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WMI Outdoor News Bulletin

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Secretary Kempthorne and Richard Louv to keynote North American Conference:

The Wildlife Management Institute is pleased to announce that U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne and best-selling author Richard Louv will provide keynote remarks at the Opening Session of the 72nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference next month in Portland, Oregon. The opening session will take place Wednesday, March 21, from 8:30-9:45 a.m., in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Portland and Executive Tower.

Secretary Kempthorne was appointed to the Cabinet by President Bush. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate and took the oath of office at the end of May last year. He succeeded former Secretary Gail Norton, who said her farewell at the 71st North American last March in Columbus, Ohio.

Secretary Kempthorne was Mayor of the City of Boise, Idaho, for seven years, prior to a six-year term in the U.S. Senate. He then served for two terms as the Governor of Idaho. He obviously has a wealth of experience dealing with political, social and resource issues at many levels of government. The Opening Session theme is “Plotting the Course of Conservation: Where It’s Been and Where It’s Going.” The Secretary is expected to address his vision of prevailing conservation priorities and his vision for the future of conservation in the U.S. and North America.

Richard Louv is Chairman of the Children & Nature Network. He also is the author of seven books about family, nature and community. His most recent book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-deficit Disorder*, is a best seller. More than that, it is profoundly insightful about a pervasive and on-going disconnect of children and nature. Richard will discuss the empirical and scientific evidence of societal pressures that shelter children from the outdoors. He will broach the cognitive, social and health issues that result, and he will offer some practical suggestions to a “Leave No Child Inside” movement.

A book signing by Richard is being planned for Wednesday afternoon. Information on that event will be posted near the Conference registration desk.

For more information about the 72nd North American Conference, go to: www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org.

Elk book again available and at huge discount:

The Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) is very pleased to announce that its award-winning book, *North American Elk: Ecology and Management*, is back in circulation. Furthermore, it now is available directly from WMI and at a remarkable savings from the original price.

The book all but disappeared several years ago when its publisher, Smithsonian Institution Press, went under. Only recently was WMI able to acquire the lost (warehoused) inventory and regain full rights to the work.

North American Elk: Ecology and Management, edited by Dale E. Towell and Jack Ward Thomas and illustrated by Daniel P. Metz, was published in late 2002. The 962-page opus was honored with The Wildlife Society’s Editorship Award in 2003. It offers state-of-the-science information on the animal and on its scientific and professional management, including chapters on taxonomy, distribution, history, physiology, nutrition, diseases and parasites, behavior, interaction, population, migration, habitat and ecosystem management, and recreational use. The book also offers two photo sections, one color and one historical. Also incorporated are 180 figures, 124 tables, more than 700 black and white photographs and two scientific-name appendices. It is a comprehensive look at

elk populations found on this continent, human impacts on and interaction with them, and management of the species.

Originally selling for \$85.00, *North American Elk: Ecology and Management* now can be obtained for \$42.50 (a 50-percent discount) plus \$7.00 shipping (within North America), for as long as the first-edition, first-printing inventory remains. For orders of three or more, the cost per book is \$39.50 plus at-cost shipping. To order, go to www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/Publications.cfm or, contact Jennifer Rahm at jrahm@wildlifemgt.org or write to WMI Publications, 1146 19th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036. (jr)

Predator/prey workshop at North American set agenda:

The agenda is set for the workshop “Predators and Prey: Integrating Management to Achieve Conservation Objectives,” which will be held Tuesday, March 20, during the 72nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, in Portland, Oregon.

Cosponsored by the Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF) and the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), the workshop schedule will be as follows:

- 8:00 a.m., **Welcome** by Bob Byrne (SCIF) and Steve Williams (WMI)
- 8:15-9:45 a.m., **Session 1: Integrating Mountain Lion and Ungulate Management**
Moderator: Dale Toweill, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Presenter—Eric Rominger, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Having More Lions Does Not Make the Job Any Easier
Presenter—Kyle Knopf, University of Alberta
Individual Cougar Prey Specialization in Multiprey Systems
Presenter—R.B. Wielgus
Effects of White-tailed Deer Expansion and Cougar Hunting on Cougar/Deer/Human Interactions
Presenter—Terry Mansfield, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
The Role of State Wildlife Agencies in Managing Mountain Lions
- 9:40-9:55 a.m., Session 1. Q & A
- 9:45-10:15 a.m., Coffee Break
- 10:20-12:00 noon, **Session 2: Predator Management Implications for Waterfowl and Upland Birds**
Moderator: Pat Lederle, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Presenter—Jim Fischer, Delta (Manitoba) Waterfowl Foundation
Societal Considerations and Constraints to Improving Small Game Populations through Predator-reduction Programs
Presenter—John Carroll, University of Georgia
Impacts of Predators on Quail in the Southeast
Presenters—Rick Baxter, Brigham Young University, Kevin Brunell, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Impacts of Predation on Sage Grouse

Presenter—Roger Hollevoet, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Integrating Science with On-the-ground Management: A Two-state Plan for Ground-nesting Birds

11:45 a.m.-12:00 noon, Session 2. Q & A

12:00 noon-1:30 p.m., Lunch (provided by SCIF to registered workshop attendees)

Luncheon speaker—Craig Packer, University of Minnesota

Managing African Lions to Avoid Human/wildlife Conflicts

1:30-6:00 p.m., **Session 3: Integrating Wolf and Big Game Management—Case Studies**

Moderator: Craig White, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Presenter—Carter Neimeyer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (retired)

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (Depending on Your Perspective)

Presenter—Amaroq Weiss, Defenders of Wildlife

Societal and Ecosystem Benefits of Restored Wolf Populations

Presenter—Edward Garton, University of Idaho

Comparing Model Predictions to Observations for Elk and Wolves in Yellowstone

Presenter—Peter Zager, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Elk, Predators and Habitat in Northcentral Idaho

Presenter—Nyeema Harris, University of Montana

Survival and Cause-specific Mortality in Rocky Mountain Elk Calves

Presenter—Mark Hebblewhite, University of Montana

Predator/prey Management in the National Park Context: Lessons from a Trans-boundary Wolf/elk/moose/caribou System

3:40-4:00 p.m., Coffee Break

4:00-5:20 p.m., **Session 3 (Continued)**

Presenter—Kimberly Titus, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Intensive Management of Wolves and Ungulates in Alaska

Presenter—Jim Hammill, Iron Range Consulting and Services, Inc.

Policy Issues Regarding Wolves in the Great Lakes Region

Presenter—Christian Smith, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Policy Issues Regarding Wolves in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

5:05-5:20 p.m., Session 3. Q & A

5:20-6:00 p.m., **Workshop Summary and Discussion**

Moderator: Mark Boyce, University of Alberta

Persons interested in registering for this workshop should contact Bob Byrne, bbyrne@sci-dc.org, by March 12.

Conference attendees who wish to take part in the Monday, March 19 Aquatic Nuisance Workshop are reminded to sign up with Amber Pairis, apairis@fishwildlife.org, by March 12.

For more information about the 72nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, go to www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org.

Jaywalking wildlife in Arizona may catch a break:

The rate and cost of collisions of motor vehicles and wild animals on Arizona highways have prompted tests of new technology to reduce the problem, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

This past December, in an effort to understand better the factors contributing to wildlife/vehicle collisions, the Arizona Game and Fish Department initiated testing of a fence that funnels animals to specific crossing points. In addition, the fence is electronically connected to infrared cameras that detect when large animals, such as deer and elk, are nearing the crossings. Special sensors trigger the deployment of a pair of solar-powered road signs that warn drivers that they are “Entering elk testing area” and “Elk ahead, slow down.” Special military-grade software in the system helps distinguish large animals from small animals, such as squirrels and rabbits.

The “on and off” road signs are an attempt to get motorists’ attention and cause to slow down and be especially alert when large wild animals are likely to be on or nearing the highway. Typically, when warning signs are on constantly, motorists tend to ignore them.

The location of crossings was determined in prior monitoring of collared elk movements. The test section of highway, including the fence and crosswalk approach, was situated accordingly and away from such typical highway structures as underpasses and bridges.

The crosswalk system will be evaluated and modified as necessary before becoming fully and widely instituted in the state. Success will be measured by monitoring the wildlife/vehicle collision rate, tracking elk with global positioning system telemetry, counting animals at the crosswalk with video cameras, and analyzing vehicle speeds before and after the warning signs are activated.

This \$700,000 study is a cooperative effort of the Arizona Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Tonto National Forest, ElectroBraid Fence, Inc., and AZTEC Engineering, Inc.

The crosswalk study has prompted formation of The Wildlife Linkages Workgroup, which is an effort to identify and map potential linkage zones that are important to Arizona’s wildlife and natural ecosystems. The effort will result shortly in a report that documents 150 “linkage zones”—areas that detail wildlife home range movements and migrations across the state. The Workgroup was awarded a national “Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative” award from the Federal Highway Administration and a state “Showcase in Excellence” award from the Arizona Quality Alliance in 2006.

To read more about The Wildlife Linkages Workgroup, see www.azgfd.gov/artman/publish/printer_676.shtml. (lhc)

Proposed plowing of the Farm Bill:

There is mixed reaction within the conservation community over policies and conservation funding in the projected federal farm program, according to the Wildlife Management Institute.

While there were some items of concern in the administration's new Farm Bill proposal, which was released several weeks ago, a number of recommendations met with community approval and support. These included an increase in spending of \$7.8 billion for conservation programs over the next 10 years, expansion of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and incorporation of "sodsaver" language, which would preclude subsidy payments to producers who plow existing grasslands.

One recommendation that quickly drew fire was that some Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands be made available for biomass production. Many people familiar with CRP are skeptical of the claim that wildlife benefits can be maintained at an acceptable level on tracts also used for production of biomass.

Concerns over the next Farm Bill were escalated when the administration's 2008 budget proposal was released last week. The proposed agriculture budget is slightly higher than the current year's allocation, but it is about 5 percent below expenditures for 2006. This is despite substantial savings in subsidy payments that will likely be realized in 2008 due to high crop prices. Many feel these funds should have been redirected to other areas in the agriculture budget, specifically conservation programs.

While the administration followed through on its strong support for WRP, by proposing nearly double the current allocation (to \$455 million) and by adding a 23-percent increase in spending (from \$257 million to \$316 million) for the Conservation Security Program (CSP), there was still cause for concern. CSP provides economic incentives for landowners to maintain and enhance natural resources on their lands. Most people familiar with CSP agree that, to date, wildlife benefits from it have been quite variable nationwide.

Conservationists find it troublesome that the 2008 budget proposes no direct funding for the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). The administration recommended that these programs be rolled into the much larger Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), but proposed a \$17 million cut for EQIP for 2008. Conservationists fear that wildlife benefits provided by WHIP and GRP would be watered down if incorporated within a reduced EQIP, which has objectives substantially broader than improved and enhanced wildlife habitat.

Then, after the administration's 2008 budget proposal was released, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) made two announcements that have very serious implications for wildlife around the country and particularly in the agricultural Midwest. Both relate to CRP.

First, USDA released a notice that no general signups will be scheduled for CRP effective immediately through the end of fiscal year 2008, which ends September 30, 2008. USDA estimates that this will cause a drop in CRP enrollment from 37 million acres to 34 million acres nationwide. Besides the imminent loss to a remarkably successful program, conservationists also find it troubling that USDA is removing from landowners the option of CRP participation. Although many landowners may decide to convert their marginal farmland or expiring CRP acreage to crops to take advantage of projected high commodity prices, it is hoped that others will opt to keep their acres enrolled in CRP. It is being argued that landowners, not USDA, should be making these land-use decisions.

The second and even more troublesome announcement is that USDA is considering allowing producers to opt out of existing, unexpired CRP contracts so that additional corn can be planted to address the demand for ethanol. If implemented, this has the potential to eliminate much of the high-quality grassland habitat established during the past two decades, to the certain detriment of wildlife, soils and water quality. Over the next several months, USDA will be assessing 2007 corn production levels, with plans to announce its determination and decision shortly thereafter.

Conservationists are hopeful that, in its haste to promote biofuel production and in the absence of any apparent energy-conservation plan, the administration will carefully consider the significant costs of reducing or removing Farm Bill conservation provisions that have proven effective and beneficial to the landscape and its inhabitants. (pmr)

Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit partners advocate rejecting budget request:

The more than 60 state agencies, universities and nongovernmental organizations of the National Cooperators' Coalition (NCC) are asking Congress to look beyond the President's fiscal year 2008 budget request and make greater use of the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units (CFWRU) in meeting this nation's pressing future natural resource challenges, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

Looking to implement NCC's *Vision and Strategies for the Future of the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units*, the CFWRU partners seek congressional establishment in fiscal year 2008 of a competitive, matching fund program that would make available \$20 million annually in new funds beyond base operational costs. These new funds would support high-priority research efforts and essential training of new natural resource professionals to replace the large number who will retire within the next decade.

To provide necessary capacity in the CFWRUs for them to meet these research and training needs, the CFWRU partners also are asking Congress this year to appropriate \$5 million more for program operation than the FY 2006/2007 funding levels. This increase would fill current scientist vacancies, restore seriously eroded operational funds for each CFWRU and enhance national program coordination.

According to the CFWRU partners, the challenges posed by climate change, energy development, invasive species, infectious diseases and limited water resources require the CFWRU approach to research, which relies on interdisciplinary efforts and fosters collaboration and accountability. The partners maintain that the CFWRUs also are well positioned to help replace the unprecedented numbers of imminent retirees because CFWRUs have an established record of educating new natural resource professionals who are management-oriented, well versed in science and grounded in state and federal agency experience.

Each of the CFWRUs in 38 states is a true research and training partnership among the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), a state natural resource agency, a host university and the Wildlife Management Institute. The CFWRUs build on these partner contributions to leverage more than three dollars for every dollar appropriated to the program by Congress.

Last fall, nearly 30 conservation organizations and a bipartisan group of 11 Senators asked Interior Secretary Kempthorne to adopt the NCC recommendations for the CFWRUs in fiscal year 2008. Instead, the President's recently released USGS budget request for the CFWRUs is \$15.430 million. That amount is just \$492,000 above the fiscal year 2007 funding level of \$14.938 million. The fiscal year 2006 funding level was \$14.664 million.

The CFWRU partners stress that the amount of support requested for fiscal year 2008 fails to maintain even the minimum level of federal scientist staffing that USGS has agreed to provide. Without that support, the partners will not be able to leverage and realize fully a return on their continuing investment in the CFWRUs. (rpd)

Worth reading:

The second edition of Dave Smith's *Backcountry Bear Basics*, released in 2006 by The Mountaineers Books, is terrific. First published in 1997, the book really is "the most definitive guide to avoiding unpleasant encounters" since Stephen Herrero's *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance* (1985) and, in some respects, it is even better.

For one thing, it is small—5 by 8 inches and 159 pages—and has a soft cover, so it is easily transported for reading in bear country, as well as advisedly beforehand. For another thing, it costs only \$15.95 retail—a fair price for learning how not to become bear terrified or, worse, bear scat. But most of all, it is easily read, due in large measure to the fact that much of the coverage deals with myths and old wives tales about bear biology, senses and behavior. Even things you probably already know about bears are explained in an authoritative and interesting manner, such as grizzlies can climb trees and, on average, grizzlies (at 35-40 mph) can outrun black bears (25-30 mph), which can outrun the fastest Olympic sprinter and, more importantly, you and, more importantly, me. And there will be plenty of things you didn't know or, at least, that I didn't know, such as whistling to

alert bears of one's presence is not a good idea and, contrary to the sporting magazine industry, bears actually are quite predictable.

You will know a lot more about grizzlies and black bears when you finish this little gem and what you will have learned should prevent an "unpleasant encounter" or enable you to experience more than one.

To order, go to www.mountaineersbooks.org, or write to The Mountaineers Books, 1001 SW Klickitat Way, Suite 201, Seattle, Washington 98134.

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When a review copy of *Scout: The Christmas Dog* arrived from Texas A&M Press, I wasn't sure why I was picked to receive a children's book. The cloth-bound volume, even with illustrations by Clemente Guzman, is only 32 pages in length, after all. It took me maybe 20 minutes to read, and I am very glad I did. This tidy nonfiction work is about a female, black Labrador retriever named Scout, owned by author Andrew Sansom. Andy Sansom, incidentally, served with distinction for 11 years as Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He was then and now a hunter. Scout never was, and that led to a dramatic episode that is the substance of this small book.

If you aren't a dog person, the narrative is likely to make you sad. . .sad that you haven't experienced the type of common but extraordinary bond between a human and canine pal that Andy and Scout share. For a mere \$12.95, you can get a glimpse. And after you finish the book, you could give it to some children. But you won't.

To order, go to www.tamu.edu/upress/BOOKS/2006/sansom.htm, or write to Texas A&M Press, John H. Lindsey Bldg., 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354.

* * * * *

Charles Fergus's sixteenth book is *A Hunter's Book of Days* (2005), published by Countrysport Press. Some may know of Chuck as the author of *A Rough-Shooting Dog* (1991), which is a very nice and straightforward piece of writing. This latest tome, 174 pages and quite attractively illustrated by Rod Crossman, is a fun read. It provides a window into the mindset and vocabulary of a happily addicted hunter of ruffed grouse ("there is no other sort of hunting as thrilling and challenging") and "wraithlike" American woodcock (aka bogsucker, aka timberdoodle, aka hokumpoke, aka mud bat).

It is less a book than a journal—documentation of the author's last year as a resident hunter in Pennsylvania. It details nearly all his days afield, mainly with his singing spaniel Caillie, and nearly every flush and shot. Interspersed with the action are reflections on memorable hunts of years past. There is coverage of some basic woodcock and grouse biology, just in case someone not already familiar with the species would follow Chuck through the pages and serrating flora of his specially named coverts. Also incorporated are laments of dogs gone and of habitat succession at the hand of Nature and the myopia

of human sprawl. And there is some entertaining shotgun snobbery that is an affliction of every partridge-chasing aficionado.

Readers will be struck by the paradox that is hunting for most of its practitioners. The author and his occasional hunter partner, Carl, revere the very game they traipse long and hard to find and attempt to kill. They are enchanted by the birds' habits and habitats, and confounded by the dearth of their quarry. Yet, they are frustrated by those that elude them and thrilled with ones they "take." Nonhunters aren't likely to understand.

I was frequently tickled by the casual insertion of such landmine terms and expressions as "blatherskite," "cocking ground," "brace," "preternaturally cheerful," "hoofies," "cheek" (verb), "make game," "a bundle of birds," "swing the muzzles" and "supped in," to list a few. Great fun, what?

The book is light and informative, and even if you haven't avidly embraced woodcock and grouse hunting by the turn of the last page, you'll get to like the author (despite his curious posthunt, celebratory penchant for single-malt iodine rather than the healing properties of Bluegrass beverage) and his writing style.

To order *A Hunter's Book of Days*, go to www.countrysportpress.com, or write to Countrysport Press, PO Box 679, Camden, Maine 14843. Should you wish an autographed copy, send \$32 to Charles Fergus, 276 Jones Road, East Burke, Vermont 05832.

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