

Spring fire season now underway

Spring Forest Fire Season is now here. From March 1 until May 15, it is illegal to burn any open fires within 150 feet of any woodland. If burning is done, more than 150 feet from the woodland, land capable of spreading to the woodland through grass or other flammable material. It is still a violation of the Kentucky Forest Fire Laws.

If burning must be done, it is permissible between the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 12 midnight, providing all reasonable precautions are taken. Reasonable precautions shall consist of cutting and piling flammable material and clearing around it to prevent spread of fire to the woodland. The fire must be extinguished at 12 midnight. The largest violators of these laws are the delinquent burners. They have no intention of doing any harm to the woodlands by causing a forest fire to spread from their innocent delinquent burning. When they have something to burn during the fire season, they should always be aware of the weather conditions and the dryness of the soil. Fires can spread over 40 p.m. if the condition is very windy or dry.

Division of Forestry employees will be patrolling the area and citations will be issued to individuals violating the Kentucky Forest Fire Laws.

For information on how and when to burn debris, or to report a forest fire, contact H. Bradley Witt, District Office, County Guard, phone 496-2546, or the District Office at Morehead, phone 474-7004.

Crop insurance has new benefits

Farmers who haven't carried insurance on their crop investments in the past may now want to take a hard new look at the benefits of an all-risk insurance policy, according to John Soper, District Director of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

Soper points out that a number of significant improvements have been made in the insurance coverage for 1979 crops, including a substantial increase in the dollar amount of protection offered on Burley Tobacco. A policy holder electing to insure his crop the maximum value can obtain approximately 7 per cent more protection against a loss than was available a year ago.

For the crop year that ended with last fall's harvest, Federal Crop Insurance wrote \$2.6 billion of insurance coverage on 26 different crops and Soper expects this year's total to be at least 10 per cent higher. A major reason for the expected increase is the continued rise in crop production expenses which, coupled with narrower profit margins, leave farmers increasingly vulnerable to the whims of nature. Soper notes that it is no longer unusual for a single crop loss to wipe out an investment equal to the profit for four or five good years.

Although the deadline for taking out an insurance policy is still several months away in most areas, farmers interested in insuring their crop investments are urged to apply as early as possible. By doing so they are assured of having insurance even in sales of new insurance policies have to be stopped because of unfavorable weather or soil conditions. Anyone wanting to find out exactly what it would cost to obtain insurance for his crop, and what yield guarantee the policy provides in his area should contact the nearest PCIC office.

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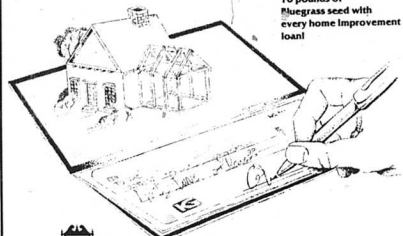


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National Wildlife Week proclaimed in Kentucky

by John Wilson

Gov. Julian M. Carroll has signed a proclamation officially marking Kentucky's participation in the 42nd annual National Wildlife Week, March 19-24. This observance, organized and encouraged by the National Wildlife Federation, usually attempts to focus public awareness upon some specific problem or need of wildlife.

This year's theme is much more all encompassing: "Conserve Our Wildlife." Surely the need for and desirability of wildlife conservation is something everyone would agree upon. Yet many of the most important methods of wildlife conservation — and indeed even the word "conservation" itself — are only poorly understood by many people who nonetheless have a sincere interest in wildlife welfare.

Too often, conservation, the wise and planned use of a natural resource, is confused with protection. There are those who believe that the best way to conserve wildlife is by outlawing hunting completely.

But contradictory as it may seem at first, the hunter, who is direct (and literal) consumer of wildlife, is also its greatest conservationist.

It is and always has been the hunter who has paid for wildlife management and research, who has funded public education programs and, who has lobbied for strong wildlife laws. In Kentucky as in most other states, sportmen (hunters and fishermen) through their license fees furnish virtually all of the money for fish and wildlife management.

In so doing they pay the salaries of the biologists who perform basic research and carry out management practices and the salaries of the conservation officer who is just as quick to write a citation for illegally poaching a songbird as for illegally poaching a deer.

The annual revenues in America from the sales of hunting licenses, from excise taxes on sporting equipment and from federal duck stamp sales exceeds \$220 million. On a national level, sportmen have furnished over \$1 billion to fund wildlife conservation programs since 1924, a record that any other group cannot come even close to matching.

But more financial contributions, no matter how great, can neither justify nor excuse exploitation of our wildlife resource. And the hunter, while he is a consumer of wildlife, is not an exploiter.

Unlike oil, wildlife is a renewable resource. This means that, give suit-

able habitat and the protection of closed seasons and limited harvests, game species will perpetuate themselves indefinitely.

Nor can wildlife species be stockpiled. The amount of habitat — food, water, living space and whatever else a species needs for survival — is limited and can support only a limited number of that species. Every year a certain percentage of the total population does not survive. Whether or not hunting is permitted, the percentage that dies annually (as much as 80 per cent in many cases) is just about the same.

The hunter then, through regulated sport hunting, only takes the surplus game animal — those that would succumb to natural causes such as starvation or predators. Hunting season lengths along with bag and possession limits are designed to limit harvest to the surplus, leaving enough breeding stock to replenish the population.

If one message comes through loud and clear from this year's National Wildlife Week "Conserve our Wildlife" campaign, it should be that, as our leading conservationists, hunters are indeed the best friends wildlife has and they deserve the recognition and credit as conservationists that is often denied them.

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