

AGENDA
Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting

Public Meeting: **Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.**
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
1801 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Due to social distancing requirements, seating may be limited, but for additional public accessibility, in compliance with the Open Meeting Act, this meeting is also scheduled to be streamed live and recorded at www.youtube.com/user/outdooroklahoma

The Commission may vote to approve, disapprove or take other action on any of the following items. The Commission may vote to authorize public comment on any agenda item requesting a rule change.

1. Call to Order – Chairman Bruce Mabrey
2. Roll Call – Rhonda Hurst
3. Invocation – Nels Rodefeld
4. Pledge of Allegiance – Nels Rodefeld
5. Introduction of Guests
6. Presentation of Awards – J.D. Strong, Director

David Robertson, District Chief Law Enforcement– 30 years
Melynda Hickman, Natural Resource Biologist – 30 years

7. Consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject or take other action on minutes of the August 3, 2020 regular Commission meeting.
8. Director's Report – J.D. Strong
 - a. Federal and Congressional Update
 - Oklahoma Legislative Update – Corey Jager, Legislative Liaison
 - b. Calendar Items – discussion of upcoming department calendar items.
 - c. Agency Update – an update on current activity within each division of the agency.
9. Presentation of the July 31, 2020 Financial Statement and consideration and vote to approve, amend or reject miscellaneous donations – Amanda Storck, CFO and Chief of Administration.
10. Presentation on the Oklahoma Youth Hunting Program – Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division and Darrell Noblitt, President, Oklahoma Youth Hunting Program.
11. Presentation on upcoming changes and improvements for next year's controlled hunts program, along with additions to the Foundation's outdoor excursion raffle, and human dimension surveying on choice preferences and willingness to pay - Nels Rodefeld, Chief of Information and Education and Corey Jager, Legislative Liaison
12. Presentation on the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's Human Dimensions Program including updates on current projects, applications of HD at ODWC, and an overview of the newly formed HD Employee Working Group - Corey Jager and Betsey York, Human Dimensions Specialist.

13. New Business – Discussion of any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
14. Announce the date for the next regular Commission Meeting on Monday, October 5, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
15. Adjourn

People with disabilities may request accommodations by calling 405-522-6279 at least three days before the meeting.

MINUTES

Of the Regular Meeting on August 3, 2020 of the

OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Held at the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 3, 2020. Commission meeting dates are filed with the Secretary of State, Office of Administrative Rules before December 15, annually. The Agenda is listed on the Department's website and was posted at the entrance of the Wildlife Department Building on July 29, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

Due to social distancing requirements, seating may be limited, but for additional public accessibility, in compliance with the Open Meeting Act, this meeting is also scheduled to be streamed live and recorded at www.youtube.com/user/outdooroklahoma

Chairman Bruce Mabrey called the Commission in session at 9:00 a.m.

Rhonda Hurst, Executive Assistant, called the roll.

MEMBERS PRESENT: BRUCE R. MABREY, Chairman
 ROBERT S. HUGHES II, Vice-Chairman
 LEIGH A. GADDIS, Secretary
 BILL K. BREWSTER, Member
 JAMES V. BARWICK, Member
 D. CHAD DILLINGHAM, Member
 JOHN P. ZELBST, Member
 C. RICK HOLDER, Member

J.D. Strong, Director, introduced the following guests: Laura McIver, Quail Forever, via live stream; Brandon & Brianne Adams, Oklahoma Big 5; Rick Grundman, Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation Executive Director; Richard Hatcher, Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation President.

Director Strong presented the following tenure awards: Joe Williams, Assistant Hatchery Manager – 20 years; Mark Walker, Warden Supervisor – 25 years; Nathan Erdman, Chief of Law Enforcement – 25 years; John Davenport, Hatchery Supervisor – 30 years.

Motion was made by Mr. Zelbst, seconded by Mr. Hughes to approve the minutes from the June 17, 2020 regular Commission meeting. Motion carried with Commissioners Brewster, Barwick, Hughes, Gaddis, Zelbst, Dillingham, Holder and Mabrey voting "Yes".

Director Strong gave a brief Oklahoma Legislative update and highlighted the Congressional report submitted by Brittnee Preston, the Department's part-time Federal and Congressional Liaison. This report was sent to all Commissioners and will be kept with the minutes of this meeting. Director Strong gave a Director's Report on calendar items and agency updates. This report was given to the Commission and will be kept with the minutes of this meeting. He also announced that Governor Stitt asked him to lead this year's United Way State Charitable Campaign and he has been elected President of the WAFWA organization.

Amanda Storck, CFO and Chief of Administration, presented the Financial Statements for May 30, 2020 and June 30, 2020. Motion was made by Mr. Dillingham, seconded by Mr.

Hughes to accept the statements as presented and approve miscellaneous contributions. Motion carried with Commissioners Brewster, Barwick, Hughes, Gaddis, Zelbst, Dillingham, Holder and Mabrey voting “Yes.”

Amanda Stork and Mike Chrisman, License Supervisor, gave a presentation on the ODWC licensing system including updates on license sales increases, marketing successes and improved tools for customer service.

Nels Rodefeld, Chief of Information & Education Division, requested Commission approval on a resolution to recognize Brandon Adams for his outstanding promotion of Oklahoma’s diverse hunting opportunities. Mr. Adams completed the Oklahoma’s Big 5 slam in one year with archery equipment. Mr. Zelbst requested that the Department look into creating a grand slam award or a wall of fame for this type of accomplishments. Motion was made by Ms. Gaddis, seconded by Mr. Zelbst to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried with Commissioners Brewster, Barwick, Hughes, Gaddis, Zelbst, Dillingham, Holder and Mabrey voting “Yes.”

Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division, recognized and presented Dallas Barber with the 2019 Wildlife Division Biologist of the Year award and Emily Clark with the 2019 Wildlife Division Technician of the Year award.

Barry Bolton, Chief of Fisheries Division, recognized and presented Richard Snow with the 2019 Fish Division Professional of the Year award.

Barry Bolton requested Commission approval of the following Emergency Rules.

Title 800. Department of Wildlife Conservation

Chapter 10. Sport Fishing Rules

Subchapter 1. Harvest and Possession Limits

800:10-1-5. Bag Limits on Fish [AMENDED]

This emergency rule will expand to statewide (all waters) the current May 1 to May 31 closed season for alligator gar. The proposed rule would prohibit all harvest of alligator gar by any method of take, on all waters of the state, for the month of May. The May 1 to May 31 closure to alligator gar harvest on Lake Texoma was implemented as a protective measure when incidents of potential overharvest of susceptible adults were observed in spawning habitat. Episodic and infrequent recruitment due to sub-optimal spawning environmental conditions (e.g. inadequate spawning habitat available or highly fluctuating water levels) compels ODWC to protect spawning alligator gar during years when local conditions allow for a successful spawn. We propose to expand this alligator gar harvest closure during the month of May to all statewide waters to protect this species during its most vulnerable period of the year.

Motion was made by Mr. Barwick who state that the Rules Committee reviewed the proposed emergency rules and recommend approval as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brewster. Motion carried with Commissioners Brewster, Barwick, Hughes, Gaddis, Zelbst, Dillingham, Holder and Mabrey voting “Yes.”

Richard Hatcher, President of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation gave an update on the Foundation to date including most recently, paying for the naming of the John G. Groendyke building of the Department of Wildlife. The funds were generated by donors. Mr. Hatcher introduced the new Executive Director hired by the Foundation board, Rick Grundman. Mr. Grundman addressed the Commission and stated that the Foundation needs Commission participation and he is looking forward to working with the Department.

Chairman Mabrey announced the next Commission meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. in Broken Bow, Oklahoma. Mr. Brewster suggested, due to the Covid pandemic that the meeting remain in Oklahoma City and the trip to southeast Oklahoma

be postponed. Mr. Mabrey confirmed that the next Commission meeting will be Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Bruce R. Mabrey, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

Leigh A. Gaddis, SECRETARY

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
J.D. Strong, Director

Personnel Actions
August 2020

New Hires

Jessica Brown – Grants Assistant, 8/3/2020

Promotions

Curt Allen – Wildlife Biologist, Cookson WMA to Wildlife Senior Biologist, NE Region, Cookson WMA, 8/1/2020

Brett Thompson – Wildlife Technician, Ft. Gibson WMA to Wildlife Biologist, Ft. Gibson WMA, 8/1/2020

Transfers

Resignations/Terminations

Mike Porta – Fish Biologist, OFRL, effective 08/07/2020

Retirements

***Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
Financial Statement***

For the period July 1, 2020 Through July 31, 2020

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
Combined Balance Sheet - All Fund Types and Accounts Groups
July 31, 2020

	Governmental Fund Types		Fiduciary Fund Types	Account Groups			
	General	Capital Projects	Trust	General Fixed Assets	General Long-Term Debt	07/31/2020 Totals	07/31/2019 Totals
Assets and Other Debits:							
Cash	14,323,117		3,591,827			17,914,944	14,945,557
Investments	0		235,617,830			235,617,830	224,495,575
Accounts Receivable	2,802,713					2,802,713	3,156,951
Monthly Lifetime License			164,850			164,850	114,525
Legacy Permit / Operation game Thief	4,277,254		7,000			4,284,254.00	4,598,838.00
Fixed Assets				69,801,393		69,801,393	51,666,233
Land				96,633,279		96,633,279	89,872,466
Other Debits:							
Amount To Be Provided For Payment of Compensated Absences					3,236,668	3,236,668	3,275,575
Amount To Be Provided For Payment of Net Pension Obligation					11,509,243	11,509,243	10,820,293
	21,403,084	0	239,381,507	166,434,672	14,745,911	441,965,174	398,354,175
Liabilities and Fund Balance:							
Liabilities:							
Accounts Payable (accrual)	2,067,570					2,067,570	1,279,809
Due to Other Funds (current month Lifetimes)	164,850					164,850	114,525
Compensated Absences Payable (leave accrual)					3,236,668	3,236,668	3,275,575
Net Pension Obligation					11,509,243	11,509,243	10,820,293
Total Liabilities	2,232,420	0	0	0	14,745,911	16,978,331	15,490,202
Fund Balance:							
Reserved for Employee Pension Benefits			122,144,089			122,144,089	118,043,116
Reserved for Defined Contribution Benefits (DC)			3,922,828			3,922,828	3,026,997
Investment in General Fixed Assets				166,434,672		166,434,672	141,538,699
Fund Balance	19,170,664		113,314,590			132,485,254	120,255,161
Total Fund Balance	19,170,664	0	239,381,507	166,434,672	0	424,986,843	382,863,973
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	21,403,084	0	239,381,507	166,434,672	14,745,911	441,965,174	398,354,175

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
Trust Funds

Combining Balance Sheets
July 31, 2020

	Expendable Trust	Nonexpendable Trust	Pension Trust	DC Trust	07/31/2020 Totals	07/31/2019 Totals
Assets:						
Cash (Wildlife Heritage)	325,994	3,265,833			3,591,827	3,300,404
Investments	19,852,398	89,698,515	122,144,089	3,922,828	235,617,830	227,522,572
Due From Other Funds		164,850			164,850	114,525
Restricted Assets (OP. Game Thief)		7,000			7,000	7,000
	<u>20,178,392</u>	<u>93,136,198</u>	<u>122,144,089</u>	<u>3,922,828</u>	<u>239,381,507</u>	<u>230,944,501</u>
Fund Balance:						
Fund Balance Reserved for Employee Pension Benefits			122,144,089	3,922,828	126,066,917	121,070,113
Fund Balance	<u>20,178,392</u>	<u>93,136,198</u>			<u>113,314,590</u>	<u>109,874,388</u>
Total Fund Balance	<u>20,178,392</u>	<u>93,136,198</u>	<u>122,144,089</u>	<u>3,922,828</u>	<u>239,381,507</u>	<u>230,944,501</u>

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances
All Governmental Fund Types and Expendable Trust Fund
For the Period July 1, 2020 Through July 31, 2020

	Governmental Fund Types		Fiduciary Fund Type	07/31/2020	07/31/2019	Percent of Inc. or Dec.
	General	Capital Projects	Expendable Trust	Totals	Totals	
Revenues:						
Licenses (without Lifetimes)	681,035			681,035	562,239	21.13%
Other Wildlife Sales	240,436			240,436	344,510	-30.21%
Agriculture and Oil Lease	154,507			154,507	132,753	16.39%
Grant Revenue	1,883,850			1,883,850	2,539,196	-25.81%
Investment Income	27,027		6,398	33,425	44,300	-24.55%
Miscellaneous	1,885,832			1,885,832	44,021	4,183.94%
Total Revenues	4,872,687	0	6,398	4,879,085	3,667,019	33.05%
Expenditures:						
Administration	555,166			555,166	480,884	15.45%
Wildlife	1,454,825			1,454,825	1,205,523	20.68%
Fish	656,417			656,417	872,599	-24.77%
Law Enforcement	785,875			785,875	940,070	-16.40%
Information and Education	215,543			215,543	241,199	-10.64%
Capital Improvements	1,611,533			1,611,533	1,899,104	-15.14%
Land Acquisitions		-		-	0	0.00%
Total Expenditures	5,279,359	0		5,279,359	5,639,379	-6.38%
Excess(deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(406,672)	0	6,398	(400,274)	(1,972,360)	-79.71%
Other Financing Sources(uses):						
Sale of General Fixed Assets	535,233			535,233	0	0.00%
Operating Transfers In	44,791	0	3,907,815	3,952,606	691,870	471.29%
Operating Transfers Out	0		(44,791)	(44,791)	(45,241)	-0.99%
Operating Transfers Out (215)			0	0	0	0.00
Total Other Financing Sources(uses)	580,024	0	3,863,024	4,443,048	646,629	587.11%
Excess of revenues & other financing sources over expenditures & other financing uses	173,352	0	3,869,422	4,042,774	(1,325,731)	404.95%
Fund Balances, Beginning of Year:	18,997,312	0	16,308,970	35,306,282	35,919,682	-1.71%
Fund Balances July 31, 2020:	19,170,664	0	20,178,392	39,349,056	34,593,951	13.75%

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances
Trust Funds
For the Period July 1, 2020 Through July 31, 2020

	Fiduciary Fund Types			07/31/2020 Totals	07/31/2019 Totals
	Nonexpendable Trust	Pension Trust	DC Trust		
Operating Revenues:					
Licenses (Lifetime)	164,850			164,850	114,525
Other Sales (Senior Citizen Licenses)	20,575			20,575	11,030
Interest and Investment Income	0	4,377,193	156,624	4,533,817	904,948
Employer Contributions		0	37,477	37,477	32,057
Employee Contributions		46,677	27,169	73,846	74,730
Total Operating Revenues	185,425	4,423,870	221,270	4,830,565	1,137,290
Operating Expenses:					
Administration		57,533	1,250	58,783	56,416
Benefits and Participant Refunds	0	694,230	1	694,231	631,858
Total Operating Expenses	0	751,763	1,251	753,014	688,274
Operating Income	185,425	3,672,107	220,019	4,077,551	449,016
Nonoperating Expenses:					
Transfers Out	0	0	0	0	0
Total Nonoperating Expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Net Income	185,425	3,672,107	220,019	4,077,551	449,016
Fund Balances, Beginning	92,950,773	118,471,982	3,702,809	215,125,564	210,874,145
Fund Balances, July 31, 2020	93,136,198	122,144,089	3,922,828	219,203,115	211,323,161



Wildlife Contributions Report 07/01/2020-07/31/2020

Order ID	Order Date	Total Payment Amount	Name Of Individual Or Business	Description Of Contribution
19737244	7/17/2020 12:29 PM	\$100.00	Judith or Lyle Kregar	In Memory of Darrell Shelton
19714336	7/2/2020 11:32 AM	\$5,000.00	City of Grove	Fish Division/Grand Lake fish habitat
19714329	7/2/2020 11:29 AM	\$25.00	Stan Dowling	In Memory of Noble Stanfield
	Total	\$5,125.00		

SEPTEMBER 2020
DIRECTOR'S REPORT



CALENDAR ITEMS:

Aug 26-27	National Virtual R3 Forum, Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Sep 9-16	Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Virtual Annual Meeting
Sep 12	Kickoff "Fostering Outdoor Oklahoma Families"
Oct 5	Monthly Commission Meeting at 9:00 a.m.
Oct 5	John D. Groendyke Building Dedication/Celebration at 2:00 p.m.

AGENCY UPDATE

- **DIRECTOR'S OFFICE:** Since the August Commission meeting, we've been busy at work getting the new Foundation Director, Rick Grundman, installed and up to speed. Rick and staff have spent considerable time over the past month exploring the programs and needs of the agency, getting to know staff, identifying opportunities to possibly get CARES Act funding for some of our projects that could provide COVID relief, etc. Additionally, staff have been working diligently with some Commissioners and the Foundation Board to review options for repairing or replacing the water pipeline to Hackberry Flat WMA in order to restore its functionality. The Director continues to spend significant time on efforts to reevaluate and realign WAFWA's mitigation program for the lesser prairie-chicken in advance of USFWS's listing proposal anticipated in May 2021. We also spent considerable time interviewing and vetting four candidates to be Assistant Unit Leader (wildlife emphasis) at the Coop Unit in Stillwater, and staff provided a hiring recommendation to the USGS for filling the position. Next up will be a process to fill a second Assistant Unit Leader position that specializes in fisheries management. We continue to work on implementation of the agency's Strategic Plan, including kicking off a project to develop dashboards for better measurement of progress towards our goals. Finally, staff spent time with Commissioners Mabrey, Brewster and Barwick touring Fisheries assets at Schooler and Raymond Gary Lakes to review infrastructure concerns and develop potential solutions.
- **LEGISLATURE:**
 - The Legislature has started scheduling interim studies. There is currently only one scheduled that is relevant to ODWC and all other agencies:
 - [IS20-005 \(Dahm, Gann\)](#) Administrative Rules Process: scheduled for September 22nd at 9 am in Senate Room 230.
 - The full list of approved studies can be viewed here:
 - Senate: <https://oksenate.gov/publications/senate-interim-studies>
 - House: <https://okhouse.gov/Committees/ShowInterimStudies.aspx>
- **HUMAN DIMENSIONS**
 - The Game Harvest Survey was submitted to Federal Aid and will be posted on the Wildlife Department website soon. On top of the annual harvest data that we collect, we asked about several different management issues such as:
 - Public land use
 - Patterns of season participation
 - Reasons for not hunting
 - Controlled hunts (participation and satisfaction)
 - Preference for WMA management
 - Hunter recruitment
 - First species ever hunted by age of hunter
 - Internet access

- Human Dimensions Specialists from across the country (Utah, Colorado, South Dakota, Michigan, Indiana, etc.) met on a zoom call to discuss current projects, challenges and goals for the future. We also talked about possibilities for multi-state collaborative projects as well as intentions for the 2022 National Survey on Hunting and Fishing
- Work began on a survey to understand hunter preferences for changes to the controlled hunts application process as well as preferable characteristics for hunts that the Wildlife Foundation might offer. This survey will be sent to current and former hunters who have applied for controlled hunts this fall.
- We began pilot testing for the private lands survey after another round of review by the private lands crew. This survey will be sent to both current constituents and non-constituents who own land in Oklahoma.
- Betsey York attended the “Fighting Fire with Fire: Rx Fire Toolbox to Combat Identified Social Barriers” conference call put on by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension unit. There was lots of good information about different social science projects done to better understand social barriers to conducting beneficial prescribed fire by private landowners.

FISHERIES DIVISION

Statewide Fish Stockings

Species	Number Fish	Size	Number Locations
Bluegill	300	3-5”	1
Channel catfish	46,812	1.5”	1
Channel catfish	3,883	10+”	6
Hybrid sunfish	400	5”	2
Rainbow trout	13,878	9-14”	2
Rainbow trout	125	14-24”	1

Activities

- Refurbished existing fish attractors at Healdton Lake with sunken trees and inspected marker buoy conditions at Ardmore City Lake, Murray Lake, and Texoma replacing and/or cleaning as needed.
- Partnered with City of Grove and Mossback Fish Habitat to install 240 habitat structures in Grand Lake.
- Continued angler surveys at Lake Texoma and Fort Gibson Dam.
- Community sampling was conducted in the Washita River drainage, and vouchered specimens were keyed and sampling data was entered.
- Provided fisheries population survey and subsequent recommendations for the Chickasaw Retreat and Conference Center.
- Provided AFS Standard Methods group with Oklahoma standardized sampling data.
- Certified new state/world record paddlefish from Keystone Lake.
- Routine maintenance continues on all Department lakes.
- Investigated a fish kill at a lake that borders Perry Country Club and private homeowners.
- Weekly monitoring of reproduction and growth of threadfin shad in Skiatook Nursery Pond.
- Hatchery staff completed annual hatchery residence inspections.
- The Durant phase 2B construction project is progressing along smoothly. The inner reservoir levee is now about 100% rip-rapped. This project looks to be completed ahead of schedule.
- Installation of new clay liners in two hatchery ponds at the Manning facility was initiated.

I&E DIVISION

- Damon Springer, Jason Smith, Shawn Gee and Colin Berg conducted a volunteer training for 10 volunteers that will be assisting Adaptive Shooting Sports in Tulsa with shooting sports instruction for veterans with disabilities. This new organization that hopes to be able to conduct shooting sports days at the Tulsa Gun Club for veterans interested in trap and skeet shooting. Their first organized event is scheduled for August 22.
- The ODWC was the first in the nation to have a grant approved through the new TRACS process. The Oklahoma Outreach to Hunters and Shooters for \$573,466.98 was approved. Beginning October 1, 2020 and running for two years, this grant will improve outreach and communication to hunters and target shooters in the state of Oklahoma. This grant will support the creation and distribution of print and digital products in support of hunter education, hunter skill improvement and recreational shooting.
- Lance Meek completed a tracking tool to keep staff apprised of the progress on all shooting range grants from start to finish. This shared spreadsheet allows everyone involved with range shooting range projects to know what has been completed with each project and will help develop an expected timeline for ranges as we move forward. The next ranges due for completion are ranges at Okmulgee and James Collins WMAs.
- Kelly Adams worked with Law Enforcement to ensure the placement of approximately 60 Oklahoma Fishing Trail signs at marinas, campgrounds and boat ramps around the state.
- Don Brown finalized the September/October issue of Outdoor Oklahoma magazine, which features the Big Game Report, and will also emphasize two of three communication priorities for IE; antlerless harvest and mentorship.
- Using targeted marketing strategies, Whitney Jenkins assisted Marketing Specialist Michael Bergin on an effort to sell “vintage” habitat donor patches. To date this effort has driven more than \$12,000 in additional revenue.
- Kelly Boyer and Shawn Gee participated in the National Archery in Schools Program virtual coordinators conference. We now have over 650 schools involved in NASP with an additional 35 schools to be added this fall. Topics of discussion include home school archery groups, continuation of national shoots in Kentucky and Utah, methods of expanding state NASP programs, review of new proposed rules and annual reports from state coordinators.
- Darrin Hill, Blake Podhajsky and Todd Craighead continue collecting video and editing video for Outdoor Oklahoma, social media and ODWC website. Recent video projects include a video for NWTf’s telethon event hosted on Facebook Live, and an interview with Director JD Strong for the State Charitable Campaign. The video crew also began working with the Private Lands team to develop a series of landowner videos.
- Blake Podhajsky and Kelly Adams worked with the Foundation and New Revenue Streams Strategic Planning committee on a potential project with Black Mesa Brewery.
- Jena Donnell and Michael Bergin worked to upload several entries into the Department’s new blog, [Outdoor Oklahoma Journal](#).
- Jena Donnell reports that in July, the Wildlife Diversity program received \$2,178.00 in tax donations. Tax Year 2019 donations total \$14,462. The Wildlife Diversity program also received \$6,020.00 in July from license plate sales, bringing the 2020 total to \$48,140.00. Thanks to a single Facebook post on July 15, ODWC received 319 unique Texas Horned Lizard reports. This information will be used by Mark Howery (W) to publish a current distribution of Texas Horned Lizards in Oklahoma. Jena continues to work on the latest edition of the herp guide.
- Lance Meek developed a plan to emphasize and promote the on-line Hunter Education Course throughout the months of August-December. We are anticipating increased hunter numbers this fall and want to move as many of these new hunters as possible through our

on-line course. We set a goal of certifying 5,200 hunters via the on-line He course from August through the end of December.

- I&E Division is coordinating the Waterfowl Stamp Contest
- Michael Bergin continues to develop targeted marketing emails and digital ads. He is also working with Mike Chrisman and Brandt to add a layer in the e-check process about proper carcass disposal as part of CWD communications. Michael also secured a partnership with Academy to implement a "Refer-A-Friend" promotion to help bolster license sales this fall.
- Daniel Griffith has completed the [deer webpage](#), [antlerless web page](#), [deer share webpage](#) and is working to update the Dove Hunting page. Daniel reports overall website traffic has been consistently higher, approximately 25% YoY and website load times are at an all time low.
- Kelly Boyer and Shawn Gee conducted two Outdoor Education Program teacher training courses at the Arcadia Conservation Education center. These courses were set up for new schools and they provide training for new teachers that will be teaching our Outdoor Education programs in existing schools during the 2020/21 school year. Teachers who attend the training receive instruction in NASP, Explore Bowhunting, Explore Bowfishing, Hunter Education and Oklahoma Fishing in the Schools programs.
- Damon Springer and Jason Smith conducted a teacher training course for new schools and new teachers that will be implementing the Departments Scholastic Shooting Sports Program during the 2020/21 school year. We now have over 200 schools involved in the Scholastic Shooting Sports Program.
- Skylar St.Yves picked up and organized the fishing equipment that will be part of the Mobile First Catch trailer that the Department Received as part of an RBFF grant to expend urban fishing instruction. The trailer should be received sometime in late August/Early September and will be used to set up clinics at Close to Home waters in the OKC and Tulsa area. Participants at these clinics will register through the Go Outdoors app so we can follow them as they progress towards becoming active anglers.
- Skylar St.Yves, Jennifer Benge, Lance Meek, Damon Springer, Jason Smith, Shawn Gee, Kelly Boyer and Kasie Joyner each produced a short how to education video that was used on the Departments Outdoor Education facebook page. The Education staff began producing these new virtual learning videos in June with plans for each member to produce one short virtual learning video per month. The videos are all uploaded to the Departments Outdoor Oklahoma youtube channel.
- Kasie Joyner and Skylar St.Yves prepared a grant application for Bass Pro shops to assist with equipment purchases for the Learn to Hunt/Learn to Fish Program. The application was submitted and we should know something within the next sixty days.
- Kasie Joyner attended an R3 subcommittee meeting with members of the NWTF state board. They want to put more focus on their Hunting Heritage events. They are going to conduct training dates and Learn to Hunt activities with volunteers who help with the NWTF WITO events. Their first training event will be a team building exercise and the R3 subcommittee will hear and address challenges that the ladies face, and help develop their outdoors skills. They hope this training program will equip the ladies who volunteer for WITO events with the knowledge and skills they need to help make their Hunting Heritage events more hunting focused. This should in turn create new mentors and new hunters.

WILDLIFE DIVISION

- GIS staff is working on WMA Plans and with other Department employees to start bringing a variety of projects on line with GIS, and non-GIS staff has been entering WMA data into the GIS system for WMA planning purposes.
- Staff responded to 7 calls, set 4 traps, caught and relocated 3 bears, and plenty of calls of nuisance bears have been received in the SE & NE regions.

- Staff are completing multiple surveys, such as quail roadside surveys, pheasant brood count surveys, WMA deer spotlight counts, and pronghorn fawn surveys.
- Much of August will be spent preparing dove fields, preparing fields for fall planting and preparing signs, campgrounds, areas for fall hunting seasons.
- WMA staff continue assisting with bat acoustic surveys, monitoring and assisting with quail and bear research projects, and dove banding project.
- We continue to conduct growing season burns as timing and conditions allow.
- Staff met with DU engineers to initiate survey and design processes for Drummond Flat wetland restoration.
- Big game section will begin assisting new DMAP cooperators with spotlight and visibility surveys. This program has 87 cooperators this year managing over 440,000 acres.
- OLAP program will open the 2020-2021 season with ~80,000 acres open to hunting access. OLAP staff are renewing existing lease agreements, updating Title 800 rules, and improving internal accounting procedures. Enrollment efforts for this fall (October openings) are focused on close-to-home opportunities. Emphasis also securing CRP grassland in Beaver and Texas Counties to increase pheasant hunting opportunities for the fall of 2020.
- Personnel continued work on updating the Wildlife Division Procedures Manual.
- Other WMA activities: cedars have been masticated, fireguards created, limbs trimmed/herbiced back from access roads, new fence was constructed, began replacing 23 water control structures, road repairs, monitoring grazing leases and maintaining water wells for grazing and upcoming hunting seasons, maintained shooting ranges, etc.
- Multiple bat watches were conducted and well attended.

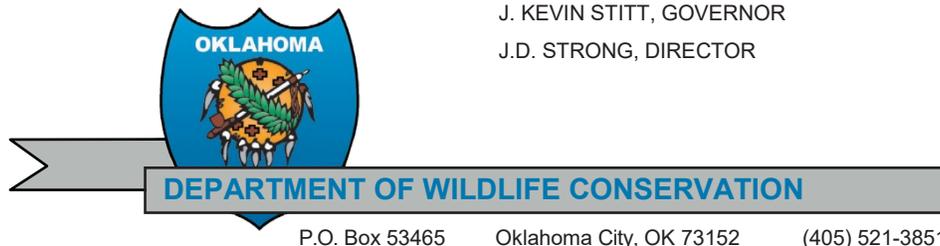
LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

- On August 21st most of LE attended online DT training “Use of Force Training”. This is to replace our annual Defensive Tactics training that we do. Due to Covid concerns, we transitioned to online training this year.
- On August 28th, LE personnel attended a Wildlife Search and Seizure training class for another 8 hours of training.
- At the time of this report LE has completed 2 Hunter education classes so far. Creek County had 26 students attending the class and Tulsa County had 32 students attend their class. All CDC guidelines were adhered to, 6 FT distancing and masks were worn if under 6 FT. distance. Temperatures were taken of all attendees upon their arrival at the classes.
- Regulation and Hunting Season Poster distribution has been done for this coming year.
- Wardens are getting ready for dove opener as it is the kick off for fall hunting seasons. Some good numbers have been reported in the western parts of the state. As always numbers are subject to change as the late August early September cold fronts come through.
- Here are some numbers for the first 7 months of the year in LE:

Miles Driven:	1,174,003	Hours Spent:	
Citations Issued	920	Assisting	10,469
Temps	1,002	Dist. Literature	108
Warnings	545	Training	11,222
Adm. Fines	587	Investigations	3,935
Compliance checks	56,616	Gen. Patrol	64,010
Programs	711		

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Bruce Mabrey CHAIRMAN	Bill Brewster MEMBER
Robert S. Hughes II VICE CHAIRMAN	D. Chad Dillingham MEMBER
Leigh Gaddis SECRETARY	Rick Holder MEMBER
James V. Barwick MEMBER	John P. Zelbst MEMBER



MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 27, 2020

TO: OK Department of Wildlife Commission and Staff

FROM: Brittnee Preston

RE: Report on July and August Federal and Congressional Issues for September Commission Meeting

COVID-19 & Stimulus:

Since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, Congress has passed four bills to address the crisis and the effect it has had on the country.

Negotiations were ongoing through the month of July for the next stimulus package as the Senate released their \$1 trillion bill (HEALS Act) mid-month. The House bill (the HEROES Act) is a \$3 trillion bill that passed the House in May.

Senate Majority Leader McConnell remained largely unengaged in the negotiations towards the end of July and the beginning of August leaving the Republican position in the hands of the Administration. In the first week of August, the House Democrats offered the White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and the Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin a \$2 to \$2.4 trillion deal, seemingly to split the difference between the Senate's \$1 trillion package and the House's \$3.4 trillion package but they did not take the offer. Talks, reportedly, stalled out and an announcement was made late in the day on August 7th that Meadows and Mnuchin would recommend that the President move forward with Executive Orders.

The President signed executive orders to extend unemployment benefits, suspend payroll taxes, and offer federal eviction and student loan relief

The USPS announced that they are slated to have inadequate resources to carry out mail-in voting for the election this fall, which spurred Congress to restart stimulus talks but on a much smaller scale. The House brought members back to D.C. to address the USPS issues and passed a \$25 billion relief bill. The Senate is reportedly working on a package termed as the "skinny stimulus" deal. This package is expected to be around \$500 billion and address USPS issues, unemployment, the Paycheck Protection Program, and education issues.

Wildlife update:

Congress –

H.R. 1957, the Great American Outdoors Act passed the House by a vote of 310-107 and was signed by the President. This bill permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million annually and establishes for maintenance of national parks and other public lands. It would require 50% of U.S. energy development revenues to be deposited into the restoration fund annually for fiscal 2021 through 2025, up to a maximum of \$1.9 billion annually. Among other provisions regarding the restoration fund, it would allocate 70% of funding to the National Park Service and 15% to the U.S. Forest Service. It would allow no more than 35% of funds to be used for transportation projects and prohibit the use of funds for land acquisition, employee bonuses or to supplant discretionary funding.

During the first two weeks of July, the House Appropriations Committee wrapped up markups on the 12 appropriations bills for FY21. During the last two weeks of July, the House pushed through a four-bill minibus, which included the

following bills: State-Foreign Operations, Agriculture-Rural Development-FDA, Interior-Environment, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bills, and a seven-bill minibuss, which included the Defense, Commerce-Justice-Science, Energy-Water, Financial Services, Homeland Security, Labor-HHS-Education, and Transportation-HUD Appropriations bills. Below are key highlights of the applicable pieces of these bills:

FY 21 House Appropriations Bills:

AGRICULTURE BILL -

- Provides \$24.3 billion in discretionary funding.
- Includes \$1.05 billion for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.
- Provides increases that will help address harmful pests and diseases such as cattle fever ticks and chronic wasting disease, while maintaining increases from past years for citrus greening.
- Provides \$1 billion to help farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners conserve and protect their land. This includes \$167 million for infrastructure for watershed and flood prevention and watershed rehabilitation projects.

ENERGY AND WATER BILL -

- \$7.36 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers
- \$1.63 billion for the Bureau of Reclamation, an increase of \$83 million above the fiscal year 2019 level and \$560 million above the budget request.

INTERIOR AND ENVIRONMENT BILL -

- \$9.53 billion for EPA, \$677 million above the FY2019 enacted level
- \$38.4 million, an increase of \$13 million above the 2019 enacted level for United States Geological Survey (USGS) National & Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers
- \$12.5 million for 22 cooperatives under Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, which provide a forum & resources to address climate change
- \$3.38 billion for the National Parks Service
- \$1.7 billion for the USFWS
- \$524 million for the LWCF

The House passed H.R. 7575, the WRDA reauthorization bill under suspension of the rules. This is largely a bi-partisan bill and the ball is now in the Senate's court to pass their version of the bill so that the two bills can be negotiated into a final package.

Agencies –

- > Department of the Interior (DOI)
 - DOI and USFWS [announced](#) a RFP for “Implementation of the Quagga and Zebra Mussel Action Plan (QZAP) in the Western United States.”
 - The DOI is expected to finalize the proposed expansion of Station-Specific Hunting and Fishing at 147 National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries and new access to more than 2.3 million acres.
- > Environment Protection Act (EPA)
- > National Park Service (NPS)
 - Acting NPS Director, David Velas, retired suddenly at the beginning of August and Margaret Everson, principal deputy director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and an adviser to DOI Secretary Bernhardt, immediately assumes the authority to lead the NPS.
- > U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS)
 - USFWS, have received [applications](#) for permits to conduct activities intended to enhance the propagation or survival of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The permit affecting species in OK is as follows:
 - TE37219B-2 - Roger Perry, US Forest Service in Hot Springs, AR for the gray bat, northern long eared bat and Indiana bat
 - USFWS, have received [applications](#) for permits to conduct activities intended to enhance the propagation or survival of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The permit affecting species in OK is as follows:

We manage and protect fish and wildlife, along with their habitats, while also growing our community of hunters and anglers, partnering with those who love the outdoors, and fostering stewardship with those who care for the land.

- TE584243B - Austin Hill of Richardson, TX for the American Burying Beetle
 - TE54802B - Megan Philips-Schapp of Tulsa, OK for the American Burying Beetle
 - TE74315D - Chaylum Hogue of Ada, OK for the American Burying Beetle
 - TE52561B - Trevor Teague of Bixby, OK for the American Burying Beetle
 - TE043399 - Eagle Environment of Vinita, OK for the American Burying Beetle and Interior Least Turn
- > The USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service proposed a definition for "habitat" under the Endangered Species Act. This is an attempt to improve clarity and address a 2018 Supreme Court ruling, according to the agencies' [statement](#). The Trump administration [proposed](#) a preferred definition and an alternative, and opened up a 30-day comment period on both. The administration's primary definition states that "habitat" would include "physical places that individuals of a species depend upon to carry out one or more life processes." It would include "areas with existing attributes that have the capacity to support individuals of the species." Wildlife groups like the National Wildlife Federation and Defenders of Wildlife quickly panned the proposal Friday as inadequate for failing to fully address climate change.

Courts –
Earlier this week, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York struck down the legal basis for the USFWS [proposed rule from June](#) codifying Interior Solicitor Daniel Jorjani's interpretation of the MBTA as saying that companies can't be fined for accidental killings of migratory birds such as geese, ducks, and mockingbirds. DOI is expected to continue with the proposed rulemaking and the additional challenges in court are expected.

The U.S. Supreme Court announced they will hear oral arguments on November 2nd on the Endangered Species Act Documents case [Fish and Wildlife Serv. v. Sierra Club](#), U.S., No. 19-547.

Coming up...

- > House and Senate are back in session in September.