

THE CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

Summer 2016 edition Nature notes & news from the Lavaca County Wildlife Management Association

Annual Membership Meeting

All members are encouraged to attend the general membership meeting of the Lavaca County Wildlife Management Association (LCWMA) on Sunday, September 18, 2016. Doors will open at 10:00 a.m. and the general meeting will get underway around 11:00 a.m. with a presentation by, Jay Bragg, Associate Director of the Commodity and Regulatory Activities Division of Texas Farm Bureau. Jay's presentation will discuss Texas water law and water rights accorded to Texas landowners. He will also discuss changes to the Clean Water Act, particularly the new definition of what constitutes Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The new definition of WOTUS could have profound impacts on what private property owners could do on their land, dependent upon how a practice could impact a WOTUS. The WOTUS rule is currently under a nationwide stay from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, but could become law again depending upon how the Court rules. As private landowners, this is one presentation you don't want to miss.

Following Jay's presentation a catered meal of barbecue brisket will be served. **Members are asked to bring their favorite dessert to share with everyone.** After lunch, researchers with Baylor College of Medicine's National School of Tropical Medicine will present an update on the Chagas disease research conducted on deer hearts collected in Lavaca County last hunting season. Brent Pierce, Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist for Lavaca County, will then review the herd composition data, and discuss harvest recommendations for the upcoming season. After Brent, Joel Wagner, LCWMA chairman, will give an update on the LCWMA. Raffle drawings will follow and the meeting will adjourn.

In addition to the bucket raffles held at the meeting, a special raffle is being conducted to offset the cost of the meeting. Only 1000 tickets will be sold. Tickets can be purchased at the meeting, however, if you are unable to attend and wish to purchase tickets, please complete the form on page 5. Send the completed form along with your payment to the LCWMA and tickets will be made out for you. In addition, you will receive a numbered ticket stub verifying your entry. The drawing will occur at the meeting on September 18, 2016.

The Board of Directors has put together an impressive suite of prizes for the bucket raffles. There will be something for everyone hunters, wildlife enthusiasts, and fishermen alike.

So, make plans now to join your fellow LCWMA members on Sunday, September 18, 2016 at the Knights of Columbus Hall (321 US HWY 77 S) in Hallettsville for the 2016 annual membership meeting of the LCWMA. We hope to see all of you there.

Director elections at annual meeting

Elections for positions on the Board of Directors will occur at the annual meeting on September 18, 2016. If you are interested in running for a position on the Board of Directors please contact the LCWMA Chairman (contact info. on newsletter cover) by September 1, 2016, to learn which positions are available and to get your name on the ballot. Nominations will not be taken from the floor the day of the meeting. So, you must get your name on the ballot by September 1, 2016 to be eligible to receive votes at the meeting.

Please help us improve efficiency

If you are receiving both a printed and an email copy, or multiple printed copies, of this newsletter please let us know. If you are currently receiving the printed form of the newsletter, and would like to receive the newsletter via email, please send us a note at lavacacountywma@gmail.com, and we will convert you over to email only.

Corresponding via email allows the LCWMA to get information to members faster, and saves funds that could be used to further our conservation goals. Also, members with email are the only ones to receive notices and newsletters distributed by Texas Parks and Wildlife via the TWIMS system.

Membership dues

If you haven't already done so, please send in your annual membership dues for 2016. Dues are \$20, and checks and money orders should be made payable to LCWMA. Questions pertaining to membership dues status should be directed to LCWMA Treasurer, Sam Bordovsky at 361-798-1813 or sbordovsky@gmail.com. Please mail your dues to:

LCWMA
P.O. Box 524
Hallettsville, TX 77964

As of the time of printing, less than 50% of LCWMA members have paid their 2016 membership dues. Remain eligible to receive doe permits by paying your membership dues on time.

The doe permit process

By Joel Wagner, LCWMA Chairman

Every year about this time I get a ton of phone calls, from new and old members alike, about the process for receiving doe permits. So, in an effort to avoid this onslaught I will go through the permit process beginning with paying your membership dues. As stated previously, any LCWMA member looking to receive antlerless (doe) permits for the 2016-2017 hunting season must have their membership dues paid by August 15, 2016. Interested members must also submit their herd composition report to Texas Parks and Wildlife by the date printed on the herd composition sheet (i.e., September 1, 2016). Failure to submit herd composition by the due date will render a member ineligible to receive permits for the 2016-2017 hunting season.

Once Texas Parks and Wildlife receives the herd composition surveys they are sorted by management unit (MU) then combined with spotlight survey data from each respective MU to create a harvest recommendation for each. This harvest recommendation is then loaded into the Texas Wildlife Information Management Services (TWIMS) site, into accounts that have been established for each individual landowner/land agent. If you have an email address on file with Texas Parks and Wildlife you will receive an email from TWIMS when your permits have been loaded into the system. You must then log into your personal TWIMS account using your *whole email address* as the login name, as well as the password you created when you first accessed TWIMS. If at any time you forget your TWIMS password simply click on the "Forgot Password" link and you will be emailed a temporary access code to enable you to log in to reset your password. Once inside your TWIMS account click on the "Harvest Recommendations" tab at the top of the page. There you should see a list of your ranch/ranches in a spreadsheet. Under the "Site Name" tab click on the ranch name. The ranch name(s) will be listed with the MU in which each belongs first. When the next page opens you can scroll down and see how many permits are recommended for the property. Then scroll all the way to the bottom of the page and click on the button labeled "Accept Harvest Recommendations." That's it. You're done. Finished. It's Over. Your permits will be mailed to you from Texas Parks and Wildlife headquarters in Austin, and should normally arrive in 5-7 business days.

If you do not have an email address on file with Texas Parks and Wildlife your permits will be claimed by Texas Parks and Wildlife, and mailed to you before the start of the hunting season.

One thing to note, that always generates a lot of phone calls, is the buck harvest recommendation. For Level 1 MLDP cooperators, this box will always contain a zero. That does not mean you are not allowed to harvest any bucks during the upcoming season. The zero simply means that you will not be issued any special permits to shoot bucks on your property. For Level 1 cooperators buck tags are taken from the hunting license, not issued by Texas Parks and Wildlife. Members are encouraged to take only mature bucks (i.e., >4.5 years) as well as all spikes and legal bucks displaying inferior antler characteristics.

Questions pertaining to permit issuance, receipt, or lack thereof should be directed to Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist, Brent Pierce, at 361-798-2625 or brent.pierce@tpwd.texas.gov

Instructions for collecting incidental observations

Incidental Observations (often called Herd Composition) may be the most valuable data collected on a deer herd. When properly collected, herd composition data can reflect the overall health of a herd and help guide the manager in making proper harvest recommendations.

Herd composition data should be collected between August 1st and September 1st. The fawns have become a part of the herd by this time, yet they are small enough to be easily distinguished from adult deer. Observations outside this period may result in inaccurate data. Observations may be collected any time during the day. However, the first and last hours of daylight are often the most productive for deer seen per hour of effort. Observations **should not** be collected at night because it is too difficult to correctly identify sex and size.

Deer recorded should be viewed through binoculars or a spotting scope. Small antlers are easily overlooked without optical aids. Fawns whose spots have started to fade are also hard to distinguish when they are observed alone. Be sure to look at the hips of deer that you think could possibly be fawns because the hips are the last place to lose spots.

When observing deer in herds it is important that each deer be identified. If a herd of six deer is seen but only four are positively identified, do not record any of the deer. If there are two bucks, three does, and one fawn in a herd, you may easily identify the bucks but may not be sure of the other four unless they are **all individually identified**. When a herd is seen, quickly get a total head count, then go back and positively identify bucks first because they are easiest, then identify fawns, and finally, identify the does making sure not to miss small antlered bucks.

Collect as many samples as you can. If possible, a larger sample size is desirable to strengthen the data and increase confidence in the harvest recommendations. Observations can be made during routine ranch operations or as a special effort. Observing the same deer recorded on a previous survey is a concern if surveys are conducted too close together (less than 2-3 hours apart). If a conscientious effort is made to record accurate data, a small amount of duplicate recording should not affect the ratio. All deer should be recorded as a buck, doe, or fawn.

Send herd composition, spotlight, and daylight and evening mobile data to your Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist by **September 1, 2016**.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologist
Brent Pierce
412 N. Texana
Hallettsville, TX 77964

Please be sure to total your sightings to the right and down before sending in your forms. Also be sure to fill in the name of the MU the data is being collected for, and a distinguishing ranch name. It is essential that everyone collect herd composition data. The more data that is collected, the more applicable the harvest recommendations made for your MU will be to your individual ranch. Please follow the instructions precisely. DO NOT RECORD RANCHES IN DIFFERENT MUs ON THE SAME FORM, it causes too much confusion when entering the data.

**HERD COMPOSITION DATA DUE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2016
(i.e. must be received by TPWD by this date)**

Lease licenses

Changes in Texas Parks and Wildlife's policy require all lease licenses purchased for a wildlife management association be done simultaneously. We are no longer be able to purchase lease licenses a few at a time. If you need a lease license, and want to get it at the drastically reduced price offered to wildlife management associations, then you must purchase your lease license from the LCWMA by September 19, 2016. Lease license applications will be available at the fall meeting for those who attend. If you are unable to attend the fall meeting the form is available on the LCWMA website (www.lcwma.org) under the FORMS tab. Please print out the form, fill it out, and return it to the LCWMA, along with your payment by September 19, 2016. Make checks payable to LCWMA. ***Note: A lease license is required if a landowner charges for the right to hunt their property. A landowner or a land agent may purchase the license.***

LCWMA Policy Reminders

If you know someone who is interested in joining the LCWMA, and would like to be eligible to receive permits for the upcoming hunting season, please make sure they enroll before August 15, 2016. This is the date established by Texas Parks and Wildlife for inclusion in the Managed Lands Deer (MLD) program at all levels. For current members, this means your 2016 dues must be paid before August 15, 2016, or you may not receive your permits before the upcoming season. You are highly encouraged to pay your 2016 dues as soon as possible, but August 15 is the absolute last day to pay, to ensure your permits arrive on time.

Remember, any member who wishes to receive MLD permits for the 2016-2017 hunting season **MUST** submit herd composition data by the date set forth by Texas Parks and Wildlife in this newsletter (September 1, 2016). Herd composition must be received by the deadline or the applicant will be rendered ineligible to receive MLD permits for that season. These requirements are necessary to streamline the permit issuance process, and allow sufficient time before the hunting season to correct complications that arise, as well as hold new and current members to the same data reporting standards.

2016 LCWMA Annual Meeting Raffle \$10/ticket OR 6/\$50 ONLY 1000 tickets will be sold

1. Weatherby Vanguard Accuguard in .300 Win. Mag. (Value = \$773.99)
2. Remington Model 700 Varmint SF in .308 Win. (Value = \$717.99)
3. Thompson/Center Venture Predator in .22-250 Rem. (Value = \$480)
4. Ruger American Rifle Full Size All Weather in .243 Win (Value = \$413)
5. \$400 Brush to Bay Outfitters gift certificate, 1526 U.S. Hwy 77 South, Hallettsville
6. Henry Golden Boy in .22 LR (Value = \$385.99)
7. \$250 Brush to Bay Outfitters gift certificate, 1526 U.S. Hwy 77 South, Hallettsville
8. \$150 Brush to Bay Outfitters gift certificate, 1526 U.S. Hwy 77 South, Hallettsville
9. \$100 Brush to Bay Outfitters gift certificate, 1526 U.S. Hwy 77 South, Hallettsville
10. \$100 Brush to Bay Outfitters gift certificate, 1526 U.S. Hwy 77 South, Hallettsville

All winners of firearms must pass a N.I.C.S. Background Check or prize will be forfeited. Prizes #1-4 and prize #6 must be picked up from Howard's in Shiner, TX (361-594-4200) by November 1, 2016 or prize will be forfeited.

Name:

Phone:

of tickets:

LCWMA
P.O. Box 524
Hallettsville, TX 77964

LCWMA Board of Directors

Chairman: Joel Wagner (Western Lavaca County)

Vice-chairman: Jason Johnson (West Sandy Creek)

Secretary: Tom Grahmann (At-large)

Treasurer: Sam Bordovsky (South Central Lavaca County)

Member: William "Rusty" Wallace (Honey Creek)

Member: Mike Hoelscher (At-large)

Member: David Pohl (At-large)

Membership questions?

Call the Chairman at

361-798-6506 or

Email

lavacacountywma@gmail.com