Inside this issue:

Mourning Dove Banding 2
Wildlife Conclave 3
Call for Publication Awards 3
Working with Private Landowners 4
Photography Contest 7

LAPB Member News

2018 LAPB Annual Meeting

The board of directors for LAPB met in Baton Rouge on 22 March to discuss the 2018 annual meeting. The meeting has been set for 2-3 August on the campus of McNeese State University, Lake Charles, LA. Student presentations will occur on Thursday and the focus session will occur Friday morning. This year’s focus session will be on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

Thursday night is the organization’s Social and Dinner and be highlighted by the presentation of student and publication awards, a photography contest, and an outside speaker. Friday morning will begin with poster presentations from university students and from professional biologists, followed by a focus session on CWD. A field trip for Wednesday (01 August) is being investigated.

Registration will be online or at the door and costs $25.00 for regular annual membership ($10.00 for student annual membership), $10 for the Symposium, plus an additional fee for the social and supper. For more information contact Jeff Duguay, LAPB President-Elect at 225-765-2353 or jduguay@wlf.la.gov

Scholarships

The LA Association of Professional Biologists (LAPB)/TWS Scholarship is a competitive scholarship that awards $500.00 annually to a student(s) pursuing or planning to pursue college studies in the following curriculums: Wildlife or Fisheries Management, Forestry, Wetland Science, Marine Biology, or other closely related field. For additional information and a scholarship application go to the LAPB website at: http://www.labiologists.org/scholarship_application.php

In addition to academic scholarships, LAPB/TWS has funding to send a student to the next SE Deer Study Group meeting in February in Louisville, KY. Contact Larry Reynolds (lreynolds@wlf.la.gov) for more information.
Mourning Dove Banding – James Whitaker, LDWF Biologist

A national dove banding program was initiated in 2003 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in conjunction with many state wildlife management agencies. This program aids in understanding mourning dove population biology and to help estimate the effects of harvest on mourning dove populations. The data gathered from this program and others are critical in the development of setting harvest season dates and bag limits for mourning doves. In addition, this information is used for annual harvest management plans and other strategic management plans that have large landscape level effects.

The United States is separated into three separate management units: Eastern Management Unit (EMU), Central Management Unit (CMU), and Western Management Unit (WMU). Since its inception in 2003, EMU has banded 268,167, followed by 225,912 in the CMU, and 102,474 in the WMU. Louisiana is part of the EMU and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries play an integral role with banding mourning doves. Mourning doves are banded throughout the state in many different regions: the Gulf Coastal Prairie, Mississippi Alluvial Valley, Southeastern Coastal Prairie, and West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas. All age and sex classes are banded during the summer months throughout these regions to obtain a representative sample across the landscape. Since 2003, the EMU has had 17,057 band recoveries, followed by 12,386 in the CMU, and 4,317 in the WMU. These data are vital for determining annual survivorship information, which assists in setting annual bag limits within Louisiana and beyond.
LSU Hosts Wildlife Conclave

LSU School of Renewable Natural Resources hosted the 2018 Southeastern Student Conclave March 24-27. There were 310 students attending from 20 universities across the Southeast. Students gained hands-on training in wildlife management and conservation. Some of the activities students participated in included Quiz Bowl, dendrology, radio-telemetry, necropsy, field research methods, and rocket netting. Activities a little less wildlife related, but fun nonetheless, ranged from 3-legged wader races to field photography.

The University of Georgia was the overall winner of the Student Conclave, with North Carolina State University and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville taking second and third place, respectively.

Students were treated to fine Louisiana cuisine

Call for Publication Awards

The LAPB/TWS is inviting nominations for outstanding publication in the following categories: Popular, Basic Research, General Conservation, Fisheries, Wildlife. To be eligible publications are to be published during 2017 and at least one author must be a paid member of LAPB/TWS. Send entries to: Eddie Lyons at elyons@mcneese.edu.
I have been a forester in Louisiana working for the National Wild Turkey Federation now for almost 3 years. I never knew I could have this much fun on the job. It honestly has been a great ride so far. Most of my job revolves around providing technical assistance to private landowners, which includes offering my advice on how to restore or manage timber and wildlife habitat. Along the way, I try to fit the landowner to a cost share program that will help them reduce their investment cost in their land, thereby increasing the return on their investment, whether timber value, lease value, or resale. I must admit that the success and accomplishments are somewhat selfishly motivated. The work I do is really about improving habitat, but the bonus is helping people. The two combined brings great satisfaction and motivation to a job, but also build a great conservation story.

I offer this article now in hopes that someone can benefit from some of the things I’ve learned from working with private landowners. I am definitely not an expert in forestry, wildlife habitat, nor in public service. But if you can utilize these suggestions to build your own accomplishments, maybe even a professional network, you may be able to share some conservation success as we do.

I have learned a lot from landowners, much about the diversity of what people enjoy about the outdoors, how some people approach environmentalism versus conservation, and what is important to them that may not be important to others. One thing that seems to be consistent though is the PASSION. When someone owns land, they usually have a passion about specific aspects they want to improve. Some landowners don’t realize that passion until we start talking about what is unique about their property or how we help them create a vision for the future of their land. That is why it is important to understand the landowner, learn what their objectives are, and what makes them “tick” when they are outdoors. In order to do this effectively, one must meet with the landowner on their own turf, on their property. This is where “kicking dirt” comes in. Show up with your boots on, clothes you don’t mind getting dirty, but yet have a professional look. When you start walking the land, listen to the landowner, take notes, and keep your eyes open. Use your knowledge to talk about specific plants that serve a purpose the landowner may enjoy knowing. If they are a deer hunter, talk about deer browse, ask them about hunting on this land or what the game cameras are finding. “Pet the grasses” and tell them why they are important to prescribed fire, maybe quail or turkeys. Creating a vision for the future can start with a small detail, a legume or forb or grass, browse and how to get more of it, a nest or bedding area, and how to enhance those opportunities. It never fails, by appealing to the landowner’s senses and desires, you will begin to see a passion for doing more on their land and can utilize that to encourage the next step.

Photo Credit: Luke Lewis
Biologists and foresters know that good habitat does not happen quickly. This is difficult for landowners to accept when the passion and desire can out run the realistic pace in which their objectives can be accomplished. Coaching PATIENCE has to be constant. Several landowners I have worked with are not happy in the first year with the way their land looks after fire or after a complete restoration with a tree planting. Good conservation is not without challenges. You must be prepared for the potential to work with a disgruntled landowner. As you develop a plan with them, express realistic expectations of how something may look after each forestry practice. There is no crystal ball to tell the future in forestry, but use your knowledge, experience, or maybe an example of another location to slow down and hopefully instill patience with each result. I often use other examples, even some that pre-date my experience in the region, even offer to show them or provide a location. Staying in tune with what others are doing in the region can help. You might even have to do a revisit and show impatient landowners specific improvements that they may not recognize, some detail that rekindles that passion. Again, listen to them. Find out where their growing pains are, and off-set that with either the optimistic reality of what is there, or what the next step could possibly bring to the land.

We hold landowner field days a couple times a year to provide education, information, and more assistance to landowners. In fact, when a landowner recognizes the expertise in the room, they realize they are not alone in conservation. This is where PARTNERSHIPS are formed. We want the landowners to know they have other resources they can call on. There are so many ways their objectives can be accomplished through forestry and wildlife enhancements. I also like to have other agencies accompany me on site visits with landowners. The different perspectives will typically find a path to the landowner’s passion, and what they want from the land. For landowners that don’t know what they want, more than one person asking questions and finding interesting details about the property usually helps peak some interest from the landowner. In fact, when you realize which person they are most interested in hearing speak, utilize that. It might be an opportunity to take a back seat, listen, learn from someone else, and watch the landowner start making decisions about their land. There are even times when I meet with someone, I find out they have already met with one or more agencies for the same reasons. They are just looking for more help, more ideas. I am okay with them looking for second opinions. The goal is improved habitat. Doing something is better than doing nothing. I am still here for support if they find another partner. Something else we point out is that landowners should consider loggers, contractors and even neighbors as partners in conservation. It needs to be about more than just cutting the trees, digging dirt or piling brush. Those involve need to understand the end goal of the landowner. The neighbors land can also support management goals. Pastures next to woodlands can provide great opportunities for wildlife. Or what if the neighbor has equipment and a skill to help accomplish something as simple as fire lanes. One of the greatest responses I received at a field day: “I know now we are not in this alone. I thought we were going to have to do all this work by ourselves.” Not the case with strong partnerships.
Kicking Dirt and Petting Grasses with Private Landowners, Continued

We often get personal and ask landowners what they intend to do with the land long-term. More than half will tell you that they will leave it to their kids or grandchildren. They like the idea of a legacy through the land. It may be property they inherited, and could have been in the family for years. Unfortunately, much of this land has been neglected or mis-managed due to heirs having to work for a living these days instead of living off the natural resources of gardens and livestock. By the time they meet with us, they realize the land could be better. They don’t want to leave it “in a mess” for the heirs. They want to PASS IT ON in better shape than it is today. I love these family stories. This scenario also leads to a passion in the outdoors. We come in to help, and lead them to a passion for conservation. Whether they are hunting with the young ones in the family or just riding around watching animals and butterflies, they have stories they can pass on along with the skills of taking care of the land.

I have never been thanked so much in my life on a job. I never look for thanks from people. I just hope the accomplishments continue to drive them forward. I look for improvements and improved management of the land. That’s my reward. But after spending time with these great people, if I do my job, many thanks will come. I believe in these four tenets: Passion, Patience, Partnerships, and Pass It On. I use them to guide me in working with private landowners. I am no psychologist, but I gladly take on the role if it improves wildlife habitat and helps people. I hope you recognize the need for personal and social abilities as well as forestry and biological principles. Allow others to develop you into a well-rounded professional, and you will create your own success.
Photography Contest

The contest is open to all registered conference attendees and winners will be announced during the evening social. Awards will be given.

Photography Contest Guidelines:

- Photographs must be captured with a digital or film camera
- Photographs must be in color or black-and-white prints, with a minimum size of 8” x 10” and maximum size of 8” x 12”
- Entries must be mounted on a stiff 11” x 14” black backing
- Framed prints will not be accepted
- Do not place your name or caption on photo. Place your name on the back of your backing

The contest will be open to all registered conference attendees and winners will be announced during the evening social, so make plans to attend the social for 2018. Any wildlife/biology/landscape/research, etc. type theme will be allowed. There is an entry fee of $5 per photo with a maximum of 10 entries per individual.

You may register the day of the symposium (Thursday). Thursday entry deadline is 12 noon. OR you may send early entries (mounted on black backing) to: Jeff Duguay, LDWF, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808. Mail in entry deadline is 25 July 2018.

Get your cameras ready!

There will be a photography contest at the 2018 LAPB annual meeting. The contest will be open to all registered conference attendees and winners will be announced during the evening social, so make plans to attend the social for 2018. Any wildlife/biology/landscape/research, etc. type theme will be allowed.
Who We Are

The Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists is a diverse group of natural resource specialists including, but not limited to, foresters, botanists, wildlife biologists, wetland scientists, fisheries biologists, and students who are dedicated to the economically sound and science-based protection, management, and use of Louisiana's natural resources through peer-reviewed research, mentoring, ecologically sound habitat management, and informed public policy.

We’re On The Web!!!
www.labio.logists.org

Questions, Comments, or Suggestions?
Contact Any Member of Our Executive Board

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