

QUWE



Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation

Making a Difference for Wildlife and Clean Streams, One Acre, One Stream, at a Time

THE HABITAT GUIDE

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation

Notes from the Dashboard: The land and wildlife habitat is disappearing

In this issue:

*Effective Jan. 31, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will retire the Sage-Grouse Local Working Groups, marking a new chapter in conservation efforts that began in 2004, **Page 5***

*For hunters who need to complete their mandatory harvest reporting after filling their mountain lion, black bear or over-the-counter archery deer tag, the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) suggests taking advantage of the easy online reporting option, **Page 8***

*The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated about 135,000 Canada geese and 9,500 mallards in the state, **Page 16***



By Craig Alderman — FACT: God is not making anymore ground. When its gone for uses of food or wildlife, it never is returned, it is gone.

Private lands in the U.S. are disappearing from agricultural uses to commercial development at an alarming rate. Why? Generational farm families are suffering under ever increasing costs of every part of the process, especially the ability to recover their costs from middlemen and companies controlling

the economics of anything agriculture. Some large processing corporations are now owned by Chinese operations, which makes me sick.

Children of farmers see the entire process every day, see the stress on their parents, grandparents and neighbors and rightfully ask, why? Why spend a life caught in a process where stress is literally killing them, costs are out of control, equipment is increasing yearly by major percentages, parts and service on equipment is like gambling in Las Vegas hoping to hit a little cash to buy tires?

Programs designed to help farmers like the Farm Bill are being bled dry to federal agencies and NGOs, not to farmers. Farmers do not need coaches, multi-year mandatory anything. Programs need to go directly to farmers and ranchers. The Secretary of Agriculture states she estimates 80% of the Farm Bill is waste and fraud — Duhhhh. It is the big piggy bank being invaded by feral hogs.

The future farmers, the educated children who are working to manage future farms, face a near impossible block to entry — cost. If you took a marketing class in college and prepared marketing plans, 50% was focused on “barriers to entry” and the “cost of exit” if things went wrong. As one who has completed many formal business marketing plans, the barriers to entry for farmers could fill a book, where as the “success of investment” is nearly nonexistent. Land values are skyrocketing, and being scooped up by commercial entities looking to build homes, put in neighborhoods or, like Amazon/Google here in MO, wants to take 5,000 acres of prime farmland to build a new super control center. They already are trying to reclassify more farmland into commercial for another 600 acres.

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1 — This is prime farmland, the best land God created for agriculture and wildlife.

In a report by Midwest Land Group (MLG), which specializes in flipping farmland and rural acreage, they report the increase in cost per acre is climbing, reducing the opportunity for young potential farmers to purchase land. Below is their chart showing average land values over the last 5 years by states in the farm belt.

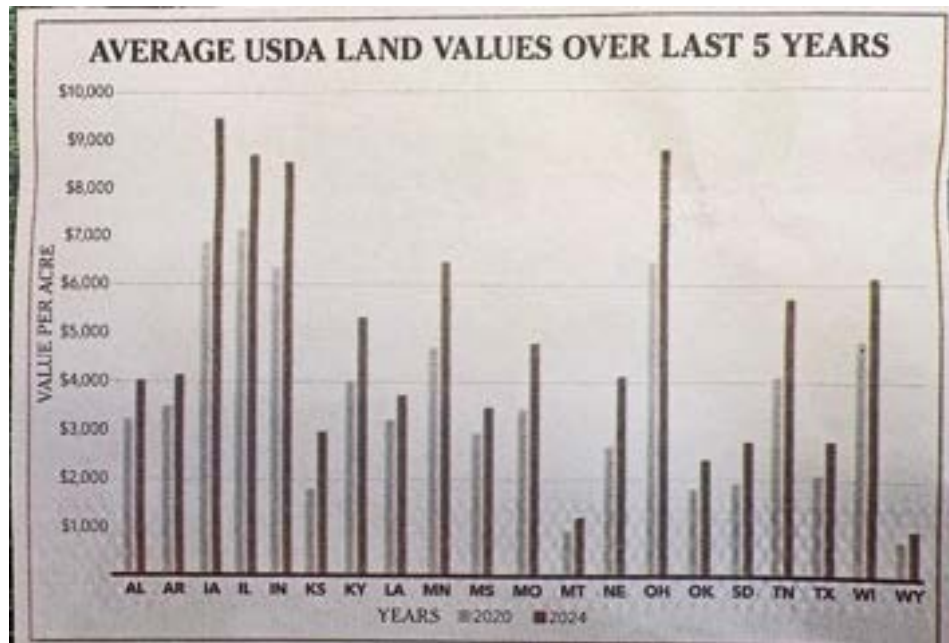
Those barriers to entry include chemical costs, fertilizer costs, seed costs, control of invasive species, taxes and states like Missouri who like to add extra yearly tax on farm equipment, trucks and trailers. They cleverly increase used values without increasing the tax rate.

If you buy a new farm truck here in Missouri you will pay sales tax and additional personal property tax for 10 years which does amount thousands of extra dollars for farmers, and yes they keep increasing the used value. This is death by a thousand cuts and little is being done to help our farmers, the very food producers we all need to survive and the owners of the wildlife habitat in this country.

This also speaks negatively for those active farms that want to expand their operation to improve profitability.

Commercial farms, on the other hand, care nothing about wildlife planning, it is about maximizing the dollar as fast as possible. Honestly, good AG land here in Missouri goes for \$8,000 with some sales of \$10,000 per acre recorded.

Then look at local governments that are looking for more taxes. In Connecticut they tried to tax farm land out of existence in 2026 (Newsmax special on Carl Higbie News), and thankfully, the farmers and supporters rose up and got the new law stopped for the moment.



There is one bright spot about focusing on private lands for wildlife work, which may be a double edged sword. **USDA and the MLG group compiled data showing the value of land where-in wildlife planning and implementation was being actively accomplished is adding an additional 12% to the value of Agricultural lands.** This being viewed from the recreational purchaser who may, in addition to AG use, want a wildlife component on the land. *It is also common knowledge that rural recreational lands with clear access roads to all portions and clearly, well-marked boundaries also bring more value, as much as 15% on their own.*

There is a word of caution about some recreational buyers. They tend to keep the land very private and do not let others hunt or use the land even for river access, especially as they increase investment by adding cabins, ponds, food plots and timber stand improvement (TSI) and will legally defend it. The land is monitored by cell phone camera systems that instantly lets them know if trespass is an issue.

Get involved to help save our farms and farming families.

Catch you across the frozen, snow covered creek.

Craig Alderman is the QUWF executive director.

For all your chapter needs, please call Leslie Casanova [direct](#) at Sportsman Insurance Agency at 1-800-925-7767. In most cases, Leslie can have your insurance the same day!

Re-introducing the Ruger 10/22 - 61 years later

Sturm, Ruger & Company, Inc. (NYSE: RGR) is proud to announce enhancements to the 10/22® rifle line. First introduced in 1964, the 10/22 has become the benchmark in the semi-automatic rimfire rifle market, trusted by generations for its proven performance, legendary action and renowned, reliable rotary magazine. With more than 10 million produced over the past 61 years, the 10/22 has inspired a loyal following and remains the benchmark for rimfire excellence.

Based on extensive consumer feedback, Ruger has upgraded the 10/22 rifle line with enhanced features previously found only in select configurations. These improvements are designed to deliver even greater performance. This first round of models features a BX-Trigger®, lightweight stock, match bolt release, and a receiver that incorporates a rear cleaning port.



The BX-Trigger has a light, crisp 2.5-3 pound trigger pull weight with minimal overtravel and a positive reset. The lightweight stock features M-LOK® slots at the 6 o'clock position along with textured panels on the pistol grip and forend. Other features include a match bolt lock that allows the user to easily advance the bolt with a quick pull and release of the cocking handle, and a receiver with a rear cleaning port that provides access to the barrel from the rear of the receiver for ease of cleaning.

For more information on the 10/22 or to learn more about the extensive line of award-winning Ruger firearms, visit Ruger.com, Facebook.com/Ruger, or Instagram.com/Rugersofficial. To find accessories for the 10/22 and other Ruger firearms, visit ShopRuger.com or your local independent retailer of Ruger firearms.

The acquisition, ownership, possession and use of firearms are heavily regulated.

Some models may not be legally available in your state or locale. Whatever your purpose for lawfully acquiring a firearm – know the law, get trained and shoot safely.





Ask Alexa to play 101.3 Real Country or AM 560 in the Morning, or go online and download the **free app**.

Game and fish retires WY sage-grouse local working groups

Editor's Note: The removal of the working group, we believe, is a negative option for the Sage-Grouse. Nothing matters more than public participation in their state. Leaving anything up to State and Federal Agencies is a mistake, proven over and over again.

CHEYENNE — Effective Jan. 31, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will retire the Sage-Grouse Local Working Groups, marking a new chapter in conservation efforts that began in 2004.

"We greatly appreciate the 21 years of dedicated service from our local working group members," Game and Fish Director Angi Bruce said. "Their efforts are part of the foundation for our ongoing work in sage-grouse conservation."

The LWGs were a direct response to the 2003 Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan. The primary role of the groups was to localize sage-grouse conservation strategies focused on improving and maintaining sage-grouse populations and habitats. Providing key local perspectives and insights, the groups were instrumental in implementing crucial sage-grouse conservation plans and funded 377 projects. Through the efforts of these working groups, more than \$11 million in sage-grouse focused conservation actions and \$68 million in matching funds were secured.

Since 2018, the role of the LWGs has evolved. Conservation funding authority has shifted from the legislature to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, while policy decisions have moved to the Sage-Grouse Implementation Team. The decision to conclude the LWGs follows a departmental assessment that identified opportunities to improve efficiency, reallocate personnel time and streamline habitat project funding without impacting sage-grouse management.

"We will continue to honor the work of our local working groups, managing sage-grouse through effective partnerships and initiatives," Bruce said. "Wyoming has a proven track record of successful management of this species, and we will continue to provide the public, as well as our former LWG members, with opportunities to work with us. While our strategies are evolving and adapting to current needs, our mission to conserve your Wyoming wildlife remains the same."

Game and Fish will continue to allocate funds to department projects specifically benefiting the sagebrush ecosystem, although the LWG project-specific funding is gone. The SGIT will continue to meet on a regular basis, providing opportunity for public discussions and policy recommendation development. Partnerships with other state and federal agencies, conservation groups and local non-profit organizations will continue to play a vital role in sage-grouse management.

RUGER®
SFAR™



Vermont: Waterfowl blinds must be removed

Editor's Note: If you are a waterfowler, check your local state regulations for the removal of blinds on public waterways and lakes.

Waterfowl hunters who did not remove their hunting blind from the waters of the state earlier must do so before February 15 on Lake Champlain or May 15 on inland waters according to a reminder from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

State law requires removal of the blind together with its contents and any surrounding debris located on or in the water before these deadlines to protect natural areas and to prevent boating accidents after the ice melts.

"Removal of the blinds and any posts that may be below the surface of the ice is important because of the danger they present when boaters are on the water in the spring," said State Game Warden Colonel Justin Stedman. Stedman says wardens annually record names and addresses of blind owners and will follow up with inspections.



Visit the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation online! Scan the QR code.

CONTACT US!

For all your Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation chapter insurance needs, please call Leslie Casanova [direct](mailto:direct@sportsmanins.com) at Sportsman Insurance Agency at 1-800-925-7767. In most cases, Leslie can have your insurance the same day!

Do you have any questions concerning banquets and/or vendor programs? If so, please call the QUWF National Office at (417) 345-5960.

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, PO Box 947, Buffalo, MO 65622
Find us online: www.QUWF.net



WOODMAXX™

ALL AMERICAN MADE
PTO & SKID STEER CHIPPERS
MADE WITH U.S. STEEL, COMPONENTS
7-YEAR/1,000-HOUR WARRANTY

WORK MADE EASY!
HYDROSTATIC AUTO FEED SYSTEM

BEST INVESTMENT SINCE THE BUSH HOG
NO MORE PILING AND BURNING OF LIMBS

VETERAN FOUNDED COMPANY
SUPPORTS ALL VETERANS

MADE IN THE USA

PROUD SPONSOR OF QUWF

WWW.WOODMAXX.COM

SAAMI announces acceptance of new cartridges

SHELTON, Conn.—The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute,® Inc., (**SAAMI®**) has announced the acceptance of two new rifle cartridges for SAAMI standardization. SAAMI is the organization at the forefront of promoting firearm safety by creating standards that ensure safety, reliability and interchangeability of firearms, ammunition and components.

Click on the cartridge name to open the introduction package.

8.6 BLACKOUT — The 8.6 BLACKOUT (abbreviated name 8.6 BLK) was introduced by Q, LLC, with a 200-grain bullet traveling at a velocity of 2,200 fps and a Maximum Average Pressure of 62,000 psi.

25 Weatherby Rebated Precision Magnum — The 25 Weatherby Rebated Precision Magnum (abbreviated name 25 WBY RPM) was introduced by Weatherby with a 133-grain bullet traveling at a velocity of 3,000 fps and a Maximum Average Pressure of 65,000 psi.

For further information on these new cartridges, please visit <https://saami.org/technical-information/cartridge-chamber-drawings/>. The standardization of cartridge and chamber designs, along with pressure standards, is key in the achievement of SAAMI's principal objectives of ensuring the safety and interchangeability of ammunition, firearms and suppressors.

JOIN QUWF IN CHOOSING CONSERVATION AND OUTDOOR PRODUCTS



**CAN'T TELL IF IT'S
FROM CHINA?**

LOOK AT THE BARCODE. IF THE FIRST THREE NUMBERS ARE 690, 691, OR 692, THE PRODUCT WAS MADE IN CHINA. IF THE UPC BEGINS WITH 00 THROUGH 09, IT'S USA MADE.

JOIN THE QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION, ITS CHAPTERS, AND ITS MEMBERS IN SUPPORTING AMERICAN WORKERS AND COMPANIES USING AMERICAN RAW MATERIALS BY PURCHASING THEIR PRODUCTS. NO TARIFFS!

Ruger Firearms: Rifles & pistols *QUWF Habitat Sponsor

Henry USA: Rifles & shotguns

Bear and Son Cutlery: All Bear and Son & Bear Ops products are built in Alabama

Easton Arrows: Hunting & target arrows

Hornady Ammunition: Rifle & pistol ammo, personal defense, personal safes

Liberty Safe Co: Gun safes & accessories

WeatherTech: Truck & cab foot liners, bed liners & vehicle accessories

Truax Inc: Grain drills & planters *QUWF Habitat Sponsor

CornholeGame.com: Game boards

InvaderConcepts.com: Chest holsters & accessories, made in Montana

Allegiance Flag Co: showallegiance.com

RotopaX: Mountable container systems

WoodMaxx: PTO & Skid Steer MX series wood chippers, American made with American parts, veteran founded & focused *QUWF Habitat Sponsor

Arizona mandatory harvest reporting best done online

For hunters who need to complete their mandatory harvest reporting after filling their mountain lion, black bear or over-the-counter archery deer tag, the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) suggests taking advantage of the easy online reporting option.

Visit <https://www.azgfd.com/harvestreports> for all mandatory harvest forms. Harvest reports take just a few minutes to fill out and are a convenient way to satisfy the mandatory reporting requirements.

Hunters may still call the appropriate species-specific harvest reporting phone numbers.

Beginning Jan. 31, 2026 call center hours will be reduced to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Arizona time) Saturday through Wednesday. Hunters can also call AZGFD offices from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays. Visit the [AZGFD contact page](#) for species-specific harvest reporting phone numbers and AZGFD office numbers.

Hunters who check out a black bear or mountain lion in person within 48 hours of harvest have fulfilled their reporting requirements and no further reporting is necessary.

Visit the individual species hunting pages (azgfd.com/bearhunting, azgfd.com/lionhunting, azgfd.com/archerydeerreport) to learn about any other mandatory post-harvest check-outs you may need to complete.

To check the status of open areas for hunting please visit <http://harvest-tracking.azgfd.gov>.

For more information, refer to the "2025-2026 Arizona Hunting Regulations," which are available [online](#), at [department offices](#), and [license dealers](#) statewide. [Visit the Harvest Reports Page](#)



**TWO HISTORIES
ONE NEW LEGACY**

RUGER X DEAD AIR



**RUGER[®]
MAX-9[™]**

YOUR NEXT HANDGUN[™]



Results flying in for OK 126th Christmas bird count

Birders flocked together this winter to count birds in 24 designated "count circles" across Oklahoma during the 126th Audubon Christmas Bird Count. So far, nine compilers have shared the results of their one-day counts, conducted between Dec. 14, 2025, and Jan. 5, 2026.

Each count covered a 15-mile radius area, and 200,379 individual birds have been reported to date. Of the reported counts, a combined 200 birders joined in – with some participating in multiple counts – dedicating 531.31 person hours to the bird census.

- The Tulsa Count Circle reported the **highest number of individual birds, 54,919 individuals**, of which 27,974 were **red-winged blackbirds**. This count circle had 59 participants, the highest of the reporting counts.
- The Oklahoma City Count Circle reported **118 species, the richest species diversity reported so far**. Of special interest was a **white-winged scoter**, a large sea duck, spotted during the count week.
- **Exciting High Counts:** The Kenton Count Circle documented 2,704 **mountain bluebirds**; the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge reported 6,508 **ruddy ducks**; and the Sooner Lake Count Circle counted 2,184 individual **cackling geese**.

Special Finds: Each count reported amazing species; 85 **bald eagles** were spotted in the Fort Gibson Reservoir Count Circle; 20 **bushitts** and three **golden eagles** were counted in the Kenton Count Circle; eight **whooping cranes** were documented in the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge; five **long-tailed ducks** were spied at Sooner Lake; 3 **Wilson's snipe** were documented in the Spavinaw Count Circle; a **black-and-white warbler** was reported in the Stillwater Count Circle; two **Inca dove** were documented in the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge Count Circle; an **American bittern** was reported in the Tulsa Count Circle; and a **Say's phoebe** was spotted in the Hackberry Flat Count Circle.



MI DNR announces \$200,000 for habitat improvement

Editor’s Note: A major issue in the devastation of the UP (Upper Peninsula) deer herd is not habitat, it is wolves. The UP Alliance, with over 50,000 sportsman members, has tried to focus on the true problem with little assistance. The first response of the MI DNR was, “You need to learn how to hunt better;” infuriating the generational hunters of the UP.

The application period for the Upper Peninsula's Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative competitive grant program is now open.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources initiative is a cooperative grant program designed to enhance deer habitat on private lands in the U.P.

New for 2026 the total DHIPI program budget has increased to \$200,000. The maximum and minimum grant requests have also increased respectively to a maximum of \$25,000 and a minimum of \$5,000. The required match remains at 25%.

Further, applicants can now bundle multiple project proposals under one application instead of applying separately for each proposal, provided they stay below the maximum grant value.

"Because of the past success of past partner projects, our budget doubled this year, enabling us to increase our influence to enhance deer habitat across the Upper Peninsula," said Bill Scullon, DNR Wildlife Division field operations manager and administrator for the grant initiative.

Continued on Page 12

QUWF welcomes All veterans. All the time.

The Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation was formed to focus on and help veteran landowners, veteran sportsmen, and all veterans who are interested in the great outdoors.

QUWF staff will help all veterans find and get benefit assistance through the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) or other resources.

You are NOT alone.

Veterans who served our country honorably deserve and have earned the right now to enjoy its freedoms and receive the support and benefits they deserve.

We are the **ONLY VETERAN FORMED** and managed national wildlife and conservation organization in the U.S. QUWF and our chapters support veteran businesses as well. Let us know.



Notes from the Road:

Landowners see positive responses to timber openings



By Nick Prough — Many times, we do a project whether that be on our farm or on our house at our work, or with our kids, and then we often have to wait a certain time period, sometimes a long time period, to see any results.

That is many times the case with quite a few wildlife management practices as it often takes a while to see the results of your management efforts; however, with the management practice of wildlife timber openings (WTO) that we have talked about before in previous articles, the responses by certain wildlife species can occur very quickly, and in fact, sometimes almost overnight.

If you go plant a Native Warm Season Grass (NWSG) field during the spring many times, it can take 2-3 years or longer to see the results of your management efforts and sometimes can be even longer than that depending on specific weather conditions on the landscape during that long waiting period.

We in fact have all heard of landowners waiting for 3-4 years to see a new stand of NWSG they planted and stared at for many years watching what they thought was a failed stand. However, as stated above, doing some quick and simple WTO management (much like the quick and easy meal craze we see endless ads on we all like quick and easy) and by creating these wildlife timber openings in a specific track of land, you have some timber on or a woodland lot on the back 40 on, you many times can have almost instantaneous results.

More often than not, a wide variety of species will begin using these areas very quickly such as deer, wild turkey and yes, even quail many times finding and utilizing that new usable space, which many landowners this fall/winter continue to report and see from their intensive game camera surveys that many of them conduct.

This winter, I have had numerous landowners reporting very fast results from the wildlife timber openings they have recently created, and many have been truly amazed at both the diversity of wildlife species utilizing them but also the numbers of each species that not only visit them day and night but that stay in those newly created openings for countless hours of the day.

In fact, just this week I have a WTO that I myself created 2 years ago this fall and on the first warmer sunny day in quite a while both deer and turkey stayed as seen by over 160 game camera images in and around the WTO for over 7 hours solid of the day with many of them never leaving during that entire time period. The turkeys were scratching, socializing, eating, sunning, strutting, eating some more and the deer did the same and browsed away all day long.

I have been using these wildlife timber openings for quite a few years with many landowners and their trend of popularity continues to grow this year as well as more and more landowners see the quick results. Many landowners who create one the first year often decide to do 2-3 more the following year because they work so well for the many species they are managing for.

In fact, just last night I had 2 more landowners call me and even send me pictures of their areas they are thinking about creating a wildlife timber opening on and wanted my suggestions and input on the size and location they were thinking about working on this spring.

If you have done one of these simple WTO management efforts in the past, I bet you are nodding your head right now in agreement and thinking about starting another one yourself.

However, if you have never created one, I urge you to get out in the field this late winter now that hopefully the deep arctic air mass has hopefully retreated and early spring is just around the corner and try your first one out. The equipment needed is very minimal (a sharp chainsaw, a gallon of gas, a couple human hands, a pair of good work gloves and some good old fashion sweat equity).

Continued on Page 13

Continued from Page 10 — The initiative is supported by the state's Deer Range Improvement Program, which is funded by a portion of deer hunting license revenue.

Now in its' 18th year, nearly \$1.3 million in deer hunting license dollars have been invested into Upper Peninsula deer habitat through the DHIPI program. An additional \$950,000 of matching funds has been contributed through partners in over 162 projects to enhance thousands of acres of deer habitat in nearly all Upper Peninsula counties.

"There are three primary goals applicants should strive to meet," Scullon said. "The projects should produce tangible deer habitat improvements, build long-term partnerships between the DNR and outside organizations and showcase the benefits to the public."

Project applications must be received electronically or postmarked by Friday, March 6.

Successful applicants will be notified by Friday, March 27.

The complete grant application package is available on the DNR website at Michigan.gov/DNR-Grants.

For more information or questions regarding eligibility, please contact Bill Scullon at 906-250-6781

ROCKY
BOOT OF THE MONTH

- MONOCREPE
- WEDGE
- BOA FIT
- WORK BOOT

CHECK THESE OUT AT ROCKYBOOTS.COM
 QUWF MEMBERS RECEIVE A DISCOUNT!
 CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER FOR DETAILS.

PROUD SPONSOR OF
QUWF

Proud Sponsor of QUWF

Quality Habitat Begins With Truax!

- Farm Programs – CRP, CREP, Farmable Wetlands, Grassland Reserves, Source Water Protection
- Roadside Seeding
- Range & Pasture Enhancements

Our Secret: Proper Seed Placement and Seed-to Soil Contact

Till and No-Till Drills and Broadcasters 4' to 15' Planting Widths

Double Disc/No-Till Drills:	Broadcast Spreaders:
FLH Series Grass & Grain Drills	Trillion Seeder
Utility Drills	Pull-type Broadcaster
	Handheld and ATV Seed Slinger

QUWF Members Buy Direct From Truax & Save \$\$\$

truax COMPANY, INC.
 4300 Quebec Ave. North
 New Hope, MN 55428

Check out our full lineup by calling 763•537•6639 or visit www.truaxcomp.com

RUGER[®] MAX-9[®]

YOUR NEXT HANDGUN™

Continued from Page 11 — Depending on the size of the wildlife forest opening and the tract of land, you can many times create one of these all by yourself, but many times having an extra pair of hands to help speed up the process or drag downed trees and brush can be very beneficial as well. I won't go into every finite detail here in this column, but the process is fairly simple and can be modified many ways depending on the specific tract of land you pick to work on to create your opening.

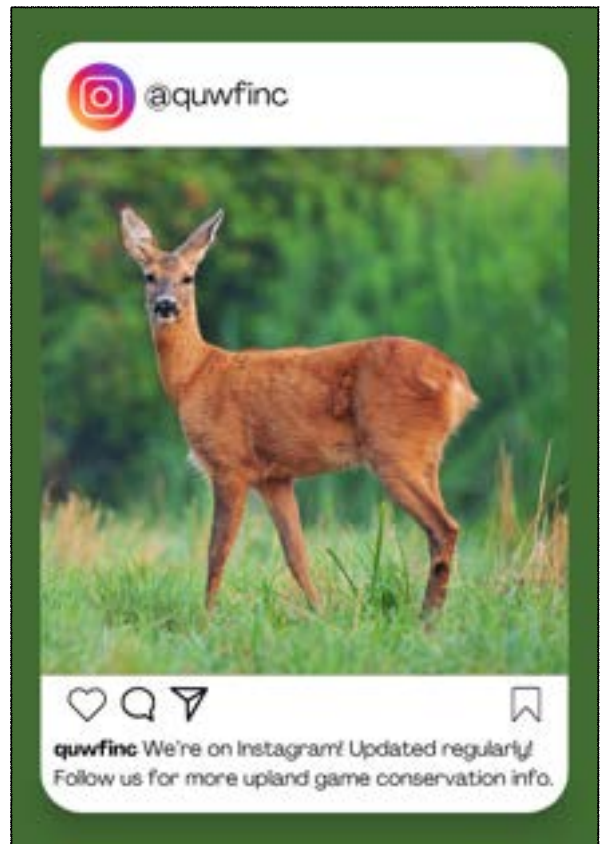
Simply select a site and size you want to work on taking into consideration the density and type of trees located in the area, the terrain of the area, etc. Once you have the site and size (I suggest a ½ (about 22,000 sq. ft) to 1-acre (about 44,000 sq ft) size to start off and that is also a very popular size many landowners continue to have success with). However, the sizes can vary greatly from tract to tract and depending on your situation, but I always try to at least keep them at least 1/2 acre in size minimum to be as beneficial as possible to as many species as possible.

As always feel free to contact me with any specific questions pertaining to your unique situation on your land or any questions you might have regarding which trees to leave and which to cut (generally cut the non-desirable one's hedge, ash, locust leave a few if you have some of them that are more wildlife friendly desirable ones like oaks and hickories. As you will see, by doing this quick and simple management technique that can have a very immediate effect and additionally be long lasting on your property at the same time then go grab your chainsaw, work gloves and head into the woods these next few months before the summer heat is rapidly upon us and you might even get a good head start on the ticks. I continue to have landowners call with great results they in fact are seeing on a wide variety of species from deer, turkeys, quail, ruffed grouse, rabbits, squirrels songbirds, and many other species that tend to find and utilize these newly created wildlife timber openings for many years to come.

Keep up all the great work out there that each of you, your landowners, your chapters and conservation partners are doing on crucial wildlife habitat projects, youth field day events, nest predator removal, as well as all your other conservation outreach efforts, you are working on in your local communities each and every day, as you are definitely ...

“Making a Difference for Wildlife One Acre at a Time!”

Nick Prough is the QUWF chief wildlife biologist and landowner liaison.



Bone chilling cold: Winter weather planning

As I write this, it is -12 degrees with 10 inches of snow dumped in the last 36 hours. That is life threatening if you do not prepare for the challenges of severe cold. First option, ***DO NOT go out if you do not have to***, stay off the roads. We live in a very rural area where secondary roads take more time to get plowed during large storms. Check on friends and neighbors, especially the seniors who need a little extra care.

How can you prepare?

1. Make sure your heating sources (fuel) of your home are full and checked. Propane tanks, fuel oil or wood all ready for the days of sub-zero temperatures. Fill those griddle propane tanks as well, if power goes out you still can cook and boil water.
2. Make sure all your vehicles have anti-freeze for at least -20. Most dealers can test for you. Fill your vehicle with fuel. We recommend 91 octane gas during very cold temperatures; it makes starting a little easier. If you own a diesel, if outside or inside, plug it in at least 3 to 4 hours before planned use. Add anti-gel to a full tank. If outside, cover the windshield and wipers to prevent solid freeze. An old pair of socks work good to cover wipers. Make sure your wiper fluid is anti-ice for low temps.
3. Have enough food and water for 2 to 3 days **MINIMUM**. This includes food for your pets, birds and livestock. Get it early, once the storm is close everywhere will be sold out of milk, eggs, bread and lunch meat. If the potential of water freezing occurs in your pipes, leave water slightly running until temperatures rise above freezing. If you use a CPAP machine, have enough distilled water, at least an extra gallon. **DO NOT USE** regular water in the CPAP machine, it will damage it. Many churches have active **FREE** food banks to help, know who they are.

Continued on Page 15

**THIS ONE
SETS ITSELF
APART**

RUGER RXM

RUGER

RXM™
SHOP NOW

Continued from Page 14 —

4. Check you have all your medications and vitamins for at least a week.
5. If power goes out have a plan, look at the option of a backup generator installed by a professional (the right size for your home with auto switching), and using propane fuel (cheaper and less dangerous than stocking large stores of gasoline). This is exceptionally important if you have medical equipment in your home. Know where warming facilities are. **DO NOT** use a gas generator in your home or garage and be very careful with stand alone heaters.
6. Charge all your phones, I pads and laptops. Have a separate charging source to recharge if power goes out. They are not expensive and come In really handy.
7. If you feel the need to shovel, *make sure you only shovel a little while*, taking many breaks and wear the right clothing and very good boots for extreme cold. We recommend boots with at least 1300 grams of insulation; mittens are much better than gloves in the cold. You will not find a snow shovel anyway locally 1 to 2 days before the storm, get one early.
8. If you have outside equipment, get them under cover, if possible, make sure all glo-plug operations are working, fuel tanks are full (they need anti gel too if diesel). Keep batteries on trickle chargers that are temperature regulated. If you are going to plow, you should have checked all nuts, bolts and connections **BEFORE** the bad weather hits. I marked the loader and control arms with white paint marker to know where perfect level was (seeing it from the operator's seat) and setting the skid shoes with a 1-inch clearance for the gravel road drive.
9. Do not try to "tough through it", If you need help, reach out to neighbors, churches, or call 911.



**THIS ONE SETS
ITSELF
APART**

 | **RXm™**
LEARN MORE

ND: Midwinter waterfowl survey numbers

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated about 135,000 Canada geese and 9,500 mallards in the state.

Mason Ryckman, department migratory game bird biologist, said numbers were pretty similar to years when Lake Sakakawea is still open, besides the record-breaking number of 300,000-plus Canada geese in 2024.

"Unlike last year when Lake Sakakawea was completely frozen at the time of the survey, this year a portion of the lake remained relatively ice free from Garrison Dam to the mouth of the little Missouri River," Ryckman said. "We were able to count 39,000-plus Canada geese on the lake this year. We would have probably overwintered more waterfowl if we didn't receive the snow we did in late November and early December. It likely pushed birds south of the border due to not having access to waste grain in ag fields. However, the snow didn't last long, which helped the birds that did stay until the time of the survey."

During the 2026 survey, an estimated 109,112 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River and Lake Sakakawea, another 16,894 on Nelson Lake in Oliver County, and an additional 8,500-plus geese in other parts of the state. Ryckman said Game and Fish staff and partners with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recorded the additional 9,500 mallards across the state.

The 10-year average (2017-26) for the midwinter survey in North Dakota is 115,950 Canada geese and 13,400 mallards. The survey helps biologists gauge wintering distribution of waterfowl in North Dakota, and other states throughout the Central Flyway.



Oklahoma free trapping workshops

Learn to run a trapline with experienced trappers and fur handlers at one of four predator trapping workshops. Presented by Wildlife Department biologists, these workshops will cover everything from scouting to putting up the fur. You'll even have an opportunity to set a few traps and catch some fur of your own! All equipment is provided, and the events are free.

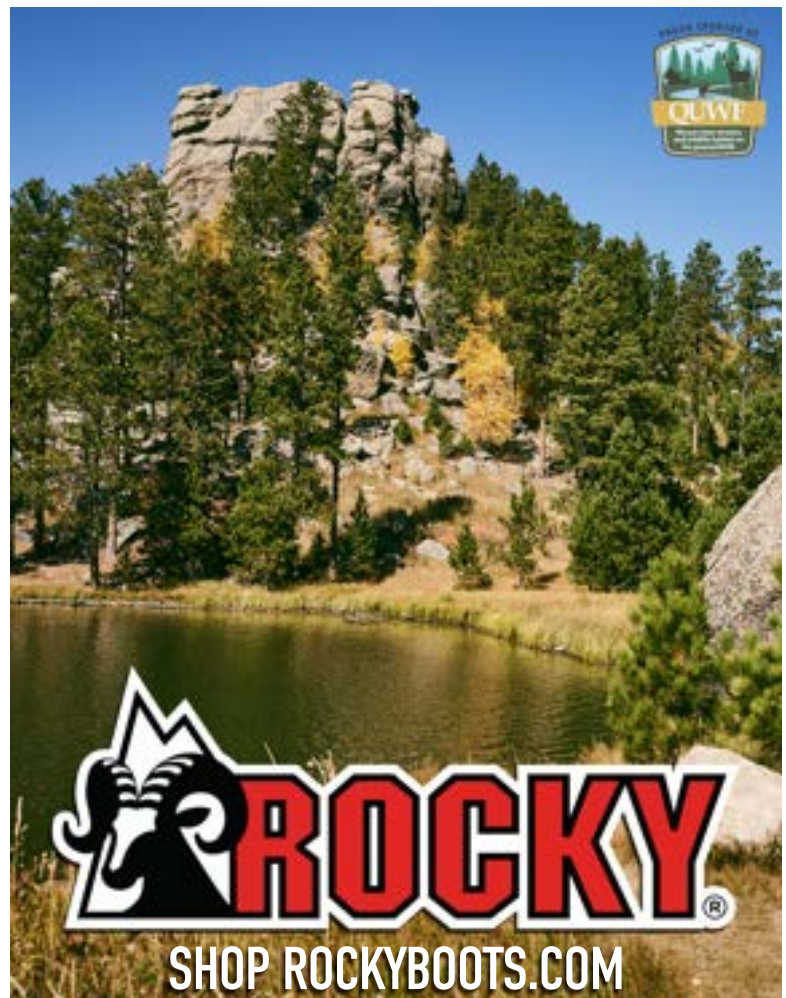
Upcoming Trapping Workshops:

[Feb. 7-8, 2026 - Packsaddle](#)

[Feb. 7-8, 2026- Spavinaw](#)

[Feb. 21-22, 2026 - Atoka](#)

[Feb. 21-22, 2026- Cooper](#)



Trump Administration announces Trump Accounts

Regardless of your political choice, this is a wonderful program for families to achieve a piece of the American Dream for their children. Providing an initial payment of \$1,000.00 to those children enrolled through the [web site TrumpAccounts.com](http://www.TrumpAccounts.com).

It initiates a growth fund account for the child to begin a nest egg at birth and I believe up to 10 years old through their 18th year, that grows until the age of 18 and can be extended to the age of 28. Other family members can donate funds to the account to grow the investment. It can provide amounts in the hundreds of thousands of dollars at full term.

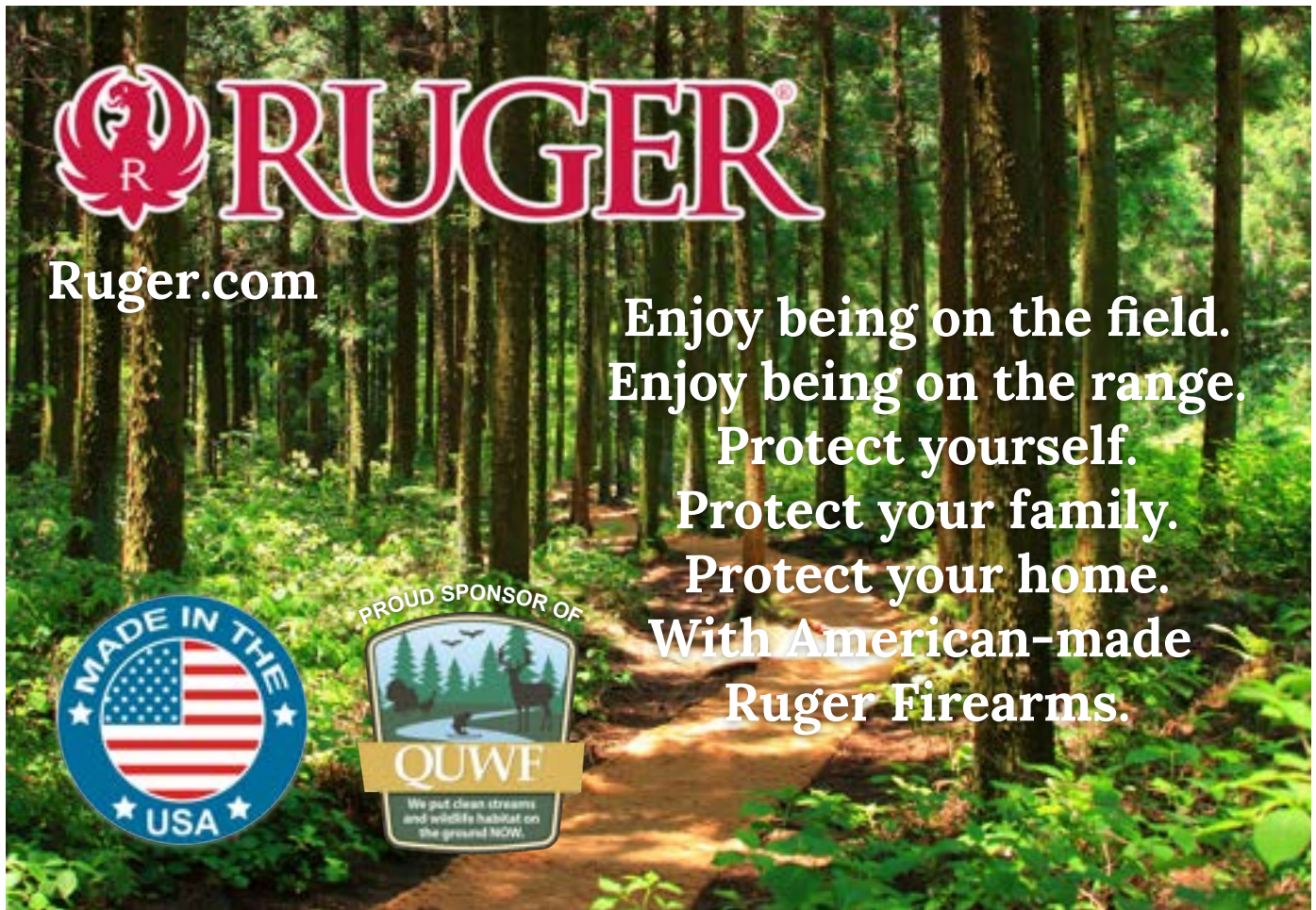
SIGN UP NOW at TrumpAccounts.com. The program will expire in 2028 unless renewed.

You can sign up NOW, and if you are a citizen, the initial deposit will be in place July 5th, we understand. Further it appears Dell computer will also donate \$250.00 to all children under the age of 10. Many states now have business donors who are willing to donate to each account in their state.

For ag families this is a HUGE ability to take care of their children, have children and now they will have a







Craig A. Alderman, executive director
admin@quwf.net
Nick Prough, chief wildlife biologist and
 wildlife partnership coordinator
chiefbiologist@quwf.net
Betty Richardson, seed program manager
habitatseedmgr@quwf.net
Calvin Chainey, social media and research
 coordinator intern, College of the Ozarks
Laura Hazelett, American Falconry
 Conservancy president
Advertising and circulation
admin@quwf.net
Membership
membership@quwf.net
Website Design
 Wehrenberg Design Company, Springfield,
 MO
QUWF Email
 Information Systems, Springfield, MO
Select Photography
 Mountain Girl Photography, Cody, WY

THE HABITAT GUIDE

Quail and Upland
 Wildlife Federation
 PO Box 947
 Buffalo, MO 65622
 417-345-5960
www.quwf.net
 “It’s all about Wildlife”
 National Staff

The Habitat Guide accepts
 story suggestions from readers.
 Some story information
 appears as gathered from
 interviewees. The Habitat
 Guide assumes no
 responsibility for the
 credibility of statements made
 by interviewees.
 © Copyright Quail and Upland
 Wildlife Federation, Inc., 2026.
 All rights reserved.