



Meet our New Texas Parks & Wildlife Biologist!

With the retirement of Robert Lehmann, the Washington County Wildlife Society has been anticipating the announcement of a new biologist to help us with our property and wildlife enhancements. Welcome **Stephanie McKenzie** to that position, effective October 1, 2008.

Stephanie, a native of Temple, graduated from Texas Tech University (TTU) in 2007 from the Natural Resource Department with a M.S. in Wildlife Science. In 2005, she received my B.S. from Tarleton State University (TSU), majoring in Wildlife Management with a minor in Biology.

Stephanie is currently a member of The Wildlife Society (National and Texas chapter), the Houston Safari Club (scholarship awarded 2006 and 2007), and the Texas Youth Hunter Program. Former affiliations include the Tarleton State University Wildlife Society, Texas Wildlife Association, and the National Rifle Association.

We realize that here in Washington County it will be hard to replace Robert Lehmann who has supported us and given us a wealth of information and advise, and in Robert's words "I think you will be very happy and surprised with Stephanie, she'll be a big asset for Washington County".

As Stephanie settles in we will try to have her in attendance at the some of our upcoming fall co-op meetings and of course she will be one of our advisors along with Larry Pierce of the Texas AgriLife Extension on the WCWS board of executives. Please welcome her aboard!



Fawn spotted in Sandtown

Don't forget to turn in your **2008 Incidental Observation Logging Form**. If you haven't done so already, you can send them to Stephanie McKenzie, Texas Parks & Wildlife, 1305 E. Blue Bell Road., Brenham, TX 77833. Your sightings from August 1st through September 15th helps TPWD biologists manage wildlife resources in Texas.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Wildlife Society

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Russell Borgstedte, Society Vice President,
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Richard Thames, Society Treasurer, (979) 278-3053
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RESOURCE CONTACTS:

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Stephanie McKenzie, Texas Parks and Wildlife De-
partment – Wildlife Biologist, (979) 277-6297

Ann Thames, WCWS Office Secretary
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President's Remarks

I hope all of you weathered the storm without any problems. My ponds are still low but the fall rains should be on the way. The morning chill in the air is nice. Many thanks to those who attended our WCWS Semi-Annual meeting and heard Robert Lehmann detail the changes in wildlife and wildlife habitat in Washington County over the last thirty years. He has retired but will still be available to consult with us about maintaining wildlife habitat on our property.



Be sure to watch for dates and locations being set for individual Wildlife Co-op fall meetings. Your Directors and Vice-Directors are choosing programs and dates now. We have had many new members join WCWS this year including two Lifetime Members. Please continue to get the word out to your neighbors about our organization. You can pick up trifold brochures that include an application form at the Extension Office to help you get the word out.

Join me in welcoming our new wildlife biologist, Stephanie McKenzie. We hope to have her at some of our small co-op meetings this fall. As always, keep checking the website www.wcwildlife.org for breaking news.

We have a birding excursion planned for the spring with details being arranged now so watch for information on this exciting outing on the web page and in the next newsletter!

Enjoy the cooler weather!

Sara Byman

President, Washington County Wildlife Society

Fourth Annual Youth Shooting and Hunter Safety Event

October 22 - Nails Creek State Park, Lake Somerville. Local high school students involved in wildlife and agriculture classes are invited to come out for a fun, safe, hands-on opportunity to learn about hunter ethics and safety and give them the opportunity to shoot different types of firearms and bows. Students are placed in small groups and rotated through eight stations where they receive one-on-one instruction. Students will also enjoy a picnic lunch provided by Washington County Wildlife Society. It takes a lot of people to put on this event and any interested volunteers will be welcome. Contact us at info@wcwildlife.org or call (979) 277-6212.

Disking For Wildlife

Disking is a method of soil disturbance that encourages the growth of forbs (commonly called weeds or wildflowers) and other annual plants. Common seed producing forbs enhance through disking include croton (dove weed), sunflower and ragweed. Many forb seeds are present in the soil and only require shallow disking to germinate.

The best method of disking for wildlife is long strips 15 to 30 feet in width. These strips should be adjacent to wooded areas or

meander through natural cover. The second year in a disk program a new strip adjacent to the first year's disked area should be selected. Thereafter, the strips should be disked in alternative years. This creates a more diverse plant community by maintaining different stages of re-growth.

The optimum time for disking is October through February. It is important to disk before spring green-up or forb growth may not be promoted. Care should be taken to avoid areas where disturbance may cause erosion to occur.

Food Plots for Wildlife

By Robert Lehmann, TPWD

The planting of supplemental food plots for wildlife seems to be a practice that is welcomed by most landowners and land managers who are interested in wildlife management. A well planned food plot can provide as much as 4 to 5 tons of forage per acre. However, the maximum benefits can only be obtained if the food plot is a compliment to the native vegetation. Food plots should be available when native vegetation is lacking or is low in nutritional value. These "stress periods" normally occur in late summer and late winter. September is the time to start preparing to plant cool season plots. The success of the plot depends on the land managers ability to correctly choose an appropriate seed variety, plant in a suitable site and use the correct planting procedures. Some considerations before you plant may include: Where should I plant? What should I plant? When should I plant? How should I plant?

Where: Best if plots are located adjacent to some type of escape cover and in good soils. If possible, use separate areas for warm season and cool season food plots. The size of the plots should be one to five acres for every hundred acres of habitat present. Several smaller plots spread throughout an area is better than one large plot. Long narrow plots are better than wide ones. Food plots should be fenced to exclude cattle with the bottom wire eighteen inches from the ground. It is not recommended to plant plots near public roads since they might encourage illegal hunting.

What: A combination of Wheat and Austrian winter peas works very well. Wheat is preferred over oats only because of its seed producing capability. Wheat tends to have a longer lasting erect stubble that will hold the seed longer into the summer. This seed is consumed throughout the year by many different bird and wildlife species. Many times in a dry summer condition, wheat can be left to stand all year and resprouting will occur by shredding and lightly disking each September. Clover plots are some of the most preferred, however special care should be taken in selecting the proper variety of clover to coincide with your soils pH. Many varieties of clover will reseed and have extended growing seasons that can possibly extend into the summer months. There are many

commercially produced specialty mixes available that will work well, but often at a much higher price.

When: Planting of cool season plots should be planted September 15th through October 15th depending on available soil moisture.

How: Wheat and winter peas are fairly simple to plant; the site should be shredded and disked or tilled to create a clean seedbed. Approximately 25 lbs of wheat and 25 lbs of winter peas should be planted per acre. The seed should be evenly spread over the area by a commercial seeder or even by hand depending on the size of area to be planted.

Seeds should then be lightly covered with a disk or some type of drag to insure ground to seed contact. The end results should be a planting depth around 1 inch deep. One of the most common mistakes in planting is getting the seed in too deep. Clovers should never be disked in or planted deeper than ½ inch deep. On well-prepared seedbeds or loose sandy soils, clovers can be planted directly on top of the soil without dragging or re-disking to cover the seed. Clovers should be inoculated to increase nitrogen fixation that will aid in improving soil quality over time. Plots will need to be fertilized correctly to realize the full benefit. Soil test should be taken to determine the lime and fertilizer requirements.

Finally: Food plots are no way a cure-all for poor habitat management. Without consideration of the native food source and cover requirements for wildlife, food plots will not provide the adequate nutrition needed by most wildlife species on a daily basis.

If you have any questions about habitat management on your property please feel free to contact Texas Parks and Wildlife (979) 277-6297 or the Washington County Extension Office Annex at 1305 E. Blue Bell Road.

Texas Department of Agriculture Invests in Feral Hog Reduction Effort



Recently, the Texas Department of Agriculture announced that the 2007 Texas Legislature appropriated 1 million dollars in an effort to reduce damage caused by feral hogs. Texas AgriLife Extension Service will ultimately receive the funds which will be split between 2008 and 2009, with Wildlife Services having responsibility for implementing feral hog population reduction measures. News of a million dollars for feral hog control quickly swept across Texas and landowners are interested in how the effort will benefit them.

This appropriation follows on heels of a successful TDA-funded project entitled, "Statewide Feral Hog Abatement Pilot Project" that was conducted during 2006-2007. This investigation gathered information regarding the economic impact of feral hogs on the agricultural industry, direct measures to reduce hog numbers, and indirect methods geared towards education.

Direct control through technical assistance was provided to cooperators in the Post Oak Savannah (Camp County), Blackland Prairies (Hill and Navarro counties), and Coast Prairies ecoregions (Matagorda County). Forty-eight cooperators allowed access to 223,017 acres. Hogs (n=3,799) were removed in these areas by aerial gunning (36%), trapping (33%), firearms (26%) and snaring (5%). Based on survey information collected over the study period, direct control resulted in a positive economic impact of \$1,480,491 (benefit to cost ratio = \$6.20 for each dollar invested).

Indirect control through education was conducted statewide, where programs and symposia were given in 66 counties. Sixty-seven presentations were attended by 5,197 people and evaluations indicated they increased their knowledge regarding feral hog biology, trapping methods, rules and regulations by 68%. Education through internet resources reached many people as 31,374 unique visitors accessed 76,830 pages for Texas AgriLife Extension Services web-site *Coping with Feral Hogs*. Positive economic impact of educational programming was \$2,978,821 (benefit to cost ratio = 11.42 to each dollar invested).

It is clear that feral hogs are having a tremendous negative impact on the agricultural community and natural resources. How to go about fixing the problem is more difficult to remedy. Wildlife Services has not revealed how they use the million dollar grant. In the meantime, expect to see a series of blog posts that will help landowners with feral hog management.

*Posted by Jim Cathey, Ph.D., Extension Wildlife Specialist
Thursday, May 29, 2008
Wild Wonderings
<http://www.wild-wonderings.blogspot.com>*

Upcoming Events

October 4 & 5 – Texas Parks & Wildlife Expo 2008 - Expo XVII

What is the Texas Parks and Wildlife Expo? It's an outdoor experience where visitors fish, shoot, kayak, rock climb, mountain bike, see and touch wildlife, learn about recreation in the Great Outdoors and see and buy the latest in outdoor gear and services. Most importantly, visitors can learn how they can help to conserve this precious resource. And it's FREE! Texas Parks and Wildlife headquarters in Austin will be transformed into the site of the largest event of its kind in the nation. Last year over 42,000 visitors enjoyed Expo! For information about the 2008 Texas Parks & Wildlife Expo, contact Director, Ernie Gammage at 512-389-4472.

October 10 - Rocky Creek WMA Fall Meeting

The Rocky Creek WMA has scheduled a meeting for all members on Friday evening, October 10th beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Rocky Creek Fire Department, 9771 Long Point Road in Burton. More details will be available on at www.wcwildlife.org or call Bill Kennisell at 713-446-2142.

October 25 - Greenvine/Mt. Vernon WMA Fall Meeting

The Greenvine WMA has scheduled a meeting for all members on Saturday evening, October 25th. Social time will begin at 6:30 and the program will start promptly at 7:00 p.m. at the Greenvine Store. More details will be available on at www.wcwildlife.org or call Sara Byman at 979-830-8555.