

# OUTDOOR HUNTING GUIDE

*FALL/WINTER*



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

OSAGE COUNTY

**Unterrified Democrat**

SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

**DRIFTWOOD OUTDOORS**

# Congressional Sportsmen Foundation celebrates Conservation Policy at Washington D.C. Banquet

Washington D.C. isn't one of the first places one may think of when it comes to celebrating hunting and fishing. Yet, our nation's capital is where federal policy is crafted to oversee many public lands, and where rules and regulations are created to protect and promote our fish and



by **BRANDON BUTLER**

wildlife resources. Activity in Washington by Congress is central to the present and future of sporting life.

The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) represents hunters

and anglers to our elected officials in Washington D.C. and around the country. This important conservation organization, which focuses on policy, hosted its 34th Annual Banquet and Auction in downtown D.C. on September 13. I was proud to be in attendance as a supporter of the CSF efforts to recognize and celebrate the bipartisan Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC) and its leadership. The efforts of these members of Congress to protect and advance conservation on Capitol Hill are imperative to fishing and hunting in our country.

"The CSF Annual Banquet is a completely unique event on Capitol Hill that sets aside party lines to celebrate our similarities and our shared love for our outdoor pursuits," said CSF President and CEO Jeff Crane. "What makes CSF unique is the unparalleled network of pro-sportsmen's policymakers, and this event, which is the largest gathering of hunters and anglers in D.C., provides an opportunity to celebrate the vast achievements of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus and our shared goals to protect and advance hunting and

angling traditions."

CSF was founded in 1989 to serve as the primary sportsmen's voice for influencing public policy. The Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC) are all made up of elected officials who have made a commitment to supporting policy beneficial to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers. CSF works with these legislators on Capitol Hill and in state capitols to advocate for our nation's conservation legacy.

CSF hosted a VIP reception prior to the main banquet. I was able to attend this event, where I, along with 100 or so other conservationists heard pro-conservation remarks from Deputy Secretary of the Interior Tommy Boudreau, USDA Undersecretary Robert Bonnie, U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, CSF Board Chairman Richard Childress, and CSF CEO Jeff Crane. Representatives of Safari Club International (SCI) also took the stage to be recognized for the organization's longtime

partnership.

The Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus is made up of more than 200 members of the House and Senate. According to CSF, it is the largest, most active bipartisan caucus in Congress, and is renowned for its unparalleled effectiveness and dedication to advancing the interests of America's 55 million sportsmen and women. This year, more than 60 Members of Congress attended the event, including bipartisan CSC leaders Sen. Joe Manchin (WV), Sen. John Boozman (AR), Sen. Angus King (ME), Rep. Bruce Westerman (AR), Rep. Jimmy Panetta (CA), and Rep. Garret Graves (LA).

I personally had the good fortune of sitting with and catching up with my friend, Congressman Eric Burlison who represents Missouri's 7th District in the House of Representatives. Congressman Burlison and I worked together on numerous conservation issues in Missouri during his time in the State House. Hearing his firsthand account of life as

See **DRIFTWOOD** on Page 5B

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# Fall Conservation

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 ■ PAGE 4B

## Missouri Hunting Heritage Federation Introducing youth to hunting

**COLTON ZIRKLE**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MISSOURI  
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INC.



What was the spark that ignited your interest in the outdoors? Were you raised on a farm, did you have a good backyard in the city, did you go for walks in parks? Was it an animal, a plant, simply the sky? Any of us with a love for the outdoors can tell you why. For parents, the goal might be getting kids off their phone and outside the house. We all know the value of that time spent out in the woods, on the river, or at the lake. But every year, less people are buying hunting, fishing, and trapping permits and the number of people participating in those activities is decreasing in Missouri and throughout the country.

The founders of the Missouri Hunting Heritage Federation (MHFF) were hunter education instructors. They noticed many of their hunter education students received their certification but never got to go hunting. They took that opportunity to create an organization that helped grow a new generation of hunters who understood their role in conservation and how to safely participate in shooting sports.

The MHFF model is an immersive experience for youth to receive their hunter education certification, shooting instruction and gun safety, and a mentored hunt. All of this is provided to the participants at no cost. Many kids have the opportunity to learn hunting from family or close friends. Others have no exposure to hunting and some have no outdoor experience beyond a mowed lawn. Our clinic sessions extend to the parent or guardian of the youth participant and they are required to attend every part of the MHFF clinic. They can become hunter education certified, receive shooting instruction, and be alongside their child during the mentored hunt. Although the parent doesn't get to shoot during the hunt, they receive the same training so they can enjoy outdoor experiences with their chil-

dren in the future.

At the end of each clinic, we host a camp meal where the kids get to share their stories of the hunt and enjoy the camaraderie that many of us experienced hunters share back at the cabin after our time outdoors. We have members of partner organizations like Quail Forever, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, and National Deer Association present to speak to our participants and engage with them. Participants can then join those organizations and receive more hunting opportunities and make connections beyond MHFF.

MHFF is proud to have guided over 600 families through our youth hunter education clinics and mentored hunts since our beginning in 2006. We are a nonprofit organization based in Linn, Osage County, Missouri and are looking to host more youth hunter education clinics throughout the state. We are starting regional MHFF chapters and provide all necessary equipment, training, and structure for our clinic model. We currently have a full slate of clinics available this fall which can be found on our website: [www.mhff.us/clinics](http://www.mhff.us/clinics). If you are interested in mentoring new youth hunters, coordinating or hosting a hunt in your area or on your property, supporting our efforts, or learning more, please contact the Executive Director, Colton Zirkle at 573-200-1889 or [execdir@mhff.us](mailto:execdir@mhff.us). We also invite you to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube at @mohunting-fed.

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## How to field dress wild game properly and safely

Fishing and hunting are popular outdoor activities. Many outdoor enthusiasts engage in angling or hunting so they can have trophies to put up on their walls. Others rely on hunting and fishing for supplemental food sources. Game animals will have to be cleaned and processed properly whether they're headed to the dinner table or to the taxidermist.

Pathogen contamination is one of the biggest risks when field dressing an animal. As with any animal, game can contain harmful bacteria, such as salmonella and strains of E. coli. Other animals, such as wild hogs, can infect people with a flu-like illness called brucellosis, which can be caught through contact with blood, fluid or tissue of an infected hog. Deer, elk and moose also may have chronic wasting disease, or CWD. Although there is no evidence that links CWD to human illness, the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention advises caution. Proper field dressing techniques and game transport can help reduce the risk of pathogenic contamination. Here are some tips for getting started, courtesy of Penn State and the CDC.

- Wear safety gear. When handling any game animals, protect yourself with rubber gloves. This will prevent the blood and fluids from the game animal from getting on your skin. Eye protection is also advised when handling carcasses.

- Work quickly. The elapsed time from when the animal is downed until it is processed can affect the safety and the quality of the meat if it will be consumed, according to Martin Bucknavage, food safety extension associate in the Penn State Department of Food Science. Field dress as soon as possible to ensure rap-

See **FIELD DESSING** on Page 7B

## Driftwood • from page 2B

a freshman congressman in Washington D.C. was incredibly interesting. I can say with all honesty that I am glad to have him representing Missouri in our federal government. He is a friend to sportsmen.

A highlight of the night was watching the two founding members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, Richard Taylor "Dick" Schulze and Robert Lindsay Thomas, be honored for their service to conservation. They each received the Dingell-Young Sportsmen's Legacy Award – the highest award given by CSF. Named in recognition of the Dingell family – Congressmen John D. Dingell, Sr. (D-MI) and John D. Dingell, Jr. (D-MI) – and Congressman Don Young (R-AK), the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation created the Dingell-Young Sportsmen's Legacy Award to recognize the extraordinary individual and collaborative leadership of the Dingell family and Congressman Young, and their long-standing dedication to the advancement of conservation policy and our outdoor hunting and angling traditions.

"Schulze and Thomas are innovative leaders that set the precedent for a bipartisan collaboration that remains as the front-line for hunting and angling policy in the Halls of Congress," said CSF President and CEO Jeff Crane. "This award is in recognition of their lifelong dedication to conservation, their passion for our outdoor pursuits, and their impact that we will forever be grateful for."

While conservation organizations dedicated to specific species and direct habitat improvements are critical to the future of wildlife, so are organizations focused on

conservation and sporting policy. Often, these organizations operate outside of the mainstream awareness they deserve. The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation is critically important to the future of hunting and fishing in our country. All of us who care about conservation and our sporting traditions should be proud to know over 200 members of Congress agree.

See you down the trail...

For more Driftwood Outdoors, check out the podcast on [www.driftwoodoutdoors.com](http://www.driftwoodoutdoors.com) or anywhere podcasts are streamed.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDON BUTLER  
U.S. Congressman from Montana and former Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke addresses the VIP Reception of the Congressional Sportsmen Foundation (CSF) annual banquet in Washington D.C.

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## Simple safety protocols that can protect hunters

Hunting is big business in North America. In 2017, more than 15 million people hunted in the United States. The National Shooting Sports Foundation reports that sportsmen and women contribute nearly \$9.4 million to the economy every day.

Millions of hunters take to forests and fields every year. Seasoned hunters and novices alike can benefit from revisiting some safety procedures before their first outing this season.

### Weather

Weather should be a consideration whenever people spend a significant amount of time outdoors. Hunters typically leave before dawn and arrive home after dusk. Hypothermia is a very real risk for hunters who may be out in snow or wet conditions. It's possible to get hypothermia by overdressing as well. Sweating and then being exposed to dropping temperatures puts people at risk for hypothermia. Hunters should dress in layers with moisture-wicking materials and a water-repellant outer layer. In addition, check the weather forecast before heading out as a last second precautionary measure.

### Firearm safety

Firearm safety is a critical component of safe hunting. Hunters use rifles, shotguns and other firearms. Each gun is different, so hunters need to familiarize themselves with new firearms before using them. The following are some additional firearm safety tips, courtesy of State Farm Insurance and Southern Land Exchange.

- Always treat a firearm as if it is loaded.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Only point at what you plan to shoot.
- Clearly identify your target and what is beyond it.
- Fire within the zone-of-fire, which is the 45-degree area directly in front of each hunter.
- Firearm chambers should be emptied when guns are not in use.
- Use appropriate ammunition.
- Never modify or alter the gun.
- Never cross a fence, jump a ditch or climb a tree with a loaded gun.
- Never rely on a gun's safety.

### Additional safety tips

Hunters should always let others know



where they will be when leaving in the morning. If something should happen, people back home can alert authorities if something goes awry. Always check equipment and maintain it properly. Equipment should include gear colored in hunter's orange. That extends to dogs if they are accompanying hunters on a trip. This makes hunters more visible to other hunters. Also, carry

a first aid kit, a charged mobile phone or a satellite phone to maintain contact with others in case of emergencies.

These are just some of the safety protocols that should be followed when hunting. Non-hunters should exercise caution during hunting seasons, particularly when entering forests and areas that hunters frequent.

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## Field dressing • from page 5B

id loss of the animal's body heat, to prevent surface bacteria from growing and to preserve the quality of the meat. Eviscerate the animal to help the carcass dissipate heat and remove the internal organs, where spoilage tends to occur more quickly.

- Watch out for internal organs. Avoid cutting into internal organs, especially the intestines, where the largest amount of bad bacteria tend to reside.

- Chill the carcass. Deterioration will occur more quickly in temperatures greater than 40 F. Therefore, insert plastic

bags of ice or snow into the body cavity of the animal to keep the carcass chilled. Move the carcass into a cooler or refrigerator as soon as possible after field dress.

- Choose tools wisely. Use clean, sharp knives when field dressing and butchering to make it easier to cut through and process the carcass. Use clean water, premoistened wipes or alcohol wipes to clean the knife frequently between cuts to prevent bacterial contamination.

- Hang game by hind legs. Hang the

animal by its hind legs with its head down when aging or butchering. This prevents brain and spinal fluids from contacting the meat.

- Most importantly during field dress, if any of the internal organs smell or look offensive, or if there is oddly colored discharge, do not consume the meat. Hunters and anglers are advised to learn more about field dress techniques to hone their skills. Speak with local fish and game officials about nearby courses.



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**OUTDOORS IN THE OZARKS**

*Something to be aware of*

People need to know about new diseases that result from outdoor living. One of them is known as the 'Alpha-gal' syndrome, a sometimes-fatal disease people get from the spotted wood tick bite. A biologist friend of mine from Arkansas says that he knows of several deaths in that state which have resulted from the disease.

I won't go into much detail here about it is caused by a tick bite which but apparently creates some kind of allergy to red meat which makes some people violently ill, when they eat red meat. That does not include pork, chicken and fish. Find out more about it on the Internet. Doctors themselves are just finding out about it, but it is going to become more prevalent. It didn't even exist ten years

ago, but at least it is known to be caused by the bite of a certain species of tick. And few know the extent of the tick diseases. I think there are nearly 100 species of ticks in the United States and more than two-dozen of them are in the state of Missouri.

It is a topic most people are being intentionally mislead about and you will never hear the truth about it through the larger news media sources in the state. On that site I will give you the name and testimony from an Ozarkian who has tearfully told me about seeing a brother die from it... transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. When I ask people if they have ever heard about it, most have no idea what it is. You need to know the whole story about it. I will talk about all those diseases on Thursday evening, the Sept. 21st, at the Patterson, Mo community center from 7 to 8 p.m., then again next week in Mt. Vernon, Mo on the Sept. 28th.

For me this week is catfish time. I am going to set trotlines for flathead and channel catfish. If you use live bait you can catch both species and I love trotlining. I want to stockpile my freezer with a legal limit of both. Then I give fresh fish to some elderly folks I know and I will use them in some community fish fries in the fall to help raise money for good causes. I myself seldom eat fish because we practically lived on fish and ducks and squirrels as a kid. But I love to catch them for others.

While I am trotlining, I will spend the night on some river gravel bar at times and catch bass on topwater lures during the day. What a time this is to be fishing, with cooling water comes hungry fish!

If you like to read, my two magazines are about to be mailed out, one an outdoor magazine and one an Ozark magazine. You can get both by calling me... 417-777-5227 and the email address is [lightninridge47@gmail.com](mailto:lightninridge47@gmail.com). If you are as technologically unadvanced as me just write to me at Box 22, Bolivar, Mo.



by **LARRY DABLEMONT**

Another disease you should know about is transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. On the Internet, that disease is said to affect animals and humans and is always fatal. Look it up. It is called other diseases, scrapies in sheep, Cruetzfeldt-Jacobs disease in humans, and mad-cow disease in cattle. Humans can get the disease from eating meat from infected cattle, and thousands have, dying a horrible death they say is worse than rabies. I have written about it on my computer site... [larrydablemontoutdoors.blogspot.com](http://larrydablemontoutdoors.blogspot.com).

I beg you to go there on your computer and read it. There is much you need to know about the disease and it cannot be published in most newspapers because of a tremendous controversy.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LARRY DABLEMONT

Counting birds is an enjoyable and scientifically impactful way to enjoy the outdoors.



# How to prepare for a child's first hunting trip

Millions of individuals across the globe are avid hunters. The passion many of those people have for hunting began on their first childhood hunting trip, and countless hunters fondly recall this milestone moment in their lives.

If there's a first time for everything, parents know that kids' initial forays into any activity comes with ups and downs. Hunting is no exception to that trend, but parents can consider these measures as they prepare their youngsters to go hunting for the first time.

- Emphasize the importance of safety. Safety is of the utmost importance on any hunting trip. Kids should be aware of all safety protocols pertaining to their guns and the hunting grounds. Hunter's education courses can teach kids about hunting safety, but parents can quiz youngsters in the days leading up to the trip to reinforce safety protocols.

- Explain how hunting trips typically unfold. Giving kids an idea of how a hunting trip may unfold is another good idea. Explain the timing of the trip and why it's beginning when it is. Kids without such knowledge may be less enthusiastic about early morning hunting excursions if they don't understand why they need to get out of bed early on a day off. But they might be more excited if they recognize they're more likely to see wildlife and enjoy a successful trip if they're willing to sacrifice sleeping in.

- Bring some extra activities for kids to do. Screens are a no-no, as they could deter wildlife. But hunting requires patience, which is not exactly a virtue many youngsters possess. So bring some books along or encourage kids to keep a diary of their first trip, describing



it in detail so they have something to look back on as they get older.

- Purchase comfortable hunting attire. Kids will likely be wearing new attire on their first trip, so parents should have them try the clothing on prior to the

trip. When shopping for hunting clothing, make sure it meets all safety standards and is functional for hunters, but don't overlook comfort. Hunting involves a lot of

See **FIRST HUNT** on Page 10B

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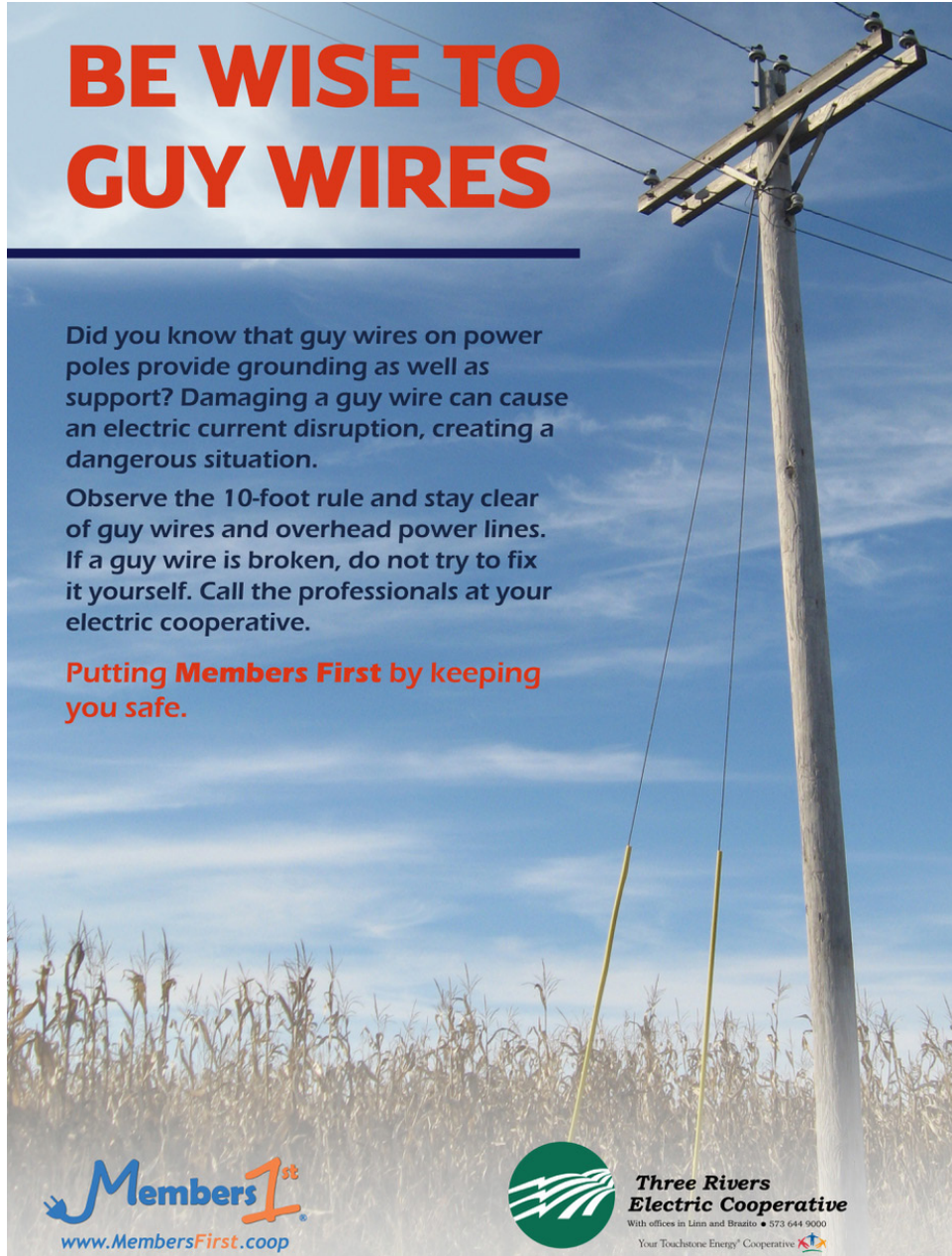
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ROLLA, Mo. — Join the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and learn about mushrooms with Mike Snyder of WildWise Botanicals from 9 – 11 a.m. on Sept. 30 at Marguerite Bray Conservation Area.

“You’ll learn about the basics of identifying fungi along with tips on how to forage for them safely and responsibly,” said Dwight Warnke, MDC Conservation Educator. “We will then venture into the woods to see what kinds of fungi we can encounter.”

Class size is limited to 25 participants; advance registration is required and can be completed online at <https://mdc-event-web.s3licensing.com/Event/EventDetails/193798>.

“Ozark forest ecosystems are home to many incredible fungi, so hopefully we will encounter plenty for everyone to observe,” he said.

Program focus will be edible and poisonous mushrooms, but other species will be discussed along the way. Ecological interactions of fungi will also be covered.

Snyder has studied and foraged fungi for over a decade and spends his time traveling and highlighting the importance of fungi in the region. He serves on the board of directors and is chairperson of the research committee for the Missouri Mycological Society (MOMS). Snyder also is a member of the cultivation committee for the North

American Mycological Association (NAMA).

Many Missouri mushrooms are edible, but proper identification is essential to avoid illness and even death. If you’re mushroom hunting — whether for ID or for the table. Don’t eat a mushroom unless you’re certain it’s an edible species! Our mushrooming topics can help you find, collect, iden-

tify, and prepare edible mushrooms. For more tips and mushroom hunting information visit <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/activities/mushroom-hunting>.

Marguerite Bray Conservation Area is located at 14220 CR 7000 (Bridge School Road) in Rolla.

Find more free programs near you at [mdc.mo.gov/events](https://mdc.mo.gov/events).



## MDC holds free basic kayaking class Sept. 28

GERALD, Mo.—The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) invites anyone interested in kayaking to learn the basics and give it a try. MDC will hold a Kayaking class Thursday, Sept. 28 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Port Hudson Lake Conservation Area in Franklin County. The area contains a 55-acre lake.

This kayaking program will teach participants about paddling equipment, paddling safety, and how to paddle a kayak on a lake. All equipment will be provided. Participants must be at least age 13 and able to swim to participate in this event. Closed toe shoes are required and participants should be prepared to get wet. Those under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

Kayaking is an excellent way to discover nature on the water. As a very personalized method of convey-

ance, it offers the paddler an intimate connection with the water. A kayak can get you to a perfect fishing spot, enable you to nimbly explore the quiet cove of a giant lake, or put you close to a great blue heron to capture that dynamic photograph. Paddling is also great exercise for an upper body cardio workout.

This Kayaking program is free, however advanced online registration is required at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4eQ>.

Port Hudson Lake Conservation Area is located at 1581 Bald Hill Road, north of Gerald. From Highway 50, go north on Highway C for four miles. Then turn west on bald hill road and go one mile to reach the area.

Sign up for email or text alerts to stay informed of MDC’s latest programs and events by going to <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZoP>.



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### First hunt • from page 9B

waiting, and the trip will be more enjoyable for everyone if kids are comfortable throughout the slow periods.

• Recognize the day could be emotional. A child’s first hunting trip can be an emotional roller coaster, as kids may feel excited, bored, nervous, sad, and even guilty at any point during the day.

Parents must allow kids to express any of these emotions during the day and emphasize that it’s alright to express their emotions.

A child’s first hunting trip is a milestone moment. Parents can take steps leading up to the trip to ensure their children are ready for what’s to come.

# Conservation Commission approves most MDC permit price increases

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri Conservation Commission gave final approval at its Sept. 8 open meeting to adjust prices for most hunting, fishing, trapping, and commercial permits offered by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). The price increases will take effect Feb. 29, 2024.

Most MDC permit prices have remained the same for the past 20 years. MDC proposed the permit price adjustments in an effort to keep up with rising costs of goods and services it uses to manage its more than 1,000 conservation areas along with nature centers, shooting ranges, fish hatcheries, and other facilities.

MDC received initial approval on its proposed permit price adjustments from the Commission at the Commission's May 19 open meeting. MDC then offered a public comment period from July 4 through Aug. 2 where it received about 250 public comments along with feedback on the proposals from numerous conservation-related groups and organizations.

Missouri is home to more than 1 million anglers, 500,000 hunters, and several thousand trappers. MDC issues nearly 2.6 million hunting, fishing, and trapping permits each year.

On average, most resident hunting and fishing permit prices would be adjusted by about \$1.

"Compared to other states, Missouri permit prices are still in the middle-to-lower end of the scale and will still be a bargain," said MDC Director Sara Parker Pauley. "The average price of a resident firearm deer permit

for surrounding states is \$54 compared to Missouri's new price starting in 2024 of \$18."

Not all permit prices will increase. Based on public comments and other feedback received, MDC will not raise permit prices for resident and nonresident Daily Fishing Permits, annual Trout Permits, and resident and nonresident Fur Dealer's Permits.

Some of the new permit prices starting in 2024 will be:

The price of a resident hunting and fishing permit will go from \$19 to \$20.50. The average price for surrounding states is \$42.47.

The price of a resident small game hunting permit will go from \$10 to \$10.50. The average price for surrounding states is \$26.57.

The price of a resident trapping permit will go from \$10 to \$11. The average price for surrounding states is \$29.38.

The price of a resident spring turkey permit will go from \$17 to \$18. The average price for surrounding states is \$47.69.

The price of a resident firearm deer permit will go from \$17 to \$18. The average price for surrounding states is \$54.06.

The price of a resident antlerless deer permit will go from \$7 to \$7.50. The average price for surrounding states is \$24.21.

The price of a youth resident antlerless deer permit will go from \$3.50 to \$3.75. The average price for surrounding states is \$24.21.



The price of the daily trout tag will go from \$4 to \$5 for adults and stay at \$3 for youth. The Commission also rescinded the '\$5 for 5 trout pilot' at Maramec Spring Park based on public input. At all trout parks the daily limit is four trout with a statewide possession limit of eight trout.

Those under 16 and 65 years of age and older remain exempt from small-game hunting permits and annual fishing permit requirements. Daily trout tags and an annual trout permit are still required.

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## MDC reminds hunters to be safe, follow regulations during migratory bird season

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is reminding hunters to follow regulations – including bag limits, shooting hours, and carrying all necessary permits – along with always hunt safely during migratory bird season.

Dove season in Missouri runs through Nov. 29. Seasons for other migratory birds include:

Teal season: Now through Sept. 24

Ducks and coots:

(North Zone) Oct. 28 – Dec. 26

(Middle Zone) Nov. 4 – 12 and Nov. 18 – Jan. 7

(South Zone) Nov. 23 – 26 and Dec. 7 – Jan. 31

“Please remember to be safe when hunting migratory birds,” said Russell Duckworth, MDC Southeast Protection Regional Supervisor. “Both dove and teal fly in groups and often are in low proximity to the ground. When swinging on birds, be aware of where other hunters may be and do not shoot at low flying birds.”

“And be sure to always have your permit with you when hunting,” added Duck-

worth.

The bag limit for doves this year is 15 total. Shooting hours for doves is one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. A small game hunting permit and a migratory bird hunting permit is required to hunt doves unless a person is under 16, over 65, or a resident landowner hunting on property that they own.

Teal season shooting hours are from sunrise to sunset. The bag limit for teal is 6 total for all species. To hunt teal, a hunter is required to have a Small Game Hunting Permit, Migratory Bird Hunting Permit, and a Federal Duck Stamp.

If a hunter is under 16 years of age, they do not need any permits to hunt teal, said Duckworth.

“But they must hunt in the immediate presence of a properly licensed adult who is 18 or older who has valid hunter education, or was born prior to January 1, 1967, or the hunter under the age of 16 must have a valid hunter education card of their own,” he said.

For questions about hunting migratory



birds, contact your local MDC office.

MDC reminds hunters to check conditions of fields. For a listing and details on MDC dove management areas, go online to [mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places/dove-management-areas](http://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places/dove-management-areas).

Buy Missouri hunting permits from numerous vendors around the state online at [huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/permits](http://huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/permits), or through MDC’s free MO Hunting app, available for download through Google

Play or the App Store.

MDC’s Migratory Bird and Waterfowl Hunting Digest for 2022 – 2023 is available where permits are sold and online at [mdc.mo.gov/about-us/about-regulations/migratory-bird-waterfowl-hunting-digest](http://mdc.mo.gov/about-us/about-regulations/migratory-bird-waterfowl-hunting-digest).

More information on hunting doves and other game-bird species is available online at [mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species](http://mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species).

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# Family-friendly outdoor activities

Children who spend a lot of time outdoors benefit from exposure to nature in myriad ways, some of which may surprise even the most devoted outdoorsmen.

According to a 2006 study published in the journal *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, fifth graders who attended school at a local prairie wetlands where lessons in science, math and writing were integrated in an experimental way had significantly stronger reading and writing skills than their peers who attended more traditional schools. Another study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* found that holding a class outdoors one day a week significantly improved the daily cortisol patterns of students, reducing their risk of stress and improving their ability to adapt to stress.

Parents who want their children to reap the rewards of being exposed to the great outdoors can encourage educators to incorporate nature into school curriculums and also embrace these fami-

ly-friendly outdoor activities.

- **Nature treasure hunt:** A treasure hunt in nature can keep kids engaged on family hiking excursions and provide an excellent opportunity for parents to teach children about the assortment of plants, birds and wildlife that live in the parks and along the trails near their home.

- **Outdoor art class:** Families don't even need to leave their properties to spend quality time together outside. Pick a pleasant afternoon and set up an outdoor painting station, encouraging everyone to paint what they see. Fall is a great time to host an outdoor art sessions thanks to the assortment of vibrant colors that have become synonymous with autumn landscapes.

- **Bonfire:** Outdoor activities need not be limited to daylight hours. A post-dinner backyard bonfire can entice everyone outside, where families can tell scary stories as they make s'mores.

- **Stargaze:** Stargazing is another way families can spend time outdoors and learn a few things at the same time.



Some blankets, a thermos of hot cocoa and a chart of constellations can provide the perfect complement to a sky full of bright stars. If visibility is compromised in the backyard, find a local spot where everyone can get a clear view of the night sky.

- **Fruit picking:** Apple picking is a popular autumn activity, but families need not wait for the autumn harvest to enjoy a day picking fruit or vegeta-

bles at a nearby farm. Visit a local farm during its harvest season, teaching children about how the foods they love are grown and eventually make it to the family dinner table.

Families looking to spend more time together in the great outdoors can look to a number of activities people of all ages can enjoy.

## Get outside this fall with help from Agents of Discovery mobile app

JEFFERSON CITY – The fall season is a great time to explore and learn about Missouri's outdoors. To help kids and adults discover nature this season, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is again partnering with the Agents of Discovery mobile gaming app for its Missouri Explorer 3.0 Campaign.

The Missouri Explorer Campaign will run through Oct. 31. Anyone can join in by downloading the free app and completing the Missions at participating locations. Each Mission is made up of educational challenges that teach players about local history, culture, ecosystems, and safety.

Agents can again complete Missions at five MDC nature centers: the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center in Kansas City, Runge Nature Center in Jefferson City, Powder Valley Nature Center in Kirkwood, the Springfield Nature Center, and Cape Girardeau Nature Center.

Download the free app and create an Agent profile. Then pick a Mission in your area. Download the mission before heading to it, so you can play the game without WiFi or a data connection. Then use your secret Agent tool to find and unlock challenges!

Agents of Discovery is available for download through the App Store for Apple products or Google Play for Android devices.

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## Safety measures all hunters should take

Hunting draws millions of people into the great outdoors every year. Many avid hunters feel hunting is a great way to actively participate in nature while also taking responsibility for procuring one's own food.

Hunting requires discipline, dedication, patience, and, perhaps most important, a commitment to safety. By prioritizing safety on each hunting trip, seasoned and novice hunters alike are acknowledging the potential dangers of this beloved outdoor activity while doing everything they can to ensure the trip is as safe as possible. Because safety plays such a vital role in successful hunting trips, hunters of all experience levels can benefit from a refresher course on the safety measures they should take each time they go on the hunt.

- Treat all firearms as if they're loaded. Treating all firearms as if they're loaded ensures hunters won't be tempted to engage in the kind of fooling around that can contribute to tragic accidents. This approach can reduce the risk of firearm-related accidents or injuries, and can be an especially effective way to teach youngsters about the dangers of firearms and the correct ways to mitigate those dangers.

- Keep your finger off the trigger and only point at what you plan to shoot. Keeping your finger off the trigger until you're ready to shoot ensures you won't accidentally discharge your firearm. In addition, nev-



er point your firearm at anything other than what you plan to shoot.

- Know the forecast and dress appropriately. Firearms are not the only risk to hunters' safety. Inclement weather can put hunters at the mercy of Mother Nature. According to the Mayo Clinic, hypothermia, which occurs when the human body loses heat faster than it can produce heat, can affect hunters who are unable to get out of wet clothes or move to warm, dry locations as their bodies lose heat. In addition, hunters may be at risk of hypothermia even if temperatures are hovering around 50 F. Before embarking on a hunting trip, hunters should read the forecast of the areas where they will be hunting and dress accordingly. Outer layers that repel water can help keep hunters dry, and hunters also should avoid wearing cotton, which retains

moisture and can increase their risk for hypothermia. Clothing made with moisture-wicking fabrics is a great alternative to cotton.

- Share your plan with others. Returning home safe is the ultimate goal for hunters, and that's more likely to happen when hunters share their hunting plans with others. Let someone, ideally a spouse, parent, roommate, or sibling, know when and where you will be hunting and when you expect to return by. Direct this loved one to call the local authorities if you do not call by a predetermined time. This can dramatically reduce the time it takes to find you if you become injured on your hunting trip and prove unable to get back to your vehicle safely.

Millions of people across the globe enjoy hunting. Avid hunters know that no hunting trip is successful if safety is not the utmost priority.

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# MDC asks public to report hemorrhagic disease in Missouri deer

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports moderate levels of hemorrhagic disease (HD) activity in Missouri’s deer population this summer. HD is a general term for epizootic hemorrhagic disease and the bluetongue virus.

MDC has recently confirmed HD in deer in Cole, Greene, Howell, Miller, St. Louis, and Webster counties. MDC has also received at least 305 reports of additional suspected HD cases from locations throughout the state.

“Hemorrhagic disease is a naturally occurring virus that infects deer through the bite of a native midge commonly called no-see-ums or gnats,” explained MDC Wildlife Health Program Supervisor Deb Hudman. “HD outbreaks are most common in Missouri between July and October and HD transmission ends after a heavy frost kills the midges.”

Clinical signs of HD in deer vary but may include an unwillingness to move, difficulty breathing, and swelling of the head, neck, or tongue.

“HD can cause a high fever, prompting infected deer to seek water,” Hudman said. “Deer that are sick may appear dazed, lethargic, and nonresponsive. Deer that die from HD usually do so in a matter of days following infection and are often found dead in or near water with no outward signs of illness.”

Hudman noted that not all deer die from HD and those deer that survive develop immunity. There is no cure or vaccine for HD and not much can be done to stop the disease from running its course. However, reports of deer with HD can help MDC biologists determine the impacts of the disease on deer numbers in specific areas.

“We receive reports of suspected cases of HD every year and ask the public to report suspected cases of



HD to their local MDC office, conservation agent, or to email the information to [WildlifeHeath@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:WildlifeHeath@mdc.mo.gov),” said Hudman.

Hudman noted that humans do not get HD, so handling and consumption of meat from deer that have recovered from the disease poses no health hazard.

The most significant HD outbreak recorded in Missouri occurred in 2012 during an extreme drought.

“Outbreaks tend to be more severe in drought years because deer congregate near the limited water sources where midges are more likely to be present, thus increasing the likelihood of disease transmission,” said Hudman.

Hunters harvested just shy of 300,000 deer during the 2022-2023 deer season – one of the highest harvests

on record.

MDC Private Lands Deer Biologist Kevyn Wiskirchen indicated that there may be some impacts during this year’s hunting season in localized areas that have experienced significant deer deaths from HD, but the overall hunting outlook remains good.

“For landowners that have found numerous dead deer this summer because of HD and are concerned about deer numbers on their property, reducing harvest pressure on does will help to mitigate the effects of HD,” said Wiskirchen.

Based on the number of suspect HD reports received by MDC so far this season, Wiskirchen indicated that the locations where taking such measures are needed will likely be very limited.



## Fun ways to enjoy the great outdoors with kids

The great outdoors can be an inviting place with plenty of opportunities for adventure. It’s also a treasure trove of sights and sounds that can serve as a springboard for a lifelong yearning for knowledge.

Children of the 1980s and before may remember long days spent outside with requirements to “come back in when the street lights turn on.” Today’s children may not have as much freedom, but they still can benefit from both unstructured and structured play outside. The following are some outdoor activities families can enjoy together.

- Fossil hunting: Whether there is a natural fossil bed nearby or not, children can use plastic colanders and shovels to dig in the dirt or sand to see if any treasures can be found.

- Collect and paint rocks: Collect stones and then paint them with vivid designs or sayings. Once painted, families can place them back into their natural surroundings for others to discover.

- Make a nature collage: Take a hike or a stroll through a nearby park and collect

little treasures along the way. Glue these items to a piece of cardstock or cardboard to create a collage that will serve as a memento of the day.

- Run through a sprinkler: Pools can be great fun, but something as simple as a garden sprinkler can keep everyone occupied for a few hours.

- Visit a botanical garden: Tour a nearby botanical garden to get an opportunity to see flowers and plants that may not be native to the area. Bring sketch pads and draw your favorite plants.

- Go camping: Whether you camp in the backyard, in the woods or at a campsite, spending a night immersed in nature can be an unforgettable experience. Camping equipment can be rented or borrowed, if necessary.

- Enjoy a picnic: Bring a meal outdoors to a quiet spot, like a park or garden.

- Take a boat ride: Enjoying the great outdoors from the water brings an entirely new perspective. Purchase tickets for a



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## Youths can learn skills of duck hunting at a free clinic Oct. 3, followed by two hunts at Busch Conservation Area

Duck hunting is a dynamic and challenging sport. It's also a way to get out to some beautiful places and see them just as the sun breaks out over the horizon. For a young person, it could be an experience that creates a lifetime impression.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to help young hunters discover the allure of duck hunting. To help, MDC is holding a free youth duck hunting clinic on Tuesday, Oct. 3 from 5-7 p.m. at the August A. Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center in Defiance. Participants will have the chance to go beyond the classroom for a first-hand field experience at one of two youth duck hunts on Oct. 21 or 22. Attendees must be signed up for one of these hunts to attend the clinic.

This program is for youths, age 11-15, who have not duck hunted before and want a safe gateway into the sport. It will cover all the basics of duck hunting. These will

include safety measures, duck habitats and migration, proper cover, clothing, firearms and equipment, and tips on using duck hunting blinds and decoy placement. The class will also look at duck hunting regulations, limits, and identification. Attendance at the clinic is required before participating in the hunts.

"If you are a new hunter or have hunted deer but want to learn to hunt ducks, this program will introduce you to duck hunting. Duck hunting is challenging and rewarding and offers an opportunity to get outside and see these beautiful birds. This program will help you have a successful hunt," said Bryant Hertel, MDC outdoor education center manager.

Youth duck hunters can select one of two options for participating in a hunt using the following signup links. Registration closes Oct. 2.

Saturday, Oct. 21; <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4em>



Sunday, Oct. 22; <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4es>

Interested participants should register online for the hunt of their choice. Registering for one of the hunts will also enroll them in the clinic. They must also be hunter education-certified by the date of the hunt and be comfortable handling a shotgun. MDC will provide all equipment, firearms, and ammunition needed for the hunts. Participants may also bring their

own equipment if they have it. Both hunts will take place on the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area in St. Charles.

The August A. Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center is located at 3550 Route D in Defiance, approximately five miles west of Highway 94.

Sign up for email or text alerts to stay informed of MDC's latest programs and events by going to <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZoP>.

## Outdoors • from page 15B

fishing charter or take a tour of a local waterway.

- Feed ducks or other birds: Children can see wildlife in its natural environment, and provide some supple-

mental nutrition in the process. Bring along wild birdseed (bread is not a healthy option) and sprinkle some along shorelines or in the water to watch the birds arrive.

- Do a scavenger hunt in nature: While on any excursion, you can engage in a scavenger hunt. Have a list of

five to 10 items to find, such as a pink flower, a leaf with a stem and a black rock. See who can find them all the fastest.

Spending time outdoors provides plenty of opportunities for family-friendly excitement and fun.

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