

# CORA

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*Promoting Outdoor Recreation*

## CAMPBELL OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSOCIATION



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## CORA PRESIDENT'S LETTER -Terry Lewis

### Litter in our Lakes and Mountains

We all know about the problems with litter. I have written about the issues with litter on our waters and through out the mountains. There is a new effort under way to address this common issue as litter is a significant threat to our states wildlife, agriculture, economy, and our quality of life. The Tennessee Wildlife Federation is assembling the Tennessee CLEAN Coalition to advocate for a process to address our state's litter problem via a sweeping public-private partnership effort called Tennessee CLEAN. CLEAN stands for Cleaner Landscapes for the Economy, Agriculture and Nature. This program is a

chance to bring new ideas and solutions to the problem of litter via legislation, it will create a Tennessee CLEAN Commission, where 13 diverse stakeholders (e.g., private businesses, organizations, farmers, etc.) will work together to develop solutions to achieve these four policy goals on litter, within the next four years.

The goals are:

1. Create a program that recovers at least 85 percent of certain plastic, glass and aluminum containers to be recycled into raw materials that are valuable to our economy, rather than thrown out the window.

## NEWS FROM THE NORTH CUMBERLAND (winter column -Newsletter is a few weeks behind)

**Keith Thomas**

### **Area Manager TWRA**

As winter begins to set in the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area (NCWMA) staff is focusing on several tasks to start the new year off. As many are aware the NCWMA boasts a variety of activities for the public to enjoy, which in turn requires a lot of forward planning, oversight, and maintenance. This past weekend (Jan 8-9) marked the end of 2021-2022 deer season and program coordinators are preparing to compile data looking for harvest trends in our deer herd. Although this is typically our slower time of year there have been several new projects that have or will shortly launch involving a variety of species and new management. Our crews have worked tirelessly to ensure the NCWMA is always at it's best and will continue to do so. The NCWMA staff will conduct several planning sessions soon with several agendas in mind. A big one being wildlife habitat planning which covers food plots, timber harvests, prescribed fire, and data collection. Our managers extensively plan for food plots each year, attempting to incorporate a mixture of both annual and perennial food plots planted over several hundred acres scattered across the almost 200,000-acre WMA. With fire season just around the corner we will be identifying areas to conduct controlled burns during spring green up. The preparation

and execution of conducting a prescribed fire can be very labor intensive and requires a lot of planning, coordination, and a little bit of good weather. One of the most important tasks our staff will accomplish during the winter months is annual servicing and maintenance of our equipment. Our technicians will service dozens of pieces of equipment to include farm equipment, heavy equipment and implements. Our technicians are the backbone of the WMA, and our success depends on their hard work. As the area manager I can say we have some of the best and brightest technicians in the state. Lastly, we will be conducting our annual elk census to help us gauge the overall health and density of our elk herd. With the end of the 2021-2022 deer season here on the North Cumberland we are hopeful that everyone who hunted on the NCWMA had success. We received several pictures of some great bucks. Last year there was a total of 514 deer harvested, 381 being bucks. This year's harvest was down just a little with a total of 428 deer harvested, 317 of those being bucks. There are many factors that can go into harvest such as more people having to work this year whereas last year, they may have had more time off due COVID-19. Weather can also play a big part in harvest, along with other things such as, hunter effort, regulation

changes, accessibility, or interference from other user groups to name a few. Overall, we are hopeful that our deer herd is healthy and the current harvest regulations that are in place will only make the deer hunting better for future years to come. The WMA staff will be assisting with some new projects this upcoming year. One project will be assisting the regional and statewide turkey program coordinators with some turkey data collection and harvest studies. Turkey populations and harvest have dropped in recent years in some parts of the state, and we are doing our best to understand why so we can make the sound management decisions based on the newest science and research. It has also become official that the Agency has purchased a conservation easement from the The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on the Ed Carter Unit of the NCWMA (formally known as Tackett Creek). We will be working alongside TNC on a multitude of projects to include stream mitigation, OHV trail assistance and continuing efforts on habitat management in the forms of wildlife openings, prescribed fire, and planting food plots. In closing, we hope everyone had a great holiday season and we are excited to see what 2022 has in store. We will continue to give you our best efforts and work to make this WMA a safe and enjoyable place for all.

## CORA PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Cont'd -Terry Lewis

2. Develop a program to reduce use of single-use carryout bags, which are a major polluter of our waters, cause damage to the current recycling system, agriculture equipment and injure fish, wildlife and livestock.

3. Develop and implement a statewide litter program that comprehensively addresses litter prevention and reduction to clean up Tennessee for this and future generations.

4. Evaluating existing state laws and any administrative rules pertaining to such laws that address litter and their effectiveness and make recommendations to improve them.

Ending litter in our state is a big, ongoing effort, but we hope to advance the legislative portion of the effort in the near future. The demand for high-quality used plastic, glass, aluminum, and paper products for manufacturing is real and growing fast. We can recover these raw materials, grow jobs, and support manufacturing operations with a strong comprehensive effort. We call all learn more and how to take action by visiting the TennesseeCLEANact.org website. I ask every volunteer to take part in this especially important issue and opportunity to support this effort to protect our beautiful waters and lands.

## CORA MEETINGS SUMMARIES

**Note:** Detailed minutes were kept for each meeting. Meeting time is the first Tuesday of each month. Meetings take place in the lower courtroom at the Campbell County Courthouse in Jacksboro. Publicity, activities, newsletter, roads and trails, membership, old and new business are on each agenda. Following are brief highlights of the meetings since the last newsletter was published in September of 2021.

**October 5, 2021:** Campbell County mayor E.L. Morton discussed the Build Back Better Grant. Centered on Oak Ridge, the grant would reach out to communities in 16 counties with up to 1 billion dollars per year. Mark J. Tidwell was tasked with getting a CORA Facebook page up and running. A trail clean-up by a Jeep club was scheduled for October 16 th for the "Sand Quarry" area. 80 attendees were reported at the Elk Banquet. The annual CORA barbecue was discussed with 85 projected to attend on October 16 th . CORA voted to give a \$200 donation to the Brandon Card Invitational Fishing Tournament in December.

**November 2, 2021:** Campbell County's OHV use policy was discussed. Originally passed to provide uniformity for the entire county, the four municipalities show some deviations from the plan. North Cumberland WMA manager Keith Thomas spoke

of the challenges of striking the right balance on the multi-use acreage of the property. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation gave a \$3,500 grant for beautification and signage upon completion of the new elk viewing tower. The grading and graveling of Elk Viewing Tower Road was discussed, a prerequisite project prior to tower construction. Interstate Steel will be the erector of the new all steel tower. Fabrication was projected to be 6-8 weeks out.

**December 7, 2021:** There was no December meeting due to COVID and members having conflicting obligations and schedules.

**January 4, 2020:** The groundbreaking for Goads Motorsports was discussed. The flagship store is to be located at the 141 Interchange. Transfer of funds from TWRA to the Chamber of Commerce was discussed. These funds are for the construction of the new elk viewing tower. The Nature Conservancy will be doing a marketing campaign in the spring. CORA president Terry Lewis and county mayor Morton will represent CORA for any on-camera sessions. An 18.47 percent decline in deer harvest was discussed. A reward package concerning a recent elk poaching incident in Valley Creek as well as the strategic elk plan was discussed.

**February 1, 2022:** Goads Motorsports will have a Can Am

## THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND TWRA

Nashville, TN — The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) announced that the 43,000-acre Ed Carter Unit of the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area (WMA) will be permanently protected after the sale of a conservation easement associated with the property. The easement, located in an area known as Ataya and as Tackett Creek, will also protect 179 miles of streams and provides habitat for the Tennessee elk herd, which attracts thousands of visitors each year for sport and wildlife watching.

A conservation easement restricts certain land uses to protect specific conservation values on a property while it remains in private ownership and generates local property tax revenue. A land trust or government agency, in this case TWRA, holds and enforces the easement, which is le-

gally binding in perpetuity regardless of whether the property is sold or passed to heirs.

In addition to limiting development on the Ed Carter Unit of the North Cumberland WMA, the terms of this easement allow TWRA to manage wildlife habitats and public recreation access, including multi-use trails.

“Purchase of this easement is a major accomplishment for habitat conservation and public recreation,” says Tim Churchill, TWRA’s chief of federal aid and real estate. “Protecting the resources at the Ed Carter Unit has been considered one of our agency’s highest priorities for several decades.”

After transfer of the easement, TNC will continue to oversee daily operations as part of its Cumberland Forest project, an impact investment project that manages this property as well as an additional 200,000+-acre network of high conservation value lands and waters located along the Tennessee-Kentucky border and in a portion of Southwest Virginia.

“Over the next decade, our primary goal is to manage these lands as working forests, space for people to

The Nature Conservancy 

play, and permanently protected, critical habitats for our region’s game and non-game species,” says Terry Cook, TNC’s Tennessee state director. “This transaction advances that goal—a win for forests, water, wildlife and people.”

To help fund the transaction, TNC secured a \$620,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Acres for America conservation program to augment state funds dedicated to purchasing the easement. The Cumberland Forest project is also pursuing opportunities to generate revenue through sustainable forestry, the sale of leases and licenses for hunting and fishing, participation in the carbon marketplace, and transforming former mining operations into sites for solar and other forms of renewable energy.

The Ed Carter Unit of the North Cumberland WMA is located in the heart of the Central Appalachian Mountains, a globally significant, connected and resilient temperate hardwood forest representing the single most critical landscape east of the Mississippi for climate resiliency and ecological



**THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND TWRA Cont'd**

services (clean water, clean air, carbon storage) benefiting tens of millions of people. In 2021, TNC identified the Appalachian Mountains as one of the most globally significant landscapes key to pursuing the dual goals of slowing the pace of climate change and protecting 30 percent of the planet's biodiversity by 2030.

**About The Nature Conservancy** The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, TNC works with a variety of partners to create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. This includes tackling climate change, conserving lands, waters and oceans at an unprecedented scale, providing food and water sustainably, and helping make cities more sustainable. TNC has been working in Tennessee since 1978 and has conserved more than 400,000 acres across the state.

**About Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency** The mission of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency is to preserve, conserve, manage, protect, and enhance the fish and wildlife of the state and their habitats for

the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the citizens of Tennessee and its visitors. TWRA has come a long way since it was established in 1949 and was called the Game and Fish Commission. Completely reorganized in 1974, it now consists of more than 700 professionals dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and enhancement of Tennessee's fish and wildlife for the enjoyment of all Tennesseans and our visitors. Note: The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation or its funding sources. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation or its funding sources.

**RECIPE****Chili****Ingredients**

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion diced
- 2 garlic cloves minced
- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 8 ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 15 ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 15 ounce can pinto beans
- 1 15 ounce can kidney beans
- 3 Tablespoons chili powder
- 1 Tablespoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne

**Instructions**

In a large pot add the olive oil over medium high heat. Add the onion, and garlic and sauté until almost tender. Add in the ground beef and cook and crumble until brown. Add in the beef broth, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, pinto beans, kidney beans, chili powder, oregano, cumin, coriander, salt and cayenne. Bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer until it starts to thicken and flavors combine about 30 minutes.

# BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY



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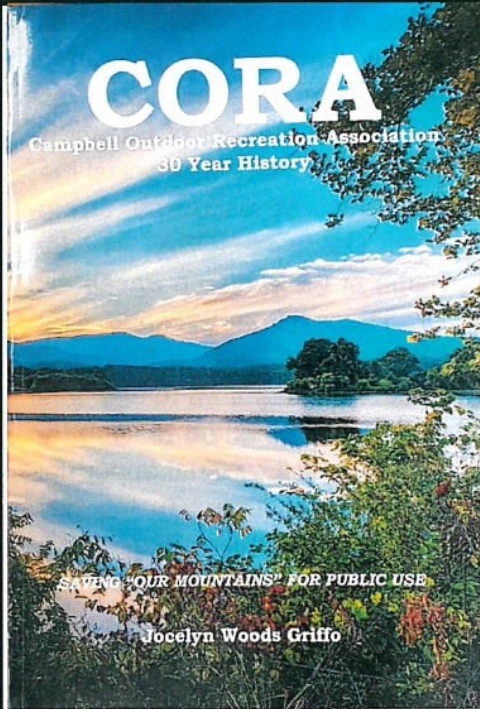
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### NORTH CUMBERLAND WMA MANAGER

Keith Thomas



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## MEETINGS SUMMARY Cont'd From Pg 3

representative at the ribbon cutting ceremony. Norris Lake will be designated as one of the Bill Dance Signature Lakes. This could lead to improved access and possibly new Clinch River side of lake access in the future. (Note: in the Spring 2022 issue of "Tennessee Wildlife" Vol 44, No 4, TWRA Director Bobby Wilson speaks of the Bill Dance Signature Lakes project in his column.) A report was given on the steel package for the elk viewing tower, at this point palleted and ready for delivery. Check flow from the Chamber of Commerce to the vendor was discussed. Final road improvements to allow delivery trucks, concrete trucks, crane, etc, to traverse to tower site was discussed. TWRA advised of needing a timeline in place for the construction. A press release, road closure signs and the like will have to be issued/put up. A discussion of the possible Phase 2 of the elk tower project, including the handicap accessible trail was entered into. The elk poaching incident on the Ed Carter Unit of the North Cumberland WMA was updated, as well as upcoming prescribed burns.

**March 1, 2022:** The newsletter account was taken up. It was de-



TENNESSEE WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Conserving Our Wildlife & Natural Resources Since 1946

ecided to work the newsletter out of the general fund instead of establishing a secondary account. The number of Facebook visits for CORA's new social media page was discussed. Campbell Outdoors-CORA is the name of the page on Facebook. Dr. Harper from UT and Brad Miller, TWRA, will be looking at the elk viewing area to see what can be implemented to keep the area as a "core visual opportunity" in conjunction with the new elk viewing tower. Phase 2 of the project, the walking trail was also revisited. Mayor Morton informed CORA that Senator Marsha Blackburn would be in county in early April. The possibility of her getting out on the North Cumberland WMA was discussed.

**April 5, 2022:** Mayor Morton shared updates concerning the Bill Dance Signature Lake initiative. Lonas Young Park figures into the equation with a possible expansion upcoming. The City of LaFollette has put directional stencils on its streets for OHV traffic to follow. The possibility of USDA grant funds for areas most in need was brought up. Of ten areas identified in Tennessee, several are close by, including Clairfield, Speedwell, Duff and Newcomb. Things such as flood mitigation, soil conservation, housing, community facilities, opioid challenges, etc. could possibly be impacted by such grant funding. Funding could potentially be tied in with our trail and lake economy in Campbell and Claiborne Coun-

ties. North Cumberland WMA Manager Keith Thomas advises he is trying to be more proactive concerning the unprecedented uptick in OHV usage. He had toured 8 campgrounds in a relationship building effort. Preventing end-user problems before they come onto the North Cumberland complex of WMAs is a long-range goal. Knowledge of rules and regulations for the end-users, a large portion travelling from out-of-state, may prove beneficial. It was reported the Elk Viewing Tower Road is probably in the best shape it has ever been in. CORA President Lewis relayed that the roof assembly of the new tower was probably only five working days out from completion. Post construction landscaping and site enhancements were discussed. As of this date, elk tower expenditures are at approximately \$145,000. Invoices should soon be submitted to The Nature Conservancy for the \$25,000 portion of the tower project that they are funding. An assessment had been made of immediate

tower area. The purpose is to maintain a high probability viewing opportunity. More clover, alfalfa, and cool season grasses will be rotated in to enhance the elks' grazing area. Soybeans have already been ordered for this crop season, so the above blend will be phased in during 2023. CORA President Lewis will be attending the CWD meeting on April 12. The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Wounded Warrior Hunt will be held April 30 at the Lewis Farm on Rock Creek. This five-time award winning event will host up to 26 participants in 2022.



# Ramblings..... By Mark J. Tidwell

It has been an extremely busy time for CORA since the publication of the last newsletter. The long process of funding, designing, and implementing the construction phase of the new elk viewing tower, on Hatfield Knob, has racked up countless hours of preparation and actual work. It seemed as though things were discussed and rehashed at monthly meetings for the longest time. Then one day, "Poof!", a large group of volunteers assembled at the tower site for the dismantling of the long-serving wooden elk viewing tower.

Hammer whacks resounded and saws buzzed as the old stand came down section by piece on February 12th. How many thousands of folks had stood on the structure, and "Wowed!" at the sight of elk, can only be imagined. More than just the sum of wood, metal, nails, and screws, the old tower had served as an integral link con-



necting those interested in nature with nature itself.

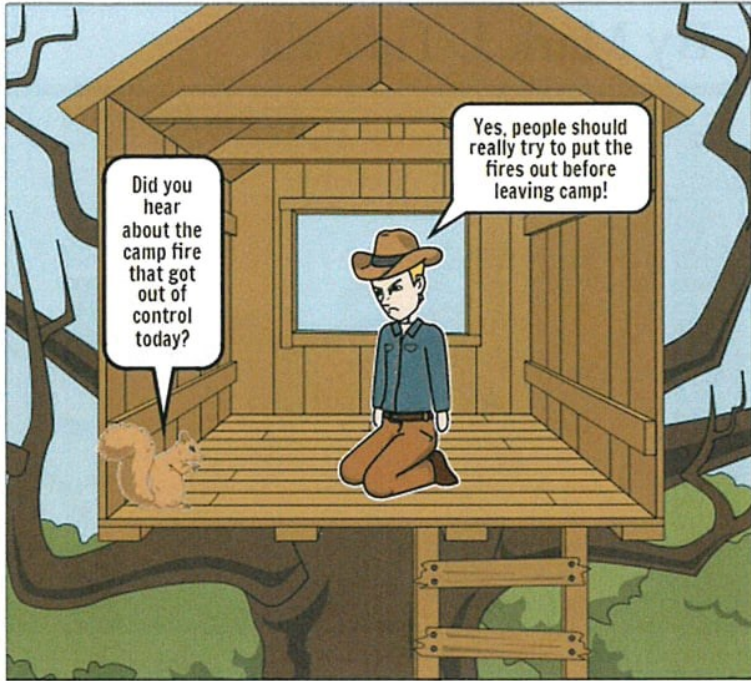
The new, all steel, substantially larger structure is now in place. There are still various and sundry little jobs that need to be completed, but the "heavy lifting" of the project is now in the rear-view mirror. Hopefully the new structure will continue to serve as a lynchpin between humans and nature for decades to come.

Forays into nature by our complex society are occurring

on an ever-emerging scale. It seems the more technology we bring into our daily lives, the more comfort that is built into our homes, at some point, we all need to counterbalance modernity with time spent communing with nature. That's why CORA's work has been, and will remain important not only to the people of our local hills and hollows, but also to those traveling from much further destinations.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park hosted over fourteen-million visitors last year. Though Campbell County's public lands may never see such expansive numbers of travelers in a single year, things are definitely trending way upward for those coming to experience the lake and mountains. We have been "discovered" by an outside world that for the most part only used Campbell County as a Segway, to other destinations, in decades past.





*Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished. —Lao Tzu*



Top picture: the old elk viewing tower  
Bottom picture: the new elk viewing tower during preliminary construction.



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