



**VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER**  
*NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION*

Fall 2020



**NWTF**

**Conserve. Hunt. Share.**



## Biologist's Corner – Cully McCurdy, NWTf Regional Biologist

### Conservation delivery in VA still on track despite Covid!

Volunteers were asked to step up this summer through the "Call for All" campaign to save the NWTf. The response was amazing and the NWTf was able to end the fiscal year at the end of August with a much-improved fiscal solvency and a business plan in place to operate effectively and promote growth over the next fiscal year. In addition to the much-needed monetary response from volunteers through non-traditional fund-raising activities, the NWTf put in place restrictions to the state super funds at least through the end of August 2021 to support improved financial responsibility. The primary (temporary) changes are that the superfund split has been suspended that allocates a portion of local fundraising revenue to the state superfund balance. Additionally, super fund expenditures have been suspended except in rare instances that must be approved by national leadership staff and board members. These changes will require local chapters be creative to support outreach events that normally receive partial financial support through the state super fund.

One of the exceptions to allowable super fund expenditures relates to agreements with federal and state agencies providing conservation delivery through partnerships. If the NWTf currently has an agreement in place requiring superfund match, those agreements are being honored. To explain, many agreements nationwide with agencies require a match requirement from the NWTf. This match can be in-kind or monetarily. In-kind match would include support from the NWTf and partners such as other non-government organizations that provide volunteers, resources, materials or if from partners...money. Monetary match is actual money provided to support conservation activities. For example, the Wallace Marshall Stewardship Agreement with the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest requires a minimum 20% match to USFS resources within the agreement. Since the Wallace Marshall Stewardship Agreement was signed in 2014, the VA State Chapter Super Fund Committee has approved several expenditures to support the project. These allocations from the super fund help meet the 20% minimum match requirement from the NWTf. Revisiting the suspension of super fund expenditures mentioned earlier, financial support for habitat work is affected also. In February 2020, \$71,000.00 was approved by the superfund committee to support 14 habitat projects on public lands in the Commonwealth. When Covid hit in March, superfund support for those projects was suspended also.

Now the good news! The NWTf, on the national level, has over a 100 grants and agreements in place to diversify our ability to provide conservation delivery on behalf of our members. This is in addition to the support provided by state super funds. To put the impact in perspective, on the national level in fiscal year 2019, 650,000 acres were conserved or enhanced toward our *Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt.* goal. Of those 650,000 acres, 250,000 acres can be contributed directly to super fund support from the states. The remaining 400,000 acres conserved/enhanced can be contributed to grants and agreements with state and federal agencies. More specifically in Virginia, through our agreement with the VA Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR), \$207,250.00 has been budgeted in fiscal year 2021 for conservation delivery to be administered by the NWTf. The majority of these funds are derived from the sale on national forest stamps with considerable added funds from VDWR, derived from license sales. Approximately 1,600 acres across all national forest ranger districts and 6 state owned WMA's will be enhanced or improved by late Spring 2021. This work will be accomplished through 40+ contracts with local operators providing valuable economic input to our communities.



Even though the super fund is on hold, NWTf leadership has reiterated repeatedly long-term support for the importance of the state super fund program. A committee is currently in place consisting of HQ staff, national board and local volunteers to develop reinstatement guidelines and procedures moving forward. In the short term, be assured that the NWTf is committed to meeting our mission and working diligently to find new ways to make sure conservation delivery remains constant as we work to return to normalcy.

### **Alleghany Highlands Chapter Super fund Project supported by Partners**

The Alleghany Highlands Chapter recently completed a habitat project on the James River Ranger District of the George Washington Jefferson National Forest. The project area was 4 miles west of Covington near Callahan at Thorny Branch. Thorny Branch is accessible by a frontage road off of Interstate 64, exit 10.

Funds were made available for the project from the VA State Chapter super fund. In addition to the \$5000.00 budgeted from the superfund, the local chapter was proactive in engaging partner organizations, The Izaak Walton League and the Appalachian Habitat Association to deliver a larger conservation footprint. The local Izaak Walton League Chapter contributed \$1,000.00. The Appalachian Habitat Association (AHA) contributed \$3,600.00. AHA is a regional science-based organization to support the management of wildlife habitat on public lands in a 7-county area located west of the Blue Ridge.

Thorny branch flows adjacent to a gated road that extends approximately 1.6 miles west from its access point into the national forest. The project consisted of refurbishing 6 wildlife openings varying in size from .2 acres to 1.5 acres. Once soil samples were provided by the U.S. Forest Service and the project prospectus was completed, Shenandoah Habitats LLC, out of Fishersville, VA was contracted to herbicide the clearings to prepare for planting with more palatable forage for wildlife. Post herbicide treatment, M.A. Quantz Corporation, out of Hot Springs, VA, was contracted to complete the project. Quantz provided equipment, labor and expertise for extensive site preparation, followed by spreading fertilizer and seeding to complete the project.

The ability to secure partners by the local chapter will allow for additional wildlife opening refurbishing work in the area to utilize remaining funds. The local chapter also acknowledges the support of the local Southern States location in Covington, VA where the fertilizer and seed were purchased at a great value for the project which benefit local sportsmen.







## HUNTING HERITAGE PROGRAMS



To say March came in like a lion, would be an understatement. To say it went out like a lamb, would be an outright lie! What a spring it was for our Wheelin' Sportsmen program as the Corona Virus threw us a knuckleball and cancelled all of our spring gobbler hunts, as well as some of our fishing events. We began to gain our footing again in early June as we regrouped for our annual offshore fishing event out of OBX Marina aboard Bazinga, with Wheels on Deck. This wheelchair accessible fishing boat offers our members an opportunity for some deep-sea fishing that most will never get to enjoy. They had a blast as they reeled in mahi-mahi, tuna, a citation Bonita, and they even hooked into a huge Blue Marlin. We celebrated July 4<sup>th</sup> with our annual Susie-Q Trout Rodeo at the Grace Farm near Broadway. This was our first large gathering since the pandemic struck, and we were admittedly nervous. While we always strive to keep our events safe for everyone involved, masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and social distancing added a whole new twist, but the event went off without a hitch. Even though the temps were warmer than we preferred, due to the postponement, the trout cooperated. Thanks to Johnny and Tina Grace for giving us another great opportunity on their beautiful river-bottom farm. September returned us to a bit more normalcy as we hosted three dove hunts throughout the state. Although we had to do things differently at our annual Warsaw Ultimate Dove Hunt at Sabine Hall Plantation, the birds were plentiful and we had a great shoot. Our friends with the Staunton-Meherrin Chapter hosted their second annual dove hunt at Occoneechee State Park the same day. And we closed out our dove hunts as we returned to Covered Spring Farm in Goochland for the third year. After much thought and discussion with other VAWS members, I decided to move forward with our fall hunts as usual, with the clear understanding we would have to do things differently to comply with Covid-19 restrictions. Although we had a couple of our hunt hosts opt to skip this year, most decided to go forward. A footnote: as things progress through the fall and winter, we may ultimately have to cancel some events. But, with that being said, our hunters are chomping at the bit to hunt. All of our hunters are considered high risk to the virus and we don't want to lose a single participant, so we're urging everyone involved to be smart, safe, and extra cautious. Some hunts are choosing to deliver lunch to the blinds. Others have moved to bigger facilities, or outside to improve social distancing. And please, avoid close contact, wear a mask when you're around people, and wash your hands! We remind all of our participants and volunteers:

**Please wear a mask around others, at lunch or to and from your blind if with your guide/hunter.**

**Practice social distancing at all times.**

**DO NOT ATTEND if you have any symptoms of Covid-19, or have been exposed to anyone with it.**

These are unprecedented times but we're praying for a safe and successful season. Let's all be safe out there and be able to look back on Deer Season 2020 with fond memories and lots of harvest pics.

Robin Clark  
Wheelin Sportsman Coordinator

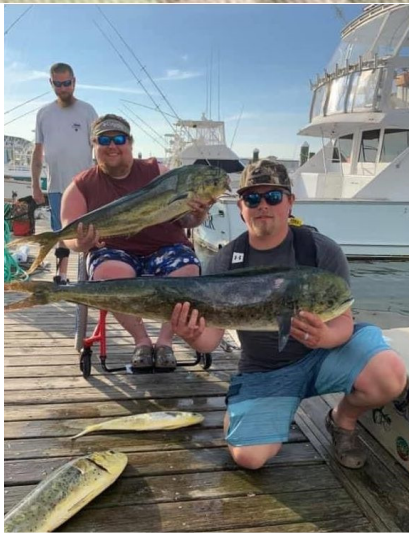




# VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER

## NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

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The VA State Chapter President Richard Pauley presents NWTF VA Regional Directors Billy Hall and Davy Blessing with a check for \$69,000 to the NWTF "Call for All" campaign.





**LOCAL CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS**

**FAITHFUL CALL CHAPTER**



Mindi Freed is presented with a check for \$500 from Alan Hawkins. Ms. Freed was also chosen as the 2019 VA State Chapter Scholarship recipient and will receive \$2500, and compete for the NWTF National Scholarship for \$10,000!



The Faithful Call Chapter holds their 2020 banquet, one of a few chapters that were able to conduct a banquet this year!



Faithful Call Chapter's annual JAKES YOUTH DEER HUNT in SEPTEMBER.





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Faithful Call Chapter holds a JAKERS Fur Trapping Education Event



Faithful Call Chapter holds a WITO Self Defense Class

**AUGUSTA COUNTY CHAPTER**



Augusta County NWTF chapter youth & Parents recently participated in a skeet shooting and Safety training event, on the Folk's Hunt Club property!!





### STAUNTON-MEHERRIN CHAPTER



On Saturday, October 17, 2020, the second annual Fall Staunton-Meherrin/Halifax WITO event was held at the farm of Pearson DeJarnette. This event featured basic handgun safety and shooting. Four participants and four volunteers were greeted by Halifax member, Liz Grove, who then turned the program over to Retired Virginia State Police Sergeant Pearson DeJarnette. After a thorough safety meeting, the group proceeded to the firing range. The ladies had ample shooting opportunities at 5, 10 and 15 yards and decided to forego 20 yards until our next event. After firing several hundred rounds, they were treated to lunch prepared by the Bobbin' Cork of Clarksville, VA. Plans are underway for another event in April of May 2021.



On September 12, 2020, Oconeechee State Park hosted the second annual Wheelin' Sportsman dove hunt sponsored by the Staunton-Meherrin Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. Chief Park Ranger, Alex Qualls, greeted the hunters and volunteers at 6:30 a.m. and gave an overview of the days' activities and a safety meeting. There were 5 hunters and 7 volunteers participating in the hunt. After a slow morning of hunting, the group proceeded to the Clarksville VFW Post 8163, where they were greeted and treated to lunch provided by the Post. Special thanks to Park Superintendent Scott Shanklin for his continued support of the program and VFW member/NWTF volunteer, Scott Slaydon, for his work in providing lunch. Plans are already being made to improve the hunting experience for next year.





### HENRY COUNTY LONGBEARDS



The Henry County Longbeards held their 1st annual Poker Run fund raiser, “Goblin’ Thunder Poker Run. This will be an annual event for the chapter to raise funds for the chapter to continue to support its outreach events throughout each year, its annual “Youth Weekend” JAKES turkey hunt, annual high school scholarship, Turkey Hunter’s Care, and holding other new events for WITO and Wheelin Sportsmen. The HCLB hopes to see more participants in late summer, early fall of 2021. This past August 8th we had 9 motorcycles and 2 cars in the event. Each vehicle paid a \$20 entry fee. We had a great cheeseburger and hot dog lunch and several NWTf prizes were given away along with other donations from local businesses, to include the best hand won a S&W MP Shield 9mm and the worst hand (which was the 1st loser) received \$100 of BPS gift cards.

### BOTETOURT CHAPTER



Botetourt Longbeards members Ed McCoy, left and Richard Pauley, right present a scholarship to Kevin Theimer. Kevin is a 2020 graduate of James River High School in Buchanan.



Spring Witt and Kathy Larlee present a check to Botetourt Longbeards representatives Sherry Crumley, Caroline Simpson and Richard Pauley. The funds will be used to buy Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys for Botetourt food pantries.



Members of the NWTf Botetourt Longbeards donated 335 turkeys to five food pantries in Botetourt County for Thanksgiving.

### Fall turkey hunting in Virginia – Vance Joyner

Fall turkey hunting in Virginia goes back to our colonial days. Wild turkey was a primary food source and harvested during fall hunts, while spring and summer were used for tending the crops. Turkeys were not hunted in the spring so the flock could bounce back and be ready for the fall. Most hunters are not aware that spring hunting season is a recent thing in Virginia. The first time to legally hunt turkey in springtime was an experiment in 1962. In Virginia we have two weeks in October in all but a few counties. Most have a three-week season in December and then some counties have a two-week season in January.

In reading wild turkey history it is noted that back during prohibition Lem Motlow continued to make his whiskey. Every fall he would get an invite to come to Georgia and bring "some of that wild turkey whiskey." The name stuck!

Fall turkey season works several ways. My friend Steve Fritton has dogs. Such hunting usually lets the dogs find a flock and bust them in all direction. Then we take a break (even eat lunch) and then we build blinds and start calling. The other way is "knowing where they are" and getting there in time to join the flock together by calling "assembly." My friend Tony Garrett is a master at that.

I am criticized often because we target and harvest hens in the fall. "It is just wrong, and I'd never do that." To that I reply that in the areas we fall hunt and harvest hens, we have BETTER spring seasons – and larger stronger flocks to hunt. We cannot explain that, but it is a fact. On one farm that we hunt and take an average of 4 hens per fall season we are now seeing flocks of 30-40 birds.

Also, in fall turkey hunting you can get some good intel on deer movement.

If you have never tried it and want to try it, we can connect you with a hunter that would be glad to carry you.

Our TriCounty Longbeards has auctioned off a fall hunt for many, many years. It is one the largest dollar items on our live auction.



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**VA STATE CHAPTER**



CONGRATS TO JONATHAN DUNN ON BEING THE GRAND PRIZE WINNER OF OUR LUCKY 13 RAFFLE IN SEPTEMBER!





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**2020 PHOTOS**







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*Take a child outdoors this fall, introduce them and others to our pastime, help create new hunters, or take your neighbor who maybe doesn't have anywhere to hunt. Good luck afield, have fun, be safe, and thank you for helping the NWTf*  
***“SAVE THE HABITAT, SAVE THE HUNT”!***