Klutts Drive
Rockwall, Texas 75032
214-588-8592
timw_@live.com

A. J. Cook
1293 County Road 306 D
Henderson, Texas 75654
(h) 903-539-1505 • (c) 903-595-4567
aj.cook@att.net

Stuart McManus
133 E. Frontera Circle
The Woodlands, Texas 77382
281-684-3584
smcmanus@corn-inc.com

T. W. Garrett
Scholarship Coordinator
8015 Plum Grove Road
Cleveland, Texas 77327
281-399-0822
twghcg@aol.com

Craig White
Wheelin Coordinator
342 CR 8113
Nacogdoches, Texas 75964
936-552-1942
craigswite@yahoo.com

Mike Fuller
2010 East Jackson Street
Paris, Texas 75460
903-737-1987
dudney1968@gmail.com

Norm Wade
4902 Connorvale Rd
Houston, Texas 77039
713-859-8136
lastofmochians@yahoo.com

Dorothy McCarver
Women in the Outdoors Coordinator
425 Tennon Road
Mt. Pleasant, Texas 75455
(h) 903-717-8670 • (c) 903-577-2674
dorothy.mccarver@yahoo.com

Chris Womack
Facebook Coordinator
129 Birdsong Ln.
Terrell, Texas 75160
972-965-7768
w2cmack@hotmail.com

Eddie Hines
3145 Rolling Ridge Lane
Brenham, Texas 77833
903-227-2006
hines.eddie@yahoo.com

Aubrey Luce
265 Sloan
Lufkin, Texas 75901
936-414-5368
a_sluce@consolidated.net

Regional Field Staff

Shawn Roberts - NWTF
Director of Field Operations
Gulf States
433 CR 1765 • Mt. Pleasant, TX 75455
903-573-4570
sroberts@nwtf.net

Mike Shouse - NWTF
Regional Director – South TX
111 Roberts Circle • Georgetown, TX 78633
512-966-9539
mshouse@nwtf.net

Gene T. Miller, CWB
NWTF Regional Biologist
West TX & OK
712 Foster Lane • Canyon, TX 79015
(O) 806-655-9416 • (M) 806-316-0232
gmiller@nwtf.net

Shawn Coleman – NWTF
TX Private Lands Leasing Biologist
2615 112th. St. • Lubbock, TX 79423
806-778-2214
scolem@nwtf.net

Barry Woods - NWTF
Director of Field Operations
West Central
P.O. Box 580 • Meade, KS 67864
620-417-0692
bwoods@nwtf.net

Shaine Nixon - NWTF
Regional Director - East TX
2384 Fm 726 W • Diana, TX 75640
903-399-8450
snixon@nwtf.net

Terry Turney – CWB - NWTF
TX Private Lands Leasing Biologist
302 Oak Ridge • San Marcos, TX 78666
512-558-1971
tturney@nwtf.net

Kyle Thigpen – TPWD
Leasing Biologist, Private Lands & Public Hunting
12805 FM 2152, Suite 106
College Station, TX 77845
(O) 979-696-4148 • (M) 979-255-2761
kyle.thigpen@tpwd.texas.gov

Robbi Vincent - NWTF
District Field Supervisor
TX/NM/CO/UT/NE/AR
401 N. Carroll Ave. • Southlake, TX 76092
817-437-3014
rvincent@nwtf.net

Tyler Kirby - NWTF
Regional Director
West KS- TX Panhandle
2007 Frederick Dr. • Dodge City, KS 67801
620-339-9026
tkirby@nwtf.net

David Carter - NWTF
TX Private Lands Leasing Biologist
5808 Fair Hill Dr.
Temple, TX 76502
254-434-1225
dcarter@nwtf.net

Jason Hardin – TPWD
Upland Game Bird Specialist
4652 CR 2612 • Oakwood, TX 75855
903-322-2770
Jason.hardin@tpwd.texas.gov