

WASHINGTON COUNTY
Wildlife
Society

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NEWSLETTER

Winter 2008

Mark your calendar for the upcoming Washington County Wildlife Society Annual Meeting for 2008. The featured speaker will be Mr. David Langford who will discuss natural resource and conservation issues on a state wide level. He will discuss the history of these issues statewide and give a perspective of the future.

Mr. David K. Langford has worked for many years as a professional photographer of Western life and landscapes. Concerned over the breakup of many of the ranchlands he'd grown up on and visited, in 1990 he became Executive Vice President of the Texas Wildlife Association. Formed in 1985 by ranchers, hunters and wildlife managers, the Association has focused on promoting the interests of privately-held lands, which make up 97% of the state.

During his years with the Association, Mr. Langford has represented the group in a successful effort to introduce the "wildlife management tax valuation," which extended discounts on land appraisals that parallel agricultural appraisals. These tax reductions have helped many rural landowners who manage their land for wildlife and hunting or birding or other kinds of nature tourism. He has also worked to defuse tensions between the agricultural and environmental communities through an effort known as Plan-It Texas, which used a Hill Country ranch as a case study on how to protect endangered species, diversify into a profitable bed-and-breakfast, cattle and hunting operation, and keep the land intact long into the future.

In addition to his work in the business and non-profit worlds, Mr. Langford has also been involved in a number of appointed positions in government, particularly with Texas Parks and Wildlife. He has served on the agency's Hunting Advisory Committee, Whitetail Deer Advisory Committee and Education and Outreach Advisory Committee.

WCWS Annual Meeting
January 25, 2008
6:00 p.m. social / 7:00 p.m. Stew Dinner
Washington County Fairgrounds -
Special Events Center
Featured Speaker: **David Langford** on
"Keeping Open Spaces Open"

If you haven't done so already,
this would be a great opportunity
to renew your Wildlife Society
membership for 2008.

Please check-in with your co-op
representative at the door to verify
your status with the Society and
pick up a raffle ticket.



WASHINGTON COUNTY

Wildlife Society

OFFICERS:

Sara Byman, Society President, (979) 830-8555
Russell Borgstedte, Society Vice President,
(936) 878-9933
Richard Thames, Society Treasurer, (979) 278-3053
Monterey White, Society Secretary, (979) 836-3418

WMA DIRECTORS:

Greenvine WMA

Sara Byman, Director, (979) 830-8555,
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Weldon Moeller, Vice-Director, (979) 836-5870

Sun Oil Field WMA

Gil Janner, Director, (979) 251-7134
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Mt. Vernon WMA

Greg Schomburg, Director, (979) 836-2568

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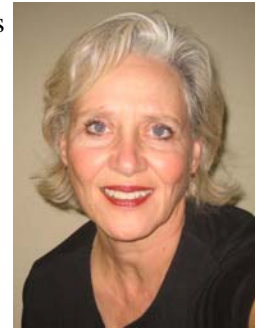
RESOURCE CONTACTS:

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Ann Thames, WCWS Office Secretary
(979) 203-3455, semahta@yahoo.com

President's Remarks

Dear Fellow Wildlife Society Members:

I have thoroughly enjoyed serving this past year as the President of the Washington County Wildlife Society. Many of you have become new friends through our mutual interest in nature and wildlife. My thanks to the WCWS Board members who worked very well together this year with several common goals - one being the desire to bring you the best programs possible. Your feedback confirmed that the two 2007 General Meeting topics were great, as well as the food. A highlight of this year occurred in May, when I had the privilege of working with a group of like-minded organizations to plan and present a special program on Rainbow Soil with a fresh and interesting perspective on what goes on underneath the surface of the soil.



I have happily accepted the role of President of WCWS for 2008 and vow to continue the quest to bring you informative and interesting programs so we can all learn to take care of our land and wildlife together. Planning is underway to bring you another 'joint effort' program in April that will be open to the whole community. I want to thank WCWS members who have agreed to join me in serving as 2008 Directors and Vice-Directors of their respective Wildlife Co-ops, as well as those taking committee positions. I am looking forward to working with this great group of wildlife enthusiasts in 2008.

Sara Byman

WCWS President, 2008



Happy New Year!

2008 is here - a fresh New Year. Have you made any resolutions? How about resolving to make your property more wildlife friendly this year? There is no greater goal than to learn better land management practices so that existing wildlife can flourish on our respective properties in Washington County. Make a resolution to attend your Washington County Wildlife Society General Meetings held in January and August each year and enjoy programs chosen specifically to enlighten all of us in our wildlife management endeavors. As we continue to lose wildlife habitat, it is more imperative than ever before that we learn to preserve our wildlife by maximizing the habitat we have left. These meetings are a great place to meet your neighbors, have a great meal and learn. Start thinking now of a neighbor you can ask to attend the January 25th General Meeting with you. We hope to see you there!

Youth Firearm Safety and Shooting Event

The Washington County Wildlife Society and the Washington County Peace Officers Association along with Texas Parks and Wildlife hosted their annual youth firearms safety and shooting event. Local high school students involved in wildlife and agriculture classes in Brenham, Burton, Lexington and Snook were invited to come out for a fun, safe, hands-on educational opportunity.

The event took place at Nail's Creek Park and was produced by surrounding State Biologists, Game Wardens, Washington County Peace Officers, and Washington County Wildlife Society volunteers. The objective of the event was to educate students about hunter ethics and safety and give them the opportunity to shoot different types of firearms and bows. The students were placed in small groups and rotated through eight stations where they received one-on-one instruction from trained personnel. Some of the stations included: hunter ethics and safety trail, archery, shotgun, 22 pistol, 22 rifle, black powder rifle, and center-fire rifle. The students enjoyed a picnic lunch provided by the Washington County Wildlife Society and many won door prizes. The event was a lot of fun and is a great venue for the Washington County Peace officers and others to spend time with our young adults; it has become established as an annual event so anyone interested in helping next year please volunteer.

Additional thanks are credited to Lee County Wildlife Association, Sheriff JW Jankowski and the Sportsman's Warehouse in Round Rock for their support and supplies. Special thanks to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for providing a grant to purchase equipment which allow our local youth to gain knowledge that will help them enjoy the outdoors safely and ethically in years to come.



GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT IS GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

In February, volunteers throughout the U.S. and Canada are invited to "Count for Fun, Count for the Future!"



Golden-fronted Woodpecker. Photo by 2007 GBBC participant Linda Alley, TX

Millions of novice and accomplished bird watchers can make their fascination with nature add up for science and for the future during the 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, led by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. During "Presidents' Day" weekend, February 15-18, 2008, anyone can count birds from wherever they are and enter their tallies online at www.birdcount.org. These reports create an exciting real-time picture of where the birds are across the continent and contribute valuable information for science and conservation.

For more information on how to participate, including identification tips, photos, bird sounds, maps, and information on over 500 bird species, visit www.birdcount.org.

WCWS Calendar of Events 2008

January 25—

WCWS Annual Meeting:

6:00 p.m. social / 7:00 p.m. Stew Dinner
Washington County Fairgrounds Special
Events Center

Featured Speaker: **David Langford** on
"Keeping Open Spaces Open"

Beginning January 22—

Master Gardener Training Class:

For anyone interested in participating in
the Master Gardener training program
contact Larry Pierce, Washington County
Extension Agent at (979) 277-6212 or
Philip Shackelford, Austin County Extension
Agent at (979) 865-5911 ext. 249.

Beginning February 2—

Master Naturalist Training Class:

For a schedule of class sessions, or to
apply, please contact Jan Redden (tel.:
936-878-1988, or e-mail: jredden@
mssblue.net. or visit our chapter Web
site: <http://gideonlincecum.org>.) Visit
<http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu> to learn
more about Texas Master Naturalist™.

"Looking for a place to discuss Texas
wildlife management practices, hunting and
more with other like-minded people? Then
check out www.texassporthunter.com.

The Texas Sport Hunter forum was cre-
ated to provide a community for hunters to
discuss, acquire and exchange information
about hunting in the State of Texas . Our
mission is to promote Texas hunting & wild-
life management, through the exchange of
information between hunters, landowners &
outdoor enthusiasts.

To become a member simply register
for a free account. Members can discuss
topics such as hunting techniques, hunting
equipment, wildlife management practices,
leases, classifieds, and more."

Prescribed Burning Recommendations

By Robert Lehmann

To maintain oak woodlands with dense, diverse, understory, prescribe burn about 20 percent of upland woodland sites during late November (after frost and leaf drop) through February (before green-up) on a rotating basis, burning each site every 5 - 6 years to remove old growth and stimulate new growth of browse and forbs (weeds and wildflowers). About 50-100 acres per burn site would be the maximum size to burn on these particular land tracts. In order to have enough low-level fuel to produce a hot fire, one or two years of cattle exclusion from wooded tracts may be necessary to allow growth of vegetation normally grazed by cattle. Prescribe burning of these woods shortly after leaf drop, while they are still fluffed up with air space and before winter rains and time compact this leaf litter, may be necessary for some tracts and should be considered.

To restore and maintain the oak savannah / native grasslands, pre-
scribed burn about one-third of native grass openings each year, burning
each site every three years, on a rotating basis, to remove old growth and
young, invasive woody growth such as cedar, locust, and persimmon. This
will stimulate new growth of plants that may have become dormant due to
not having occasional fires to stimulate growth. Pasture burn sites should
normally be less than 40 acres and be burned in late summer (late August
through September) weather conditions permitting. See included TAEX
publication Prescribed Range Burning in Texas for good general guidelines,
especially for native pastures. About seven times more insects are usually
found in burned native grass areas compared to unburned areas, thus pro-
viding much more spring and summer high protein food for quail and turkey,
especially for the young.

General burn prescriptions for Post Oak Savannah woodland and na-
tive pastures are:

1. Prepare disked bare-ground fire guard around all sites before burning. Disked fire guards, which can include roads and right-of-ways, should be 15 to 20 feet wide. (These disked areas can be planted to winter supplemental food plots between burn years.
2. Humidity should be between 25 - 40 percent.
3. Wind speed should be between 10 - 15 miles per hour.
4. Always burn into the wind first (backfire) 50 yards into the woods or pasture, then set fire with the wind (headfire). The entire burn may be conducted with a backfire, depending on fuel and weather conditions and burning experience of crew.
5. Initiate burns in the morning, after 9 a.m.

Consult with Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologist, Natural Resources
Conservation Service (NRCS, formerly Soil Conservation Service, SCS), or
Texas Forest Service, and notify local volunteer fire department before con-
ducting burns.

Cattle should be excluded from burned areas for at least 3 months to
allow regrowth of new, tender vegetation.